

LECTURES ON EPHESIANS

by

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CHAPTER SIX

THE BODY—ITS MYSTERY AND GLORY Ephesians 3

WE ARE now coming to the fourth division of this book: The Church—Its Mystery and Glory.

Let us read verse 1: **“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.”**

The opening words, **“For this cause,”** have reference to the subject matter of chapters one and two. We are informed that Paul’s imprisonment was the result of his bold declaration of the revelation which God had given him concerning the peculiar character of this age, in which God is dealing with the Gentiles (setting aside Israel), taking out from among them a people for His name, forming them into one Body and making them **“Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”**

Because of the fidelity of the Apostle Paul in making known this truth, he was incarcerated in an inner prison in Rome. Think of it! Paul was actually in a dungeon in Rome because of his desire that you and I should know the mystery of God’s great purpose in this dispensation. Nothing stirred the ire of the Jews like the message which fell from the lips of the Apostle Paul, to the effect that God was not dwelling in temples made with hands; that He was not dealing with Israel as a nation; that He had turned to the Gentiles with salvation; that the people who were saved were being formed into a Body, indwelt by God’s Spirit, possessed of His life and one day to share His glory.

Turn to Acts 22:22-24 and read how Paul’s brethren, according to the flesh, cried out in response to his preaching:

And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

The prison in which he was placed was different in character from prisons as we know them today which are palaces compared with those into which political prisoners were thrust. There were no comforts; little light, no heat, and scanty fare. Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, thus suffering because he desired to make known God’s truth concerning the plan and purpose for his age. Paul, however, did not call himself a prisoner of Nero, or a prisoner of the Roman Empire, but the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Paul was conscious of the fact that all of the earthly kingdoms could have no power over him were it not the permissive will of God.

Every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is in the hollow of God's hand; no person can touch him, neither can Satan. How clear this is made in Satan's conversation with God, concerning Job. The Lord asked, "**Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?**" But Satan questioned his ability to touch Job when he said, "**Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?**" (cf. Job 1:8, 10).

The Puritans used to say that this hedge was so high that the big devils could not get over it, and so thick that the little devils could not get through it. Not until God gave His permission could Satan touch one possession of Job.

Paul also was living in the center of the will of God, hedged about on every side. Such protection is our portion also if we are living in the center of God's will. We can say with the utmost confidence,

Enemies may seek to injure,
Satan all his arts employ;
God will turn what seems to harm me
Into everlasting joy.

If God should allow Satan to break through the hedge about us, as He did with Job and Paul, can we not show forth the sufficiency of the grace of God to sustain as well as to save? How significant the opening words of chapter 3 are: "**For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.**"

Perhaps I am writing to a child of God who has passed through a great sorrow, or who at present feels the heat from the furnace of affliction.

God allows you, my friend, to show, to exhibit to the world, what the grace of God can do for one who places his trust in Him. You are not a prisoner of circumstances; you are a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God desires that you glorify Jesus Christ through your present circumstance. If you keep that in mind, your attitude toward every bitter experience which enters your life will change.

Consider Madame Guyon, a refined, cultured and exceedingly beautiful woman; yet for Christ's sake, she was exposed to the indignities and tortures of the French prisons for ten years, from 1695 to 1705.

Why?

Because she loved the Lord Jesus Christ and was determined to serve Him. While she was in prison she wrote that exquisite poem so filled with thought:

A little bird I am
Shut from the fields of air;
Yet in my cage I sit and sing To Him
Who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because my God, it pleases Thee.

Naught have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He Whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song;
He caught and bound my wandering wing
But still He bends to hear me sing.

My cage confines me round;
Abroad I cannot fly.
But though my wing is closely bound.
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose Providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.

Madame Guyon truly was a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ, not the prisoner of the Roman Catholic power, or a prisoner of circumstances.

One is never on a bed of sickness without the permission of God; therefore if you find yourself thus situated, you are a “**prisoner of the Lord.**” He desires you to be there. He allowed Paul to be in prison. Why? To prove to others that you possess something able to sustain you. Let our attitude and spirit be like Paul's when he wrote, “**Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice**” (Philippians 4:4).

There are three attitudes which we can take toward God and circumstances which confront us. We can resist, and many people do. We can submit, which is better. When trouble faces some people they say, “What cannot be cured must be endured.” Others say, when sickness or death brings anxiety and grief, “I submit to the will of God.”

