

God dwelling among His people (in Scripture) is referred to as **His household**....

Already... up in the first half Ephesians chapter 3.... Paul has said God has granted us the undeserved privilege of **ACCESS to His house**....

Ephesians 2:17-18

"And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we **both** have **access in one Spirit** to the Father."

We (who were enemies of God – and His people) ...have **obtained access** to His HOUSEHOLD of grace.... The living room of Divine Favor.....by faith...in Jesus Christ....

So.... if you are not yet trusting in Jesus.....

If you are still walking with the world..... and remain (in your heart) on the other team.....

You will not really behold the BEAUTY of what we are going to look at this morning.... because like a tourist outside the iron fence of the Whitehouse.... you have not yet been CLEARED to come... in...

Urge you...God is inviting you to through **the GATE**

Come to the Savior!

Turn from your wicked ways.... and believe that God sent Jesus to PAY for your sin on the cross..... and that because your sin debt was paid in FULL.... God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day.....

By faith in this resurrected Christ.... enter in to His household....to the joy of your new Master.... Jesus.

Believers followers of Jesus Christ..... through faith in Him.... **now** have confidence and boldness to **go in** and enjoy our Father.

On our TOUR.....We are going to get a glimpse of what the multifaceted perfections of GOD will look like.... not only in eternity when we see Him in all His beautiful radiance....

... but in some measure what you can begin to experience in Spiritual relationship with Him right now....

Paul **lived** for THAT! And he DESIRES that every Christian experience the knowledge of GOD and the power of God and the love of God in FULL measure...

He DESIRES that you and I be **Filled with All the Fullness of God**....

(Eph. 3:14-21)

So He prays that for the church ...

Ephesians 3:14-21

" For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
(from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named),

that according to the riches of his glory he may **grant you**
to be **strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,**

so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** (through faith)—

that you, (being rooted and **grounded in love,**)

may have **strength to comprehend with all the saints:**

what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know
the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,

that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God.**

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Filled with ALL the Fullness of God1. Strengthened with **God's Own Power**

Supernatural power....is one of the most sought after commodities on the planet...

Whether it be someone in Africa brewing beer to offer to his ancestors so that his cattle will reproduce....

Or an American sports fan.... moving their hands in a certain way ..in order to put a hex on the other team....

Or even someone who becomes RELIGIOUS so that God will owe him a big favor....

We often want the power of God **by itself.**

We want God's power, **apart from** the right RELATIONSHIP of authority through which His power flows.

It is not unlike the **enriched URANIUM** that Iran is seeking to empower its newly constructed nuclear power plant...

iRAN.... seems to want the benefits of **enriched uranium**....so that they can add 1000 megawatts of power to the country's electricity grid..... (and who knows what else...)

WITHOUT the constraints of a good relationship with the U.S.

So.... Russia has agreed to sell it to them.....

See the parallel.....?

Too often... people want the benefits of POWER only God can provide..... but we don't want to be **UNDER His control**....

We don't want GOD as our **Father**..... (because we love to be independent or in short... we secretly love the familiarity of our sin).....

So we look **elsewhere** for POWER sources..... that we can agree with on **OUR OWN terms**...

If God convicts you of that today..... please repent.... and turn back to the SOURCE..... b/c...

- What God calls us to (in the gospel)....is a personal and **spiritual UNION** with His Son.... where **His resident power** accomplishes good on our behalf.

The fullness of His presence, however, demands that GOD not just be one broker you are trying to use to **accomplish your agenda**.... (you have to jettison that wicked heart)

The fullness of God's power flows through **HIS AGENDA** for His glory.

- God's power is not a byproduct of Himself..... It is an **attribute** of His **personal presence** in your life.

Look again at how Paul prays that for the church:

Ephesians 3:14-16

" For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,"

Most often... when Jews prayed... they did so **standing up**....

Kneeling... (bowing one's knees in prayer) was (and is) and indicator that the pray-er.... EARNESTLY desires what He is asking of the Father....

Solomon knelt (with hands outstretched) as he dedicated the temple and the nation to the Lord on the day of dedication...

