

Sunday July 26th 2009  
Ephesians Revisited – Part Five

1). Eph 3:14 ¶ *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

a). Here at the conclusion of Ephesians Chapter 3 we see Paul bowing his knees ‘to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’, firstly, in complete submission to the will of God with respect to His plans and purposes for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, which would include God’s appointment of Paul as an Apostle - sent with the ‘good news’ concerning the 7<sup>th</sup> Day to the Gentiles - and secondly, in prayer for the church of Ephesus. Especially those who would be ‘faithful in Christ Jesus’.

b). This is the second prayer that we find in the opening chapters of Ephesians – the first coming at the conclusion of Chapter 1 – and both of these prayers need to be seen within the context of that which has preceded them.

c). The first Chapter of the Book draws attention to the plans and purposes of God writ large – dealing with the overall scope of God’s purpose with regards to the coming 7<sup>th</sup> Day by and for His Son with respect to rulership over the earth and an inheritance to be gained by the Gentiles grafted in to be a part of the one new man in Christ, ruling in the stead of Satan. The very substance of what Paul had taught them during his three years of ministry there - Eph 1:7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

d). And the prayer that concludes this Chapter has as its focus a continuing and ever increasing revelation of that which God has set in place for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day thereby proclaiming the absolute certainty of the fulfillment of God’s purpose so as

to produce faithful obedience in those who are the recipients of this revelation as it is brought forth to them from above - Eph 1:15 ¶ *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

e). This prayer then has to do with the saints, those who would be faithful in Christ Jesus, continuing to receive the revelation brought forth from above, so that they may clearly see all that the scriptures contain, continuing to build on the ‘epignosis’ knowledge that they already had – in essence that the Christ had to suffer and then enter into His glory leaving us an example that we should follow - 1Pe 2:21 *For this is your calling; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps;*

f). Following on from this the second Chapter again focuses on the plans and purposes of God by and for His Son in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, only this time with a more personal emphasis – showing what God has done for us individually, presenting the reason for our eternal redemption – Eph 2:1 ¶ *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, .....11 ¶ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

g). And the third Chapter continues with the same focus giving detail of the reason for Paul’s appointment as an Apostle to the Gentiles and an explanation with regards to the ‘mystery’ that was committed to him – Eph 3:1 ¶ *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the*

mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

h). And so in the light of the personal, individual content of Chapters 2 and 3 within the context of the mystery, Paul then prays concerning a work of the Spirit within us individually with regards to our individual race of faith.

i). Paul's overwhelming concern is that those in Ephesus should be found faithful in the midst of the 'savage wolves' who would come in 'not sparing the flock', in the midst of those from amongst themselves who would rise up 'speaking perverse things'; in the midst of the onslaught of the world, the flesh and the Devil; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. And we would realize that this is not just Paul's concern for those in Ephesus, but also God's concern for all Christians throughout this dispensation and, particularly within our own setting, the eternally redeemed who hear the message of the Kingdom within the Laodicean church of the end of this dispensation, as Satan tries to stop our fruit production.

j). Paul's request to God is that those who would be 'faithful in Christ Jesus' would - *be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

k). It is the 'inner man' the man of the Spirit who must be strengthened so that the old man will not gain the preeminence – a conflict between these two that Paul outlines in – Ro 7:21 *I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

l). And we would realize that our old man never becomes better, but on the contrary - Eph 4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*

m). And this strength in the inner man, according to our scripture, will come through a mighty, wonderful work – Greek 'dunamis' – through His Spirit.

n). This though is not a charismatic experience, but rather, as we see from comparing scripture with scripture, it is to do with renewal and transformation.

o). 2Co 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

p). Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

q). And we see here in Colossians that the 'new man', the 'inner man' is renewed in knowledge – in 'epignosis' – the meat and strong meat of the word –

those things surrounding the coming glory of Christ and the Melchizedek priesthood – the realization of the purpose for our eternal salvation.

r). This would be the same thought found in - Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

s). It is through our proper engagement with the word of God, keeping ever before us the focus of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day that we will have renewal and strength in our inner man. Our inner man is a spiritual man and can only be nourished through the Spirit via the word – the ‘epignosis’ word.

