

## **Filled To All The Fullness Of God**

**7-26-09**

### **Part 1 – Powered By The Holy Spirit**

#### **Ephesians 3:14-16 (READ)**

You realize that it is possible to know all about a car

To understand how the engine works the ignition system the transmission

To have complete knowledge about an automobile

And never be able to use it to go anywhere

And all this knowledge has no real purpose in your life

It is also possible to know very little about a car

And yet use it every day and drive it expertly

Well it's also possible for a person to know a great deal about the Bible

Its doctrines promises warnings

Believe every Word of it and yet not live by those truths

And for another to know very little about the doctrines of the Bible

And yet live a life that glorifies God

In the first part of his letter – From Chapter 1 verse 1, through 3:13

Paul gives us the basic truths of the Christian life

He lets us know who we are in Christ

And the unlimited resources we have in Him

From this prayer onward through the rest of the letter

**We are exhorted to claim those truths and live by those truths**

**That we now know are ours**

In other words once you understand a truth – live it out

Like I said last week

**Spiritual insight must always lead to practical application**

That's how it works -

You understand spiritual truth and then you apply it to your life

By sharing his prayer request

**Paul is urging us to live in the full power and effectiveness**

**Of all that we have in Christ**

Immediately following this prayer - Paul heads right to practical application

He does this because his prayer gives us a progression of enablement

**Paul prays for the inner strength of the Spirit**

**He then prays for the indwelling of Christ**

**For the incomparable love of God to permeate our lives**

**That we would experience God's own fullness**

**And for God's glory to be manifested in us the body**

**First Paul prays for the Spirit's power**

For this reason I bow my knees

The reason Paul is praying comes right out of chapter 2

Verse 5 – We are spiritually alive in Christ

Verse 10 – We are God's workmanship

Verse 19 – We are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household

Vs 22- We are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit

For all these reasons

**Paul wants us to experience the power we have from being in Christ**

God's power is in us – we need to appropriate it

We are the habitation of God – His dwelling place

**God's unlimited energy and power are available to us**

The truth is this – Omnipotence dwells within impotent man

Strength within weakness

**Omnipotent Almighty God dwells within your weakness**

Everything God requires of you

He is fully prepared to supply to you

Now when Paul says - I bow my knees

He is not giving us the required posture for prayer

Scripture shows us men praying in many different positions

As he interceded for Sodom - Abraham stood before the Lord

When David prayed about the temple - He went in and sat before the Lord

In the Garden as Jesus faced death – He fell on His face and prayed

## **In prayer the issue isn't posture – it is attitude**

And bowing the knees signifies several things

### **First - Bowed knees represents an attitude of submission**

When you approached the king with a request you bowed before him

It signifies our being in the presence of someone much higher than we

**Ps 95 – Come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker**

### **Second bowing in prayer represents intense passion and emotion**

Appalled that the Israelites were intermarrying

Ezra fell on his knees and stretched out his hands in confession to the Lord

Because of his intense love for the church

And his intense desire that the God of glory grant his request

Paul spontaneously bows his knees in prayer

Paul prays to the **Father from whom every family in heaven and earth derives its name**

