

Ephesians 14-03-02b

Let's pick up our study in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 16, Paul has emphasized now that he is praying for these believers. Intercessory prayer is a wonderful privilege that we should remember to exercise regularly. It is great to be the recipient and the object of prayer support as we all know.

Whether or not our difficulties are visible, whether or not our challenges, you know, people don't tend to pray for you near as hard when you're in the midst of a prosperity test. Oh Lord, please help Sam not run amok with all that wonderful automotive wealth he's got over there, he's got five cars parked around his house, oh Lord, I mean people, you know, if you've got an abundance people don't really think to pray for you and yet sometimes, you know, blessing and ease is one of our greater tests. But it is a challenge sometimes to find the way to pray that will actually be effective.

We've talked about this many times, it's, I think God the Holy Spirit fudges on our behalf if you will, when we don't pray as we ought, you get this out of Romans, Paul says, we do not know how to pray as we ought. God the Holy Spirit insulates God the Father from the dumbness of our prayers and he rephrases and puts things in eloquent terms and expresses our intent rather than our clumsy expressions. But we want to get better at this, we don't want the Holy Spirit to have to do that much work on our prayers and if you think strictly in terms of God being the genie of the lamp, you know, Aladdin rubs the lamp, three wishes, okay, you know, I want this, I want that, I want the other, please fix this, please help somebody with that, heal this person, bring them back to health.

We reflect the fact that we're not thinking in God's terms, we've covered this many times, you know that we ought to pray if we're mature, if we're growing believers, we should be learning to think like the Father thinks, if somebody is sick, why are they sick? Why would God allow this to happen? It slows them down, it makes them ineffective, takes away their, sometimes their ministry opportunities or their opportunities to do things we know are the will of God such as provide for their family or be able to concentrate and focus, attend Bible class, think about and concentrate on and reflect on the truth of God's Word. It's all distracting because you're ill, feverish, in pain, suffering and so on. If you have a reverse employment-wise, if you have a reverse relationship-wise, if you have trouble of a circumstantial nature, why would God allow that? Why would it be a part of the plan and program for someone's life? We want to pray in line with what God might be doing.

How would we know what God might be doing? We look in His Word. Why has God allowed these things in the historical past? People that are recorded in Scripture, why did God allow afflictions? Why was this man born blind? Who sinned, him or his parents? Jesus said, no, it is so that the glory of God can be shown in him. And so we want to try to pray this way as we intercede for one another.

Go a level up, move into the advanced class, get the extra credit question right in prayer. Think the way God thinks. This is where effective prayer really begins, is aligning our requests with the will of God, showing God that we understand how His plan and program works and we make our requests in line with that.

This is the kind of prayer that gets answered. And we know it will be answered because we know we are praying in accordance with the will of God, O Lord, comfort this person, encourage this person, give them a sense of your presence and sensitivity to the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit and bringing truth to their mind that they can claim, that they can apply, that they can lay hold of by faith and achieve righteousness, lay up for themselves treasure in heaven. That your glory, O Lord, will be reflected in their lives in a way that is manifest to those around them, in a way that testifies, in a way that shines a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Is there any way God's not going to answer that prayer? Of course He's going to answer that prayer. And He is going to be pleased that there are some of us who understand what He's up to enough to pray in that way. And He's going to show us the answer to that prayer because we're looking for the right things.

We're not saying, well, you know, Uncle Joe got over his, you know, his water on the knee problem there and hooray. It's so much more than that. Well, Paul is praying here and we can look at his prayers and educate ourselves on the way great prayer is constructed, what it focuses on, what it thinks about.

What is Paul praying for here? Does he say, well, I've heard that there's, you know, persecution and affliction and dire straits and bad circumstances for these people in Laodicea. I've heard, you know, as different ones have come and gone and given me reports that, you know, there's this, that, and the other circumstantial reverse. What does Paul pray? I pray, I bow my knees to the Father, Paul says in verse 16, this is what I pray.

I pray that He would grant you. This is *hena do homen*, *hena doi*, actually *homen*. This is the aorist active subjunctive from the verb *didomi*, which means to give in Greek.

Subjunctive means that this, this subjunctive is the mood of potential that he might give. You often hear in prayers, people say, Lord, you know, we pray that we might come to understand. And that's the subjunctive mood because we're not definite about where and how God is going to answer this request, but we recognize the potential and our subjunctive mood prayers leave the latitude for answering where it belongs, which is with God.

We don't know exactly where and we don't know exactly how, but we recognize that the potential is there and we're asking God to fulfill that potential. This is the subjunctive mood, aorist active subjunctive. I bow my knees in order that, that's *hena*, in order that he might give, there are five things here in total.