Daniel knelt 3 times a day... giving thanks to the LORD... even when it was against the law...

Jesus knelt in the garden..... earnestly asking the Father (if it be His will) that the cup of His wrath might pass by him....

Stephen knelt in intercession for the men that killed him.....as he breathed his last..

Here... Paul tells us that **he** regularly bowed his knees before the Father... to pray for the church...

He was **EARNEST** that you and I be filled with all the **fullness of God!**

In the Greek... Paul utilizes a play on words here to make his point..... about this **FATHER** to whom He is praying...

Lit. He bows His knees before the **Father** from whom **all** fatherhood is named....

Remember – that is the MYSTERY Paul just digressed about for 10 verses above....

The whole Spiritual Family (both in heaven and on earth)..... from every tribe and tongue and language... have been and are being.... TRANSFERRED into the Household of God.....and have been brought under the Spiritual Headship of **One Father**....

ALL the children of God..... who can now cry Abba Father in prayer.

He has given us His **Very Own NAME**.... and given us access to his **TRILLIONS** of dollars worth of strength and power....

And like a good earthly father would.... if he were wealthy....

God wants His children to have it....

Not for a little bit..... but to be **FILLED with** His power and strength in your inner being!

Again.... remember.... God is not some kind of spiritual power broker.....

He doesn't run a store front operation (like a palm reader).....

Where you come to see him..... get a little power..... or knowledge and then hit the road going about your own way.....

As you come to God (through the cross of Jesus Christ) **He gives you HIMSELF**....

- So God's power is an **ATTRIBUTE of His Presence**..... **mediated** by the Holy Spirit.

Paul prays....

v. 16b he may grant you to be strengthened with power **through his Spirit** in your inner being so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith—

(go slow)

- GOD gives you His HOLY SPIRIT to create in you **a dwelling place** for His Son.....

He gives you spiritual POWER.... that manifests itself in increasing amounts of **FAITH**.....

So that you can be FILLED with the **reality** of CHRIST.....

Your connectivity with Christ.... will INCREASE..... beyond Sunday morning.....

From your inner being will flow RIVERS of Living Water... as God fills you with HIMSELF.

....

God **empowers your Christian life**.... by giving you HIMSELF.... and increasing your ability to TRUST Him in daily affairs... to rely on Him to empower you to be HAPPY and content in Jesus.....in increasing measure as you ask Him.

So....

If you **hate** your job. or if you really (on a practical level) have a hard time relating to your spouse....

Or if (deep down) you are having a hard time being freed from bitterness over something that happened to you....

God does not merely give you power to **COPE**..... to subsist..... to make it.....

As you ask Him.... He increases your POWER to **be HAPPY** and CONTENT in Jesus... in spite of your suffering.....

in the midst of your miserable circumstances.....

and to BELIEVE that God is ordering the events of your life for your GOOD.... as you trust Him.

To believe that MANY times.... your suffering in this world.... is to PUSH you farther into the SOURCE of all power and goodness resident in your heart.

In fact... if you are feeling particularly **helpless** right now.....(in your circumstances)... God has postured you so that HIS POWER can be perfected (in your inner being) through your NATURAL weakness...

Paul is praying here..... (I would ask you to pray this for yourself)...

that you be **Filled with ALL the Fullness of God**

so that God can strengthen you with His very OWN (personal) Power.... the strength that emanates from **His PRESENCE** in your heart.

I'll be honest with you..... I don't always WALK in the fullness of God's Power....

When I try to lean on my fleshly mechanisms to keep me afloat.....

Keeping Christ minimized at the bottom of the screen of my life.....

I can easily become UNSTABLE.....

Fears.... Frustrations.....and impatience can leave me TOTTERING in the wind of my circumstances.....

I can become (at least on the inside...) **unstable**....

Instead of RESTING in and ENJOYING the fullness of GOD's goodness in Christ.....

I can find myself tumbling through life..... even (unintentionally) hurting others close to me as I go.....

- Ever experience that?

Have two options in that situation..... you can follow the world and turn aside to some IDOL... or even a forbidden fruit to try and gain some **equilibrium** in your soul.....

