

PRAYER AS LIVING WITHIN GOD'S POWER AND LOVE

POWER IN PRAYER | EPHESIANS 3:14-21 | AUGUST 17/18, 2019 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power... And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." (Ephesians 3:16-18)

Approaching the Source of Power and Love (Ephesians 3:14-15)

Praying to Live within God's Power (Ephesians 3:16-17a)

Praying to Live within God's Love (Ephesians 3:17b-19)

Praising the God of Power and Love (Ephesians 3:20)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When did you first learn to pray? How did you learn to pray?
2. This week we begin a new series entitled "Power in Prayer: Learning to Pray with St. Paul." In this series, we will look at three of Paul's prayers in his letters in order to learn how to pray. Our journey begins in Ephesians 3:14-20. Begin your study by asking God to speak to you through your study of Scripture. Then, whether you're alone or in a group, read that passage aloud.
3. This section of Ephesians begins with "for this reason." What is Paul referencing as he begins to relate his prayer?

4. The prayer of Ephesians 3:14-20 has two basic requests: strengthening with God's power and knowing Christ's love. The first request comes in verses 16-17. What is the source of being strengthened with God's power according to Paul's prayer?
5. There are a lot of kinds of power, and a lot for desire for power these days. If the Spirit works this strengthening "in your inner being," then what sort of power do you think Paul is praying for here?
6. According to the first half of verse 17, what is Paul's goal in praying for God's power to strengthen the believers?
7. How have you experienced God's provision of His power in your life?
8. With the second half of verse 17 through verse 19, we find Paul's second request that believers would know Christ's love. It is important to notice the community aspect of this prayer. What stands out to you about that?
9. Paul prays that they might know the extent of Christ's love even though Christ's love "surpasses knowledge." Is Paul contradicting himself here? Why do you think he prays this?
10. According to the last part of verse 19, what is Paul's goal in praying for the believers to know Christ's love?
11. This prayer ends with a beautiful doxology, or hymn in praise of God, in verses 20-21. What stands out to you about this aspect of Paul's prayer?
12. What is God speaking to you about the life of prayer through this study? If you are on your own, write these things down and let this shape your prayer life in the days to come. If you are in a small group, discuss your answers aloud together. Close in prayer.

RESOURCES FOR PRAYER

Our life of prayer is fueled by accurate knowledge of God's power and love. Read through these verses and use them as material for prayer, both this week and in the future:

- Psalm 103
- John 3:16-17
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Jeremiah 10:12-13
- Colossians 1:15-20
- Revelation 11:16-19

Understanding God's love is central to our growth in faith and prayer. Here are some resources that may help us better understand God's love:

- Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God* (https://www.ccel.org/ccel/bernard/loving_god.html)
- C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*
- Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*