There's actually three major requests and the first two of them have two parts. So that's two, four, and then the fifth. And we have these expressed by infinitives.

So he would grant you to something, you know what an infinitive is, right? To swim, to hike, to eat, to sleep, to something. That's how we express an infinitive in English. So here I bow my knees to the father that he might give you according to the riches of his glory.

So if God is going to give according to the standard of the riches of his glory, is this a little bit of giving or a lot of giving? How glorious is God? Is he a little glorious or is he way glorious? So if Paul is praying, he says, I pray that God will do this for you according to the standard of katah, by the measure of the riches of his glory. God's glory is pretty rich. It's abundant.

It is a treasury. It is infinite. And this is, Paul doesn't just pray for a thing.

He prays for the measure of a thing. Now this is helpful when you're thinking about praying for someone. Let's imagine somebody that's ill.

And you say, oh Lord, please let so and so get well. Well, that's kind of a mindless prayer. We say, Lord, I pray that in this illness, you will express your grace, your faithfulness, that this ill person will experience a sense of your presence through the word of Christ dwelling richly in them, through the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, that others will see Christ in them, that your glory will be reflected, and I pray that you will do this according to the measure of your own glory, the riches of your glory.

I'm not just praying a what, and I'm not just praying a how, I'm praying a how much. Don't you sometimes wish you could think of some way to pray, and you say, well, I know I don't know how to be saying, oh Lord, bless so and so. You know, when you're a little kid, now I lay me down to sleep, pray to the Lord, soul to keep.

If I die before I wake, pray to the Lord, soul to take. That part always scared me a little bit. Then, you know, God bless grandma, grandpa, Uncle Ned, you know, and on and on and on.

God bless, God bless, God bless. Well, this doesn't really get it. And don't you wish that you had a convenient way to latch onto the effectiveness of prayer? Well, here's the way.

Paul is giving us the example. He gives us what to pray, and he shows us that you can not only pray what, but you can pray how much. Lord, don't just give them a little bit of a sense of your presence.

Don't just give them a little bit of an ability to reflect your glory. Don't just give them a little bit of a reminder of your word, but do it according to the riches of your glory. This is a how much.

You don't go to the old-time general store and say, give me some oats. Give me some cotton cloth. Give me some fine linen.

What's the guy immediately going to say? You want some oats? You want some linen? You want some flour? How much? How much do you want? Well, this is a great thing to add to your prayer. Lord, I pray this, this much. This is how much.

Well, you're talking to God. So, remember when the guy strikes the arrows on the ground and only does it three times, the prophet says, wow, what were you thinking? You should have just banged those things until the heads came off, and then you would have had a complete victory. But as it is, you didn't ask for enough.

You weaseled out. You gave up. You were pathetic.

If you're talking to God, ask for the God measure of things. Not just a little bit. According to the riches of His grace, you can't get any bigger than that.

How limited are the riches of God's glory and the riches of God's grace? Well, it's infinite. So, pray for that much. Lord, don't just dump a little bit of blessing.

Open the windows of heaven and let that glory just come down like Niagara Falls. I mean, if you're praying, pray big. He's a big God, and He's waiting for people to claim, to believe in, and to access and possess that greatness.

So, like I said last week, go large. Go big. Think big picture.

And Paul puts this in verse 16. It's not an accident. He's not just trying to find filler so the book will be long enough to put in the Bible.

You know, sometimes you don't really have a lot to say, five-page paper. You've written two pages, and you're done, and you're thinking, well, how can I bloat this thing so it'll be long enough to meet the... That's not Paul's problem. The reason he puts things in here is because they count.

They matter. So, I pray. I bow my knees to the Father in order that He would give you, according to the riches of His glory, this is how much I'm asking for, what? To be strengthened.

First infinitive. To be strengthened. This is krataiothani.

Krataiothani. Now, you might recognize in there the root of it, which is krateo. You remember from chapter one, you may remember, may not remember, there are five different words for power in Greek, and we had all of them at the end of chapter one.

What is krateo? It is strength in the sense of active, motive, get-it-done, bulldozer-moving-dirt kind of power. In other words, strength, iskuo, can talk about the muscular strength you have to pick up a heavy hammer or to carry a heavy load, sort of a muscular strength in doing work. You have potential strength.

You have authority type of power. But this is krateo. And this has the idea of inherent ability to seize or to hold.

You have this and you retain it. It is your possession. It is a characteristic strength.

