

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Christian Turn-On

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21

Code: 1235

I had a great pastors' conference this past week. I was in Oregon for four days with Christian Missionary Alliance men. And I just want to tell you that I'm thankful to the church and the elders for letting me go. I don't like to travel, I missed my kids, I missed the church, and my wife, and it's very difficult for me. But whenever I go, it seems like God confirms to me that I should have gone. And I went to this pastor's conference ... we were in a mansion up in the mountains up there, which wasn't too hard to take.

[Laughter]

It was a place owned by Meyer, who was the mayor of Portland. And Herbert Hoover slept here, and teddy Roosevelt here, and all this...A beautiful place on the Columbia Gorge. But we were all in this one room for three days...one large area...and slept right around that area with about 70 or 80 pastors. And I taught them for about 10½ hours of teaching. And then all day long...three days...I answered questions. And it's very fatiguing, I want you to know.

But God really used that saturation thing to revolutionize some of their lives and some of their ministries. And I was so thrilled about it that I want you to pray that God will give us something like that as we go to Nicaragua with these men who have less tools and less of anything to really use in their ministry than we do here in the states. So you be in prayer about that.

Also, while I was at the pastor's conference, I was, you know, naturally running back through my mind all of the factors of the church, because they were asking me every conceivable question. And we really began to talk about some things in the church. And that led me to preach to you today...this morning and tonight...something totally off the subject of 1 Corinthians or Jude. And what I want to share with you has to do directly with our responsibility as Christians to the fulfilling of the commission and the mission of the church.

As I was thinking about all of these things, we were talking about one thing in particular, and that we're going to talk about this morning. And another thing tonight...I don't want to miss it...we're going to talk about how to finish the unfinished work of Christ. And this really lays down for us what we are to do as a church in days to come, what we are to see as our objective in the church as individuals, and how we contribute to accomplishing the thing which Christ began. So that's tonight, and it's really going to be important...I don't want you to miss it.

But for this morning, we were having a conversation about the fact that it seems so difficult in the church to get Christians up off their sanctified seats and -

[Laughter]

...You know, out into the action. And we were talking about, over and over again, the power of failure in the life of the Christian. The fact that, you know, the divine revelation of God tells us we have all this energy and all this power. And yet, Christians crank it out on one cylinder, limping and coughing and smuttering *[sic]* and smoking, and nothing really ever seems very dynamic.

And the average church is full of a whole pile of spectators who just sort of sit there and watch. And they go out to live a very mediocre Christian life, or even less than mediocre. And we talk about the fact that this means that the pastor or the staff winds up having to do most everything. And how do we get the saints activated? Well, it isn't a question of organization. It isn't a question of administration. It's a question of individual attitude on the part of the Christian toward what God asks of him.

And so in response to that, I decided I'd share with you some things that are on my heart in this regard. And I was reminded of a problem I used to have...I don't have it anymore, but I used to have it...it's always good when you knock off one of those.

[Laughter]

But I used to have the problem of believing certain promises in the Bible. Do you ever face that? You know, the Bible says, "Call to Me _____ and show the great and mighty things _____." And I used to say, "Oh, it's real good. It probably refers to the prophets and surely doesn't refer to me. I never see those kind of great and mighty things which I know not." Or you'd read a promise about, "My God should supply all your needs," and all of us would have anxiety about our needs almost monthly. And we'd say, "Well, that's a nice promise, but I'm not too sure you can really bank on it." Or, "The Lord knows what you have need of. Don't worry about what you eat, what you wear, or where you're going to sleep; God will take care of all of that." And yet, all the time we face anxieties about that. "Have no fear in death, because death is nothing for the Christian." And yet, some people get closer and closer to death, and they get more panicky all the time, even Christians. So some of the promises are hard to believe, aren't they, practically speaking?

But you know the hardest of all of them to believe? The hardest promises that I had to believe were three promises in the New Testament. And I struggled and struggled and struggled with these for a long time. The first one appears in John 14:12. This was a very difficult promise for me to believe. John 14:12 says...this is our Lord talking to His disciples just the night before His death..."Truly, truly,

verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me"...now of course, that tells us who he's talking about...he's talking about Christians..."He that believes on Me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Well, that sounds fantastic. And I would say to myself, "Now let me just check out which of the works of Christ that I have done, or which greater than these that I have done." And I struggled with that verse...hard for me to believe it.

