

# **BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE**

## **Rooted and Established In Love**

Ephesians 3:14-21

1998

### **Introduction**

#### **I Paul's Attitude In Prayer**

##### A. Humility and submission

###### 1. Kneeling - Phil 2:10

Phil 2:9-11 "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Kneel = "To bend ones knees"

Paul "bows the knee", a common posture in prayer found in Scripture - cf. 1 Kings 8:54; Lk 22:41; Ac 7:60; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5.

Other postures in prayer found in Scripture:

- a. Solomon "stood" when he prayed to dedicate the temple - 1 Kin 8:22  
Among the Jews it was customary, under most circumstances, to pray standing up - Matt 6:5; Lk 18:11, 13
- b. David "sat" before the Lord when he prayed concerning the future of his kingdom - 1 Chron 17:16
- c. Jesus "fell on His face" when He prayed in Gethsemane - Mt 26:39

##### B. Acknowledgment of our lineage

1. We derive our origins from God
2. We derive our identity from God

We derive our understanding of what is beautiful from God's creation

We derive our understanding of marriage from God's plan for marriage

We derive our understanding of parenting from God's model of fatherhood

We derive the bulk of our legal system from God's Word in the OT

We derive our understanding of right and wrong from God's commands

We derive our understanding of morality from God's standard of morality

We derive our understanding of decency from God's character

This prayer is divided into three sections (indicated in the Greek by the word "hina" - 16, 18, 19), with each section leading to the next, much like a stairway.

## II Paul's Focus In Prayer

A. That we may be strengthened:

**Strengthened** = To be made strong or capable

A person can be made strong in love, or knowledge, or some other quality.

In this case, Paul prays that they may be strengthened with power.

1. The source of our strength:

a. God's glorious riches

Eph 1:7-8 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding."

Phil 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

b. The power of the Holy Spirit

Luke 1:35 "The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

It is the consistent teaching of the New Testament that strength for the Christian life comes by the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

2. The sphere of our strength:

a. Our inner being

**Inner being** = "Into the inner man". Suggests the Holy Spirit's penetration

Col 3:9-10 "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

2 Cor 4:16 "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."

3. The purpose of our strength:

a. That Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith

**Dwell** = "Be completely at home".

Eph 2:22 "And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

Rev 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."

There are several words in Greek for dwell. The one that Paul uses here is contrast to the transitory or temporary dwelling that might be used of a short stay or vacation. It emphasizes the idea of continuous, unending fellowship.

**Faith is the required human response to God's initiative.**

B. That we may know God's love

1. The prerequisite:

a. Rooted in love

Col 2:6-7 "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

**Rooted** = Plants; To cause to take root

Believers find their life-giving growth in Christ's love

Why is being rooted in love so important to Paul?

Because of the danger of a belief and faith in God that depended simply on intellectual knowledge. This was the particular problem of the Gnostics in the early church and always led to pride and a lack of love.

It's also a danger that each of us must guard against.

b. Established in love - 1 Cor 13

**Established** = Buildings

**How does one become "rooted and established in love"?**

1) It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to instill the love of God in the heart

Rom 5:5 "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Gal 5:22 "And the fruit of the Spirit is love ..."

But Paul is not primarily arguing against the possibility of falling into an intellectual pursuit of God. Rather, he is emphasizing a spiritual truth -- that a true knowledge of God is unattainable without love. And agape love is unattainable without the work of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, it's only as we live and walk in love that we can know and comprehend God's love.

According to 1 Cor 13, love is superior to:

- All the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Infinite knowledge of God
- Faith that can move mountains
- Self-sacrificing generosity
- Martyrdom

Here, Paul attaches the phrase, "Together with all the saints."

The Christian life cannot be lived in isolation of other believers.

We can't say, "I love God. It's just the people in church I can't stand."

## 2. The pursuit:

### a. Grasp the love of Christ

Grasp = Seize, perceive, apprehend or comprehend

#### 1. Width, length, height, and depth - Job 11:7-9

Paul is emphasizing the many dimensions of Christ's love

It is wide enough to reach the whole world and beyond

It is long enough to stretch from eternity to eternity

It is high enough to raise both Gentiles and Jews to heavenly place in  
Christ Jesus

It is deep enough to rescue people from sin's degradation and even  
from the grip of Satan himself

### b. Know the love of Christ

The goal of Paul's prayer is that they would know how Christ loved and loves,  
and to experience his love in loving him and loving others for his sake.

#### 1. Surpasses knowledge

Phil 4:7 "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will  
guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

1) How is it possible for us to "know" the love of Christ, if it "passes  
knowledge"?

2) Only in the sense that no matter how much we learn about Christ's love,  
even with the strength God's Spirit provides, there is always much  
more to grasp!

It is only as we begin to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge that  
we are beginning to experience the last step for which Paul is praying.

3. The purpose:

A. To be filled with the fullness of God

Col 2:9-10 "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

Eph 4:13 "... until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Eph 5:18 "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

Paul's petition on behalf of the Ephesians:

1. That they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to know Christ's love
2. That they may be indwelt by Christ
3. That they may experience the fullness of God

### III Paul's Praise In Prayer

Paul's' theology results in doxology

A. Glory to God in His sovereignty

1. He is able

He is able to establish you by [the] gospel - Rom 16:25

He is able to save [you] completely who come to God through Him - Heb 7:25

He is able to make [you] stand firm - Rom 14:4

He is able to help [you] who are being tempted - Heb 2:18

He is able to save [you] from death - Dan 3:17

He is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work - 2 Cor 9:8

He is able to guard what [you] have entrusted to him for that day - 2 Tim 1:12

He is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy - Jude 1:24

a. To exceed our expectations - 1 Kings 3:13; Mal 3:10

1 King 3:13 "Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for-- both riches and honor-- so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings."

Mal 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

B. Glory to God in and through:

1. The church

Eph 3:10 "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known ..."

II Th 1:11-12 "With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Christ Jesus

John 17:4-5 "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

This returns to Paul's repeated phrase, "In Christ Jesus"

The glory of God is most gloriously seen in the grace of his uniting his sinful creatures to his eternal, sinless son."

C. Glory to God for:

1. All generations
2. Forever and ever
3. Amen!