Or... you can cry out to God that He would show you FILL you with a love that CASTS out all fear.....and be stabilized by the embrace of God your Father....

Paul prays that the FULLNESS of God would STABILIZE us... would **ANCHOR** us in the unchanging LOVE of Jesus Christ....

Filled with ALL the Fullness of God

2. **Stabilized** by His Love

When Jesus comes in to take up **RESIDENCE** in a believing heart.....

When His Living **WORD** begins to **permeate** the thick walls or your brain....and the soil of your understanding.....

His **LOVE** (resident in His person)...simultaneously sends its ROOTS into you into your soul....in increasing measure.

If you continue in the faith..... hearing His Word... applying Scripture to your life.....

The ROOTS of His Love.... gradually only **take over** (FILL) your soul.... like they do in a potted plant....



The **ROOTS** of God's love permeate your life as His WORD.... is **applied** to your heart!

Note: There is little room for weeds (idols) to exist in this soil....

The plant has FILLED it with the FULLNESS of itself.

- So if you are feeling very **unstable**.... or very UNLOVED by God..... (they usually go together).....

What you need to ASK God for is STRENGTH... power..... to fill you so that you can (as you study His Word)... **apply His living truth** to your soul....

That is WHY He is called a **healing balm** in the OT.....

B/c.....As you do.....your heart begins to heal and be stabilized by His love.

It might be just one verse.....just one phrase.....that quickens you and adjusts your thinking....

Of if your heart has been made **bitter**.... or calloused by the deceitfulness of sin.... it may take **MORE** of the WORD... spoken in the power of God's Spirit to penetrate your heart and life...

But as God's Spirit does that.....**Your life is STABILIZED by the love of Christ!**

Goal - So that (like when the wind blows on the plant...or the rains come.....it will not be easily disturbed....

God wants YOU (child of God)..... ROOTED and GROUNDED... stabilized by..... His LOVE.

Here is how Paul prays that for the church...

Ephesians 3:17-19

"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

may have strength **to comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Every one of God's attributes is **infinite** in scope....and **supply**....

- His storehouse of POWER is never depleted.....

and the parameters of His LOVE.... go way beyond our ability to comprehend.....

But **He has given you a MIND**..... (not just a cognitive processor)..... but the MIND of Christ... empowered by the Holy Spirit.....connected to your heart.

So that you can be FILLED up with His FULLNESS through trying to **wrap your mind around** just how much He loves you in Jesus Christ.

-Study the TRUTH!

Preach to yourself... passages that declare **how DEEP** ...how WIDE must be a love that would pity his enemies and adopt them into His own household as co-heirs with Jesus???

God wants you to **LAY HOLD of**..... what has **LAI D hold of you**..... in the PERSON of Christ Jesus.

Illustr-

Have you ever tried to hug a child that either feels unloved or is so upset about something they are initially **unresponsive** to your affection?

Laurie – illustrate..?

After a few minutes of not only embracing the child..... but in your words CONVEYING your love for them verbally.... ... and the assurance of God's Providence over this situation.....

Often... (as the swirling around of their anger..... or fears.....begin to slow down.....)

the child will **begin** to be receptive to your love for them.....

Their screaming or crying may wane down to a wimper.....

SLOWLY they may begin to trust you.....(one hand)...

Until... by God's grace.... their anxious hearts begin to **STABILIZE**....and peace.... and **well being** return to their minds....

Some of you are saying..... well that's great for a simple minded child..... but MY PROBLEMS **are full size!**

That is why God calls you **His** CHILD.... and that faith in Him must be like that of a little child...

You must stop trying to handle things TOO big for a human being..... and RESPOND (daily) to **God's embrace** in the gospel!

Paul prays... prays that you would be receive the Spirit's power to be STABILIZED by Christ's love... as you embrace it with your mind....heart and soul.

But notice..... Paul UNDERSTANDS... that this takes place ONLY in the context of the church!

He wants you to GET (to lay hold of)....the immeasurable scope... of the glory of God's love for His children in the context of relating to OTHERS who are seeking the same thing!