There was another one that I came across early in my Christian life because a lot of people talked about it...Acts 1:8...and what it says is this: "But you shall receive power"...and we're going to talk about this verse tonight in some detail..."But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Man, that sounds fantastic...when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you shall receive dunamis...dynamite...Christians, you will be exploding all over the place. And I would say to myself, "I don't even fizzle."

[Laughter]

"You know, maybe I'm a dud, you know? What's the deal?" Because this didn't seem to be a real thing in my life...power to go out and witness all over the world. And I had a hard time just telling somebody near me. That was hard.

But the one that was maybe the hardest of all to understand is Ephesians 3:20, and that brings us to the text we want to study this morning...Ephesians 3:20. And there are really only two words in this verse that mess it up; if it didn't have those two words, it might be easier to handle. But look what it says: "Now unto Him"...that's God..."who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh." Now that's easy to handle, isn't it? "Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh." But the two words that mess it up are "in us." How do you get that kind of power in us? And I used to really struggle with that verse.

When I was in college, a guy shared that verse with me...one of my friends...and he went through it with me. And I said, "Yeah, I understand what it means, and I understand what it says. I just don't see how it works." And I never got any answer. So some years ago, when I found out that you don't just take a verse out of the Bible to find it's meaning; you leave it in there and find the meaning around the verse, and then you'll know what the verse means.

So for this morning, let's look at verses 14 to 21. And I think this verse will just fall off the tree right into your lap, and you'll understand what it's saying. Sure, it's hard to believe some of the promises of the Bible. It's hard because we don't ever see the realization of them which is potentially available. How can we see in our lives, "exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think" kind of power? How can we ever exhibit that kind of power? How can we see it flow in our lives to the fact that we can do

the things that Jesus did, and even greater things...not necessarily greater in kind or greater in miraculous power, because that we couldn't do...but greater in extent. How could we see these things occurring in our lives? Well, we've got to look at the whole paragraph and see what happens here.

Now this section of Ephesians I call the "Christian turn-on." Or if that bothers you, the "Christian ignition." In chapters 1 and 2, and also even in chapter 3, verses 1 through 13, Paul is describing the power of a Christian. He doesn't ask anything of the Christian. He doesn't suggest anything. He doesn't even exhort. He just talks about what we have. He describes the engine. He describes the power plant of the believer. He is saying, "This is who you are. You are blessed with all Spiritual blessings in the heavenly"...verse 3 of chapter 1. "You are chosen. You are holy. You are blameless"...verse 4. 5..."You're predestinated." 6..."You're accepted in the beloved." 7..."You're redeemed. You're forgiven." 8..."You're abounding in wisdom and in knowledge." 9..."You know the mystery of God's will." 11..."You have obtained an inheritance. You are sealed with a Spirit"...verse 13...on and on and on and on. "You are his workmanship created"...verse 10 of chapter 2..."in Christ Jesus unto good works."

And he describes it. It goes down into verse 19 of chapter 2: "You are the family of God, and you are the temple of the Holy Spirit," etc., etc., etc....describing the tremendous potential power of a Christian. It's like specs on an engine.

Then beginning in chapter 4, he describes what you do with your engine once it's rolling. He says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy." Once you get rolling, here's how to go. Here's the map, and here's the path, and here's the road...here's what to do.

But people, somewhere between the description of the engine and the engine moving out, you've got to turn it on, right? You've got to get the key in the ignition, and click it, and make it happen. And that is in chapter 3, verses 14 to 21. I call it the "Christian turn-on" or the "Christian ignition." It comes in the form of a prayer. It's kind of like the Indianapolis 500, you know, it's Paul praying, "Gentlemen, start your engines." Get it together...get it rolling...it's got to start sometime.

And it has a remarkable sequence incidentally here. It is a sequence or a progression of purpose clauses all tied together: do this in order that this might happen, in order that this might happen, in order that this might happen, in order that this might result. It's a whole sequence, and if you pull verse 20 out, it's totally out of context. But once you see the sequence, then everything just kind of explodes in verse 20.

All right, I'm going to give you five steps...five steps to get your ignition on and to get rolling. And I'm going to pray that...like Paul prayed...that the power is going to be released in your life. This is exciting.

