

The apostle Paul offers his second prayer for the church in Ephesus in today's study. (The first prayer is in *Ephesians 1:15-23*.) In this prayer, the writer is asking God to work in the hearts of the people of God and display his power through their lives. This prayer is for the body of Christ, the church at Ephesus. Read it as members of the body of Christ.

Remember, Ephesus was the center of the worship of Artemis, drawing pilgrims from around the Middle East and Asia. As the goddess of hunting and fertility, she was referred to as "savior" by some adoring adherents. When a little church started seeing people come to faith as believers, believing in Jesus as the "Savior" in the city of Artemis, the idol worshipers became alarmed. Paul wrote to remind the followers of Jesus who they were in Christ.

1. Talk with God

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

We lay down any worldly position we have when we approach God. The *reason* we are told to talk with God rises from our faith in him (3:12). With humility and confidence, we submit to God the Father who gives all of us our identities. A significant aspect of our prayer to God resides in the way we see God. If we have whittled God down rather than recognizing how incredibly big he is, we will never see the grandeur of what he can be in and through our lives. Our conversation with God is balanced with listening and speaking. God's responses remind us "we are not ourselves by ourselves." (E. Peterson)

2. Trust His Resources

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches

We can never strain the resources of God. God does not give grudgingly or in meager portions. *Everything comes from him.* (Romans 11:36, The Message)

Christians need to be mindful when tempted to "poor mouth" God. God provides what is necessary to sustain the church built on the rock that the gates of Hades cannot overcome (*Matthew 16:18*). Poor mouthing focuses on what believers don't have. Faith focuses on what believers do have in Christ Jesus!

3. Tap into His Power

16b He may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...

Paul prays for God to *strengthen* believers so that we can handle what life sends our way. We are often tempted to underestimate what God can do, because we do not consider God in our calculations.

Carl Bates: "With plans no bigger than yours, you don't need my power."

The *power* of God can grow in each of us as we allow him to transform our thoughts, attitudes, words, deeds and habits. The Holy Spirit reworks our hearts through prayer, Bible study and ministry. He energizes, revitalizes and empowers us to do more than we can imagine

The Holy Spirit must open our *inner being* to make room for *Christ to dwell in our hearts*. How would you define your feeling of being "at home" where you live? How would you define the way you "make Christ at home in your heart"? *Faith* is the hand opening the door for Jesus Christ to enter our lives.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Hebrews 11:6

We often speak of "Jesus coming into our hearts" at conversion. Paul is speaking more often about believers being *in Christ (in him)*.

Lloyd Ogilvie: “Lord, help me to see, what you want me to be, to expect the miracles of your grace, in all that I am called to face.”

The New International Version, 1984 is the Bible translation used in this study unless otherwise noted.

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