

# A Fervent Petition

**Introduction.** William Lee wrote, “It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they are; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they may be — which God cares for. Fervency of spirit is that which availeth much.”

In the concluding part of Ephesians 3 (vv. 14-21) Paul bows the knees in petition to God on behalf of his brethren in Ephesus. It is a deeply moving, fervent prayer. Paul does not address this prayer to the Creator of the universe, or the One who was above all, through all, and in you all, as he did at other places. Here he uses the fact that God is our dear loving Father. He is concerned for us. He cares for His people. This is the grand and glorious truth that Christians enjoy — a special relationship between God and His child (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6-7). Paul made six specific requests of God for his brethren and they are excellent to discuss and meditate on..

## ***I. He Prayed They Would Be Strengthened***

- A. Paul was not praying for them to have physical strength.
  - 1. It was the “inner man” or spirit that the Holy Spirit would strengthen or fortify (Luke 1:80; 2:40; 1 Corinthians 16:13).
  - 2. This is the part of man which will remain (2 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Peter 3:4; cp. 1 Timothy 4:7-8).
- B. How does that strength from the Holy Spirit come?
  - 1. Most people think that this means that the Holy Spirit will give a person direct power through a miraculous working.
  - 2. However, this is not how the Holy Spirit works. We are strengthened and are able to stand against the devil through the power of the revealed word (Ephesians 6:11-17).

## ***II. He Prayed The Savior Would Dwell In Their Hearts***

- A. He is to be a permanent resident, not an occasional guest. He is to be enthroned as Lord of our lives (Colossians 3:16).
- B. Christ is to live in and through us.
  - 1. He dwells in us the same way the Holy Spirit dwells in us, through faith (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27).
  - 2. If we walk by faith, we are demonstrating Christ and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us (2 Corinthians 5:7; cp. Romans 10:17).

## ***III. He Prayed They Would Be Rooted And Grounded In Love***

- A. Being “rooted,” an agricultural term, means that love should be as firm in our hearts as a tree is in soil, whose roots strike deep into the earth (cp. Luke 8:13; Hebrews 12:15). Being “grounded” is an architectural term which means a firm foundation (cp. Ephesians 2:20-21). Paul wanted them to be as firm in the love of Christ as a building that rests on a solid basis.

- B. Our Lord pleaded that we have lives dedicated to loving one another. In fact, love for one another defines us as disciples (John 13:34-35; Acts 4:32-35).
- C. Our love has to be stable and sure. We cannot be hypocritical, claiming to love God, while hating others (Romans 12:9-10; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 2:5-10; 3:10-14; 4:20-21).

#### ***IV. He Prayed They Would Know The Love Of Christ***

- A. The dimensions of Christ's love.
  - 1. The length reaches from the eternal purpose of Christ's mission to the eternity blessedness spent in His glory, its depth reaches the lowest and deepest depths of human depravity, and its height reaches to the throne of Heaven.
  - 2. Is it not encouraging that there is no force powerful enough to pull away the faithful Christian from the love of Christ (Romans 8:38-39)?
- B. The duration of Christ's love.
  - 1. Christ's love is eternal and will not fade away by reason of time or space.
  - 2. In fact, it is the only everlasting part of this world (1 Corinthians 13:8).
- C. The distinctiveness of Christ's love.
  - 1. Divine love is different than the love we have for one another.
  - 2. Divine love has specific, incredible characteristics (Romans 5:6-8):
    - a) God's love does not depend on our ability to love Him back.
    - b) God's love is not limited to just His friends.
    - c) God's love is demonstrated by an act of unbelievable sacrifice.
- D. The power of Christ's love.
  - 1. It turned a tax collector in to a disciple.
  - 2. It turned unlearned fishermen in to powerful proclaimers.
  - 3. It turned a persecutor in to the persecuted.
  - 4. It can "compel," "control," or "move" us (2 Corinthians 5:14).

#### ***V. He Prayed They Would Be Filled With God's Fulness***

- A. What does Paul mean when he says we should be "filled with all the fullness of God"?
  - 1. This means that we should be completely satisfied or "filled to the brim" with the blessings of God our Father.
  - 2. Our life should be totally wrapped in our relationship with God. It means you have received power and might from the Holy Spirit through the word, you have fully appreciated the love of God with its life-changing power, and you have patterned your life around the precepts of God, and this means people should see it (1 Peter 2:9)!
- B. Being filled with God's fulness is a concept found other places in the New Testament (Matthew 5:6; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 1:9).

#### ***VI. He Prayed God Would Make Them What They Should Be***

- A. We can be assured that God has the ability to make us what we need to be (Romans 4:21; Philippians 3:21).