

## **A Prayer For Power**

### **Ephesians 3:14-21**

### **Pastor John Miller**

Let's read Ephesians 3:14-21. I'll read it; you follow with me in your Bibles. Paul says, "For this cause I bow my knees," this is a prayer, "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might," or power, "by his Spirit in," or into, "the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 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, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

One of the ways to discover what's really concerning someone, or what worries or fears or issues are on their heart, is to listen to their prayers. Prayer is kind of a window into the soul to see what's happening in a person's heart. This is why I encourage husbands and wives to pray, and we need to pray together with other believers, because it really opens their hearts to the deep needs that we find in other people's lives. We all pray about the things that concern or worry us. Prayer, as someone said, is the soul's sincere desire. Well, that is true of even Paul the Apostle.

There are two different times in this epistle to the Ephesians that Paul prays. This is the second. The first was in Ephesians 1:15-23, actually the end of Ephesians 1, and today in Ephesians 3:14-21 Paul again comes back to the subject of prayer. Paul is turning from instruction, Ephesians 1-3, to intercession where he's praying that they might experience the love of God and the power of the Spirit in their lives. What an awesome prayer it is.

Jesus used this same pattern of instruction, turning to intercession, when in the upper room John 13-17—He instructed from John 13-16, and then in John 17 is the great prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ. We talk about the Lord's prayer, it is John 17. The "Our Father, which are in heaven," that we call the Lord's prayer is actually the Lord teaching us to pray. It's not Him praying. If you want a window into His heart and the things that were paramount of a priority to Christ and what He wanted us to experience as believers, read John 17. (Again, another kind of desire that I have on Sunday morning is to do many weeks in depth through John 17, Christ's high priestly prayer.)

We're going from instruction to intercession. What we come to is the end of the doctrinal section of the book of Ephesians. First of all he has instruction, then ends with intercession, praying for the believers. Paul prays at the end of this doctrinal section of the epistle to the Ephesians.

I want you to note several things. Note the purpose of Paul's prayer in verse 14. He says, "For

this cause,” or you might translate it, “For this reason.” We have the purpose for which Paul prayed, and the purpose was that the mystery revealed to him would be known and understood—that of the Church, Jew and Gentile, one in Christ—and the ministry that was entrusted to him, that they would understand that he was suffering for them as Gentiles. His revelation came from God, and his responsibility was to God. He got a revelation about the Church and wants them to understand that. He had a ministry to the Gentiles. He was going through suffering and adversity and wanted them to be encouraged and not faint.

Look at Ephesians 3:13. Paul says, “Wherefore I desire that ye faint not,” or be discouraged, “at my tribulations for you,” so that’s one of the reasons Paul was praying. He wanted them to be strengthened. He didn’t want them to be discouraged. They were going through suffering and trials like Paul was, so he wanted them to be encouraged and not faint. There was a purpose for Paul’s prayer. This is interesting. When we read the Bible, it should kind of drive us to our knees. When you read the Bible and learn about God, you learn about His commandments and His precepts. It should drive you to your knees to say, “Lord, help me to live out, in the power of Your Spirit, what you have written in your Word.” You pray before you read the Bible for understanding, and then you pray after you read the Bible for application in your life. You pray before, you pray after, and you might want to also pray during, as you’re reading the Bible, that God would give you eyes to see and open up your ears to hear.

Secondly, notice the posture of Paul’s prayer in verse 14, “...I bow my knees.” Is it really necessary for us to kneel when we pray? The answer is no. If you fell head first into a well and were stuck upside down, you wouldn’t be able to kneel in prayer, would you? When Peter was sinking on the Sea of Galilee and said, “Lord, save me!” The Lord didn’t say, “Well, you need to kneel down, Peter. You need to be kneeling in order to pray.”

All through the Bible we find people praying on their knees. Why? It’s a sign or a show of humility, submission, and respect to God. If you’re going to kneel for anyone, you want to kneel for the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen? You’ll want to get on your knees and pray as kind of a picture and a reminder to your own soul and heart that you are submitted to God, that He is God in Heaven and you are on earth, that you’re praying to not only your Father but your Father who is in Heaven. He’s God. It’s kind of a thing to help you remember that prayer’s purpose is for God’s plan, not for yours, for God to do what He wants to do. The posture doesn’t really matter, the heart does. Many times the posture is a reflection of where our heart is at when we pray—that we are coming broken and with humility.