Submission is not bad, but when one submits to the will of God he is not occupying the highest ground he could possess.

We may rejoice in the will of God.

That is the attitude which Paul took when he termed himself a “**prisoner of the Lord.**” Paul determined that regardless of circumstances, he would magnify the grace of God. What a power the church would be today if every member individually looked upon difficult, sad circumstances in the same way in which Paul did as a “**prisoner of the Lord.**”

My homeland is Australia. Some years ago, a man in England by the name of George Grubb was stirring that country. Though I never met him, I have met many people who accepted Christ under his ministry. He was described as a large man, over six feet in height. Regardless of what came into his life, he was filled with the glory of God and able to magnify God always.

Wherever he went, revival fires began. Australia was in need of a revival, so they cabled George Grubb. He boarded a ship on which was a leader of a certain cult. He also had received a cable from Sydney, for the purpose of nullifying the work to be accomplished by Mr. Grubb. While enroute, the man of God led many souls to Christ, among them many of the ship officials. Whenever anything went wrong he always gave a testimony by saying, “Bless the Lord.”

When the two men arrived in Sydney, they happened to secure a room at the same hotel, and on the same floor. It was the custom then for hotel guests to place their shoes outside of their doors at night in order that the handy man might polish them. When George Grubb went to get his shoes the next morning, they were gone. He could not see any shoes down the corridor—only two men at the end of the long corridor having a heated discussion.

One was the proprietor of the hotel; the other was the leader of the cult. Slipping on his bathrobe, George Grubb started toward the men. The leader of the cult was very angry, threatening to move when he learned that a burglar had stolen all of the shoes. His anger produced harsh words.

Approaching the men, George Grubb said, “Where are the shoes?”

The proprietor explained. George Grubb replied, “Bless God, I’ve got another pair.”

The proprietor said, “Say that again, sir.” And George Grubb repeated it.

Then the proprietor turned to the leader of the cult and said, “Do you hear what this man said? His shoes were stolen just as yours were. All he says is, ‘Bless God, I’ve got another pair.’ I have in my pocket tickets to admit me to hear your talk tonight, but I am not going. I was going to take my wife and children, but I am going to hear George Grubb.”

Saying that, he tore up the tickets and continued, “I am a spiritist and do not believe what George Grubb teaches, but I shall hear him.”

That night he took his wife and children, and when the invitation was given to accept Christ, the first man to respond was the hotel proprietor. The next night his wife and children were saved. He became an usher at the services and urged all of his employees to attend. Everyone accepted Christ. On the last night of the meeting, a man came forward, accepted Christ, and then brought in some shoes. He was the burglar who had stolen the shoes from the hotel.

That great harvest of souls would never have been gathered had not George Grubb rejoiced in the will of God. That is what Paul meant when he said, **“I am a prisoner of the Lord.”**

Let us go on to verses 2 and 3:

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words).

We have already pointed out the meaning of the word, *dispensation*. It has the same meaning as our word, *administration*, referring to a period of time during which God deals with man in a certain manner. Before the beginning of this dispensation, there had come and gone five dispensations: the dispensations of innocence, conscience, human government, promise, and law. The dispensation of the grace of God mentioned in this verse is that in which we at the present time are living. It began at Pentecost and will close with the rapture.

During this dispensation, God is calling out the church. Paul declared that in a special way he was a minister of this mystery which is now revealed. In this character, he was not one of the twelve apostles, for they were connected with Israel. Paul’s ministry is connected with the Gentiles in the unfolding, or the making known in detail of the mystery, a revealed secret. And so he says that it was **“Given me to you-ward”**; that is, that we Gentiles might come into the knowledge of it.

The closing words of verse 3, **“As I wrote afore in few words,”** refer to his brief reference to the mystery in former epistles.

In Romans 16:24, 25 we read:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.

Again in I Corinthians 12:12-14:

For as the body is one, and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

Paul made reference to the mystery in the other Epistles, but the difference between those references and the content of Ephesians is that in Ephesians there is a complete unfolding of this truth, whereas such references elsewhere are general. The details of God’s plan and purpose for this age are being unfolded before our eyes, so when we read, we **“may understand”** Paul’s **“knowledge in the mystery of Christ”** (v. 4).