All right, let's look, first of all, at the first step...inner strength...verses 14 to 16...inner strength...it all begins here. Verse 14...Paul starts by saying, "For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father." What cause, Paul? Well, because of who you are, because of your resources, because of the specs of your Spiritual engine, because you have so much capacity, because you are who you are, because you have available to you all that is available, because of this position in Christ, I pray that you'll get turned on. There's nothing worse than a Christian with all this power just sitting there. It's got to get going...that's what he's saying..."I'm praying to the Father, the Father of whom the whole family in Heaven and Earth is named, our Father." And he's talking about the Christian family..."the church triumphant"...that's with Christ...and "the church militant"...that's alive on Earth. "The whole family of God has a common Father, and it's to that Father that I bow the knee to pray for you." Paul prays for us.

You know, Paul prayed a lot for the believers. And he always prayed for their Spiritual needs, not their physical ones. And what he's concerned about here is that they would really know the fullness of the power of God...that they would see released in their lives that power that God can use to do "exceeding, abundantly above all they can ask or think."

So he comes to a bold request in verse 16: "That he would grant you, I'm praying, God the Father, of one who is the Father of the whole family of all Christians in Heaven and Earth, those who are alive, and those who are already with the Lord, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might or power, strengthened with power, by His Spirit in the inner man." Number one, inner strength...Paul says, "I'm praying for inner strength through the Holy Spirit." That's the beginning of everything...the first step in turning the power loose, beloved, is to be strengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit.

Notice a little footnote: "That He would grant you according to the riches of His glory." "According to the riches" is interesting. I want you to remember that statement because you're going to see it in many places in the New Testament. You can see it earlier, for example, in Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." You see it in Ephesians 3:8 expressed in this way: "The unsearchable riches of Christ."

In Philippians 4:19, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ." He says, "Now listen to me. God always gives grace and glory according to His riches, never out of His riches." There's a difference. To give "out of" His riches would simply mean to give something from the amount that he has. To give "according to" is to give the amount in some kind of accordance with what He has. This is the illustration: If I go to a rich man and say, "I have a need, I need \$500." And the rich man who is a benefactor says, "That's fine. I'll give you \$4.50." I say, "Rich man, you didn't give me according to your riches; you gave me out of it." You see? The same rich man, I say I need \$500, and he gives me a thousand, I say, "Rich man, you gave me not out of, but according to." As

rich as you are, that's how richly you give. God never gives out of; He always gives...what?...according to. As rich as He is, that's how richly He gives.

So Paul prays that God would grant according to the riches of His glory that we be strengthened in the inner man...inner strength...a bold request. He is asking that God's resplendent attributes be richly applied to the Spiritual progress of the believer, and to begin with that he experience inner strength. And it comes only by the Holy Spirit.

As you and I yield to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God empowers us in the inner man. Now the inner man simply means the internal you. There's only two you's...the inner man and the outer man...that's all...the inside and the outside. And the inside is to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit with power. And you say, "Well, John, how does that happen? How do you really experience that dynamite inside?" Well, certainly it isn't as simple as just the Holy Spirit living there, because the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian. But it's when you yield to Him...it's when He fills your life...when He dominates your life. And this is basic truth that we've gone through many times.

I think what he's talking about here...and I want you to notice this...is not strength for witnessing, or strength for service, or strength for evangelism, or whatever it might be. It's Spiritual vigor that gives me victory in my own life. It is the strength to conquer Satan and sin and the flesh and the world and whatever it is. It's that Spiritual vigor. It's that Spiritual stamina that a Christian has.

To start with, if you're going to really be effective, and the power will be released, you need to have Spiritual stamina to be victorious over temptation, to be victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil. And you can only know that victory when you're strengthened in your inner man. You have to have a strong inner man to resist temptation, a strong inner man to resist the flesh. And the only way you can ever have a strong inner man is when the Spirit of God strengthens you. Because in your own strength, you are nothing, right? If you try to do it on your own, you're a disaster.

Look at Romans chapter 7 for an illustration. The Apostle Paul was fussing around in chapter 7 trying to strengthen his own inner man, and he was having a disastrous time at it. Verse 15..."For that which I do, I understand not. For what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I can say unto the law that it is good. But then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwells in me." He says, "I got a problem. I never do what I want to do, and I always do what I don't want to do. And I find this thing warring in me. There is sin that is in me."

He goes on to say the same thing, essentially, again in verses 18 to 20. Verse 21, he says, "I find a principle, then, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." "I want to do good, but evil is there. I delight in the law of God in the inner man, but there's another law there warring against me, oh wretched man that I am." See the struggle? He's trying to get strong on the inside in his own strength, and he can't do it.

