

Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

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I. Introduction

What is a typical day supposed to look like for the average Christian, especially a very difficult day? From the looks of things, the lives of many Christians aren't any better than the average agnostic or atheist. Is this what God had in mind, offering us a cloak of holiness that would only cover our miserable lives? What if God was actually offering us His constant presence? What if everywhere we went, the Lord was standing right behind us with endless guidance and support, how would we face life then?

II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

God's goal is for His DNA to become our DNA. He wants to infiltrate every corner of our lives. Every thought we think, He wants us to pass by Him. Every word we speak, He wants to vet before we utter it. He wants every action we take to be based on what He told us. When we study the Bible, the goal is not learning a bunch of information, a bunch of doctrine. God's never just giving us information; instead, He's always telling us what to do based on what He said. What He says are never dead words on a page; His Word is "alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." In the first two chapters of Ephesians here's essentially what God has said to us:

"Do you know what I've given you in My Son? In spite of the fact that you were so sinful, I decided to adopt you into My family and it cost My Son's life to do it. Do you know what this means? It means that My power, which I used to raise My Son from the dead and seat Him high above every other power and ruler—everything is now under His authority, even the rocks—that power now works on your behalf. It also means that you get to rule alongside My Son. Because you see, when I adopted you I did something with you that permanently changed your essence and identity: I took you, who was so lost and dead in sin, so driven by Satan's spirit, and I fused you together with My Son. You used to be dead, now you're alive. You used to rule nothing, now you're seated *together-with* My Son. You used to be completely separated from Me and My people without any hope of salvation. But now you've been so thoroughly united to My Son and My people that you are now the house where I dwell!"

When God says this, what is He offering, what is His desire with us every day, during every thought? Notice how Ephesians chapter three ends:

Chapter 3

3:14-15, in light of everything God has done for us in uniting us to His Son—He's in us and we're in Him, Paul drops to his knees in prayer before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul makes it a point to tell us that He's not just Jesus' Father but ours; we get our family name from Him (what does "Christian" mean? That we're part of Christ and thus a child of God). And we must notice: though this is Paul's prayer, who drove Paul to pray this, what drove everything Paul did? The Spirit of the Lord which beat inside him (Galatians 2:20; 4:6). This means that this is God's prayer for you. Everything in this prayer, what He says about His Spirit, His Son, His Son's love, and His fullness is what God desires for you.

3:16, the first thing Paul asks is that God the Father's Spirit would strengthen us deep inside with might according to His storehouse of power (how much power does God possess? All of it!). What does this mean? He's in essence asking the Father to fortify us so strongly that we could withstand a blast from a trillion hydrogen bombs going off at once inside us. What?! Why do we need such fortification...inside? Because of what the Father's about to put inside us, or rather, what He's about to do inside us with His Son. The Father's going to do something so powerful inside us that it's going to leave us totally filled with His being, with His presence. We're like a bodysuit that God wants to wear, wants to fill to the breaking point with His presence. How can we contain the God of the universe? He makes it possible.

3:17-19, why does God need to fortify you? What's His ultimate desire? That His Son would dwell inside you, that He would permeate down into your DNA. God's not interested in doing a Bible study with you; He's interested in you **experiencing** Him. And how is this to happen? By "faith." What's this mean? Do you believe what Jesus tells you? If you do, do you act on it or are you just another "hearer of the Word" but not a "doer of the Word" as James says (James 1-2)? You might say, "This is hard to believe." It's actually impossible for us and God knows this, which is why His love for us, which runs so deep, takes the smallest bit of faith we have and multiplies it (Mark 9:14-29). And it is because of His great love in which we've been grounded (2:4) that we're able to comprehend what God wants to do with us. And what is it that He wants us to know to the uttermost? The love of Christ!

But then He says something puzzling; He tells us that Christ's love is unknowable; it's beyond our knowledge. How can we understand something incomprehensible? The key is in God's ultimate goal: "that you may be filled with all the fullness of God"! God's not interested in us knowing Him intellectually like a subject we study for 10 years and then write a book about it. No, He wants you to personally know Him, to **experience** Him, to wear Him and for Him to wear you, where you don't know where one begins and the other ends, where His thoughts become your thoughts, His actions become your actions. You know, the way Jesus wore Him (John 5:19-20). Now, if you're familiar with what a Christian is, you'll see a giant problem with what God just said. Scripture is clear that Christ already dwells in us (Galatians 4:6) and God's fullness is already in us (Colossians 1:19, 27; 2:9). So why does God want Christ to dwell in our hearts if He's already there? He's there, but do you live and breathe inside Him and He in you; do you **experience** Him (Galatians 2:20)?

3:20-21, if what God's told us from 1:1-3:19 is true, what should be our response? Praise Him for ever and ever? Yes! a thousand times Yes! We should be praising God from morning to night for the ginormous things He's done for us: uniting us to His Holy Son, giving us part of His inheritance, given us complete access to Him 24/7, taking up residence in us!...for all this and more, we should shout from the mountain tops how grateful we are and how awesome He is. But what else should it make us think and feel? Ever feel like you can't lose? Don't we love those kinds of characters in life and film? We love the person who can save the day against all odds. Would you like to feel like that? Why should we feel like we can't lose, especially during impossible situations? Look what 3:20 says: God can do what for us? *Exceedingly, abundantly* above all that we can ask or imagine! What did Jesus come to give us? An abundant life, John 10:10!! Is this your Christian experience....at work, at home, everywhere?! Or is it a miserable existence interrupted by visits to church on Sunday? Is that all your Christian experience is doing for you, every week you visit God on Sunday and you put on a smile and pretend that life is great?! What is God offering you and have you grabbed it?!.....does what God wants for you in this prayer match what you want for you?

How can we live like nothing can stop us? How can we live as if God is always right behind us, ever-ready with His guidance, with His counsel, with His power, ready to overcome the impossible? We have to hear what He's saying and then act on it by faith, no matter how we feel, no matter how hopeless things look. And when we're tempted to run away, to avoid, to get angry, depressed, anxious, etc., we must seek His voice again.

When we let the Lord's DNA become ours, His Spirit will become our guiding force and we'll sense the Spirit's fruit inside us (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, ... Galatians 5:22-23). When we let Jesus dwell in us, i.e., when we let Him dictate how we'll react to our life, our life will go much better. Jesus wants to be everything that fills us: when we want to get angry, He wants to tell us how and why. When we're tempted to get depressed, He wants to tell us why we shouldn't. When we want to beat ourselves up, He won't let us and instead He'll show us how Satan's lies aren't true. When we want to give up and throw in the towel, He'll show us how to win instead.....a man struggles with his wife but then the Lord steps in to help him and He frees him from Satan's lies and in the process brings him and his wife love, joy, peace.

III. Conclusion

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.