

Looking at the Future

Ephesians 3:14-19

Context

Ephesians 1-3 : `God's big plan for the church

3:14-21 : Hope that we can be what God wants us to be and do what God wants us to do!

Ephesians 4-6: Our responsibilities as a church

Exposition

WE NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY WE OFTEN RESPOND AS WE THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES. AND TO DO THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT HOW PAUL RESPONDS:

1. His Attitude

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father...”

- Paul was in prison and knew the church had struggles, but he refused to downplay God's plan.
- Looking at the local church with only our eyes gives a distorted, small view; we must use the "telescope" of God's revelation to see the glorious thing He is actually doing.

2. His Actions

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father...”

- Bowing the knees is a physical expression of humbling yourself and recognizing your neediness and weakness.
- When tasks feel too big for us, the best place for a church to be is on its knees in a sense of desperation for God's help.

3. His Request

“That according to the riches of his glory, [in order that] He may grant you to be strengthened with power...” (3:16)

- Paul asks for power from outside of ourselves that matches the infinite standard of God’s own glory.
- We often feel overwhelmed because we approach life as if everything depends on our own limited strength; we must believe God is active and ready to strengthen us.

“...with power through his Spirit in your inner being...”

- We need God to do a deep down powerful transforming work in our inner person! And we have a lot of hope for that to happen because God’s Spirit is working on our spirit!

“...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...”

- Paul believes that God’s Spirit can work in our inner person in this life in such a way that we can experience a real living true communion with Jesus Christ!
- This is different than the indwelling that happens when we become believers, because Paul is praying for believers here.
- Paul is praying that Christ would be at the center of every part of our lives, taking control of us, us trusting Christ and enjoying Him.
- Jesus is a living Person who has promised to be with us!

“...that you, being rooted and grounded in love...”

- We are asking God to do a really powerful work in our church that produces spiritually mature people who trust Jesus and love Jesus and have a relationship with Him that overflows in us being the most loving people we possibly can be!
- Because if God is doing that in us, then no matter what happens (where we are or what we look like), we can be absolutely confident that we’re playing our part in God’s great big plan to glorify Himself through Christ’s work in the church!