Here’s Paul in prison. He’s not outside preaching, but he takes up his pen and now he is praying. The cool thing is he’s praying and writing down what he prayed for. Paul is not only praying for the Ephesians, but he’s writing down what he prays for the Ephesians. These are the recorded prayers of Paul, and everything Paul wrote was, of course, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

I do think that it’s good to use this position in prayer if you can. The older you get, the harder it gets. You might pray that you get up after you pray, if you get too old, “Lord, save me.” It is a

neat thing to pray. Don't pray lying flat on your back with your pillow under your head and the blankets tucked up around your neck. Have you ever got down, even on your knees, by the bed and started to pray? You put your forehead right on top of your hands. You know, that makes just a perfect little support cup for your forehead and you're elevated above the bed enough where you can still breathe, so you start to pray. The next thing you know, you wake up about an hour later with a big red spot on your head. You've been sleeping, "Oh, Lord, I'm sorry. I'll talk to You tomorrow," kind of a thing. Also, when we pray, sometimes our minds start to drift away. Maybe you start to pray, seeking the Lord. The next thing you know, you're in Alaska chasing a polar bear or something. How did I get there? I remember praying for my parents one time and then started remembering the house I grew up in and the bicycle I rode with my dog in the backyard. It's like, "Oh, oh, sorry, Lord." You kind of get back on track.

These prayers of Paul can be used as patterns for prayer. The posture is that of humility and brokenness as we petition God. I want you to notice the Person Paul prays to in verse 14 as well, "...unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." I want you to understand something. The Bible teaches there's one God, and He's manifested in three Persons. It's called the Trinity or triunity of God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Some people are freaked out by this concept of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is conveying a concept of Christ's humanity and Christ's humility that when He was on earth, He prayed to His Father. Now, true that He did have a Father, but they are co-equal in essence. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all co-equally divine in their essence, but their roles and function differ. Jesus left Heaven and took on flesh, that was His humiliation. In Philippians 2, it's known as His emptying Himself, "...and took upon him the form of a servant," so in His humanity, you might say that He viewed that as His God. When He rose from the dead, He talked about My God and your God, so that's how it conveys the concept of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mistakenly, people interpret that to mean that Jesus is not God and that He has God as His Father in the same sense that we would. That's not at all what's being conveyed. It's interesting in verse 15 that you have a reference to "the whole family," which is the family of God of which God is our Father in Heaven. Look at verse 15. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." We're not sure who all is included in this "whole family," but for sure at least it's Old Testament saints, it's New Testament saints that are saved and on earth, and some New Testament saints that no doubt have died and gone to Heaven to be with the Lord; which is interesting, notice no mention of anything called Purgatory or God's people or God's family in a third location, just on Heaven or on earth is named.

Some Bible scholars think that that could include angels in Heaven as well, but given the context of Ephesians, I think it's better to just view this as the family of God of which he just mentioned, verse 14, that He's our Father. He's the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He's our Father as well. The whole family would include in context of Ephesians, Jews and Gentiles, one Church, His name, whether they have already gone to Heaven or whether they are on earth, we're still one family.

Notice Paul prays to the Father. I want to mention that again. Someone was asking me about this recently, and I get the question quite often. Generally, and not only exclusively, when we pray, we talk to the Father, and we go through the Son, and we do it in the energy and the power of the Holy Spirit. True prayer is trinitarian—we're talking to the Father, through the merits of the Son, He's the mediator, "...one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," and we do it with the power and the energy and the strength of the Holy Spirit. Now, that's not to say that we can't cry out to Jesus or pray to Jesus directly. There are cases in the Bible where people prayed to the Lord, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and there are also references to people addressing the Holy Spirit directly. Since we have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you can do that; but the general pattern is to talk to our Father, which art in heaven, we come through the merits of Jesus Christ the Son, and we do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was praying here to the Father.

Then, I want you to note the petitions in the prayer. This is what we're going to spend our time on for the next few minutes in this text. It's in verses 16-19. There are four petitions in Paul's prayers. It gets a little sticky to break them up, divide, and kind of analyze them because when Paul prays, they're so profound and so full of doctrine and truth, it's kind of hard to tell if it's one prayer that telescopes out, are they all connected, is it three prayers, or is it four? Tonight, I'm basically breaking it up for exposition sake into four prayers. But it's kind of like a telescope—it's all connected. It starts with the first prayer, out of the first prayer comes the second prayer, out of the second prayer comes the third petition, out of the third petition comes the fourth petition, and one is the result of the other. They are indicated with this word "that," and I want to point them out before I talk about that.