"you may be able to comprehend (take hold of) with all the saints...how wide and long and high and deep and to KNOW the love of Christ.... (surpasses knowledge)...

The LOVE of God is 4 dimensional.... and is such that you will not really GET it by your lonesome....

Our chief goal for the Application Groups beginning next month....

as we make the time in our schedule.. on Sunday morning.....

Together... we can fix our eyes on Jesus and ask God to FULFILL His Word here!

That WITH ALL THE SAINTS... we can attempt to get a bigger GRASP...

That our daily lives will be affected as our MINDS begin to lay hold of.....the FULLNESS and the empowering GOODNESS of God's love.....

Hopefully God will spark that at the retreat as well.....

Final reason Paul prays....that we would be...

Filled with All the Fullness of God

3. **Ask Him** to do the IMPOSSIBLE!

Too often.....(I hope you will agree)..... our prayers don't really reflect the God of Scripture..... **because** they are SO small.....

I do not mean.... you should not pray about the little things....you should!

But God wants to FILL you with power in order to give you faith to ask Him to do things which blow away the boxes we try to keep Him in.....

Ephesians 3:20

"Now to him who is able to do **far more abundantly** than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,"

Vaughan – says that we should pray according to the reality that we could never begin to make a dent of the resources of GOD....

While God may say no to a prayer..... because he knows our motives..... and he wants us to be lined up with His Kingdom work in the world.....

He may close a door you really want to open.....

In order to keep you in a place... or put you in a place.... where He will use you in a far more POWERFUL way than you would have ever dreamed.

Even if the answer is no..... He wants your understanding of Him ENLARGED so that you continually view Him as the GOD with whom ALL things are possible....

And the GOD who has chosen to listen to your PRAYERS in accomplishing what no one else can even imagine.

He is ABLE (unlimited power).... to do FAR more! (exceedingly abundantly) than you could ever ASK or think.....

THAT is who you are to bow your knees before.... earnestly asking Him to fill you with the fullness of HIMSELF....

Asking Him to DO (things which men view as impossible).....

Like SAVING someone who has had zero interest in God for over 50 years.....

Or reconciling a MARRIAGE where one of the spouses is intent on destroying it.....

Or bringing ONE HEART and ONE MIND to a group of a 100 or so people.... as we are FILLED with all the FULLNESS of God.

I'll tell you one IMPOSSIBLE thing I am praying for.... and then I want to ask you to write down something ONLY God could do.... but you have been bashful about asking Him because it is SO big.....

I am asking God to help us eliminate our LAND PAYMENT by July 2011. I am praying He will supernaturally PROVIDE..... the \$300,000. we need to pay off that note.... so that He can be seen as the God who does the IMPOSSIBLE.

This is not the power of positive thinking..... this is OBEYING God's command to believe Him for the IMPOSSIBLE!

Luke 1:37

"For nothing will be impossible with God."

As Jesus disciples had trouble casting out a demon....and asked Jesus why...

Matthew 17:20

"He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and **nothing will be impossible for you.**"

Two Questions (to help you apply this) and we are finished:

1) What **MOUNTAIN** currently stands in front of you..... that no human has been able to move..... but GOD may want to move through your prayer... and the prayer of others in concert with you?

- job
- relationship
- an addiction
- finding power to forgive..

ASK Him (who can do WAY beyond) what your brain can conceive of... to FILL you with POWER so you can have faith to PRAY for Him to do it.... ask Him as a child asks his father.....

You have not... because you ASK not.

2) How much of your prayer life involves **God being glorified** in this church?

It is too easy.... in dealing with the magnitude of our problems..... to forget that the **DISPLAY case** for all of this is designed to be ... the congregation of the Living God...

Ephesians 3:21

"to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

This was not just a FIRST century prayer.. It is God's will... in **EVERY generation**.... (in THIS generation... in THIS place!)

for the **SPLENDOR** of His Son to be on display in **FULL measure**....in the church....

In the Family of the Father..... who call upon His Name.....

with a heart **FULL of GOD** Himself.

Amen.