

## Confidence in God's Power - Eph. 3:14-21 (25/5/08)

Best way to discover what a Christian's most important worries and ambitions is to look at their prayers and how hard they pray for them.

Prayer expresses desire.

So much in Paul's letter is about teaching, but now he prays and the great thing about this prayer is that he writes it down, so we can overhear his prayer. We can listen in.

So it's worthwhile looking at Paul's prayer in detail.

'For this reason' - What is it that moves him to pray?

Surely it's his reconciling work of Jesus and his understanding of it.

It is in Scripture that God has disclosed his will, and it is in prayer that we ask him to do it.

'I bow my knees' - normal posture for prayer was standing. Luke (18:11, 13). Publican and Pharisee stood to pray. Kneeling was unusual. Jesus knelt to pray Gethsemane (Luke. 22:41) Stephen did also in (Acts 7:59, 60). No rule about how we should pray, standing sitting, walking....

He introduces the prayer...talking about God the father. Remember the talk of the one new humanity??? Here it is again 'from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. Out of his glorious riches.....points out that God either has inexhaustible supplies of gifts, or that out of them he will be able to answer his prayer.

The substance of his prayer.

He sets out with a step up every time, from strength, to love, knowledge and fullness....

Verses 16-17 - refer to a Christian's inner being. Inner man (Superman) and heart on the other.

Verse 17. Rooted and established in love.

Change from our love...we need to be rooted and grounded...

Christ's love..... Verse 18...wide, long, high, deep

'To know this love that surpasses knowledge.' Kind of funny because it's about trying to comprehend his love with our mind, but we can't really know it in our experience, because it's just more than we can ever imagine.

Filled to the measure of all fullness.....

Fullness is a characteristic word of this letter. 'Filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.'

God's standard or level up to which we pray to be filled.

Looking back down the staircase, we can be a bit awestruck.

He prays that we may

Be given the strength of the Spirit  
The ruling presence of Christ in their life of love  
The knowledge of Christ's love in all its dimensions  
The fullness of God himself

You might feel a little awestruck at the thought of this.

But notice this... Paul's prayer is sandwiched between two references to God. 14-16, he is God the Father. In verses 20-21 he is the one who works powerfully within us.

God's ability to answer prayer is forcibly answered.

Paul's prayer relates to the fulfilment of his vision for God's new society of love.

He asks for members to be strengthened to love and to know the love of Christ

He is convinced, as we must be, that only divine power can generate divine love in the divine society.

What's in your prayers?? Where does your confidence lie?