In verse 16, "That," in verse 17, "That," twice; and jumping down to verse 19, "...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." One of the indications that we have here, the prayer of the petition is that we're "that," and then he goes on to ask the Father what he wants the Father to do for the believers there in Ephesus. I believe that what he prays for the believers in Ephesus...and remember he's praying for believers. He's not praying for unbelievers to be saved. He's praying for believers to go deeper in their relationship with God, and it applies to us as well.

There are four petitions in Paul's prayer, and they give us a pattern for prayer. If you're taking notes, here they are. They won't be on the screen tonight, so you've got to listen and follow me in the text. The first is, verse 16, "That," God would strengthen them with power. The King James Bible has the word "might." What a great petition. "God, strengthen them by Your power with Your Holy Spirit." Remember back in verse 13, which we didn't really read tonight, we started in verse 14, he didn't want them to faint, right? Don't be discouraged, don't faint, don't give up, don't throw in the towel, don't quit. What better thing to pray for is that God would give them strength so they wouldn't faint, so they wouldn't be discouraged, they wouldn't give up. We need to pray for one another that God would give us strength. Pray for yourself. Pray for your family. Pray that God would strengthen us. God is our strength in time of suffering.

Again, in verse 13, Paul mentioned his tribulations. Paul mentioned his sufferings. In light of

that, he's praying now that God would strengthen and give them power and give them might. How does God strengthen us? Look at the text, verse 16, "...by his Spirit." Jesus promised that He would go away but would send the Holy Spirit called the Comforter. The Greek word is *parakletos*, one who comes alongside of us to strengthen us, to help us, to lift us up, to make us strong. He's praying, "Don't be discouraged about my troubles," and then prays, "God, give them strength," and it's going to come through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is your helper. Rely on Him. Surrender to Him. Walk in His power. You can't live the Christian life on your own. The Christian life is not hard to live, it's impossible to live apart from the power and the strength of the Holy Spirit. He gives us the Comforter.

Now, where does God strengthen us? Look at verse 16, "...in the inner man." What is our inner man? Our inner man, whether you're male or female by the way, this is a generic concept, is the idea of your inner spiritual life. God may not strengthen you physically, He may not strengthen you in the area of your body. He can do that, but He wants to come strengthen your spiritual life. Sometimes the outward man is perishing and sometimes it's getting weaker and weaker. As a matter of fact, all you need to do to get weaker and weaker and weaker is age. Just get a little older, and you get a little weaker and the tent starts to lean, and it starts to lean quite a bit; then it starts to flap in the wind and starts to leak; then it starts to tear and then, praise Jesus, He takes us home! Amen? The outward man perishes, but the inward man is being renewed day by day. Even though your outward man starts to get weaker, your inward man can get stronger and stronger and stronger and stronger until the day the Lord takes you home to Heaven. How we look for that day!

What Paul mentions in verse 16 is that the Spirit strengthens us in the inner man, that's your inner spiritual life and involves at least your mind, your emotions, and your will (someone said your determination), so that you can learn the Word of God, so that you can worship God, so that you can do His will. What we want to do is have our minds educated by God's Word. Never stop reading your Bible. Never stop growing in your knowledge of the Word. Never stop digging deeper in the things of God. Continue to read the Word. You don't say, "Oh, I read the Bible already before. I don't need to read it anymore." You need to read it over and over and over and over again. I'm sure, if you're like so many, every time you open God's Word, you discover something new. A verse you've read a thousand times, you read it a thousand and one and then all of the sudden, Wow! you see it in a new light. Things pop out of the Scripture because it's the living Word. It's alive and powerful. Amen? It's "...sharper than any twoedged sword." We want our minds educated by God's Word, our emotions to be surrendered to the Lord in worshiping Him, and His will to be done in our lives. Notice we do that by trusting Him through faith.

Write this down. I believe that what Paul is describing here, as we transition as well to the next petition, is what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul is describing the Spirit-filled life. Again, he's not talking to unbelievers that need God in their life. He's talking to believers that need more power in their lives. Where does that come from? It comes from the Holy Spirit. There's only one way for you to be victorious over temptation. There's only one way for you to have joy in the midst of suffering. There's only one way for you to see clearly in a world full of

confusion, and that's for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to renew your mind, your heart, and your life.