He finally finds the victory in chapter 8 verse 2: "For the principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me"...what..."free from this principle of sin and death." What freedom? The principle of the Spirit of life. Verse 4, he began to walk not after the flesh, but what? After the Spirit.

Now Paul says, "As long as I was trying to crank it in my own flesh, it never got me anywhere. When I began to walk in the Spirit, then power came."

Now people, it's important that we be strong the inside...the pressures, the distresses, the troubles of life can tear up the inner man. It can destroy mental, emotional, Spiritual balance. But the Holy Spirit promises to strengthen the Christian in the inner man if the Christian will yield to the Spirit of God. We see a world around us that totally has lost the battle with the inner man. The terrible, terrible mental illness problems that we have in our world that run the gamut are simply evidence of the fact that a man can't coordinate his inner person. But the Spirit of God can take your inner man and put it all together if you'll yield your life to the Holy Spirit's control...simple principle. You know, it's as simple as simply saying this: "Holy Spirit, I yield to you at this time."

Now I'll give you an illustration on my own life. I struggle, and I have for the last week or so, just struggling in the inner man ... Satan, for some reason, just really laying it on me. And I've told him time and again what I think of him, and I've told him to get out of there, and his demons and whoever else. But I still get this...lately...just this oppressing kind of thing. And the only resource that I have...last night I was beginning to feel this thing, and just kind of pounding in on me. And you feel that Satan is working overtime, and you're starting to get troubled and turmoiled inside. And all of a sudden, the only way that I knew to resist that thing was to say, "All right, Holy Spirit, you take over. Strengthen me in the inner man. I yield to You." And whammo, I felt strong, went right to sleep, got up this morning raring to go. It's as practical as that, people. It's as practical as knowing how, in a moment of stress, to yield to the Spirit of God. And it comes simply through knowledge of the word of God so that God's thoughts dominate your mind, and they become the handles the Holy Spirit takes ahold of to turn you the way He wants you to go.

Now it's...life is a matter of commitments, a matter of decisions. And each decision yielded to the Spirit of God allows the Spirit to pour His strength into you. You know it's the same...it says, "Being filled with the Spirit or kept filled with the Spirit," in Ephesians 5:18...that's the idea...let the Spirit of God fill you; let him dominate every part of your life.

The synonymous concept is in Colossians 3:16, where it says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." As your mind is saturated with the word of God, which is the revelation of the mind of the Spirit, then the Spirit has the truths in your mind by which He can guide you. You know, it's as if the Spirit of God gives you the Bible, which is the training manual, and then helps you to implement it. And that's just how it works. As the Spirit of God has those thoughts planted in your mind, as you

study and discipline yourself, then there are tools there by which He can steer you and guide you. As a Christian yields to the Spirit, his inner man is strengthened to resist Satan, sin, temptation, whatever.

Let me show you how this works in a practical example from Paul. I'll just read you Philippians 4:13...you don't need to look it up...Paul says this: "I can do all things through Christ who" what? "Strengthens me." Now that's confidence. He was totally healed due to power of Christ. The interesting thing is that he probably wrote that from a jail. But it never phased him because his resource was available.

In 2nd Corinthians, he does give us real insight into this when he says, "The Lord said to me, after I prayed for Him three times to take away my illness, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.'" You're better off when you realize your inabilities. You're better off when you know you can't hack it. You're better off when you know your own strength is not going to make it. "And you turn and yield to Me," he says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." So Paul says, "All right, then, I'll gladly glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest. I'll take reproach. I'll take infirmity. I'll take necessity, persecution, and distress, for Christ's sake. Why? Because when I am weak," what? "Then I am strong." In other words, when I realize that I have no resource but to depend upon the Spirit of God...and the only way, people, that you're going to have that instantaneous ability to depend on Him, and just to flick your brain toward the Holy Spirit, is if His Word is dominating your thought patterns. And that means the study of the Word. "When I am weak, then I am strong."

So Paul prays that the inner man might be strengthened. And that can only happen when the Spirit of God does it. And the Spirit of God can only do it when we allow Him to do it. When we stop trusting ourselves, when we turn consciously with our minds, to thoughts of the Holy Spirit. You say, "Well, how simple is it?" It's just as simple as this: here I am being tempted; I simply say in my mind, "Holy Spirit, I desire Your will, I desire Your control, I yield to Your power." And I believe, if that's an honest prayer, the Spirit of God will take care of the consequences.

