

## 9. Inner man

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"Beauty is skin deep," so they say. Yet the majority of people in the USA chase after that skin deep beauty. According to USA Today, Americans spent a whopping \$33.3 billion on cosmetics, other beauty enhancement products, and cosmetic surgeries in 2010.

I am not against them. I am not saying that a person should look like an unmade bed all the time to be holy. I like what the late Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee said, "If a barn needs to be painted, paint the barn."

Hollywood is full of good looking men and beautiful women. Nothing wrong with being good looking outwardly. But if that is the only thing a person has, it is a really sad thing.

I am sure that you all have heard a term "inner man" sometime in your life. Do you know where it originates from? From the Bible. This inner man is the real you. As I mentioned it before, your body is nothing more than a container of the inner man or woman resides temporarily on this earth.

While our body is obedient to the gravity by sagging down each year, our inner person in Christ can be stronger and more mature in Christ. The maturity of the inner person has nothing to do with how long a believer has been saved. I've seen many immature born-again Christians who have been saved for a long time and I also have seen many other Christians who have been saved for only short time, yet they know the Savior Jesus intimately with reverence and they are obedient to Him and His Word, the Bible.

As apostle Paul explains about the riches, goodness, grace, and mercy, he can not contain himself in his own writing format, he bursts into a spontaneous praise, adoration, and prayer to God the Father in these 8 verses at the end of chapter 3. It is considered as one of the greatest prayers of apostle Paul that takes us to the heart of God, which is rich toward us beyond our ability to grasp.

### A. PRELUDE

*Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,* What prompted this prayer, which obviously had been mounting in Paul's heart for some time? It was the awesomeness of God's mysterious plan: to reconcile Jew and Gentile to Himself through the grace of Christ and unite all believers as equals in Himself.

Please note the posture that apostle Paul mentions here: "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." A typical Jew doesn't get down on his knees to pray. He normally stands and sways his body back and forth and prays as many of them do in front of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The only time they would be on their knees is to show deep adoration, submissiveness, and urgency.

Such was surely the case with Paul, who not only rejoiced over this new intimacy with the Lord but also recognized that this Father ruled the world which owed Him its obedience.

We can stand up side down while we pray. Whether we actually bow our knees is not the important thing; that we bow our hearts and wills to the Lord and ask Him for what we need is the vital matter.

Contrary to what unbelievers would like to believe, not all men are children of God by nature. Instead, they are children of disobedience and children of wrath. As Creator, God is the Father of each man; but as Savior, He is only the Father of those who believe. There is no such thing in Scripture as the universal fatherhood of God that saves all men. They must be born-again.

Paul basically prayed for four things: that we would be strengthened power through His Spirit, rooted and grounded in Christ's love, able to somehow grasp the immensity of that love, and filled with God's own fullness.

## **B. STRENGTHENING WITH MIGHT THROUGH HIS SPIRIT**

*Ephesians 3:16-17a that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;*

Do you ever wonder what "the riches of His glory" mean? I am glad that you asked. It is every thing in God that exhibits Him glorious, the proper object of adoration. Apostle Paul prays that God would deal with His people according to that abundance of grace and power, which constitutes His glory and makes Him to His creatures the Source of all good.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life is evidence of salvation. But the power of the Spirit is enablement for Christian living, and it is this power that Paul desires for his readers. This enablement by the Holy Spirit should be the source of all the work we do for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But unfortunately, many Christians work in the ministries with their own power and plan that have nothing to do with the Lord. It is no wonder why they get burned out.

I want all of you to pay attention to two words in this verse: "according to". It didn't say, "out of" the riches of His glory. Let me put it this way: If I am a billionaire and I give you ten dollars, I have given you out of my riches; but if I give you one hundred million dollars, I have given to you according to my riches. The first is a portion; the second is a proportion.

Inner man means the spiritual part of man where God dwells and works. The inner man of the unbeliever is dead as we learned in chapter 2:

*Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,* But it becomes alive when Christ is invited in. The inner man can see, hear, taste, and feel, because it is the real you. Just like the physical body we have, the inner man must exercise to be strong.

*1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

So how does our inner man become strong? First, we must yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him control the inner man; second, we learn the Word of God and be obedient to what it says, start to live for His glory, not for our own.