t). This is the process of transformation that we know as the ‘metamorphosis’, that we have previously studied in - Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Eph 4:23 *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

u). It is only by aligning our mind, our thinking, with that which God has planned for us in the future that we can escape the snares and pitfalls of this world. In fact it is only by doing this that we can patiently endure the pain and the uncertainty of our present circumstances. This tension between the uncertain present and the absolutely certain future guaranteed by the Holy Spirit is poignantly shown to us in - 2Co 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and age lasting weight of glory,*

v). And as we have seen Paul prays that God would grant this strengthening of the inner man through the Spirit – the inference being that God may not grant it. And God’s not granting it would need to be seen after the same fashion as that which we find in - Heb 6:1 ¶ *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection.....3 And this we will do if God permits.4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

w). Now these would be two ways of looking at the same thing with regards to those who have begun the journey toward the heavenly Kingdom, and both concern issues of faithfulness and unfaithfulness as viewed by an omniscient God .

x). Paul’s prayer then continues by referencing the very greatest strength our inner man can possess – love - 17 *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God*

y). In - Col 2:6 *As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

We see that we are rooted in Him – being rooted in love and rooted in Christ would obviously be one and the same thing as ‘God is love’. The prayer is that we would be able to comprehend ‘what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ’.

z). A love that we see detailed in Chapter 5 of Ephesians –  
Eph 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

2). Christ’s love is sacrificial with a view to the fulfillment of the Godhead’s purpose for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day. Christ’s love for us is expressed in His absolute obedience to His Father’s will because of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day - Heb 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

a). Not only do we need to understand what it means that ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son’ – but this same sacrificial love, expressed through our obedience to the commands of Christ, must of necessity be our practice. And such practice is so far removed from our soulical self, our old man, that it can only come about through the strengthening of our inner man through the Spirit’s work of renewal - Php 2:5 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

b). We are clearly looking at things concerning dying to the flesh and walking according to the Spirit as unconditional love for us can only ever come out of the death of self.

3). And so, as Paul’s prayer for us to be filled with all the fullness of God comes to a close we have reached a point of transition within the Book.

a). We have seen God’s focus on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day and Paul’s prayer with respect to our continuing mature understanding of it.

b). We have seen the enormity of what God has done for us individually and Paul's prayer with respect to the work of the Spirit within us that we shouldn't lose God's purpose for us.

c). What follows, beginning with Chapter 4, now moves away from what we might call 'doctrine' to the way we are to live in response to the 'doctrine' we receive – that which we might call 'practical application'.

d). And we should note the importance of the inextricable link between these two.

e). Foundation must always be laid to provide the context into which faithful obedience is to be placed. Without the foundational context faithful obedience has no meaning.

4). Eph 4:1 ¶ *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 ¶ with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

a). Having focused on the 'big picture' so to speak and having focused on the individual we now move to issues of relationship. From the vertical – us and God – to the horizontal us and each other.

b). Which is in no way surprising - 1Jo 3:14 ¶ *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*

c). Our love for God and our faithful obedience to the commands of Christ, which are one and the same thing, do not exist in a vacuum. They are right here in this room in the way we relate to one another. They are in our homes and in our places of work; and in the quietness of our mind when no one else is around. It is in the small things, outside of the context of the corporate gathering that our faithful obedience is proven. It is easy for us to lie to one another here and create the semblance of spirituality, but it is behind closed doors that the true level of our spiritual maturity emerges. Let's be encouraged though by the importance of the small things - Lu 19:17 *"And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*

5). Chapter 4 begins then with the challenge to walk worthy of our calling – so let's be clear as to what our calling is.

a). There is a great deal of confusion concerning the word 'calling', created of course in the minds of men, with the word 'calling' used to describe our

function within the body which would supposedly be attended by a supernatural voice from heaven giving us our job description.

b). Scripturally though this is not it, and even right here within the context of these first five verses of Chapter 4, our calling is clear – ‘you were called in one hope of your calling’.

c). To what does our ‘hope’ refer? The appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom with attendant positions as joint heirs with Him - Tit 2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

d). In other words - Heb 3:1 ¶ *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers [companions] of the heavenly calling,*

e). Ours is a heavenly calling, a calling to come out from this age to the heavenly realm of the Kingdom in the age to come, a calling to rule with Christ from that heavenly realm over the earth during that coming age in the place of angels.

f). We have been called out of the world with a view to being called out of the called at the Judgment Seat – and in this we all have exactly the same calling.

g). And the realization of our calling is based on our choice to faithful obedience in whatever circumstance we find ourselves - Mt 22:14 *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*[lit. called out of the called]

h). Let’s not be in any doubt about our calling – and because it is a high calling, described as, ‘so great a salvation’, we need to walk worthy of it.

i). To conduct our lives in this present age in such a way as to be deserving of a position with Christ in that coming day, as there is nothing greater that God could set in place for redeemed human beings and is the very heart of God’s revelation to Man.

