

Paul's Prayer for Every Christian

The Apostle Paul's letters to the churches in the first century are dual purposed. They were instructions, exhortations, and corrections for their time, and they apply to our lives today as well. Today we will apply Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus to Christians all over the world.

We have taught in the past about the Bible's authenticity and inerrancy. As we read the Bible, we must apply what we read to our lives while keeping the scripture in context. It is very dangerous to read portions of scripture and take them out of context. Earlier this week I saw this happen. Someone commented on a Facebook post with part of our scripture today, but not the whole thing.

Let's read Paul's prayer for the Church in Ephesus in Ephesians 3:16-19.

Ephesians 3:16-19

(16) I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, (17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, (18) 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, (19) and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Believers who subscribe to the "Name it and claim it" doctrine will often quote verse 16 of this passage. We believe this is not a correct application of this verse. It is quite dangerous when we try to apply a verse that is breaking up a sentence. In the case of verse 16, Paul is praying that God will provide power through the Holy Spirit for your inner being. Wow! That sounds great! He is praying that in this case, but for a reason. When we stop at only verse 16, we miss the reason he is praying for the Church in Ephesus and what we are praying for one another today.

Paul's First Prayer for Every Christian

As we continue to see in verse 17 Paul is praying for power to strengthen the brothers and sisters in the Church in Ephesus, and every Christian, **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**. Our prayer for you today is that as well. We pray that out of God's glorious riches you are strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit to your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith.

Christ living in you is the reason for this prayer. The more Christ lives in you, the more you can be the hands and feet of Christ to your neighborhood, your village and town, your city and region, and to the world.

This is major power. Look at the words Paul uses. He says out of God's glorious riches. We know God is all-powerful. Paul here is not asking for a portion of God's power. He is not asking for strength *out of God's* riches but *according to His* riches. The difference is like a wealthy person giving out of their abundance, and the poor person giving sacrificially. Paul is asking that God give according to his glorious riches. That, my friends, is more power to strengthen us and our faith in Christ than we can imagine.

That is a strengthening that will help you endure the fiery darts of the devil that come your way day in and day out. It is also the strengthening that will help you weather the trials and tribulations that come your way while living your life in this fallen world. This can only be accomplished with Christ in our



hearts. Paul was praying 2000 years ago for the believers in Ephesus, and he was praying for all Christians then and in the future, too. This is the strength we need to live an abundant life and be a witness for Jesus. This is power that comes through the Holy Spirit and defies human thinking and logic sometimes. This leads us to the second thing Paul is praying for the Ephesians and for every Christian.

Paul's Second Prayer for Every Christian

He is praying that we all would be rooted and established in love and have the power necessary to understand how much the love of Christ is and to know this love that surpasses knowledge. Paul specifically says in verse 18, "together with all the Lord's Holy people". That includes you and me! This is Paul's prayer for every Christian.

We must be established and rooted in love, not just any love, but the love of Christ Jesus. A love that is so wide and so long and so high and so deep that it takes the power of God through the Holy Spirit for us to grasp it and understand it. Paul starts with praying for the power to strengthen us so Christ can live in our hearts and then continues with a prayer for us to have an understanding of that love and root ourselves in it. Love that is so unfathomable that it takes the power and wisdom of God through the Holy Spirit to understand it.

God's love is so wide, it saves both Jews and Gentiles. His love is wide enough to save anyone and everyone who calls on the name of Jesus and accepts Him as their Lord and Savior.

God's love is long that it covers all time from eternity past to eternity future. He has loved all of creation from before the beginning and will love all of creation forever. It is also never too late to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

God's love is so high that it extends beyond where we can see. His love extends into Heaven where His glory shines brighter than the sun.

God's love is so deep it can find us and save us in the deepest pit of despair and sin that we find ourselves in. We can never be so far apart from God that His love cannot reach us and bring us back to Him.

Paul's Third Prayer for Every Christian

But that is not the end of Paul's prayer for every Christian. He continues at the end of verse 19, "that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." The more we allow Jesus to fill our heart the more of the fullness of God we receive. We do not receive it just for our own edification, but so that we can fulfill our personal mission that God has ordained for each one of us for our time here on earth.

What has God created you for? Why are you where you are? Nothing with God is by chance. God knitted you together in your mother's womb with a specific plan and purpose for your life that only you can accomplish during your time on this earth. I am convinced you cannot accomplish God's plan and purpose for your life without the love of Christ Jesus in your heart. So, we pray for you just as Paul prayed for every Christian.

We pray that God would strengthen you with power out of His glorious riches so that Christ can live in your heart in faith. We also pray that you would be established and rooted in the love of Christ Jesus



and that you would understand that love and share that love with everyone the Lord leads you to.
Finally, we pray that you would know, and live in, the fullness of God through the love of Christ Jesus.

Amen