This cannot be done unless Christ be at home in our hearts. When apostle Paul said, "dwell in your hearts through faith," it means that through our ever-maturing faith, we would let Christ more and more "be at home in" us – that we would more consis-

tently put and keep Christ at the center of our lives, letting Him shape our attitudes and choices and form us into His likeness.

*Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Do you know the difference between “living in a house” and “being at home”? As you can tell the first one is a mere presence in a house as if a person is a house guest. But the second one is either being an owner or a family member .

Now, with that in mind, let me ask you this question with our wild imagination: If Jesus Christ Himself comes and knocks on your house front door at any moment, would you welcome Him without an embarrassment? I am not talking about a little mess here, or a poopy diaper there. Do you need to hide your porno magazines from between your mattress and box spring or a garage shelf? Or do you have to erase your questionable internet site visit history from your computer? Or do you shove all the sleazy or vampire romantic novels or some DVD movies you’ve been reading or watching into a trash can? Or do you need to dump your beer , wine, and liquor down the drain before you invite Him into your house?

What about your heart? Your inner man? Is there anything that you don’t want Jesus to see? Does Jesus just live in your heart like a guest or does He make Himself at home in your heart because He is welcome there? You think about that.

### **C. BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE**

*Ephesians 3:17b that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*  
What does it mean to be “rooted and grounded” in Jesus’ love?  
The word ‘rooted’ brings to mind plants, with their roots shooting deep into rich earth to be nourished and grow tall and strong .

*Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water , That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

Like that tree of Psalm 1 , a life rooted in Christ’s love also feeds and shelters others - and it, too, is firmly planted and refreshed constantly by God’s love for us.

The word ‘grounded’ conveys the same idea, but with building the very foundation of our lives in Christ should be love. It’s the only thing on earth that can hold the body of Christ together and see us through the upcoming tough times.

### **D. COMPREHENDING THE IMMENSITY OF CHRIST’S LOVE**

*Ephesians 3:18-19a may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19a to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;*

Did you guys get that? It is kinda overwhelming and a bit of a paradox, isn’t it? So, how can we possibly know this love that “passes knowledge”? We can never completely. We’ll probably spend eternity searching out the vast magnitude of Christ’s love.

But here's what we can do: We can continually draw our minds back to all that Christ has done for us and why He has done it. We can learn to accept it by faith and rest in the blessed security of it. And we can train our heart's eyes to see His love for all the believers with no barriers of race, background, denomination, gender, or age. We can follow the Spirit's teaching through His Word, the Bible, so we love a little more like Christ loves.

## **E. BEING FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD**

*Ephesians 3:19b that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

If you are a born-again believer, compare yourself before Christ and now. You were hopeless, guilt-ridden, hell-bound and isolated. From that spiritual murk and mire, Jesus saved you and placed you in the family of God where you are loved with the immeasurable love of God, you now have the Bread of life, the Living Water, and the resurrection-power of the Holy Spirit within you.

But if you are an unbeliever, you still live in horrible hopeless condition. However, if you choose to accept Jesus into your heart as the Savior and Lord, He will gladly fill your heart with all the fullness of Him.

In the physical world, there is no such a thing that is a naturally emptied and vacuumed, because air or water will automatically flow into the empty space. The same goes for the spiritual world. Either it is filled with God's presence or demonic presence.

If you were familiar with the New Ages movement, you know that they encourage you to empty your mind so that you can be ushered into the so-called enlightened status. By emptying your mind, you are inviting the demonic presence into your heart.

Once we are saved, the Holy Spirit resides in our heart with the opportunity for us to have all the fullness of God as we learn to love Him more. That is only the beginning of receiving the riches of God's glory.

## **F. THE BENEDICTION**

*Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

God's greatness overwhelmed Paul, just as it overwhelms us now. So he turned his eyes and ours from ourselves to the One who deserves our worship and all the glory.

As the heavens are higher and greater than the earth beyond our most wildest imagination, our God is greater than the heavens itself. Yet He has choose to work through us, His church to bring about His new, redeemed society of His divine love.

## **G. APPLICATIONS**

1) Unless we yield ourselves obediently to the Holy Spirit's teachings and guidance through His Word, we cannot step into the fullness of God's love.

2) Unless we grow deeper in Christ's love, we cannot grow higher in the power of His.