It is a conquering strength. And that is what Paul prays for here, that you will have an overcomer power, that it resides with you. You possess it.

And as circumstances come up, you use it. It is not talking about iskuo, work strength. This would be kind of in a specific context.

Can you bench that weight? Can you pick up that stone and move it? Can you uproot that tree with your bare hands? Can you slay these Philistines with the jawbone of an ass? What is your strength in getting this one task done? Krateo has the idea you are capable and you carry this capability around with you. And when occasions arise, you've got that potential that turns into action as needed. You've always got it.

You're just that person. You look at security guards that they hire, and they're just these great big guys. They're just big.

And he's not always security guarding. He's not constantly carrying somebody by the nape of the neck and throwing them out of the bar or wherever or out of the bank. But you look at him, and he's just an enormous guy.

That's Krateo. As needed, this guy has got what it takes to make people exit when they're not wanted. He's built with it.

He carries it around. Krateo. Paul says, I pray that God would give you, according to the riches of His glory, this is a big measure, to be powerful, to be carrying with you a coping strength.

A coping ability. And you are endowed with this dunamis. You are empowered with dynamite.

You carry around and possess and maintain and hold at any given moment, whatever may come up. It might be a surprise. Maybe it's something you saw coming a long ways off.

But when it comes up and when it's time to do a thing, you have been endowed and you possess and carry around the power to dynamite the thing, to use explosive power, application at the point of need. You carry it around, and when there's a rowdy person, when there's somebody that needs to be thrown out, you just pick them up and throw them out. Dunamis.

You are endowed, you are empowered with strength. With dunamis, this is potential. Dynamite stick sits there.

Power in the sense of potential. But you are endowed and empowered with the potential to

handle whatever comes up. And it's unlimited.

There's nothing you can't handle. That's His prayer. Isn't this a great prayer to pray for each other? Pray for your spouse.

Pray for your siblings. Pray for your parents. Pray for your fellow church members.

Pray for your pastor. Pray for missionaries. Pray for those near and far that you know enough about to pray intelligently.

This is a great prayer. Who would not want to be, as I asked last time, who would not want to be strengthened with might in the inner man? Who would not want to be thoroughly equipped for every good work? Who would not want to have the ability to cope and to accomplish what God wants accomplished because you've got the inherent ability to do so? This is a prayer. This is a prayer.

Paul prays. Grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened, to be kreteoized with dunamis. To be endowed with potential power through His Spirit in the inner man.

These prepositions, just like our new memory verse, are so important. Our memory verse coming up here in verses 20 and 21. We're going to see all these prepositional phrases.

Same thing here. Through His Spirit in the inner man. This power doesn't exist outside God the Holy Spirit.

And therefore, you don't have to worry about it being genetic or something that was trained into you or something that you acquired through experience. It doesn't come from inheritance. It doesn't come from experience.

It doesn't come from training. It comes from the Holy Spirit. You say, well, I've never really been, you know, I'm kind of a timid, fade into the wallpaper kind of a person.

I just don't really feel, or I'm constantly baffled and I just don't seem to have this kind of power. Don't worry about it. It doesn't come from us.

It comes from the Holy Spirit. So this is like the strategy of the indirect approach. You don't cultivate strength.

You don't try to cultivate power in yourself. You cultivate the presence of the Holy Spirit. You cultivate the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

He's got the power. He endows us. He creteoizes us with this dunamis power.

If you try to go after it yourself, you say, well, I'm going to get some spiritual barbells and dumbbells and I'm just going to work out and I'll make myself powerful in situations. I'll make

myself powerful in testing. You're going to miss it.

We're strengthened through the Holy Spirit. So you don't have to do all this hard work. Cultivate, encourage, dwell upon, focus on the presence and power of God, the Holy Spirit.

And He endows us with this strength through His Spirit in the inner man. In the inner man. This is Aiston, Aeso Anthropon.

You have kind of a double here because Ais means in or into. Ais Erechomai means to come into a place, into a house, for example. And this is Ais into the Aeso man, into the inside, in the inward man.

This, of course, is where the Holy Spirit dwells. And what's interesting about this is you can talk about your body being the temple of the Holy Spirit. But it's the inner man where the actual strength.

It's not so much the house as the people inside the house that count. Strengthened in the inner man. And this is helpful because this is where the thoughts and intents happen.

This is where decisions are made. This is where policies are set, goals, values. This is how we confront our situations.

Secondly, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. This is another infinitive. It says to be strengthened.

That's our first infinitive. The second one is also an infinitive. It doesn't look like it in English because you've got that Christ may dwell.