In verses 5-7 Paul makes known that the sons of men in other ages did not have the mystery revealed to them.

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel; whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

The substance of the teaching of the Old Testament prophets concerned the crucifixion of Christ and the glory that was to follow, that is, the glorious reign of Christ.

A careful study of the Old Testament Scriptures reveals that the millennial reign of the Lord immediately follows the descriptions of the crucifixion.

Zechariah 9:9, 10 is an illustration of this. In verse 9 we have a detailed account of Christ as King at His first advent.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Immediately following we have a description of His return to deliver His ancient people from their enemies and to establish His world-wide kingdom.

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Thus we see the earthly kingdom of the Lord portrayed immediately following the crucifixion. This is characteristic of all Old Testament writings concerning the advents of Christ. To them were revealed the sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow. They did not know that there was to be a great interval between these two advents, during which time the church was to be called out.

It was a natural question for the disciples to ask the Lord after His crucifixion, **“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?”** (Acts 1:6)

Such a question was according to the order of events revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The sufferings of Christ had taken place and, according to the order of events revealed in the Old Testament the glory should immediately follow. The Lord’s answer is very significant, **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power”** (Acts 1:7).

The emphasis is on the word **“you,”** for they, the disciples, were to be members of the church soon to be formed on Pentecost, with which Body, times and seasons have nothing to do.

Times and seasons apply only to Israel. These disciples were soon to be baptized into the one Body.

We can understand, therefore, Paul's statement in Ephesians 3:5 to the effect that the mystery **"Was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."**

To be sure, there were shadows in the Old Testament of the church age and the calling of the Bride, seen in the creation of Eve from the side of Adam, in other brides of the Old Testament, and in the Jewish tabernacle and temple. But there was no direct reference to this age, and the shadows were not understood until this dispensation began.

Note the significance of the last few words of verse 5, which, to my mind, are very important in view of the so-called Ultra-dispensationalism, a theory which is wrecking the ministry of many Bible teachers in this present hour. It teaches that the church did not begin on the day of Pentecost, but at the close of the period covered by the book of Acts. Followers of that teaching claim that the church mentioned in Acts is different from the Body mentioned in Ephesians and that during the period of Acts, God dealt with Israel as a nation. When that nation was set aside, the church was born, at the close of Acts 28. They also claim that the revelation was made known only to the Apostle Paul then; consequently, the messages of Peter and James, and others recorded in Acts, have no reference whatever to the church. But Paul, in verse 5, says that the mystery was revealed unto the **"apostles and prophets."** Notice the plurality of the words. The details of the mystery were revealed to the Apostle Paul, and to him was given the great privilege of unfolding the secret, but to Peter was the peculiar character of this age made known.

To prove this, let us read several passages of Scriptures. Acts 5:14, **"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."**

These believers were added to the Lord before Paul's conversion. This was something which could be accomplished only by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:4, **"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"**

Surely Paul was given the mystery at this moment. He was not persecuting the Lord; he was fighting the Christians. However, he learned that day about a secret union between believers and Christ who was the Head; consequently, the Lord said, **"Why persecutest thou me?"**

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: and he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven (Acts 10:9-16).

Surely this vision of the sheet filled with animals, clean and unclean, given to Peter, represents the Body, composed of Jews and Gentiles to whom the righteousness of Christ has been imputed.

- The sheet being caught up is prophetic of the translation of the church.
- The clean animals represent the Jews who were clean ceremonially;
- The unclean animals represent the Gentiles who were unclean ceremonially.

Both were gathered into a sheet, representing the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Acts 11:22-24 emphasizes that much people were added to the Lord.

Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many (I Corinthians 12:12-14).

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another (Romans 12:4, 5).

These are statements written during the period covered by the book of Acts. To any unbiased mind they show clearly that the Body began to be formed on the day of Pentecost and has continued to our present day, instead of beginning after Paul reached Rome as extreme Ultra-dispensationalists hold.

Let us continue our study of the unfolding of the mystery. The apostle mentions the place which Gentiles are to have in Ephesians 3:6, **“That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”**

We must bear in mind that this was something entirely distinct from the blessings portrayed in the Old Testament Scriptures which were to come upon the Gentiles during the millennial reign of Christ. During the millennial reign there will be multitudes of Gentiles saved and they will be blessed with earthly blessings. That is no mystery, for throughout the Old Testament glowing prophecies concerning the glories which are to be the portion of saved Gentile nations in the millennial reign of Christ stand out. Let us read a few references:

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name (Isaiah 62:2).