I believe with all my heart, and I think this is totally biblical and have experienced it in my own life, the number one way by which the Spirit of God works in the heart of the child of God is through the Word of God—the Spirit of God, using the Word of God, to transform the child of God, into the image of the Son of God. Don't expect to grow stronger with the Lord if you're neglecting God's Word—not only reading it, but surrendering and yielding to the Holy Spirit's control. It doesn't do any good in your marriage to read your Bible if you're not doing what it says, if you're not surrendering to it. We're going to get to Ephesians 5 and go in depth on the Holy Spirit's filling, the wife's submission to her husband, the husband loving his wife, children obeying their parents, and parents not provoking their children to wrath. All of those are the fruit of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives. We're filled by the Holy Spirit.

Warren Wiersbe said, listen carefully, "It means that our spiritual faculties are controlled by God, and we are exercising them and growing in the Word. It is only when we yield to the Spirit and let Him control the inner man that we succeed in living to the glory of God. This means feeding the inner man the Word of God, praying and worshiping, keeping clean, and exercising the senses by loving obedience." This is what Paul is actually alluding to, the idea, "I want, Lord, You to fill them with Your power which comes from the Holy Spirit."

Here's the second petition, the first half of verse 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." He says, "I want first of all for you to be strengthened by the Spirit in your inner spiritual life. Secondly, I want you to have Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith." Here's what I was alluding to at the beginning of my study tonight is that the way we are strengthened by might or power by the Spirit in the inner man is having, verse 17, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. They telescope out from one another. It could be that technically it's not a second petition but it's the result of. When the Spirit fills your life with power, then synonymous is Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith.

You might say, "Well, Pastor John, don't Christians already have Christ in their hearts?" The answer is yes, but I want you to note carefully Paul's praying, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts," not be in their hearts, but "dwell in their hearts." That phrase "dwell" literally means to settle down and to be at home. There's other passages where Christ may be at home in your hearts. I love that concept of Christ at home in your hearts. Have you ever had company come to your house and you say, to use a familiar phrase, "Make yourself at home." We don't really mean that, by the way. You want me to do in your house what I do in my house? You might get mad at me. What you mean is, "Sit right here. Don't move. If you need something, I'll get it for you," because if I started doing what I was doing at home, then you'd freak out.

Christ wants to come into our hearts and make our hearts His home. Christ wants to be comfortable in your heart. You know, when the Lord visited Abraham in the Old Testament, there were three angels when He was going to talk to him about the city of Sodom and Gomorrah and then go to Lot. One of the angels went into Abraham's tent, and I believe that

was a Christophany—that was Christ—and He went in and just hung out in Abraham's tent with him. Can you imagine that? Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, sitting in your tent at home? Jesus, when He was on earth, had three friends that He liked to spend time at their house. He was evidently comfortable there. It was Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in the home at Bethany, and He liked to go there and hang out. How cool would that be to have Jesus say, "Hey, can I just hang out with you guys today? I love your house. Martha is such a good cook, Mary and I get into the deep things of God where we can just fellowship, and Lazarus is there," just that He's at home in your hearts.

What this means theologically and doctrinally—listen carefully—is that He wants you to be sanctified. It means that He wants you to be set apart, not just saved. This is not salvation, this is sanctification, which is a process. Salvation is instantaneous and complete and doesn't change, but the Christian life is a sanctification process, Christ being at home and having His way—moving in, painting the walls, taking down pictures, changing the carpet, moving around furniture. Our tendency is, "Okay, Christ, come into my heart, but don't go in the bedroom. Come into my heart, but don't look in the closet, especially that one. Come into my heart, but don't look at my books or my magazines. Come into my heart, but just stay right here. Don't do whatever You want." To have Christ at home in your heart means that He has His way in your heart, that He's sanctifying you at all times. It's an ever-deepening fellowship with Jesus.

Paul prays for our affections to be enlightened and our minds to be changed. He prays that God will control our will, and here's where it says it, verse 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The just shall live by faith. You must trust Him with your life. Never ever, ever be afraid to just say, "Lord, make my heart Your home. Do whatever You want. Change it, rearrange it, throw out things that are displeasing to You. Make my heart Your home," and just spend time with the Lord growing in the grace and knowledge and the love, petition three, of Christ.