But this is kat oikesai. Kata is according to or in some cases down. And this is kat oikesai.

Oikesai means to dwell or to settle. And in English, the closest translation of kat oikeo is settle down. In the sense of, well, we moved to California and settled down.

We moved to Oklahoma, we settled down. We came to Dallas and we settled down. We dwelled there permanently.

We established roots. We had our homestead. Settle down.

Dwell down. Dwell permanently. That's kat oikeo.

And this is the aorist active infinitive. I pray for you to be strengthened and for Christ to dwell. I pray for Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith.

Now, you say, well, I can't just ask Christ to come dwell in your heart. He's not going to go there because I said so. What if it's not qualified? What if it's not a place he can dwell? What does Paul

say? I pray for Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith.

Meaning, I pray that your faith will grow and create the environment where Christ can come and dwell. He's really praying for the end by talking about the means, which is faith. So, dwell in your hearts through faith.

These are the first two infinitives. I pray that he would give you to be strengthened and for Christ to dwell. Covered those two, right? Now, we have two perfect passive participles.

Rooted and grounded. Rooted and grounded. And it says being rooted and grounded in love.

But if you look at the Greek text here, in love and agape, it sits right between the katoikasi infinitive and these two passive participles, rooted and grounded. So, the English translators here said, well, in love being rooted and grounded. And then they flipped it around.

Rooted and grounded in love. But in the text, in love comes right after may dwell in your hearts through faith. In love.

And I would argue that if you circle in love and put an arrow and stick it in there after through faith, we have Christ dwelling in your hearts through faith in love. In love, I think, goes with that preceding infinitive. It is through faith and it is in love.

And both of those conditions are associated with the indwelling Christ. Okay? We'll document that a bit later. I just want to finish this clause here.

That you, being rooted and grounded, may be able to comprehend. And these are perfect passive participles. You having been rooted.

You having been grounded. And Paul uses these same terms. Depending on if you have a cross-reference Bible, they may already be there.

But Colossians 2.7. Remember, Colossians is in the same bag with this letter. Paul wrote them at the same time, perhaps on the same day. Colossians 2.7. Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Rooted and built up. This is the perfect passive participle from chrizao. And you have femelao, which is grounded.

And you have this in Colossians 1.23. If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast. You see why I think love goes up with the preceding Christ.

Christ, to dwell in your hearts through faith in love. This is the rooting and the grounding. You know how in athletics and in martial arts and in boxing, any physical endeavor where you've got

to interact with another person or with the environment, your stance, the way you stand, the balance that you achieve is important.

You've got to stand with your feet shoulder width apart, with your knees slightly bent, and your center of gravity over your feet. And that's how you approach someone. If you're boxing, it's all about footwork.

If you're doing self-defense, it's footwork. If you're playing golf, it's footwork. If you're playing basketball, if you're going to stand at bat, your stance is important.

You've got to have firm footing. Fullbacks that run the ball through the line in football. You'll hear commentators over and over again talk about how a fullback keeps his legs under him.

He keeps driving with his legs. He keeps driving, driving, driving, and he gets the extra yardage because he keeps his feet where he can drive himself through the pile and not get tackled. It's footwork, footwork, rooted and grounded.

It's your feet on the ground, driving, driving, driving. That's what this has at its essence. Having been rooted, having been grounded, this has to come first.

You can't do the other until your feet are on the ground. And these things are more or less sequential. So first of all, I pray, Paul says, that God would give you to be strengthened, to be carrying around and possessing power of a potential nature, the dunamis, the ability to deal with whatever comes up in the inner man, and that God would give you for Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith in love.

This is the Christ-like attitude. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. We have that whole Philippians 2 passage.

Think about it. This is Christ in you, the hope of glory. This is, if you have my words and keep them, you're the one that loves me, Jesus says.

I and my Father will come and make our home with that person. Christ may dwell, Christ to dwell, this is a potential, in love, through faith, that you, and this is in order that these things build on each other, so that you, having been rooted, having been grounded, may be able to comprehend. Notice, comprehension, the in love is a little bit out of place there.

Being rooted and grounded, I mean, do you have to be rooted and grounded in love to comprehend? No, you need to be strengthened and experiencing the presence of Christ through faith in love, through faith in love, rooted and grounded to comprehend. That's why in love needs to move up where the Greek puts it. Rooted and grounded, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints.

Comprehend is a great word. It's the last one we're going to look at this morning. It is kata

lambano.

Lambano means to receive, and kata again means down, and so you receive from above. So it comes to mean to understand, to grasp, to attain in a definitive way. So comprehend is a good translation here, but it misses a little bit of the directional idea.

