

## PRAYING THE HEART OF GOD LESSON ONE OUTLINE EPHESIANS 3:14-21

- I. Introduction
  - A. Class objective- to know and understand the heart of God so our prayer line up with who He is, who we are in Him, and what He is doing
  - B. Class based on D.A. Carson's book *Praying with Paul*- excellent resource
- II. Two important questions
  - A. What is prayer? Talking to/with God
    1. Implies conversation which can be anticipated or dreaded, intimate/superficial
  - B. Factors which determine attitude
    1. Who I am talking with
    2. The topic of conversation
- III. The heart of God in prayer
  - A. Two important considerations to keep in mind
    1. God considers it important for you to know who He is
    2. He also considers it important for you to know that He knows who you are
  - B. Since we as Christians believe this, if prayer is a struggle, is there something we have not known or apprehended about God> a barrier to anticipated prayer?
    1. Leads to prayer staying at the level of 'TALKING WITH GOD'
- IV. Exploring this with Paul in Ephesians 3:14-21
  - A. Important! These prayers are Scripture and express the Father's desired blessings for us
  - B. Prayer is strategically located in letter between description of salvation and miracle of Israel and Gentiles being joined and changes in the life of the believers accomplished by God's power in response to this prayer
  - C. Three sections to the prayer
    1. v. 14-16 the power Paul is asking for from the Father
    2. v. 17-19 why he is asking for it
    3. v. 20-21 his glorification of the Father
  - D. v. 14-16 What is the request?
    1. v. 14
      - a. For this reason- all Christ has accomplished as described in first half
        - i. 3:11-12 we have boldness and confident access through Jesus
        - ii. Therefore, Paul can pray directly to the Father!
      - b. I bow my knees> kneeling posture indicates very fervent prayer
    2. v. 15
      - a. Before the Father- He is the true head of all families
    3. v. 16
      - a. Basic request= that the Father would grant that we would be strengthened> two important details here
        - i. The Father must grant this
        - ii. We are strengthened- passive, we receive strength!

- b. How? With POWER
  - c. The source? The Holy Spirit within us
  - d. The measure? The riches of His glory= infinite!
- E. v. 17-19 Why does Paul request this? So we will know God's heart and love for us
- 1. v. 17
    - a. SO THAT Christ will dwell in our hearts- strong word, house metaphor
      - i. He will make our hearts truly His home, transforming them
      - ii. It takes power to overcome our resistance to change!
    - b. We are rooted and grounded in His love- who we are in Him!
  - 2. v. 18 to comprehend-
    - a. Comprehend with the saints the enormity of His love
      - i. Comprehend= lay hold of with the mind, understand
      - ii. Must grasp the truths of the gospel
    - b. Spatial analogy- it's enormity is without measure, limitless
    - c. This appreciation can lead from talking with God to MEETING WITH GOD in prayer- we know who He is and our place in His heart
      - i. Entering His world, plans, economy
      - ii. Prayer anticipated, rejoiced in, planned for
  - 3. v. 19 still more! To KNOW the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge
    - a. Deeper than mental knowing> experiential knowing in all our being, in all our time, in every area
    - b. Putting Christ's love to the test in life and finding it sure and true
    - c. Move from talking with God, to meeting with God, to BEING WITH GOD all day every day
    - d. Still have times of meeting for particular focused time of intercession or processing, gaining wisdom, like son/daughter with parent
    - e. Leads to natural flow of petition, prayer, confession, repentance, rejoicing as His Word is incorporated
  - 4. God has initiated this close/intimate relationship and desires to develop it
- F. v. 20-21 Doxology
- 1. Directs attention to God's exceedingly abundant ability and power
    - a. Prayer is about what HE can do! His power works in us!
  - 2. Answers to prayer> glorification of God
    - a. In the church and in Christ Jesus
    - b. In the bride and the bridegroom
    - c. In the body and in the head
    - d. In all people for all time
  - 3. AMEN
    - a. Response to solemn prayer/discourse making its substance our own
    - b. So it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled!

## LESSON ONE SUGGESTIONS

1. Read this prayer at least once a day for the next week, but preferably more. Read it at different time in the day and when you are in different frames of mind. Write down what stands out to you at any one time, or in a particular challenge or trial.
2. Take some time to think about your relationship with your earthly father. Are there aspects or weaknesses in that relationship which have affected your understanding or appreciation of your relationship with your heavenly father? All earthly fathers have failings, as they are human and affected by the fall. Do you attribute some of those same weaknesses to our Father? How does this affect your prayer life?
3. Think about someone you could use this prayer to pray for. It could be yourself, a brother or sister in Christ, an unsaved person or an enemy! Use all or part of the prayer and write out a prayer for that person.