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious (Isaiah 11:10).

For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees (Isaiah 66:12).

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts (Malachi 1:11).

You will note that the context makes clear that these blessings are to be earthly in character. The blessings about which we read in Ephesians 3:6 are entirely different; they are heavenly in character.

In verses 8-12 we have revealed Paul's self-effacement and see the burning zeal which filled his heart – that all believers should enter into an understanding and enjoyment of this knowledge concerning the church of Christ.

Verse 8 gives a little insight into the character of Paul: **“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”** The impartation of the mystery hidden from man through the other ages did not fill him with fleshly pride. One vision of the glorified Christ on the Damascus road terminated his pride and he no longer was Saul, the Great, but Paul, the Little, the Insignificant. He knew the truth of Galatians 2:20. It was no wonder that the Lord could use him in such a marvelous way. Many of us cannot be trusted with great gifts because of the presence of the spirit of pride. How easily we become puffed up! How quickly self becomes prominent, destroying all of the good which might be accomplished.

Maybe we can learn a lesson from a young preacher who entered a pulpit in England with an exaggerated air of his own importance. He did not have very much freedom in preaching, however; in fact, his sermon was a complete failure. Dejectedly he left the pulpit and, coming down the stairs, he was met by an old man who took his hand and said, “My son, if you have walked into the pulpit as you have left it, you would have walked out as you went into it.”

It is interesting to note the continual self-effacement of the Apostle Paul. He introduces himself in his earliest Epistle as **“the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ”** (II Corinthians 1:1). Later he says, **“For I am the least of the apostles, because I persecuted the church of God”** (I Corinthians 15:9). Later, he says, **“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints”** (Ephesians 3:8). In I Timothy 1:15 he says, **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”**

The way to go up is to go down; the way to be strong is to become weak. **“When I am weak, then am I strong”** (II Corinthians 12:10).

We see from verse 8 that Paul wanted all men to enter with him into the secret. He was ambitious that the people of God should not only know that they were saved, but also understand God's plan and purposes for this and other ages.

How many Christians there are who are content with knowing that they are saved, but do not have any sharp or keen appetite for the deep things of God's Word. The Corinthians were in this condition. Paul called them babes fed with the milk of the Word. Protracted babyhood in spiritual things is a great grief to God, for He greatly desires that His children should grow in knowledge, as well as in faith, and love, just as a human mother desires that there should be physical and mental growth in her child. Paul did not keep his secret to himself. He labored unceasingly in order that all believers might enter into the enjoyment of the secret hid in God in past ages.

Part of His eternal purpose is stated in verse 11, "**According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

Verse 12 naturally follows the preceding verses, for, if we are members of the household of God, we are a part of the mystical Body of Christ, and can therefore exercise boldness and confidence as we draw near Him. Because of our position we can approach the throne of God fearlessly, giving thanks and making known the desires of our hearts.

The concluding verses of this chapter, 14-21, comprise a prayer. Let us give our attention to verse 14: "**For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

"**For this cause**" connects the prayer with what precedes it. Can we not understand why Paul could say, "**For this cause,**" when we review the contents of chapter 2 concerning our natural state? We are "**dead in trespasses and sins**"; subject to the devil; "**children of wrath.**" Contrast this position with our state by grace: "**quickened,**" "**raised,**" exalted to be members in the household of God, no longer "**aliens,**" but members of that Body, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, through which God will show, to "**Principalities and powers**" the manifold wisdom and power in ages to come.

When Paul received this vision, the glory of it so overwhelmed him that he could no longer stand or sit, but on his knees prayed: "**For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

You, reader, will also know something of Paul's feeling if you receive the vision of this revelation: "**Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named**" (v. 15).

The family of God includes more than the church. We have already seen that there are dispensational differences so that regardless of whether a man belongs to the antediluvian, patriarchal, the age of grace, or the kingdom age, he belongs to the family of God, providing he has been redeemed in the Lord Jesus Christ. What an exceedingly large family must be God's family!

In number the redeemed souls in God's family are like the sands of the sea.

In Revelation 7:9 John saw "**A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people**" gathered before the throne of God.

