

More like Jesus

Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

Introduction:

The apostle Paul prayed a fervent prayer on behalf of the Ephesian Christians at Ephesians 3:14-21. Paul's prayer was that the Ephesians would be strengthened by their knowledge of Christ, that Christ would dwell within them through His words, and that they would be rooted and grounded in the founding principles of truth taught by the apostles and prophets through Christ. The prayer is dominated by the idea of spiritual growth, interest, and knowledge in the truth. Christians today are encouraged to make God's word a special part of their life so that we too can be filled with the knowledge of Christ and grow more like him day by day. This lesson shall examine Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and make application to it for us today.

I. A review of the context involving Paul's prayer for the Ephesians:

- A.** Paul addresses the saints at Ephesus (Eph. 1:1).
- B.** The Ephesians had been forgiven of their sins through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7).
- C.** Paul prays for the Ephesians to have a "spirit of wisdom" (Eph. 1:16ff).
- D.** Paul reminds (Eph. 2:11) the Ephesians of their former life as he draws a contrast between spiritual life and death (Eph. 2:1-10).
- E.** The Gentiles are just as equal in the kingdom of God as are the Jews who have obeyed the gospel (Eph. 2:11-22).
- F.** Paul was ordained by God to preach the gospel message of salvation to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:1-13).
- G.** Paul's prayer for the Ephesians to be more and more like Christ (Eph. 1:14-21).

II. Paul prays for three things on behalf of the Ephesians:

- A.** Paul prays that the Ephesians would be "*strengthened*" by God's word so that they can overcome temptation and the difficulties of life. Bible strength comes by molding our "*inner man*" after Christ.
- B.** Secondly, Paul prays that Christ would dwell in the Ephesians hearts by their acceptance and study of His revealed truths.
- C.** Thirdly, Paul prays that the Ephesian Christians would be willing and able to know the full spectrum of truth (i.e., have a complete and mature knowledge of Christ).

Conclusion:

Paul's prayer focuses on spiritual growth in Christ Jesus. The Christian is to be more and more like Christ each day that passes in this life. Paul's prayer is a model for the Christian's life today. We should obtain strength to overcome temptation and difficulties, be firmly fixed upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets teaching through Christ, obtain a complete knowledge of Christ, and maintain a disposition to give God glory in this life. When I am interested in eternity I will be interested in being more and more like Christ.