This does not teach the universal fatherhood of God

Nor the universal brotherhood of man

Scripture clearly teaches that there are 2 fatherhoods – God's and Satan's

However Paul is stressing the brotherhood of all believers

God is the Father of every saint of every age

Those in heaven and those on earth

**Saints are the only ones who legitimately derive their name from God**

And Paul prays that out of the riches of His glory

God would strengthen the saints by His Spirit with power

You know there is a difference between from and out of

If a millionaire gives \$25 to the church – he has given from his riches

If that same millionaire were to give \$100,000 to the church

He would have given out of his riches

The greater a person's wealth the greater the gift must be

To qualify for giving according to his wealth

For God to give according to His riches absolutely staggers the mind

Everything about God is big – his riches are uncountable

**God's power is immeasurable – limitless – beyond comprehension**

Yet that is exactly what Paul prays for

No wimpy praying here

He is going for the whole nine yards

He is praying for exactly what he wants and what Paul wants is all of it

**Paul wants you to experience power flowing from God out of His abundance**

That is the measure of power Paul was experiencing

That is the measure of power Paul wants for you

Have you ever noticed that almost every prayer of Paul's was for others

He was imprisoned - persecuted – mocked - lied about and in need

But he primarily prayed for other believers

He wanted them strengthened and protected

When he asked for prayer - his desire was to be able to spread the Gospel

Later in this Letter he asks the Ephesians to pray for him

That he might be able to proclaim with boldness the mystery of the Gospel

Too often our prayers are inward focused – they are all about us

God knows what you need before you pray

We as God's people ought to be more like Paul

**We ought to be more concerned with others than ourselves**

**And our praying ought mainly to be concentrated on behalf of others**

If that happened I believe we would see mountains move

That is one of the reasons I like to go to Tuesday Prayer Meeting

Among other things it causes me to focus on praying for others

It's not about me

Of course the other reason I go is because it works

**Things happen when God's people pray**

Martin Luther's assistant Myconius was not expected to live

He wrote Martin and said his goodbyes

Martin wrote him back – I command thee in the name of God to live. I still need thee in reforming the church. The Lord will never let me hear that you are dead, but will permit you to survive me. This is my will; may it be done, because I seek only to glorify the

name of God

Bold praying don't you think – could you pray like that

When he received Luther's reply Myconius was near death

But shortly he recovered and he outlived Luther by two months

Prayer works but it is often neglected

**That is because it is easier to appreciate material riches than it is spiritual riches**

We know what money can do – even if we don't have it – we know it

Spiritual riches on the other hand are not so obvious

And - listen to this - Spiritual riches are not attractive

To the natural man or to disobedient Christians

**But to those who follow hard after God**

**Spiritual riches are worth the sacrifice**

From the beginning of this Letter Paul has been describing spiritual riches

Chosen before the foundation of the world

Blessed with every blessing in the spiritual places

Redeemed from the pit and forgiven of our sins

Giving us the knowledge of His will

We have an inheritance in God's Son

All of these are spiritual riches that we have right here right now

And then in his Letter to the Corinthians Paul also notes

That we will all stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ

Where we will receive rewards for way we lived our life on earth

**What you have on earth should be valued – God has given it to you**

You are God's steward in charge of some portion of His wealth

So you should treat it carefully

You are also a steward of the gifts He has bestowed on you

**But what you have on earth**

**Is not worth mentioning compared to what awaits you in heaven**

**1Cor 2:0 – Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man; all that God has prepared for those who love Him**

Don't set your heart on that which will fade or rust

Get eaten by moths or destroyed by fire – they are nothing

**Set your mind on the things above and your heart will follow**

Now there is one aspect of this prayer that we need to remember

Paul is not praying that God give these riches to believers

**Paul wants you to be strengthened by God**

**According to riches you already possess**

In the movie “The Outlaw Josie Wales”

Josie is making peace with a hostile tribe – his ranch is in their territory

He says – we will live side by side - we can share the water and the grass – When you journey we will give you some of our cattle

After he is finished the chief says – we already have all that

Josie responds - I know I'm just offering you life and you're offering me life

Paul isn't praying that God give you something different

You already have all that

**In Christ Jesus you have everything you need for life and godliness**

Paul wants what you already have to be real to you

He wants you to experience the power you already have

**Paul wants you to experience in daily living the blessings**

**You have already received in the heavenly places**

Paul wants you to live a life that corresponds to the wealth you have in Christ

We are the Kings kids – we ought to live like it

I worked with a lady whose husband was a financial planner

He gave up his business to work for a large corporation

But he kept one client

It was an elderly couple who lived in a small apartment in the city

They lived in poverty – but they were worth millions – lots of millions

When the husband passed away – members of the family thought they would have to help support the wife

That is the way it is with so many Christians

We have all the riches in the world in Christ

And we live like we're poor - in the gutter of life unable to lift ourselves out  
How tragic that we go around in the rags of our own self effort  
When we could be living in the abundance of God's unspeakable riches

**And the first step in living like God's children**

**It to be strengthened by His power in the inner man**

Step one may be the most misunderstood

Christians suffer, the church suffers, the world suffers

Because the inner man of most believers

Is never strengthened with power by the Holy Spirit

Paul was concerned for the physical health of believers and prayed for them

He was concerned for the destitute and collected money for them

But he knew the outer man is destined to perish

The outer man is only temporary housing for the real person – the inner man

**In 2Cor Paul wrote – We do not lose heart, for though our outer man is decaying,  
yet our inner man is being renewed day by day**