That innumerable throng of redeemed souls will “**Have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**”

If someone who reads these words refuses to accept Christ as Saviour, let this be understood, you will not be missed in heaven; you will miss the happiness of the family of God. To become a member of this family you must be born into it—“**Ye must be born again**” (John 3:7).

Nicodemus asked, “**How can these things be?**”

To his query Christ explained the way in which a man is born into the family of God:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:14, 15).

Before the Father of this family, the Apostle Paul bowed his knees and prayed.

Paul in his petitions for the Ephesians, made three requests, the first, “**That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man**” (v. 16).

I wonder if you ever become discouraged because of a consciousness of your limitations and weaknesses? Do you ever feel that the “odds are against you” and that they are so numerous and powerful that it seems useless to continue in the Christian pathway? The Ephesians doubtless felt that way. They were like sheep among wolves, having been gathered out of gross heathenism, the worship of Diana. To be a Christian costs, and because there was a tendency to be discouraged, even as today, Paul prayed that they might be “**Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.**”

The Holy Spirit of God indwells every believer.

His mission is not only to baptize a believer into the Body of Christ, but also to take the things of Christ and reveal them unto the believer. The Holy Spirit imparts power by means of which a believer may live in victory over indwelling sin, for in himself there is no power. Only as the Holy Spirit controls a redeemed man or woman will he find the indwelling Christ, undertaking on his behalf, imparting strength and “**might in the inner man.**”

I quote a true story to illustrate this truth:

“A good clergyman living in the north of England, was an earnest worker in his parish. He had a sad failing, however— an ungovernable temper. Though he preached well on Sunday, his sermons had little effect because repeatedly he exhibited his temper before his parishioners during the week. He was a sincere, zealous Christian man, but he had not found the secret of victory. Returning to his study, he would cast himself upon his knees and say, ‘O God, I lost my temper with that man. What is the use of my ministry? I had better give up in despair.’

“After a terrible outburst of temper one day, he was so ashamed that he threw himself to his knees in his study and said, ‘O my God, O my God, must I always go on like this? I have struggled against my temper; I have prayed against my temper, and I am as bad as ever. O my God, teach me the secret of victory over sin.’ He had not prayed in that manner before. He had only asked God for forgiveness, then would rise and struggle again. This time, with an honest heart, he asked God, ‘O God, teach me the secret of victory over sin.’ God taught him the secret through a strange dream.

“He dreamed that he was in his study. Looking upon the floor, he was surprised to see it covered with dust and dirt. Looking from his study window, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ walking slowly toward the rectory door. Ashamed, to himself he said, ‘Oh, my Lord is coming and my house is filthy; I must clean my house before the Lord Jesus comes.’ Taking a broom, he began to sweep his study, raising the dust in clouds which nearly choked him. Exhausted, he laid down the broom. A knock came to the rectory door, and he heard the words, ‘Let Me in.’ No, he wouldn’t do that, so with redoubled energy he began to sweep, but soon laid the broom down again, utterly exhausted. Again the voice said, ‘Let Me in.’ He rose and went slowly toward the rectory door, lifted the latch (the latch is your will, my brother), and flung open the door. The Lord looked upon him and said, **‘Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you . . . from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.’**” With these words (Ezekiel 36:35) ringing in his ears, the clergyman awoke.

At breakfast he told his wife and his son the dream. The young man, just beginning to experience some of the difficulties of manhood, said to himself, “What is good for my father will be good for me. I will trust God to save me in the same way.” That morning at that breakfast table the clergyman’s son opened his whole being to the Lord Jesus Christ—he was saved.

The mistake which the clergyman made was in trying to sweep his own heart. Have you been trying to do that? Jesus says, ***“Stop all of that; let Me come in; I will cleanse thee; I will sprinkle clean water upon thee, and I will deliver thee from all thy sins.”***

Each believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God. It is He who strengthens **“with might.”** This is not an act accomplished “once-for-all.” It is a moment-by-moment yielding to the indwelling Spirit for a moment-by-moment strengthening.

In other words, it is a moment-by-moment trusting in a moment-by-moment Saviour for a moment-by-moment filling of the Spirit of God. He does not give strength for a whole day, but for individual moments. As an electric bulb shines moment-by-moment, being connected with a dynamo, so my life and your life are strengthened with **“might,”** power, and light as we walk daily in communion with Him.

