

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

6. Paul's Second Letter



Introduction

At times we question why God allows his children to suffer. Why was Paul, who preached the gospel so effectively to the Gentiles, confined in prison, when he could have continued to fulfill his calling? Yet it was during that time in prison that he wrote letters to the Gentile believers and prayed for them. These letters not only impacted those who received them then, but every generation of Christians since! We marvel as we read his letters and prayers, nearly 2000 years later. There are two prayers in the Book of Ephesians, and we now come to the second one.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:12 -21

The Apostle Paul was telling the believers that they could approach God with freedom and confidence and urged them not to be discouraged that he was suffering in prison. Then he continues by saying, "For this reason I am praying for you."

† How do Paul's words in verses 12 and 13 encourage you?

† What position does Paul take to pray and what do you think this shows us? V14

(Paul bowed his knees or knelt. This shows us an attitude of humility and the earnestness of his prayer.)

† Paul bases his prayer on the phrase 'out of his glorious riches'. What does this mean to you? V16

(It means that God has provided for us in abundance. There is no limit to God's resources.)

† What is Paul's first prayer for the believers in v16-17? Explain in your own words.

(He is praying that the Holy Spirit will work in our inner being, to stir our faith, so we will know Christ dwells in us.)

Perhaps you have given your life to Jesus, but at times you are not sure he is with you. Why not pray this prayer for yourself? Pray that the Holy Spirit will work in your heart to stir your faith, so you know and are assured that Jesus lives in you.

† What is the second thing that Paul prays for the believers? V17b-19. Paraphrase in your own words.

† What does it mean when it says, 'rooted and established in love'? V17b

(Just like the believers in Ephesus we have experienced the love of Christ when we accepted him as our Savior. However that is just the beginning! Paul is praying that they (and us) will understand and experience his love more and more, so this will be the foundation of our life and hold us in difficult times.)

† What difference will it make in our lives if we know his love in this way according to v19?

(We will increasingly be filled with God himself and become more and more like him, for God's very essence is love.)

Isn't this a beautiful, powerful, amazing prayer? Don't you want God to work in your life like that? It is possible! Look at v20 and 1:19.

† How does v20 encourage you to believe this is possible? Share your thoughts.

(We may feel our prayers are inadequate, but God is able to do far more than we ask for or even imagine possible! Isn't that encouraging?)

Conclusion

It would be good to close by praying for one another. You could do this in smaller groups or in pairs. Before praying ask each one to share what part of Paul's prayer they would like the others to pray for them.