Listen to Paul's testimony...and he had a lot of pressure! But he learned how to fall on the Holy Spirit and allow the Spirit to strengthen him. He says in 2nd Corinthians 4:9...I'm reading from Philip's Translation...just listen..."We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated. We are puzzled but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone. We may be knocked down, but we've never been knocked out." Every day, we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus...that is the persecution that he got...so that we also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. This is the reason we never collapse...here it comes..."The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but every day the inner man receives fresh strength." This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit pouring in power to give us Spiritual stamina, Spiritual vigor, Spiritual muscle, to approach life victoriously.

Now that leads to something else...back to Ephesians chapter 3...now we come to the flow that comes out of this: "I pray that He would grant you to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man in order that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Stop right there...now that's the second point, "indwelling Christ." The first step in the five steps to get your ignition on was "inner strength." The second is "indwelling Christ," in order that...now once you're strengthened with His might, you're going to find that Christ will dwell in your heart.

You say, "Now wait a minute, John, I'm already saved. I don't need Christ to dwell in my heart again. He's already there. And what does that verse trying to say? Is it trying to say, after I'm controlled by the Holy Spirit, then I become a Christian?" You know better than that, don't you? What is he saying?

Now you've got to look at the word, "dwell." The word is a Greek word, and it's simply the word, "kotoy case-eye." I just...I tell you that to split it in half. "Kata oy keto" is the verb. "Oy keto" means to be at home. "Oy keto" means to be at your home or to be in a house. "Kata" means down. Put them together, you have the compound word that means to settle down and be at home...to settle down and be at home. It's the idea of total comfort.

Now read it that way: "That Christ may settle down and be totally at home in your hearts." Would you say that Christ could be in a heart and not necessarily be totally comfortable there? Yes, I would say He has experienced that in my case many times. There are Christians who get Christ into places that He would never choose to be. There are Christians' lives where Christ can never settle down and be at home; he's got to be up cleaning the place up all the time because it's such a mess. That's the idea. When you're strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, then the Spirit will do the purifying, then Christ will be at home there, and He can settle down and enjoy your life, instead of always up trying to clean it up. That's what it means. And the tense is an Airesstense, showing a finality that Christ may finally ... finally settle down and feel comfortable in your heart.

I think about all of the work that He has to do in my life, and I wonder if He ever has any time to just settle down and enjoy me. That's sad that, though the Lord Jesus dwells in the hearts of Christians, in most of them He is unable to rest in comfort because there is so much self, there is so much sin, there is so much lust, so much disobedience, that He is busy cleaning.

I wonder what's in your heart...I wonder what's in my heart today that prevents Christ from settling down? Well, the Spirit is the only one that can purify it. The Spirit is the only one who can clean it out. And if we settle down and let the Spirit of God strengthen us, then Christ will settle down and be at home.

There's an interesting little book that helps develop the thought. It's called My Heart...Christ's Home by Robert Munger. It's a very helpful book. And he pictures the heart like a house. And here comes Christ, and He comes into the life. The guy is saved, and Christ is in the house, but He's got a mess in there. You know, when you become a Christian, that wasn't the end; that was the beginning, right? Then you start cleaning up the mess. The Lord gets to work on you, and it's painful sometimes...usually.

So the Lord, first of all, goes to the library. The library is the brain. And the Lord goes into...the library is the control room. And He checks out all the stuff on the shelf and finds trash, garbage, crud, and evil ... you know, everything that's been pumped into that brain is bad stuff. So the Lord says, "Well, we've got to burn this library and start a new one...get all the trash." So the Lord cleans the library up, and what do you think he replaces it with? "Right here...meditate on these things day and night. Get this in your library." In goes the word.

Then the Lord goes into the dining room, and the dining room is the place of appetites. And He says, "I want to see where your appetites go? Ah, that's what you desire. Oh, you desire a fulfillment of the flesh, of lust...you're money-hungry, prestige, pride, ah, etc." So the Lord says, "We've got to get rid of all of this stuff, and we've got to feed you on the righteous things." So he cleans out the dining room.

Then the Lord goes to the living room, and the living room is where you have fellowship...that's where you share. That's where you leave Jesus when you neglect Him, you see...that's like having company over, and sitting them in your living room and leaving all day.

You know, I used to think, when I was just in college, I used to think, "If I treated my friends like I treat the Lord, they wouldn't be my friends because I ignore them so often." Not so much anymore, but I used to.