Kata lambano means that this comes from above, and it is traveling in a downward direction, and you catch it. This is the long bomb, the Hail Mary pass, you catch it. This is the freshen of grace from above, and you're under it.

This is the blessing of God descending. This is the dove descending, and you're there to receive it. There is a directionality here that comprehend doesn't quite catch.

Having been rooted, having been grounded, and see, that's the downward side. With your feet planted on the ground, you can catch what is coming from above. You're in a position.

You're positioned, rooted, and grounded already in the past, so that when it comes, you receive it. You comprehend it with all the saints. So, what's the upshot? What's the final conclusion from what we've seen thus far? Two things.

A, we have a wonderful example here of intercessory prayer. We look at what is possible in the realm of praying for one another in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. Secondly, in this prayer is distilled the objectives for a healthy, productive Christian life, and that is strength in the inner man, competency to cope with whatever comes up.

You're prepared in advance. You're not, you know, how it is. You have a problem.

What was I thinking about yesterday? You have, let's say, a light goes out that ought to be on some device you have. What do you do? I have no idea. I'll Google that.

I'll put in the make and model of this toaster that's not lighting up and toasting or this device that's not working. I'll Google that, and I'll get the information, and maybe I can figure out how to fix it. That is not, that's the opposite of what this is.

If you were a toaster repairman and you took one look at the toaster and you said, I can tell you exactly what's wrong with that. The wires come off the dial there. That's strengthened with might in the inner man.

You've already got the knowledge and experience. You know exactly how to cope with this. You don't need a reference.

You don't need a lookup. You don't need to phone a friend. You've got it inherent in you, and when it comes up, you just deal with it.

It's like somebody in basketball phoned you a quick pass. You immediately catch it, pivot, and shoot. You know exactly what to do.

You're ready. In music, one of the funniest things I ever saw was the Smothers brothers doing one of their typical duets, and Tommy Smothers is playing the guitar, and Dickie's playing the bass, and they're playing along, and after Dick Smothers finishes singing the verse, he turns to his brother Tommy and he says, take it. And one of those typical Tommy Smothers looks, and he said, take it.

Well, he didn't know what to do. He wasn't ready. We want to be ready.

When God says take it, you're ready. You just launch right into a lick or the next verse or whatever it is you're supposed to do. This is strengthened with might in the inner man.

It's not just some abstract strength in some abstract inner man. This is knowing what to do and how to do it. As soon as it pops up, it's almost a reflex.

You recognize it and you know exactly what the required skill is. You implement that skill and you meet the need. Strengthened with might, empowered with that potential to meet whatever comes up.

We can pray this for one another, but this is, in fact, the objective, and we can pray for ourselves. We can aspire to this and strive for it and work toward it ourselves. And this comes through his spirit.

And if we can't cultivate it directly, we can't just, you know, drink some magic potion and suddenly be strong. How do we acquire these things? We seek the active presence and power of God's Holy Spirit. That's how this comes to us.

It's indirect. Presence and power of the Spirit, we will have this. Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith in love.

And this gives us the double direction that we spoke of earlier of the cross. In faith, that's looking to the Word of God. In love, that's circulating with fellow believers, forgiving one another even as God in Christ has forgiven you, caring for one another, encouraging one another, speaking the truth to one another.

Those 60 other one another commands in the New Testament are in love. Christ dwelling in your hearts through faith in love. When James talks about works, he's largely talking about the expression of love in the body, in the family.

I will show you my faith by my love, my works that reflect and express love. So this is our task. This is our challenge.

This is our prayer for one another and for ourselves. This is our objective. It's nice to know what the objective is, right? If you've got an assignment, if you've got a rubric that you have to fulfill, it's nice to know what are you looking for? What do you really want? Well, it tells us very explicitly, this is the goal.

This is what we hope to achieve. And because it's wonderfully clear, we can pursue it with great energy and with great enthusiasm. We know what it is and we know how to achieve it.

And praise God that His Word is this clear. It's now just up to us to think it's important enough to do. Well, we'll close here and pick up in verse 18.

What is it that we should comprehend in four dimensions? We'll look at that starting next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the power that You have made available to us.

We are made of dust. We return to it when we die in the outer man. But our inner man can be refreshed and renewed and strengthened and prepared for the eternal future to live and dwell with You through the things that You have revealed to us in this portion of Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will make them clear and salient to us as we return to the details of our lives, that we can be objective and recognize who we are in Christ and what our potential is from these gifts that come from Your heavenly throne. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.