Notice the third petition, verses 17-19, "...that ye, being rooted and grounded in love." These are verses that are so well known by a lot of Christians because they're so wonderful and appealing. Paul is praying for them both to have and to know the love of Christ, not just to have the love of Christ in their hearts, but for them to experience it, to know it, as a foundation for their lives. There is nothing more important for you than to know God's love and to have that as a foundation for your walk with the Lord. Notice Paul says, "...rooted and grounded in love." The Greek word "love" is the word agape love. It's a divine spiritual love.

Paul uses two metaphors, and the rule today is not to mix metaphors. No one told Paul that, but he's writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so it's cool. He uses a metaphor of botany, "rooted," like a plant or a tree, and then uses the metaphor of a building, "grounded." The idea of rooted speaks of a tree or plant. Let's go with the tree picture. I love big gnarly oak trees. I love seeing the scrub oaks that we have in the valley here. They're so beautiful and so marvelous. Their roots go down so deep. The real important part of the tree is not what you see above the ground but what you see underneath the ground, right? Without that root system the trees would die or blow over. An oak tree actually sends its roots deeper, the more it's

buffeted by the winds and storms. We need to be like trees.

I love Psalm 1, where "...the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." If you want to be fruitful, if you want to be blessed, get rooted in God's love.

Then Paul uses the metaphor of a building, grounded. Buildings have to have a foundation. One of the most important, if not the most important, aspect of a structure is the foundation, right? It's so important. If you don't have a solid foundation, then the building will fall over. We have to have our lives rooted in the love of God and founded on the love of God. It's so important for us to believe, by faith, that God loves us.

Notice verse 17, "...in love," which, as I pointed out, is the Greek word *agape*. Did you know that love is the birthmark of the Christian? If you're a Christian, and you don't manifest God's love, something is wrong. Now, I know there are those times when we get in the flesh and don't manifest God's love; but if the Holy Spirit is at home in your heart, Christ is dwelling there, and you're walking in His power, guess what you're going to have coming from your life? Love. This is why it only makes sense that in our marriages we need our hearts filled with God's Spirit to manifest His love.

I love what Donald Grey Barnhouse, once pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, said. He pointed out that love is intrinsic to all the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. I've heard this said in different ways, but I love the way he broke it down. He said, "Love is the key," it's the main fruit, the central theme, "Joy is love singing. Peace is love resting. Longsuffering is love enduring. Kindness is love's touch. Goodness is love's character. Faithfulness is love's habit. Gentleness is love's self-forgetfulness. Self-control is love's holding the reins." I love that. That's the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer—grounded and rooted in love.

Secondly, Paul wanted them also to not only have and show God's love but to know it. Notice that in verse 18. He used the word "comprehend." That word "comprehend" literally means to get a hold of so that we understand. Not only do we have God's love, show God's love, but we comprehend, we understand, God actually loves us. Notice as well verse 18, "...with all saints," he's not praying for some super elite group of believers. Some of you may at this point tonight as you're listening to this say, "Oh man. This is kind of wearying me. I'm a Christian, but I'm not one of those super Christians. This deeper life stuff is just really, really kind of bumming me out." God wants all His people to be filled with all of His Spirit. To be filled means to be controlled by. It doesn't mean you get more Holy Spirit, it means the Holy Spirit gets more of you. I love that phrase, "...with all saints," for it's all believers that he's praying for.

Notice these four dimensions of Christ's love. We love this text. Paul talks about, "...the breadth," or width, "and length, and depth, and height," of God's marvelous love. God's love is

wide, it includes the whole world. God's love is long, it lasts forever. God's love is deep, it reaches the lowest sinner. God's love is high, it lifts the sinner up to heaven. These are the four dimensions of the love of God. Because God is infinite, God's love is limitless. His love has no limits. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure. You can never exhaust the love of God. God never just gets, "You know what? I'm so sick and tired of you. I just don't love you anymore." People do that, God never does. Aren't you glad? Do you know that God has never stopped loving you? He may not be pleased with you, He may be grieved by you, but He loves you. He loves you. Someone said, The love of God is greater far, Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell. Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made; were every stalk on earth a quill, and everyone a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.