And the Lord is in the living room, and saying, "Say, could you stop for a minute. I've been here every morning, all day, and you just never sort of stop by. Could we have a little time together? I want your pure fellowship." So He straightens up the living room a little bit, and the guy comes in and spends a little time...it's good.

Then the Lord goes down to the workshop. And he sees skills and talents and abilities, all to make toys ... the guy has made nothing but toys. He says, "Let's get rid of this and build things for the Kingdom."

He gets everything cleaned up, and all of a sudden there's a terrific odor coming out of a closet...just stinks bad...this one closet. He says, "What's the closet over here?" The guy says, "Look, will you leave the closet alone? I gave You everything else. That's my only closet. That's the only thing left.

Just...you know, that's all I ask. A two-by-four closet...You can't want that too."

Well, the cleaner the house, the worse it smells. In fact, in the book, I think he says, "It smells like something dead." That's the hidden personal things that you just never really want to give up, see? The Lord says, "But it isn't over. And I can't settle down and be at home until I get the closet cleaned." And then he'll settle down.

That's how He is really relating in Ephesians chapter 3. Paul is simply saying, "Christ can't settle down and be at home in your life until the garbage is cleaned out of it, and that will only happen when the Spirit of God has strengthened you in the inner man to give you victory over sin." Victory over sin means a pure life, and it is in a pure life that Christ can settle down and be at home, do you see? Now there's the process...there's the sequence.

If you're yielding to the Spirit, not walking in the flesh, but walking in the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, as a result you'll be strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man. And that strength will translate into Spiritual vigor, and you will conquer sin and temptation. And the result will be that Christ will settle down in that clean life and be at home. And your fellowship will be rich and sweet.

And that's not all...something is going to happen out of that, and that's point number three. Verse 17...Once Christ has settled down to be at home in your life, "in order that ye"...here's the next purpose clause..."in order that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Stop there ... here's the third point...incomprehensible love...incomprehensible love. What happens when Christ dominates a life is that love exudes throughout that life.

You know, the one commodity that fulfills the whole law is what? Romans 13..."Love is the fulfilling of the whole law." Love is the one thing we want to dominate our lives. You know, people say, "Well, I wish I loved more. Well, I wish I had more love for the Lord. I wish I had more love for the brothers. I wish I had more love for the lost." Listen, love is a byproduct of the person of Christ filling your life, and he can only do that when your inner man has been strengthened and purified by the Holy Spirit.

So as the Spirit does his work, Christ settles down. His love permeates and dominates your life. That's what he says in verse 17, "That ye being rooted and grounded in love." And those two terms are simple. They have reference to the idea of being solidly established in love as a way of life. If you're looking around at your life and saying, "Boy, I wish I had more love for somebody. I wish I had more love for the Lord. I wish I loved more the things of God and hated the things of the world. I wish my love was properly directed." It isn't just that simple, people. Back up. Is Christ really at home in your life? He isn't unless you've been strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man. If you don't love, Christ is not at home in your life because you are not strong in the inner man, because you

are not yielded to the filling of the Holy Spirit. Start at the beginning, and love will be the byproduct.

Now what kind of love is it? Man, it's fantastic...it's incomprehensible love to everybody but us. Once you experience it, you will comprehend it ... verse 18..."You may be able to comprehend." You know, you can't comprehend love until you experience it, isn't that true? That's true in any case. You know, they say the hardest word to define is love because you can't define it; you can only experience it. And that's exactly what He said. Love is only understood by lovers, and you will never know, and you will never experience what it is to know the love of God until the love of God dominates your life.

You know, I think it's probably true that there's nothing as neat as being in love. Man, you see people who are in love...you know, just the initial...they're just cow-eyed, pie-eyed, staring at each other. And man, the world...they're walking across the top of the ground, and everything is bliss. And love brings security, peace, joy, hope, confidence, rest, meaning, and purpose. Love is everything when you really love...when you really experience it.

Well, if human love can do that, imagine what divine love can be like. And yet most Christians never experience the fullness of divine love. Most Christians never understand the peace, the joy, the security, the purpose, the meaning, the hope, and everything else that comes with divine love, because they never comprehend it, because they never experience it, because Christ is never really able to exude it, because they're never controlled by the Holy Spirit. And you start at the beginning, and the result of it is going to be experiencing the love of Christ in a comprehending personal kind of way.

