

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on January 27, 2019:**

**"Transforming Life Lessons
for the Church Today from Ephesus:
Part 7 (Ephesians 3:14-21) –
Paul's Prayer of Confidence in God's Power"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that Paul's prayer for the Ephesians to be rooted and established in the love of Jesus is so important for us today, as well.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Even though we've been interrupted, today we're going to get back to our series on Ephesians.
- The text we're going to look at really dovetails into and fits with what we've been looking at these past few weeks with our vision sermons.
- But first, pastor Craig had an announcement to make.

The Ditty Meister is back!

- His wife, Nan calls him "A Ditty Meister" because he can come up with various jingles.
- In the movie, "Defiance", it depicted a real family, the Ryans, who lived in Defiance, Ohio and who were struggling financially as a large family with 8 or 9 kids.
- So, the wife got paid to write little jingles for the local supermarket and eventually got pickup by Hollywood.
- As pastor Craig was thinking about us as congregation one morning, this Ditty came to him.

A Diddy about Family:

As a Family on any given Day,
while walking in the Way,
and come what May,
we all have a Say,
in how we Pray, Play, Pay, and Stay,

basking in his Ray,
being transformed like Clay
making spiritual Hay, without DeLay
in MonroviA,
Okay?

- Obviously, we're here as family and we're on a mission. And this is a mission from God.
- Paul, in this letter to the Ephesians, is showing us a picture of what life in the church is like.

- Today, we're going to focus on the prayer that Paul had for the church at Ephesus.
- And we'll see how closely this correlates with what our church here in Monrovia is moving towards.

Recap Transforming Life Lessons from part six in this series (3:1-13):

1. Paul considered himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ.
 - Now, there's something we can learn from that.
 - Today, there's so much emphasis about being independent, upon being autonomous, not having anyone dictate what we do.
 - Now is that God's message to us or is that part of the message from the world around us?
 - What is the true message for the church?
 - Now, Paul, the chosen apostle to the Gentiles, considered himself a *dulos* (Greek) or slave or prisoner of Jesus Christ.
 - Even, today, if we consider ourselves prisoners of Jesus, there is nothing wrong with that, because it indicates a close relationship we have with Jesus.
 - So, this comment sets the tone for Paul's prayer.
2. The mystery of Jesus Christ was revealed to Paul and other apostles.
3. The mystery is that Gentiles are saved and included in Jesus Christ.
 - This mystery was the unfolding of God's inclusive plan of salvation for all humanity.
 - Through Jesus and His Incarnation, all of us are included in God's love, even though many don't even have a clue about this. (Our role is help them get a clue, so to speak.)
4. In Jesus Christ we have unfathomable riches. (Let's not take them for granted.)
5. The church is the means by which God's wisdom is made known, even to the angels.
 - Now, the church is not just something we do on Sunday morning.
 - We have to realize that the church is the bride of Christ being prepared for Jesus' Second Coming.
 - That's not just a light metaphor, that's what we are engaged in.
 - The church has meaning ever since Jesus established it back in the first century.
6. Through faith we have been given bold and confident access to Jesus Christ.
 - That was such good news back at that time because the Jewish system had set up all kinds of barriers to keep even good Jews out of a relationship with God.
 - And the Jewish people had access to God only through the priesthood.
 - Under Jesus, all of us have true access to God, the Father
7. The tribulations Paul went through were for glory.
 - Let us never forget that we enter the kingdom of God through suffering.
 - Now we have many blessings in this life, but when we go through trials, please know that it's for God's glory, know that it's for our spiritual transformation, know that it's part of the way God changes us.
 - Especially during trials, we need to remember that God has us in His love.

- Paul talked about the various trials he went through serving God – being shipwrecked, being stoned several times, or not knowing where his next meal might come from.
- Yet, Paul counted all these trials as “all joy.”
- We need to remember that being a part of the church is not just an invitation to a picnic.
- But rather it’s an invitation to change; it’s an invitation for spiritual transformation, which doesn’t always come easy.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NASB):

1. Introduction to Paul’s prayer (:14-16)

14) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

- Right up front, Paul positions himself in humility, because at that time, prayer was done typically standing up.
- So, Paul bowing before God in prayer, reaching out and seeking God’s heart as to what He wants the church at Ephesus to become.

15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,

- Paul shows us that the church is considered family and that God the Father is the Father of all families both here on earth and in heaven.
- And so this concept of family is not just a physical thing, but also has spiritual significance.
- And the fact that we are here, in Monrovia, as a family and going together so that we can go far rather than fast is an illusion to what Paul is saying here.
- Our true identity comes from our spiritual family.