The first part of verse 17 contains the second petition: **“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith . . .”**

The word, **“dwell,”** means that He might make His home in the heart, that Christ might dominate and control their lives. It is possible to know Christ as a wayfaring man, an occasional visitor, or as the One who abides, who is at home.

The devil's aim is to keep one as ignorant about Christ as possible. When one accepts Christ as Saviour, the devil well knows that that one is lost to him eternally, and that that one is assured of heaven. Satan cannot rob that person of salvation, but he can rob him of knowledge about Christ. We have a Christ who is so great and so rich that He can make a life into a watered garden if He is enthroned. The devil knows that fact, therefore he labors to have Christians reserve some things from Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ lives in every believer's heart. Paul prayed that He might dwell, in the sense of being enthroned.

Surely what has been revealed in the first three chapters of Ephesians, concerning what the matchless work of God's grace has accomplished for us who were once "Dead in trespasses and sins," should constrain us to say:

I surrender all,
All I have I give to Jesus,
I surrender all.

Dr. F. B. Meyer used to say that God desires the ring and all of the keys which open each department of our lives. He does not want just one, or some, but all of them, in order that He might unlock every door, every drawer, and have entrance into every recess of our lives. Many Christians fear to relinquish the keys to Him, trembling at the thought of what He might have to remove when He enters to take control, forgetting that when He enters, He brings with Him glorious things. If, at this moment, you cannot say to the risen Christ, "Take the scepter of my heart, and reign over me," you should ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to say it. Pray that the Spirit will bring you to the mind and disposition which will enable Christ to enter and take possession.

Paul's third petition begins with the closing part of verse 17 and continues to verse 19:

That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

There are two figures of speech presented:

- "**rooted**" like a tree in the soil, The soil is love.
- "**grounded**" like a building on a foundation, the foundation is love.

When we are empowered by the Holy Ghost and when Christ is enthroned in our lives, the roots of love strike deep into the soil, and the building rests more absolutely upon the foundation. Resulting from this is ability to comprehend with "**All saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,**"—of what? Commentators answer, "**the love of God in Christ,**" but this is hardly so.

The apostle had in mind the “**Breadth, and length, and depth, and height**” of the plan and purpose of God stated in the first three chapters of this Epistle, for he continues, “**And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.**”

It is delightful to be loved, but think of being loved with a love that “**Passeth knowledge.**”

Surely such a love as this does for us what is unfolded before our eyes in Ephesians. The love, “**Which passeth knowledge,**” has reached down to the lowest depths taking hold of us who were lost, undone, hell-bound sinners, and translating us to holy, happy, saints, making us co-heirs with Himself. If we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and have Christ enthroned, we shall have some measure of ability to comprehend these things.

“**With all the saints.**”

This is a precious thought and full of meaning. Dr. Scroggie relates a story about a woman who once sat in his study. As he was speaking on some spiritual theme to her, she interrupted saying, “I have a Christ whom you do not have.”

Dr. Scroggie said, “What do you mean?”

She replied, “It is because I am what I am in my temperament, my make-up, my training, my outlook upon life, my sphere of service, my relations, my hopes, my responsibilities, and all that goes to make me; it is because I have needs which must be satisfied and Christ satisfies them; it is because there is not another of me in the world. You cannot have my Christ.”

“And you cannot have mine,” Dr. Scroggie replied.

From that story I saw the vision of the church of God with as many conceptions of Christ as there are Christians in the world. I saw a vision of every child of God in his place, possessing something of Christ which no other possesses, because you are you and there is not a double of you, and never has been and never will be.

Are we beginning to see what Paul meant when he said, “**To comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height**”?

Look at the last part of verse 19: “**That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God,**” the translation in the Authorized Version, which literally means, “*Filled unto all the fulness of God.*” How can one put an ocean into a teacup? “*Filled unto all the fulness of God*” means “*filled unto all the goodness of God.*” The “**fulness**” is an ideal presented to us for future attainment. We are to progress toward it more and more.

There will be no monotony in heaven, for the wonders of God’s “**fulness**” will be unfolding before our wondering eyes through countless ages of eternity, and we shall ever be glorying in knowledge and in being filled “*Unto all the fulness of God.*”

No wonder the apostle closes this section with a doxology:

**Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus
throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.**

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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