What love is it? It's the same love...verse 18 says that "All saints know broad, long, deep and high. And this love is that which passes knowledge. The world cannot understand it." Incidentally, the word, "comprehend," is "kata lombo" in the Greek...it means to seize and make your own. You'll be able to seize the very love of Christ and make it your own. It's a fantastic concept.

So Paul says, "Christian, you want a deep experiential knowledge of Christ's love." And I'm telling you, people, there's nothing like it...absolutely the most satisfying experience in the world, to be able to comprehend fully the love of Christ "which is shed abroad in your heart"...Romans 5:5...to be able to understand the depth and dimension of what that love means is without doubt the most exhilarating experience a human being can ever have. If you haven't experienced it, back up and find out where you've missed out in the process here.

Well, when you yield to the Spirit, and your inner man is strengthened, you have spiritual vigor and vitality. And you're conquering sin, and you're knowing the victory, and Christ is settling down to be at home in your life. And His love is exuded in your life so that you experience and comprehend that which the world can't understand.

There's another result, and that brings us to point four at the end of verse 19. Here's another "that"...another "here now" purpose clause..."In order that you might be filled with all the fullness of God." Man, that engine is about to turn over now...you're really cranking. You come to the place now where you are going to be filled with all the fullness of God. Can you comprehend the fact that God's fullness can dwell within the believer and be expressed through his life?

People, listen. You see, if I am filled with all the fullness of God, then verse 20 makes sense, doesn't it? Because then God can do anything He wants through me. Then there aren't any restrictions. Then there aren't any hang-ups...nothing to hold him back.

Look at verse 16 says, "You can be filled with the Spirit." Verse 17 says, "You should be filled with Christ." And verse 19 says, "Filled with God." I mean, to think that the Trinity exists within the believer is just staggering. And to realize that when they dominate you, when they fill you, the power flow is such that we can't even comprehend it. What a thought. What a thought.

You say, "What does all the fullness of God mean." It means all of God's attributes. Once the love of Christ dominates you, and you comprehend it, and you exist within that love, when that experience occurs, then all of a sudden the attributes of God begin to flow through you. And the world will see grace and mercy and wisdom and knowledge and all those things that make up the character of God. And then truly you'll do what Paul said; you'll adorn the doctrine of God. That doesn't mean you become God. And it doesn't mean that God becomes you. It just means that His essence resides in you. Fantastic stuff.

In fact, in Galatians, it expresses it this way. It says that when you're in this position, here's what's going to flow out of you: love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. Those things are going to flow out of the life of one who is experiencing the fullness of God. You're going to be like Moses. You'll come down off the mountain, and your face will glow with the Shekinah of God when you're filled with His fullness.

Let me tell you, people. God has given to us the power to absolutely revolutionize, and it's His power. The engine described is incredible! And God says, "Get it turned on, will you?" And that's an act of your will, to sit down and saturate yourself with the word of God, to flip the switch of your will over to the side of the Holy Spirit, and activate the Spirit of God in your behalf as He strengthens your inner man, so that you are pure and victorious over sin. Christ is at home in your life, His love will dominate your life, and out of that will flow the very character of God. And God will be glorified.

Now, listen. With inner strength as a start, and the indwelling Christ, and incomprehensible love, and infinite fullness...that's verse 19...infinite fullness, the fullness of the very infinite God Himself...those four steps...infinite fullness leads to the fifth, which is the great reality, verse 20. "Now unto him who

is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is now working in us."

But listen, people. That power is not working in you unless what? Unless you have experienced verses 14 to 19, you see? And the reasons...because Christians are saying, "Well, I read that verse, but I don't understand it. It doesn't seem to relate to me." Right, you've got to get through verses 14 to 19 first.

And then verse 20 explodes...what dynamite. Listen to this verse: "Did you know that because of the power that is in you, you are able." See the word, "able," there? God, though you, is able. Do you believe God is able? Oh, we don't say...if this verse just said, "Now unto Him who is able according to the power that works in us," that would be good, wouldn't it? "Now unto him who is able according to the power that works in us." But it says this: "Now until Him who is able to do according to the power that works in us."