6). And practically, what walking worthy of our calling looks like begins to be given in v2 - 2 ¶ *with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*

a). Lowliness = Greek – ‘tapeinophrosune’ = from a compound of 5011 and the base of 5424; humiliation of mind, i.e. modesty:--humbleness of mind, humility (of mind, loneliness (of mind).

b). Php 2:3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

c). Gentleness = Greek – ‘praotes’ = from 4235; gentleness, by implication, humility:--meekness.

d). Mt 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

e). Longsuffering = Greek – ‘makrothumia’ = from the same as 3116; longanimity, i.e. (objectively) forbearance or (subjectively) fortitude:-- longsuffering, patience.

f). Col 3:12 ¶ *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*

g). What we see here can be summed up for us in - 1Pe 5:6 *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,*

h). The lowliness, gentleness and longsuffering that we are to walk in now are things that we choose to do for ourselves having been strengthened with might in our inner man through the Spirit by the grace of God. We can note in our 1 Peter scripture that it says, ‘humble yourselves’ – this then is something that we choose to do now with a view to God exalting us in due time.

i). And we do this ‘under the mighty hand of God’ - in other words, in faithful obedience to the word – in response to God, through Paul, beseeching us to walk worthy of our calling.

j). And again of course our lowliness, gentleness and longsuffering are relational – the final phrase of v2 drawing attention to this – ‘bearing with one another in love’.

k). Bearing = Greek – ‘anechomai’ = middle voice from 303 and 2192; to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with:--bear with, endure, forbear, suffer.

l). 1Pe 4:8 *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

m). This is the love of 1 Corinthians 13 – and it is not that love ignores or condones sin, but rather the love we have for each other will not cause us to look on the sin of another with condemnation, but with compassion and mercy and forgiveness, with a view to restoration in respect of Kingdom worthiness, knowing that we too are just as vulnerable - Ga 6:1 ¶ *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

n). v3 then adds, *3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*

o). Endeavoring = Greek – ‘spoudazo’ = from 4710; to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest:--do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavour, labour, study.

p). We must be quick to be diligent to hold fast the unity, the oneness, of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

q). There must be unity between us, but this unity is of the Spirit – we all have the same Spirit to guide us into all truth – there is not a different truth for

different people. We all need to walk in the Spirit, and this is the same for each of us - Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

r). There is no place in the Church for divisions or factions or politics – we are all headed in the same direction with the same end goal in view, and we need each other to be able to get there. Because of this if we hurt each other we are hurting ourselves. No one on this journey gets left behind because they are struggling to keep up. We don't shoot the wounded so they won't slow us down, although inevitably some will turn away and turn back – helping each other, healing each other, bearing each other's burdens with patient endurance is the journey, and it is a privilege for us all to participate in it.

7). The next 3 verses draw attention to the very reasons why we are to be in unity  
*4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

a). Christ' body is one body made up of all born again believers – the faithful and the unfaithful. There is not a different body for Baptists and a different body for Pentecostals and a different body for us. We shall all stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ and give an account. And in that Day it will not be the name over the door of the building that matters but our faithful obedience in respect of our calling.

b). There is only one Spirit, the Holy Spirit who has been sent to search out a Bride for God's Son, and He will only act within the boundaries that have been set for Him. There are of course many deceiving spirits, which is why we need to know what the Holy Spirit has done, is doing and will do, according to the scriptures.

c). There is, as we saw earlier, one hope of our calling – it is the same calling for us all and the same hope for us all. It's not 'going to heaven', but being a joint heir with Christ, receiving our inheritance and the salvation of our soul within the heavenly realm of the Kingdom – this is the direction to which all of scripture moves – there is no alternative ending.

d). There is only one Lord – the Lord Jesus Christ - Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

e). All things have been made by Him and all things have been made for Him – there is no other - Col 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

f). There is one faith, the faith – the faith which leads to the saving of the soul – the faith that will be accounted as righteousness. Faith is not a nebulous concept – it is very specific that’s why it is shown to be singular – one faith leading to one conclusion - 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

g). There is only one baptism in relation to our positioning in the Kingdom Ro 6:4 *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

h). Col 3:3 *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 ¶ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:*

i). It is dying to the flesh pictured in baptism – keeping our old man in the place of death. This is the only baptism that will result in Kingdom life.

j). There is One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all – there is really nothing else that needs to be said about that – the preeminence of God in and over all is without question - Ps 14:1 ¶ <<To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.>> *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."*

8). And so, in these first 6 verses of Chapter 4, the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul, has focused on the unity of our walk in worthiness to our calling.

a). What follows next in Ephesians does not contradict the unity and the oneness, but rather demonstrates the diversity and interdependence of each part of the body forming a whole.

b). But this will have to wait for next time.