

I Bow My Knees

Ephesians 3:14-16

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being. (Ephesians 3:14-16)

In our message last week, we rejoiced at the humility that began to flood through the heart and the soul of the Apostle Paul as the regeneration work of the Holy Spirit began to take place, systematically removing the arrogance and pride that once controlled his life and replacing it with gentle, loving humility.

And isn't God so very generous to us in that we are not left to wonder as to whether the changes were really real within Paul? They were clearly to be seen in his new behavior and responses. Paul had become a completely "new man" in Christ and that "new man" was very different. Listen to these words in 2 Corinthians 5.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The evidence that Paul had become a whole "new person" is clearly spread before us in these scriptures, his behavior and conduct serving as visible fruit for all to observe and to accept.

And is not Paul's departure from his old ways, and his being transformed into a usable vessel for the purposes of God the way of God's Holy Spirit as He is "poured out" upon a believer? In Acts 2, we read . . .

16 . . . this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:16-17)

This "pouring out" of God's Spirit had taken place in the life of the Apostle Paul. And Paul began to know things and to do things that he had never known or done before. And he began to have the vision for the "kingdom of God" that Jesus had brought to the earth.

I realize that with these particular words about God's Holy Spirit being, "poured out" upon Paul, I can quickly depart from some of the beliefs of my fellow reformers. But I clearly understand these scriptures to tell us that the "pouring out" of God's Holy Spirit" is very different from the gift of His "indwelling presence".

I clearly see, as I read these scriptures that God does many "special works" in and through the souls of believers when He appoints them to tasks and to opportunities that go beyond their own ordinary abilities.

God gives special "unction" that enables ordinary men and women to accomplish "special tasks and missions" that they surely would not otherwise be able to do. And yes, as we have said often in other messages, God could easily do those more difficult things Himself. He could simply "speak" and whatever He desired to take place would suddenly come into being.

But for some reason, God prefers to place some of those responsibilities upon the shoulders of men. And He does!

And thankfully He is also divinely generous as He hands out assignments to us. He not only gives us the tasks to do, He also gives us the enabling power to carry them out. And that was especially so with the Apostle Paul. Through Paul, God would begin to invite all of the Gentile world into His beloved eternal family.

And, as we can see, that effort would be no small task; because with the invitation to the Gentiles, God's family would increase from just the few in the small nation of Israel out to the entire world, bringing to mind God's promise to Abraham, that his children would be numbered as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore.

This calling was truly a massive undertaking for Paul to carry out, one that he would in no way be able to do by his own efforts and abilities. He would need help and strength and power beyond anything that any ordinary man can muster within himself. But may we always remind ourselves that God knows all about the limitations within men's souls. He knew full well that neither Paul nor any other man was capable of doing all that would need to be done.

So, as God is always certain to do, He stepped forward and made all the provisions that Paul would need. He filled Paul with His indwelling Holy Spirit, giving him a special presence of His "fruits of the Spirit" and giving Paul special "Spiritual Gifts" that Paul never had before.

And then, even beyond giving Paul special “Spiritual Gifts”, God also gave Paul the special privilege of passing on the gift of the Holy Spirit to other believers. Paul would do that often through the “laying on of his hands”.

May I confess to you that I really have no adequate understanding of these truths I am conveying to you today? But I do know that they are clearly given within these scriptures, and that they are absolutely true! And so, I accept them for myself and I pass them on to you with confidence!

And simply put, when God calls you or me to a work, and as He gives us tasks and assignments to carry out, He will also surely always fully equip us to do it all and to do it all very, very well. Here in verse 16, we read

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being. (Ephesians 3:16)

This is God’s equipping, His generous provision, bountiful and overflowing. And may I quickly remind us, as I often do, that while these words we are reading here came from the writing pen of the Apostle Paul, they are really the words of the Holy Spirit flowing through Paul’s mind and onto this page.

And here, as Paul prays for these dear saints in Ephesus that they would be strengthened in their “inner being”, this is also Christ’s prayer and plea for them, just as He also continually intercedes for you and me that we too will be strengthened in our “inner being”.

Because it is within our “inner being” that we are most needful and most vulnerable. Our “inner being” is that special place within us where our spirit and our soul reside. It is there that weakness of every kind has its beginnings. It is in there that Satan seems to be able to find access and to get a foothold to exert his subtle temptations.

But thanks be to God, through the “overcoming power” of “God’s Spirit” we can receive a fresh supply of strength within our “inner being”, strength to resist the onslaught of Satan and his temptations, to bear our cross daily, and to have the perseverance to hold out to the end.

But please take note of the words given in verse 14! Here, we are being reminded that we also have our part to play. We must fall to our knees before the Father in complete surrender, and we must always remain there. Verse 14,

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, (Ephesians 3:14)

These words are very descriptive to our minds. They speak of a special “posture” before the Lord, sometimes physical, actually on our knees, but more than physical, these words speak of the “posture of our heart”, humbly bowing all that we are and all that we have within us before God the Father.

But may I also say that when our heart is humbled, our body will often be moved. The gesture of being on our knees speaks of sweet submission, reverence and humility. Again yes, quick, instant prayers in times of need are excellent and effectual as we rush about our daily activities. But in those circumstances when serious attention and focus is needed regarding a matter, we really must make “serious business” of our prayer, on our knees fully acknowledging that God is our only hope and provision.

But even and also beyond those times of prayer, we must live out the matters and activities of our daily lives in an “attitude” of “bended knees”, in complete submission, reverently acknowledging that God truly is God and that He is sovereign over everything that is taking place. He truly does have a plan and He is carrying forward with it at every moment. We are admonished in Proverbs 3 to

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

God really does have a plan for each of our lives, every part of it, plans for the big things, like when and where we will live out our days on this earth. He tells us so in Acts 17. Listen!

26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for “In him we live and move and have our being”; “For we are indeed his offspring.”(Acts 17:26-28)

These words are plain and easy to understand. God really does have a plan for our lives and it is specific to each one of us, when and where we will live and why He wants us to be there, “so that we can seek Him and find Him.”

But we must also know that His plans extend down to even the smallest of attitudes and activities within our day, even to what we will eat and what we will wear. We read about that in Matthew chapter 6,

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Matthew 6:25)

And then here also again, we, you and I are told that we have our part to play. And we must do it. In verse 31 of Matthew 6, we read . . .

31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

Why is God so interested and involved in the minute details of your and my daily life? It is because when you and I receive Christ as Savior and Lord, we actually become His children, “sons of God”, real members of His family. So, as we read these words in our text . . .

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, (Ephesians 3:14-15)

In these words, we begin to see the bigger picture of who God is and who we are supposed to be as His beloved children within His kingdom.

Folks, I have said this often to us, and I want to keep saying it. The “Kingdom of God” really has already come to the earth. It is not some future event that will take place after we die.

Yes, when sin entered into men’s souls, it separated us from God and from His special spiritual kingdom. But thanks be to God, when Jesus came to earth, He brought God’s kingdom back to us. And as He reconciled men and women to God, He not only united us to Himself, He also united us to one another in a divine community, His kingdom, the Body and Bride of Christ.

And His kingdom now not only thrives all around us, His kingdom thrives within our hearts, our souls and our spirits.

And yes, these concepts are mystical and hard for even the most devout of believers to comprehend. But thanks be to God, we do not have to perfectly understand this truth to know that it is real and to believe and accept it for ourselves.

Our calling is to simply “bow our knee”, in submission, in attitude, in behavior and in constant prayer, inviting the “Kingdom of God” to come and abide within us. And as we do that, we will begin to “see” into that mystical world that resides all around us each day.

Folks, this is an exciting thought to me, to be able to begin to see the divine plan and workings of God actually taking place, His providential hand at work.

As I said in our message last week, this is all very real, both the visible and invisible “Kingdom of God”. And as we abide in the person and the presence of Christ, very different things will begin to take place within not only the big things of our daily life, but also in all the many minute details of it.

And it is all of and through and by the precious and Holy Spirit of God. Finally, before we close, may we ask, “What is the “reason” that is spoken about here in verse 14?”

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, (Ephesians 3:14-16)

The “reason” is that in His deep love, God has graciously reached out to you and me, the outsiders, the gentiles of the world, and has now drawn us into His beloved family. In Christ, we are now “sons of God”, true sons and daughters, and that is a very serious matter, one so serious that we need be continually on our knees before our Father, surrendering to Him and blessing Him back for all that He has done for us.

As we close, may we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray? I know that with the closeness of the pews, it is not easy to get on our knees, but do join me in saying this prayer together.

9 . . . Our Father
which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
10 Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done

in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever.

Amen.