I have to tell you that is the way it is in my life

I think about being young and I wish I had run more

Why – because this shell of my body can't run or jump at all

It is wasting away

It's that old saying – if I knew I was going to live this long, I would have taken better  
care of myself

But even if I had taken care of myself I wouldn't look much better

My body has mortality it is disintegrating – it won't make it to the next life

At a certain age – things just start going downhill

And you know what happens when a round object starts downhill

It just picks up speed

Listen I have known some of you for a while

And I can tell you that your outer man isn't doing so well either

But while our outer man is disintegrating – literally before our eyes

The inner man is being renewed day by day

When Paul told you that you were God's workmanship

He was talking about your inner man

**The inner man is where God is at work in you**

**Conforming you to His Son's image**

I can't give God the credit - or is it blame - for what this shell looks like

That is caused by time and lack of care

But any positive changes you have noticed in my character

**Any difference you have seen in my Christian life**

**Is caused by the Spirit of God displaying His power through me**

Now here is the key part

If I try to make my inner man renewed by my own strength

I will begin to look spiritually as bad as I look physically – I cannot do it

**For your inner man to change – for the who your are to really change**

**There must be an experiencing of the power of the Holy Spirit**

Do it in your own strength and it will be like putting lipstick on a pig

It may look good from a distance but get up close – and it'll shock you

Only God's Spirit can strengthen our inner man

**The Holy Spirit is the one who energizes, revitalizes and empower us**

He is the only one

That is why Paul prays that we experience Holy Spirit power in our lives

**Now let's talk about Working it out**

In Romans chapter 7

Paul expresses the frustration of a saved man who is unable to do God's will

**He writes - The wishing to do good is in me, but the doing of the good is not. The good that I wish I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not wish**

He is controlled by the sin that dwells in his fleshly body

Can you identify with what Paul is saying

Are you still struggling sin

Many Christians are still in struggles that could have been won years ago

In Romans chapter 7 Paul gives us the problem

Then in Romans chapter 8 he gives us the key to victory

## **Victory over the flesh comes from the Holy Spirit**

And it is achieved by our mindset

**Rom 8:6 – The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace**

**Remember the battle over sin takes place in the mind and what you think about is key to victory**

Knowing that - Paul tells us to set our minds on the things above

He urges us to meditate on the true and honorable and right and pure and lovely anything worthy of excellence or worthy of praise

Too often a thought comes into our mind that isn't excellent

And instead of discarding it we dwell on it

We're like cows chewing a cud; chew it; swallow it; bring it up; chew it again

Over and over again until that unwholesome thought dominates you

And before you know it you are trapped in sin

**For what dominates your thought life dominates your words and deeds**

Sow a thought and reap an action; sow an action and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a lifestyle, sow a lifestyle and reap a destiny

But victory over the flesh – victory over sin is yours in the Holy Spirit

Notice I didn't say can be yours – victory **is** yours in the Holy Spirit

**Simple instructions - Gal 5 – Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh**

**John MacArthur – The obedient, effective, and productive Christian must be Spirit conscious, Spirit filled, and Spirit controlled**

Is that you

Spirit conscious – always remember that you have power within you

That the world has never experienced

Spirit filled – keep short accounts with God

When you sin – immediately repent and confess it

Spirit controlled –

Begin every day with prayer the Word of God and the armor of God

**When the inner man is fed regularly on the Word of God**

**And seeks the Spirit in all the decisions of life**

## **You can be sure you will be strengthened with power through the Spirit**

Holy Spirit power is not the mark of a special class of Christian

It is intended by God to be the mark of His children – all His children

That power is available to all who submit to God's Word and God's Spirit

Just like physical growth spiritual growth doesn't come overnight

But here is the key

Discipline your mind and spirit to study God's Word

Meditate on it and live by it

Set your mind on the things of the Spirit

And every day give Him the control

That is when you will grow

**Spiritual growth can be defined by three aspects**

**Increasing love for Jesus and His body**

**Decreasing frequency of sin**

**And increasing joy**

As we experience the power of God's Spirit within us

What happens to the outer man matters less and less

That is why Paul could tell the Corinthians

**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 are never knocked out. Every day we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus, so that we might also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. This is the reason we never collapse. The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but every day the inner man receives new strength**

Isn't that great – every day the inner man receives new strength

Is that the way it is with you