Well, what's He able to do? Well, "unto Him who is able to do all that we ask"...that would be good, wouldn't it? "Wow, 'unto Him who is able to do all that we ask.' Boy, I can ask a lot of things." Ready for this? "Not unto Him who is able to do all that we ask or" what? "Or think." Have you ever said, "Well, that would be nice, but He would never do that." Did you ever think that? Well, that's going a little far. I better ask Him only for ten souls. I don't want to ask Him for too many. He's way ahead of you. "Now unto Him who is able to do"...now hang onto this..."all that we ask or think." Boy, that would be terrific. "Now unto Him who is able to do above all that we ask or think." Man, I mean, where do you go from there? "Now unto Him who is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think." Oh, I can't take it...one more..."Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or think according to the power that is working in us." That's how powerful you are, my friend, when you follow the patterns that lead to this.

People say, "Oh, isn't it wonderful how your church is growing?" You know what I say? I thank God, but I don't think we're really doing one-thousandth of what could be done. "Oh, don't you see wonderful things happening in the lives of people?" Yes, I do, but I don't even believe that I have begun to tap the resources of God in my own life. For Spiritual strength, and Spiritual vigor, and experience, and ministry that really glorifies and honors His name.

I want you to know something. I've experienced verse 20 in my life, I really have. I mean I used to just have the simplest thoughts: "Lord, I just want to be faithful to You and minister." And then the Lord kept doing more and more and more. And I wake up every day and say, "What's going on?" People always say, "What are the deals you did to get the church to grow?" I said, "I don't know. I wish somebody would tell me. I just go there every day, every week, and those people are all there."

[Laughter]

And I know this: that God has expressed His power through my life and the lives of others to the point that I can't even believe it. I mean I meet people all the time who come up to me and share with me and say, "You know, we got your tapes over here and over there." Somebody told me this last week...this man came from Brazil and said, "I want you to know, my brother, that your tapes are being used in Brazil in Bible studies. And people are being saved," and on and on and on he goes. And I'm just saying to myself, "You know, this is unbelievable."

Listen, God has so many times done beyond what I could ask or think in the miracle of bringing people to Christ, and the miracle of the new birth, and of revolutionizing Christians and things, that I just can't even comprehend it. But I don't think any of us have even begun to see what could be done if we walked in this kind of walk, day in and day out, day in and day out. This is the pinnacle in our experience...all the way to the top in verse 20.

Listen. You know what's liable to happen when you get to verse 20. You're liable to see all that power flowing through you. And do you know what the big temptation is? Pride, right? "Oh, man, am I cranking it out. Wait until I get to the Kingdom. Boy, they'll be so many crowns, I'll have to have a few other Christians who didn't get any and take them for me," you know?

[Laughter]

Or you get that temptation to think you've really arrived. You're a real Spiritual wonder. So do you know what Scripture says? Verse 21 really comes in. "Unto Him be" what? "Glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, generations without end, so let it be, amen." Who gets the glory, people? Who gets it? God gets it. Listen, do you know why God wants to display His power through you? Do you know why God wants to do exceeding abundantly above you can ask or think according to the power working in you if you follow the principles? Do you know why? In order that He might be what? Glorified. And that's the purpose for everything. And that's the reason for everything. And God will be glorified. But because He will let his power go through you. He will do those things if you'll put yourself in the position so He can.

I'll tell you, one thing that always gets me is I do not want to be somebody who stifles the glory of God. Do you? I want God to get His glory. If that's true, then I need to be seeing His power working in me, according to verse 20, so He can be glorified. And if His power is going to work in me in verse 20, then I'm going to have to be filled with His fullness. In order to be filled with his fullness, then I'm going to have to have the love of Christ dominating me. And the love of Christ can only dominate me if Christ is at home in my life. And He will only be at home in my life if I am totally controlled in the inner man by the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you see the process? It isn't enough to have a good church. It isn't enough to come here and be comfortable, and just sit down and take it in. It isn't

enough. God wants to release His power through you as an individual to give you Spiritual victory in order that others may see who He is, that He might be displayed through the attributes of His own power, that He might be glorified. And let Him do it...don't bottle up the very will and purpose of God by your own unfaithfulness in these areas. I would say to you what Paul said...get turned on. Get the ignition going, that God might be glorified in you and in me.

Let's pray. Father, for this cause, I bow my knees unto You, of whom the whole family in Heaven and Earth is named. And I pray that You would grant this congregation, all of us, according to the riches of your glory, to be strengthened with might by Your Spirit in the inner man, in order that Christ may settle down and be at home in our hearts, in order that we might be rooted and grounded in love and able to comprehend, experientially, with all the saints, the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, in order that, as a result of that, we may be filled with all the fullness of God, and therefore able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think according to the power that works in us, so that through all of it, You might be glorified. By Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

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