

Abiding Through Faith in Christ Eph 3:16-17a

Paul petitions God on behalf of the Ephesians: **in order that he may grant you according to the wealth of his glory.”**

Since we as God’s children are heirs of His, and joint heirs with Christ, it makes sense that Paul is praying that God grant them benefits out of the wealth of His Glory, as he had told them God would. Paul prays that God may give “according to” the wealth of his glory. God’s wealth is poured out on us. The word for glory conveys the idea of the reflection of the essence of one’s being—who He is. And what does he request for the Ephesians?

to be strengthened with power through his Spirit. Two words for power are used here. The first is dynamis δύναμις which has the meaning of “power, ability, capability of acting,” from which we derived our English words “dynamic,” and even “dynamite”, speaking of God’s great power and ability to act on our behalf to accomplish His Will. The second word is krataioo. It means “to strengthen” by exercising. He’s not telling the Corinthians to summon up the courage within themselves so much, but to be strong to stand firm in the faith because God is strengthening them to be able. It is God who gives the strength; it is not from the self.

The fact that it is God’s power is further underscored by emphasizing that the source of the strength is **“through his Spirit.”** While back in 1:17 Paul prayed **17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him,** asking that the Holy Spirit bestows insight and wisdom and disclosure into the knowledge and nature of God, here the Spirit acts as agent of God, enabling believers to be strengthened with His power. So, it is through God’s Spirit that we are strengthened with God’s ability to act to do His Will. And where does this strengthening take place?

in the inner person

So Paul now tells us that the type of strength that he’s talking about that the Holy Spirit gives is strength in the inner person, not physical strength. Paul is praying for the Ephesians that they will allow God, through His Holy Spirit will give them the inner strength to win this battle against their flesh, and do His Will in their lives instead of the will of their sinful flesh. This transformation by the renewing of their minds is the transforming work of the Holy Spirit into having the same mind that was in Christ Jesus to do God’s Will, and not our own. Since we are helpless in spiritual battle without the Holy Spirit’s help, we need to be strengthened with power through God’s Spirit.

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

This word for dwell katoikeo means “to live, dwell” or “to take up one’s abode,” down in. So, to “to dwell, reside, live, inhabit, colonize, settle down in.” It means a settlement, a continual dwelling, rather than a temporary sojourn. Our relationship to the earth is as a temporary sojourn, our relationship with Christ is that we are in Him fully forever, settled down, homesteaded in Him. The strengthening in the inner person by the Holy Spirit results in the deep indwelling of Christ by means of faith and this takes place in our hearts as believers as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit. We must be in Him, and He in our heart, our “inner person”. Our inner person, our heart determines much about our relationship with God. Jesus points out the necessity of remaining in fellowship with Him, abiding in Him, in John 15:4-5 **4 Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.** We must abide with Him, remain with Him, remain in fellowship in the light with him so that we are cooperating with His loving plan for our lives. It allows God to work through us, in continual relationship with us, and It gives glory to God as we more and more resemble our heavenly father. Jesus continues in verse 8 **8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love.** And how do we remain in Jesus’ love, as He has commanded us to? He answers in verse 10: obedience. He says **10 If you keep My**

commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. So, we have fellowship with Jesus through obedience to Him, abiding in His love. Abiding in the love of Christ involves habitual obedience to God and His commandments. It is a life lived like Christ lived. Col 3:16 ¹⁶ **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** Though habitual obedience is not automatic in the life of the believer, we have an obligation through what Christ has done for us to make it more automatic through habitual imitation of Christ. Ephesians 5:1-2 says **5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.** The one who says that he abides in Him, to have a relationship with God should imitate the character and the lifestyle of Jesus, who always and only did the Will of the Father, continually serving God and meeting the needs of others. In 1 John 2:6 **6 the one who says that he remains in Him ought, himself also, walk just as He walked.** This term *opheiló óφείλει* means "to owe", which is translated ought, means to have a moral obligation to be repaid. So we have a moral obligation to walk as Jesus walked, in light of the So Great a Salvation that we have received. Realizing what Jesus has done for us, we have this debt that we can never repay, but we can live our lives for Christ as His Bondservants, just as Jesus lived His life on earth as a perfect Bondservant of God. Truly abiding in Jesus means that we have a desire to know Him better and to get closer to Him in relationship, and to allow His presence and His Word to influence us. Jesus' words are at the forefront of our mind as we live out our life, we have, more and more, the mind of Christ, so we are influenced by Him, and desire to become more like Him. Stubborn clinging to a sinful lifestyle is an indicator of self-deception regarding salvation. In 1st John 3:6, we read **"No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."** Verse 9 says that those who have been **"born of God" will not continue to live sinfully.** A sinful lifestyle is incompatible with the New Life in Christ. "A fish cannot remain on land for long because its nature is to seek water." A fish could flop onto the shore and survive for a short time. But it was not made for land and cannot continue there.

As His followers, we will still sin. But, when we do, we are commanded to confess that sin to God in agreement with God about how bad sin is. We stand guilty before Him with no argument and no justification of our own. Our Advocate steps before the Judge, and together they agree that, because we are "in Christ," no further punishment is necessary. Jesus has already made sufficient payment to redeem us. So, when we come to God and admit to our guilt for specific sins, He promises to forgive them. We know they are forgiven on the basis of Jesus' shed blood—His finished work on the cross. And by agreeing with God that sin is sin, and that we have sinned, there is a change made in our heart. And it's this repentance of sin, based on a desire to remain in close relationship with Him, and get closer to him that conforms us more into His image, and this cooperation with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in us that makes all the difference in our hearts. And we are cleansed, making us morally pure. How are we cleansed? This is accomplished through cleansing by Jesus' blood, His death on the cross on our behalf.

If we follow Christ in obedient service to the Kingdom of God we do not need to worry about our status in this world, because we have a place of honor in the next world. We don't need to worry about glory and applause and adoration here, because we will be a treasure to Jesus in the next world, and receive glory and honor because we are a fellow heir with Christ. If we live and act according to God's revealed will in God's service doesn't need so much to worry about what's going to happen to this world someday, because this world is not our home, we are merely pilgrims passing through.