2. Substance of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians (:16-19)

- They would be strengthened with might.
- They would be rooted and established in love.
- Knowing Jesus Christ’s love for them.
- And that they would be filled up to God’s fullness.
- Paul didn’t consider these automatic, even though all of God’s promises are available to us and would be delivered according to God’s plan for them.
- Doesn’t “rooted and established in love” and “knowing Jesus’ love” sound like “Loving God and loving others without fear, shame, guilt, or doubt”?
- Paul’s message for the Ephesian church is no different for us today

16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,

- What Paul is saying here is that God wants our relationship to come from the inside out and it’s the inner man that is renewed.
- The inner man is the Holy Spirit working within us.

- Paul wants the church to be strengthened by the Spirit.
- Pastor Craig then asked the members, “What are some ways you feel strengthened by the power of the Spirit?”
- It’s when you have different thoughts that challenge what you are about say or do.
- The power of the Spirit works on that “old man” as Paul calls us in Romans.
- We need to be “in tune with the Holy Spirit.”
- Now being in tune with the Holy Spirit is not necessarily a natural thing. It’s a supernatural thing.
- We become in tune with the Holy Spirit through spiritual practices and through the spiritual pathway.
- You hear some say that if God just brought back some of those epic miracles, like the parting of the Red Sea, then people would believe in God.
- But did the Israelites really believe in God back then? Not really.
- Today, God deals with humanity differently – He gives us the Holy Spirit.
- And it’s through the Holy Spirit that the natural or “old man” is changing and transforming.
- When we catch ourselves from doing the wrong thing – that’s a true miracle.
- The true miracles that happen today happen in our hearts.
- So, when Paul is speaking about this power through the Spirit in the inner man, it’s that power of change, it’s that power of spiritual transformation that’s going on.

17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- Remember, we said that the purpose of Scripture was #1 belief and #2 response.
- It all starts with the fact that we know who we are in Jesus and then that love begins to grow and transform us.
- Paul’s prayer is that all be “rooted and grounded in love.”

18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19) and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

- The love of Jesus for each of us is so hard to describe as Paul shows here.
- The phrase, “that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God” is translated in the NIV as, “that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”
- Each of us experiences God’s love differently based upon the depth of our relationship we have with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- When Bruce Marchiano was at New Hope several years ago, had an interesting interaction with one of our members Rod Gula.
- Bruce played Jesus in the “Matthew” films.
- Bruce asked the question, “If Jesus walked in here and conveyed His love, what would that look like?”

- To demonstrate Jesus' love, Bruce just wrapped himself around Rod and wrapped his leg around the back of Rod's legs and tightly hugged him.
- That's the kind of love Jesus has for us.
- Now, when Bruce was at one of our churches in Ohio, he talked about some of the supernatural experiences he went through in the filming of Matthew series.
- When Bruce got to the section in Matthew where Jesus was wailing against the nation Israel, he didn't want to appear snarky representing Jesus, but wanted to show the love and concern of Jesus, but he didn't know how to do it.
- Bruce prayed about that and asked God, "Help me to convey this scene in the same way that your love did then and now."
- Then Bruce felt the love of God in such an amazing way that it almost consumed him.
- And he also got a vision from God that Jesus couldn't force humanity to go a different way than they were going which would bring disaster upon them.
- So during the filming of this scene, Bruce broke down in such emotional tears of response that God had given him.
- Bruce felt that emotional agony that Jesus went through because He truly loved His people so much, yet knowing they were not going to change.
- We can't teach others about this incredible, unfathomable love of Jesus, it has to be received and experienced by them.
- This brings us back to what we were talking about in our two vision messages – it's all about loving God first.
- Pastor Craig can't force us to love God; he can't change who we are or even who he is.
- All, pastor Craig can do is to encourage us to partake in that relationship by spending time in prayer, study and meditation.
- We can have conversation with God through prayer, curiosity with God through study, contemplation of God through meditation.
- So, prayer, study, meditation, along with fellowship, giving, and worship help fill us with God's love that Paul is so dramatically speaking about.
- We need to experience God's love which surpasses knowledge and provides the means by which we can be filled up to the fullness of God's grace and His divinity.
- All of this helps us as we go through our daily lives, whether talking with people or writing e-mails, or driving on the freeway, etc.
- Our behavior should reflect our Christian life.
- Now the two main reasons why people don't go to church is that they feel Christians are hypocrites and that Christians judge them.
- Now, if we are living out of our "old man" and if our "inner man" is not being renewed on a daily basis, then that's going to be the natural reaction we're going to have – we're going to look hypocritical to others and we're going to judge others.
- The only way God's love flows out of us to others is if we are first in love with God.
- Remember, we talked about this in the past, that the percentage of church goes who feel they have a flourishing relationship with God is only 11%.
- Now we can do something about that by partaking in flourishing relationship with God,

19) NIV and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

3. Conclusion to Paul's prayer (:20-21)

20) Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21) to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

- Does asking imply a relationship and our interaction?
- We need to be engaged in that relationship knowing that God has the power to do everything.
- Our focus should be how we engage that spiritual transformation.

Closing prayer