

EPHESIANS 3:13-21 **ALL FOR YOU !**

Therefore, I ask that you do not **lose heart** at my **tribulations** for you, which is your glory.

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.

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— to Him be glory **in the church** by Christ Jesus to all generations, **forever and ever!** Amen!

Have you ever ordered at a restaurant and then been amazed at the size of portion you received?—“All that for me?!” Or maybe on your birthday--“All this?!” Paul is writing to the congregation at Ephesus, where he had spent three years (Acts 20:31). He was currently in prison in Rome for preaching Christ. The people at Ephesus were becoming discouraged in their faith, feeling troubled—hard pressed / squeezed—by what Paul was enduring. They evidently felt partly responsible for his suffering, and were thinking of walking away from Christ, rather than adding to Paul’s suffering. Paul wrote, *I ask you, do **not lose heart** at my **tribulations** for you, which is your glory!* Paul says, Don’t feel badly because of me; don’t walk away from Jesus. My preaching and suffering is for your glory! It is all for you, just as Christ Himself suffered and died—all for you. Don’t turn away from such a gift. *My **tribulations** are your glory!* It was Paul’s privilege to bring them good news—the Good News of Christ. ----- Do you ever think about walking away, because you’re too much work for the congregation or the pastor? That’s why God has brought the congregation together and the pastor—for you! for your eternal encouragement in Christ! Every time Paul says “you” in this text, he’s not just talking of “you” singular, but “you” plural (clear in Greek), all of you, the entire congregation! What Jesus has done and what your pastors do is all for your encouragement and *glory!* Everyone likes “glory”—maybe not social glory—but that things go well for you—no equipment breakdowns, good weather, good health. Your glory in Jesus is His cleansing you from all your sins, His leading you safely through life, death, and the grave, to eternal life in heaven! All of it for you!

*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.* How often do you get down on your knees to pray for someone else’s needs? How would you feel if, say, your own brother got down on bended knees to beg for you? Wow, such a brother! Paul was on knees before God for them—all for them. Don’t walk away from such a treasure! In Jesus, you, as well as every other believer, have special ties with the heavenly Father—physical blessings, yes; but spiritual blessings even more. Therefore, treasure your Christian fellowship with one another in this congregation, and with your pastors, and with the synod. The Lord brings all together for you—for forgiveness and heaven in Christ.

What was Paul specifically asking for them? *I pray that [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.* It was not health, money, success, good weather. Better than that! Paul asks that God would kindly *grant*—not make a deal, or barter—but give them the blessing His glory. His glory is not sand, or beans, or silver. For sinners, the most glorious aspect of God is His pardon for wrongs, for Jesus' sake. Paul prays that God's glory, His pardon, would make them strong, not ready to walk away—but to be “strengthened with might”—which is exactly what they and you need. Such strength does not come in a box; it's not physical. It comes invisibly by the Holy Spirit putting to work in your heart God's Word of Salvation in Jesus. A messenger, a Paul, a pastor—someone!—presents the message of salvation in Jesus to your ears, the message is laid before your heart, your soul, your *inner man*, your spiritual man. And the “Counselor” with capital C, the Holy Spirit, leads you by that Word and Message to trust in Christ, your Redeemer / Rescuer. Paul prays for this trust and faith to grow mightily in their hearts. That is what God's messengers also pray for you today.

Paul continues, *That Christ may **dwell** in your hearts through faith.* Not stay for a few days, as at a motel, but dwell in your heart. Jesus does not “physically” move in; He is present spiritually. Trust Him, believe in Him. The Holy Spirit instills that trust in your heart. Paul wanted Christ to dwell in them. That's what your pastors want for you, because that's what God wants for you. He wants all that for you.

*That you, being **rooted and grounded** in love.* That your relationship with God is not built on anything flimsy, but on the unchanging love of God—on His tremendous, self-sacrificing love for you, no matter how much hurt it involved for Him. Do not walk away from Him; love Him in return. Be rooted in Him like a tall tree rooted deep into the earth, like the massive foundation pilings of a tall skyscraper. In Jesus is security. Paul prays for this mighty strength!

*That you 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**.* He asks that you, together with all the *saints*, all the believers, may comprehend and grasp God's love through Jesus. It is awesome. That is every pastor's prayer, that you may “see” God's great love and care, for you in Christ. How big is God's love? Paul describes it in terms of four dimensions—length, width, depth, and height. Imagine that you are in financial distress and have access to a strip of gold running from Lemmon to Minneapolis--about 500 miles. Nice! Let's say it's not just a strip, but a sheet, extending from the Nebraska border to the Canadian border! That value is almost too big to comprehend. Let's say, not just a sheet, but a solid gold bar, extending ten miles deep into the earth, and ten miles into the sky! Incomprehensible! Paul prays that the tottering Ephesians might solidly know the magnitude of God's love, *the love of Christ which passes knowledge*. Passes knowledge, indeed! We can't grasp such love; it surpasses knowledge; but that's what Paul prays. He wants their faith to be stabilized against all the assaults of Satan. He wants them to *be filled with all the fullness of God!* like cramming 100 bales of hay into a hay shed that holds 25. God can do all things. What a blessing, to grow strong in your faith in Jesus and in His love, that nothing keeps you from heaven!

*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.* Paul prays knowing that God can do anything; the power we have is nothing. The Lord's power has already worked in your proud stone-hard hearts, leading you humbly to say, “Lord, I've done wrong, I'm still wrong. Help me.” “I foolishly drove off the road into a downslope ditch, and thought I could get myself out again, but I can't. I just keep spinning my way further down.” “Lord, You are up on the road with the tow rope that You have already offered. I am sorry, I'm so stubborn. In your undeserved kindness, please help me.” He can do ***exceedingly abundantly** above all that we ask or think*. And all this is for you, you, the members of His invisible church by faith in Jesus, nourished at “church.”

Don't walk away. *To Him be glory **in the church** by Christ Jesus to all generations, **forever and ever!** Amen!* Glory to Him forever, who does all this for you. In His Word of Christ your Savior, He gives you the “biggest portion” ever!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---