

“Four Reasons Why a Preacher Should Bow His Knees”

Ephesians 3:14-19

Introduction: A man once stated, “A prepared messenger is more important than a prepared message.” Certainly, this statement is true concerning the preacher and his people. If a man of God is to be effective, he must be earnest in his life. There must be an element of consecration on his part if there is going to be an impact upon those that hear him. There is a tremendous amount of responsibility placed upon the shoulders of a pastor that intends to care for his flock. Knowing this, the Bible offers to us several suggestions that the minister should be. Some of these are that:

1. A Preacher Should Prepare II Timothy 2:15- *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
2. A Preacher Should Provide I Peter 5:2- *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind”*
3. A Preacher Should Protect I Timothy 6:12- *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”*
4. A Preacher Should Plant II Timothy 2:2- *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*
5. A Preacher Should Pray Acts 6:4- *“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”*
 - a. The Lost is Buried Ephesians 2:1- *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins”*
 - b. The Layman is Busy (Notice their positions)
 - (1) Walking Ephesians 4:1, 17, 5:2, 8, 15
 - (2) Waiting Ephesians 2:6
 - (3) Withstanding Ephesians 6:11, 13-14
 - c. The Leader is Bowing Ephesians 3:14- *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (The only reason the church members can be walking, waiting, and withstanding is because the pastor is praying.)

Body: It is this last point that we will be looking at as it relates to Ephesians chapter three. This is the second prayer of Paul (the first is in Ephesians 1:15-23) for the church at Ephesus found in this book. The Ephesians held a special place in the heart of Paul and therefore he is praying for their spiritual advancement. This prayer seems to focus on the inner man and the growth of each individual believer. Paul realized that if the Ephesians could develop their inner man in all godliness then the outer man would automatically be holy. His prayer, as every pastor’s prayer should be, was for the spiritual wellbeing of the church. He had such a burden for “his people” that he bowed his knees constantly for them. Therefore, let us look at this prayer and learn how pastors today can pray for “their people”. Paul prayed:

- I. That the Church would be Strengthened v. 16- *“That...to be strengthened...”*
 - A. The Provision of this Strength- *“That he would grant you”*
 - B. The Plentitude of this Strength- *“according to the riches of his glory”*
 1. “How marvelous that God does not give the Spirit’s power to us ‘out of His riches’ but ‘according to’—which is a far greater thing.” (Wiersbe)
 2. “If I am a billionaire and I give you ten dollars, I have given you *out of* my riches; but if I give you a million dollars, I have given to you *according to* my riches. The first is a *portion*; the second is a *proportion*.” (Wiersbe)
 3. “The power of the Spirit is given to us according to the riches of His glory. Christ returned to glory and sent the Spirit from heaven to indwell and empower His people.” (Wiersbe)
 4. “It is not necessary for us to ‘work something up.’ The power has to be sent down.” (Wiersbe)
 - C. The Power of this Strength- *“to be strengthened with might”*
 - D. The Person of this Strength- *“by his Spirit”*
 1. Luke 4:1- *“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness”*
 2. Luke 4:14- *“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.”*
 3. Acts 1:8- *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”*
 4. Acts 10:38- *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him”*
 - E. The Place of this Strength- *“in the inner man”*
 1. The inner man “signifies faculty or virtue not necessarily manifest.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 2. “In the unregenerate it is liable to fall under the power of sin (Rom. 7:23); and in the regenerate it needs constant renewing and strengthening by the Spirit of God, as here.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 - a. The Cultivation of the Inner Man II Corinthians 4:16- *“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”*
 - (1) “The inner man can see (Ps. 119:18), hear (Mt. 13:9), taste (Ps. 34:8), and feel (Acts 17:27); and he must be exercised (1 Tim. 4:7-8).” (Wiersbe)
 - (2) “He also must be cleansed (Ps. 51:7) and fed (Mt. 4:4).” (Wiersbe)
 - b. The Cravings of the Inner Man Romans 7:22- *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man”*

- c. The Concealment of the Inner Man I Peter 3:4- *“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”*
- II. That the Church would be Saved v. 17- *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...”*
- A. The Person of the Salvation- *“That Christ”*
- B. The Prerequisite of the Salvation- *“may”*
- C. The Place of the Salvation- *“dwell in your hearts”*
1. That Christ may dwell is “an old verb [that means] to make one's home, to be at home.” (RWP)
 2. “Christ is asked to make his home in our hearts. This is the ideal, but a deal of fixing would have to be done in our hearts for Christ.” (RWP)
- D. The Performance of the Salvation- *“by faith”*
1. “Through ‘your’ (the article) faith, as the medium of appropriating Christ.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 2. “Faith opens the door and receives Him who knocks.” (Vincent’s Word Studies.)
- III. That the Church would be Satisfied vs. 17-19- *“...that...able to comprehend...to know the love of Christ...”*
- A. The Stability of this Love v. 17- *“that ye, being rooted and grounded in love”*
Colossians 1:23, 2:7
1. “Rooting and grounding are consequences of the strengthening of the Spirit and of Christ’s indwelling.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 2. Psalm 1:3- *“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.”*
 3. Jeremiah 17:8- *“For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”*
 4. “Grounded is an architectural term; it refers to the foundations on which we build.” (Wiersbe)
- B. The Scope of this Love v. 18- *“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height”*
1. To comprehend means, “To lay hold of effectively”. (RWP)
 2. With all the saints means “no isolated privilege; fellowship open to all.” (RWP)
 3. “Paul gives a rectangular (four dimension) measure of love.” (RWP)
 4. “No special interpretations are to be given to these words. The general idea of vastness is expressed in these ordinary terms for dimension.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)

- C. The Surpassing of this Love v. 19- *“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge”*
1. We gain knowledge through experience.
 2. “All the same Paul dares to scale this peak.” (RWP)
 3. “Which surpasses mere knowledge without the experience of love.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
- IV. That the Church would be Spiritual v. 19- *“...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”*
- A. The Capacity of our Spirituality- *“that ye might be filled”*
 - B. The Completion of our Spirituality- *“with all the fulness of God”* Matthew 5:48, Romans 8:29
 1. “The ‘fulness’ of God is the fullness which God imparts through the dwelling of Christ in the heart.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 2. “Christ, in whom the Father was pleased that all the fulness should dwell (Col 1:19), and in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Col 2:9).” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 3. Colossians 2:9-10- *“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power”*
 4. Ephesians 5:18- *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”* (“filled” Strong’s- “to render full; complete”)

Conclusion: What a tremendous prayer this was for his people. Wiersbe states, “There are four requests in Paul’s prayer, but they must not be looked on as isolated, individual petitions. One request leads into the next one, and so on. He prays that the inner man might have spiritual strength, which will, in turn, lead to a deeper experience with Christ. This deeper experience will enable them to comprehend God’s great love, which will result in their being filled unto all the fullness of God. So, then, Paul is praying for strength, depth, apprehension, and fullness.” This type of prayer can sustain a congregation during the attacks of Satan. Hence, will men of God make this commitment to pray for their people as Paul did the Ephesians?