One of the most important foundations for your life is to believe in, rest in, trust in the love of God. No matter what comes or what happens, no matter how dark the night, God loves you. His love is limitless. God is also eternal—there is no end. Do you know because there's no beginning in God and God is love, there's no beginning to God's love. There's no end to God's love. How marvelous is the love of God!

In verse 19, Paul prays that they would know it. Notice at the beginning of verse 19, "And to know, " there it is, "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." How do you know something that's beyond knowledge? I don't know, but we are told He wants us to know. That God would give us an understanding heart to know that which is limitless, which is infinite, which is unfathomable—that we could know the love of Christ.

Here's our fourth and last petition. Remember, you pray these things for yourself, you pray these things for others that you love and know, and you can pray these things for each other in the Church, the body of Christ. Notice verse 19, "...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." How's that for topping off this list of petitions? That you would be filled with the fullness of God. How can the finite, human beings, be filled with the infinite? The answer is, I don't know because I'm finite and He's infinite.

One of my favorite places to go is the ocean, and I can just stay on the beach all day. I can just watch the waves all day. I can hear the ocean all day. I can just look at its moods and changes. I'm always watching the waves. I like to be in the ocean. I like to get out in the water. I just come alive when I'm at the ocean. You know, if you take a bucket, and sometimes the grandkids will have their little sand toys. I'm kind of anti-sand toy, by the way. We don't go to the beach for some toys, we go just to watch and play in the ocean. I just thought I'd throw that in. Pray for me. Sometimes we'll go down to the water—they're building castles—and try to scoop some of the ocean in the bucket. I thought, What an interesting thing. You have the vastness of the Pacific Ocean as we look out from the coast of California. I have this little bucket, and I scoop up the ocean. Have I exhausted the ocean? Not at all. I mean I could go all day just scooping and scooping and scooping. I can never exhaust the vastness. How can I, this little "beach bucket," this little vessel, ever be filled with the fullness of God? It's something

that's hard for us to fathom or understand.

To know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, verse 19, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Some believe that the translation here would be better rendered, "with respect to all the fullness of God." Not that we're filled with all of God because He's infinite, that's impossible, but God's fullness is the source, it's the channel, that comes to us to fill us with God Himself. How amazing to think that we as God's people have God dwelling in us in all His fullness. It doesn't mean we're divine. Don't ever let anyone teach or tell you that you become little gods. No, we're human beings redeemed by God, and we become the temple of the Holy Spirit, but we're not divine. But we can be filled with all the fullness of God. God fills us with His fullness.

Paul ends with, verses 20-21, not petition but praise, doxology. How interesting. We have instruction, we have intercession, and now we have doxology. That's so often what happens. We read the Bible, we pray, and it turns into praise. "Now unto him," and Paul wraps it up, "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power," once again that word dynamis, that dynamic power, "that worketh in us," so His power is actually working in us. If you're a Christian, God's power is working in you. "Unto him be glory in the church," I love that, "by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." How amazing! We love verse 20 when we read about the divine ability of God. He is able.

When you pray, just remember, God is able. If you're having problems in your marriage, God is able. If you have problems in your finances, God is able. If you have problems with your health, God is able. Notice the way Paul piles this on here if you read it and break it up like this: "Now unto him that is able," and I could've stopped right there, but he added, "to do," and he could've stopped right there—He is able to do. Then, he added, "exceeding," and that would've been a great place to stop, "...unto him that is able to do exceeding," but he added, "abundantly," you say, "Wow! This is pretty cool!" Then he added, "...above all," even getting better! Then he says, "that we ask or think," he just piles it on. Not only is He able, He's able to do, He's able to do exceeding, He's able to do exceeding abundantly, He's able to do exceeding abundantly above all, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think. If you can think it, God can do it; if you can't think it, God can still do it. There is nothing too hard for God, all things are possible with Him. Ask God, He is able; but it's all for God's glory, verse 21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus."

Remember, the end of Ephesians 2 and all of Ephesians 3 was all about the Church. That's the theme of the book of Ephesians. How does Paul end the doctrinal section? In the Church may Christ get all the praise, get all the glory, get all the honor throughout all ages, without end. Some of the oldest manuscripts that we have on this passage says, "to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever." When he says, "world without end," it's forever and ever and ever and ever, and then we threw in the word, "Amen," or so be it. That's how the prayer comes to an end. It ends with praise. It starts with coming to the Father and ends with praising God from whom all blessings flow. Amen? Let's pray.