



Sunday, November 26, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

Introduction to Ephesians 3:7-21

One of the greatest struggles in contemporary Christianity is prayerlessness. It's not that we don't think we should pray or that we don't see a need for prayer. We do—which is why we feel guilty when we don't. The problem is that we find so many lesser things satisfying. Our minds are constantly so absorbed with our own lives that our default position is not to find solace in relationship to God, but in our phones, in our hobbies, or in our work. But, if we had the proper mindset and discipline in other areas, then we would truly be compelled to pray.

In Ephesians, Paul has been meditating on the greatness and goodness of God. As he has considered the power of God, demonstrated through the bestowment of every spiritual blessing in Christ, the raising of spiritually dead people to spiritual life, and the unification of spiritually divided people, he is almost overwhelmed. He understands that God is the only one able to accomplish what is necessary for the salvation and well-being of humanity. And because he understands these things and has disciplined his mind to meditate on the nature and character of God, he is compelled to pray.

Context

As Pastor Don noted, this is the end of the “sit” section according to the “sit, walk, stand” structure of Ephesians. It is important to really meditate on these truths if we are to understand the commands that will follow in chapters 4-6. Once we understand all that God is for us in Christ, we will understand that our proper response can only be to walk in a manner worthy of His calling (4:1). But, we won't understand the “why” or the “how” we are to live that way unless we understand the immensity of God's grace and His power.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“Compelled to Pray”

Read Ephesians 3:7-21

- 3.3 Grace to know: revelation
- 3.7 Grace to serve: proclamation
- 3.10-11 Intent and eternal purpose
- 3.12 Approach with freedom and confidence
- Power... Three times

1. Power within us (v. 16)
 - Source Holy Spirit
 - Location Inner being
 - Purpose Christ may dwell within
2. Power around us (v. 18)
 - Grounded In love
 - Location Together with all the saints
 - Purpose Know dimensions of His love
3. Power above us (v. 20)
 - Purpose Doxology
 - Location Above us
 - Promise He is able

God.

God is able.

God is able to do all.

God is able to do all we ask.

God is able to do all we ask or imagine.

God is able to do more than we ask or imagine.

God is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or or imagine.

Discuss

- 1) Describe the times or seasons in your life when you are most compelled to pray. What is it that prompts you? Is it more because of the circumstances in your life or because of a sense of God's power and presence? Or something else entirely?
- 2) What are some obstacles in your life when it comes to establishing a discipline of prayer?
- 3) Read Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-19 again. What kinds of things does Paul pray for? How closely does that line up with the kinds of things you pray for?
- 4) Pastor Don emphasized God's ability to act on behalf of His people. Have you ever been tempted to doubt God's power to act in a person's life to bring them to the knowledge of Christ? Or have you ever doubted God's ability to change you in the course of your own sanctification?
- 5) In what ways can we encourage one another (Heb. 10:24-25) as a group to "tap into the power source"—to be more faithful in prayer knowing that God is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine?