

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 3:14-16
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 53
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INTRO: If you divide the book of Ephesians into its largest components you have two major sections. Chapters 1-3 give us the wonderful work of salvation. Chapters 4-6 gives us the worthy walk of the Christian. As in many of Paul's epistles the first section is doctrinal, the second practical.

As I outline the book, the first section also has two larger sections. There is the blessed source of salvation in 1:3-14 and Paul's prayers for the Ephesian believers in 1:15-3:21. But in sharing his prayers with them he makes two excursions and we have just finished those. These digressions began in 2:1 and went through 3:13. In 1:15-16 we had some information regarding his thanksgiving.

So let us look just at Paul's prayers for the Ephesians. So go to Ephesians 1:15 and we'll read through 23 to get the whole prayer:

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;

that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion,
and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in
that which is to come.

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be
head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Then we have the two digressions which we'll skip and then we go
to 3:14-23 where he gives the reasons why he prays for them.
We'll read those verses but before we do, let me read what D.
Martyn Lloyd Jones says to this section so that when we read it
we will realize what a significant passage lies before us. He
writes, "However long you may live in the world, whatever orator
may arise, you will never hear anything equal to that for
eloquence, for elevation of thought, for profundity of language
and for conception. It is undoubtedly one of the great mountain
peaks in the Scripture. Indeed, there are many who would say
that this is the highest peak of all in the entire glorious
range of Scripture truth and divine revelation. We are looking,
let us remember, at the actual prayer which the Apostle offers
for the Christian people at Ephesus" end quote (3:119). With
that in mind, let us read verses 14-21:

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ,

15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His
glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the
inner man,

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that
you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the
width and length and depth and height—

19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you
may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above
all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in

us,

21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Well, verse 21 ends the first major section of this epistle, and it is this last part we want to now consider. What we have covered of what he shares of his prayers for them is his thanksgiving in 1:15-16; the twofold purpose of his prayers for them in 1:17-23; and skipping the two digressions we now want to begin looking at the reasons why he prays for them. This we have in verses 14-19.

4. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians (3:14-19)

a. The reason Paul prayed (3:14-15)

-The content of this reason

We go now to verse 14 which says:

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

As we begin to consider the reason why Paul prays, consider first that he prays. We saw earlier that he did not resign himself to being in prison and sit back and just wait it out. He could write, so he wrote. He wrote four epistles; Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. They are called the prison epistles. You see, the devil could see to it that he was in prison and his ministry seriously hampered, but it appears the devil could not stop him from writing, and he could not stop him from praying. Paul prayed. He prayed for those to whom he had ministered.

How important is prayer? Prayer is a very mysterious thing in many ways. But it is a very important aspect of the Christian life. When we pray we get God's ear. Listen to Psalm 34:15, "The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry." In a special sense God's eyes are on the righteous. The righteous

are His pleasure. But further, His ears are open to their cry. We may often feel like God does not hear us, but His ears are open to the righteous.

So, consider this question: Why pray? Can things in life be changed by praying? They can. There are times when God does huge things because someone prayed. You will remember the story of Hannah who was barren. She prayed for a child and the Lord granted her request. No doubt many other women prayed for a child and God did not grant the request. We must never forget that God is omniscient. He knows what is best for us. When Peter was in prison the Church prayed for him and to their surprise their prayer was answered and Peter experienced a miraculous deliverance.

Again, even today we see many Christians imprisoned, and many are not released. But, there are many other examples of answered prayer in Scripture. Even in the life of Jesus we learn that God does not always answer prayer. For example, in Gethsemane Jesus prayed that the cup which God gave Him to drink might be removed. He prayed earnestly and for a long time, but God did not give Him what He wanted. But many times prayer changes things. Someone has said that sometimes the answer is yes; sometimes, no; and sometime be patient. Paul prayed, no doubt with hopes that God would answer his prayers for the Gentiles. That is why he prayed.

You see, in verse 12 Paul had said that in Christ we have boldness or freedom of speech and access with confidence through faith in Christ. We can come into the very presence of God in the Holy of Holies in heaven through Jesus Christ and we do that in prayer.

And so we pray because the Bible teaches us to pray. And the Bible teaches us to pray because God can do things when we pray that He would not otherwise do. Many things happen because

people pray. Consider that the Church was born in a prayer meeting, and as soon as it was born Acts 2:42 says: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Each of these four things are done as a church body. The devil will exert every pressure to keep us from praying.

The most unselfish praying is praying for others. Prayer is a discipline. Those who compete in the Olympics do not become champions in a day, or a week, or a month or even a year. But they are committed and disciplined. In life, if we discipline ourselves to pray we will grow in prayer.

Well, Ephesians 3:1 says that Paul prayed for the Gentiles. And in our passage now we will get some idea of what he prayed for them. So we have noted first that Paul prayed. Consider this; Jesus had seasons of prayer. He prayed. Listen to Mark 1:35, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." Oh Lord, teach us to pray.

When I look back at my own ministry, how many times I wanted someone to change their ways or their lives. So many times I wanted certain people to see certain things and I talked to them. How many times I wished someone would repent and turn to Christ, and sometimes I talked to them. It is not that it is not important to talk. But there are many matters in life that unless God does a work in someone's heart, all the talking in the world will not change hearts. It seems in many cases that to pray is a waste of time, I need to be doing something. Oh Lord, teach us to pray. If Jesus needed to pray, if Paul needed to pray, without question, we need to pray!

Let us consider now the reason why Paul prayed for the Ephesians. In verse 14 he says, "For this

reason..." And we ask, "For what reason did he pray for the Ephesians?" Well, in verse 14 he is picking up where he left off in verse 1 where he said, "For this reason I Paul, the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ..." Why does he pray for them? Well, we have to go back to before 3:1 and according to this verse the reason is given somewhere earlier. And I think the answer is found in 2:19-22 like this:

- 19 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*
- 20 *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*
- 21 *in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,*
- 22 *in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

These Ephesian believers are no longer strangers and foreigners. They are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Why does Paul pray for them? Because they are becoming part of the temple where God dwells here on earth. It is not a temple made with human hands, but a temple made up of saved humans. They are being made a fit place for God to live here on earth. This human temple grows into a holy temple in the Lord. To become a fit place for God Almighty to live in, they need to become godly, clean and holy. So for this reason Paul prays for them.

-His posture in prayer (14b)

Let me now read our verse once more:

- 14 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Now notice that Paul said he bowed his knees when he prayed.

That leaves us with this question: What is the proper posture for prayer? Lloyd Jones has a good word here. He says, "This expression brings us face to face with the whole question of our posture in prayer. This is a matter which has troubled people in two diametrically opposed ways; they tend to go to one extreme or the other. But the Scripture is quite clear on the matter. It teaches that sometimes men bow their knees or they kneel in prayer; but it is equally clear in its teaching that others stand in prayer. Both methods are mentioned in Scripture, and even others such as lying prostrate on the ground" (3:111-112). Personally I think that often the situation which calls for prayer may indicate what posture is appropriate.

-To whom he prays (3:14c-15)

We notice now further that Paul tells us to whom he prays. Look at verse 14 once more:

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

To whom does he pray? Well, he prays to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is God Almighty! It is to God Almighty that our prayers should be addressed, but we can only do so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, when our prayers are truly addressed to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ we enter the Holy of Holies in heaven. This is the holiest of all places! And the only way we can enter there is in the name of Jesus Christ. If we do not come in His name, we cannot truly come before God Almighty.

Now let me mention that modern versions leave out the words 'of our Lord Jesus Christ.' They only say that he prays to the Father. That is because the manuscripts they prefer leave out these words. But I believe that in the words 'the Lord

Jesus Christ' as we will see later, we have a very important modifier to the noun 'Father'.

We go to verse 15. It says:

15 *from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.*

A big question in this verse is, should it read, "From whom the whole family" or "From whom every family"? If the words 'from whom' refer to the Father, then it should probably read "From whom every family". The words 'every family' would then refer to all the various kinds of angelic beings and all the families on earth.

On the other hand, if the words 'from whom' refer to Jesus Christ, it would probably be best to translate it as "From whom the whole family". It makes the most sense to me if the words 'from whom' refer to Jesus Christ and that they then refer to the whole family of true believers. I would read verse 15 then like this: *from whom (i.e. Jesus Christ) the whole family in heaven and earth is named.* This whole family then would include all saved people and all the Jews and Gentiles who are saved and of whom Paul has been speaking. Ephesians 2:19 says, "Now therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God." That is because they are all part of the family of God through Christ.

Furthermore, believers may refer to God as their Father because they are born again of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. That's what I believe Jesus meant when He said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." What I believe that means is that we must be born again by the Word of God, referred to as the water, and the breath or wind of God which is the Spirit of God. That the Word of God is instrumental in the new birth is unquestionably true. That also holds true for the Spirit of God.

b. The threefold purpose of Paul's prayers

1) That they might be strengthened in the inner man (3:16)

We go now to verse 16 to see the first of four purpose clauses that give us the reasons why Paul prays for the Ephesians. Consider as we read verse 16 the entire content of this first purpose. Paul says I pray:

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

We will consider this first purpose now piece by piece.

a) The manner of the answer (16a)

Let us look then first at how Paul expects God to answer his prayer. This is the manner in which God will answer. It will be by *granting* them what he was praying for. The word 'to grant' is *to give*. The only way one can get what one is praying for is for it to be given. Prayer cannot be bought and what is prayed for cannot be bought. Prayer is offered without price and the answer is given without payment. It must be given, and the giver is God.

b) The measure of the answer (16b)

Now note further the measure of the answer Paul expected. Paul prayed that God would strengthen them in the inner man 'according to the riches of His glory.' And without doubt we must ask, just what does it mean to be strengthened according to the riches of God's glory? What are the *riches* of His glory? Well, first, what is His glory? His glory is what He is. All His attributes are His glory. If a man were to be

strengthened by God's might according to the riches of God's glory, he would, in a sense, become a superhuman. And let me ask, what might happen if you strengthened a new believer according to the riches of God's glory? Could he not be blown away by pride?

So we ask, just what does Paul have in mind here? Well, we ask second what are the *riches* of God's glory? Well, as theologians have said, His glory is what He is. And I will go out on a limb to say I think that the *riches* of His glory is that which we understand of what He is. Now think about this carefully. If there is nobody to behold God, where is His glory? He alone knows it. Nobody is enriched by it. But when anybody comes to realize who He is in any aspect, that person will say, "Wow!" I propose to you that the riches of his glory is that which we experience when we get to know something about Him and we say, "Wow!" We stand amazed. He is recognized and glorified! And we are enriched!

So I propose that the riches of His glory are what we get out of it when we recognize some part of God's glory. I think the richness of His glory is when we learn something of His attributes. You see, our glory is when somebody learns some positive ability or attribute in us.

For example, let us say there is a bow shooting contest. Everybody is trying their best and there are some good marksmen. And then a little wrinkled man steps up and you wonder why he even entered. But when he stands erect, loads the arrow and lets fly and the arrow hits bullseye, you gain a whole new view of him.

Until he stuck that arrow in the bulls you thought he looked hopeless. But now, when he hits the bullseye each time he shoots, your mind is enriched by an understanding of this little guy you didn't have before. I recommend that when we truly learn something new about God we will gain a whole new view of Him and we will be enriched by it!

And I am recommending that Paul wants the Ephesians to be strengthened by the power of God Almighty by God's Spirit in the inner man according to the *richness* they discover of God's glory. That is, those who do not put their diligence into knowing God will only be empowered according to the richness of God's glory that they discover. On the other hand, if they are diligent in the Word of God and in their Christian life, Paul desires that God will grant them power accordingly.

Now here is what I think. The only kind of person God can strengthen by His power in the inner man is the one who has learned something of who God truly is. That is the only kind of person God can entrust His power to.

c) The main substance of the prayer (16c)

We are going to look now at the main substance of Paul's prayer, that is, what he prayed for them for. But before we do that let me mention something from Lloyd Jones. He has such interesting and sometimes unusual insights. He encourages the reader to consider first, not what Paul prays for, but what Paul does not pray for. He does not pray about his circumstances in prison. He does not pray about the Ephesians circumstances

in Ephesus. He does not make request to be released from prison. And instead of asking them to pray for his situation he prays that which is on his heart for them. Paul's concerns are spiritual and they are specific. He does not just simply say, "I am praying for you."

Now when we hear somebody has cancer, what is our first concern when we pray? "Lord, if it pleases you please heal him or her." Our first concern is the person's physical well-being. But we note that Paul does not pray about his or the Ephesians' external circumstances. Have you noticed that when someone is sick or they have been hurt that we immediately pray that they will get well? Now I'm not saying that is wrong, but we are focused on the outward man, not the inner man. Paul is here focused on the inner man and we will look at what that means later.

But what he does pray for will have the greatest effect on how they handle their outward circumstances. The content of Paul's prayer is threefold. First, he prayed that they would be strengthened with might in the inner man.

The condition of our inner man has the greatest effect on how we handle our outward circumstances. We need to be strengthened in the inner man to be able to properly handle our outward circumstances.

Now Paul prays that they might be made strong by God's might. The word 'might' is *dunamis*, or power. When we are strengthened by God's power, it is to be strengthened by God's ability. It is the ability to handle life's various trials and difficulties in a godly way.

John Gill says: *Believers in Christ need fresh supplies of strength to enable them to exercise grace, to perform duties, to resist Satan and his temptations, to oppose their corruptions, and to bear the cross, and undergo afflictions cheerfully, and to hold on and out to the end: this is a blessing that comes from God, and is a gift of his free grace; a "grant" from him who is the strength of the lives of his people, of their salvation, of their hearts, and of the work of grace in their hearts* (Comment on verse 16).

How many of you parents need God's ability to be able to teach your children how to live right? How many of us need God's ability to handle life's manifold problems? And where do we go to get that? I have pointed out Psalm 9:10 before. It says, "And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You." Those who know His name know that for which the name stands, and that is the glory of God. And I believe that the riches of that knowledge will strengthen us with God's power!

d) The means of the answer (16d)

So we notice now further the means that God uses to strengthen the Christian. Let me read verse 16 once more:

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might (and here comes the means) through His Spirit...

The pronoun 'His' very clearly tells us this is the Holy Spirit he is talking about. John's Gospel

speaks a lot about the coming Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 16:3:

16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

In John 16:7-11 Jesus said this:

7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

9 *Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

10 *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

11 *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

Here is the process: First, Paul prays to God that he would strengthen the Ephesian believers with His might or power. And that He would do it according to the riches of His glory. Second, God then sends this strength or power to the believer through His Holy Spirit. Third, the believer is strengthened.

e) The sphere of the answer (16e)

We come then to the last words in this great verse. They give us the sphere in which the answer to Paul's prayer takes place. Paul prayed that God would strengthen the Ephesian believers with power through the Holy Spirit in the inner man.

So just what is this inner man? Well, listen to 2 Corinthians 4:16. Here Paul says: *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.* Well, our outward man is the body. The inner man then must be the soul and spirit and these include the mind, the will, the emotions, and all such non-material parts of man. This is the inner man. This is a huge subject and makes up the true psychology of man.

Turn to Ephesians 4. When we are born again our inner man becomes the new man. The inner man in an unsaved person has no interest in being strengthened by the Spirit of God. So just who or what is this inner man? I think this is the new man of Ephesians. Here is what Paul says in verses 20-24:

20 *But you have not so learned Christ,*

21 *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*

22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*

23 *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

24 *and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

When a person is born again he comes under new management. He is now to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, not the spirit of the world. The inner man referred to here is the born again person under the control of the Holy Spirit. It is the man you do not see. The outward man is the body.

This is what you see. The inner man is soul and spirit under divine control. 1 Peter 3:3-4 says:

3 *Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—*

4 *rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

Notice how the inner man is spoken of here. He is the hidden man of the heart. Now just what is that? The inner man is the self under the control of the Holy Spirit in the heart, or the mind. The hidden person of the heart is the born again person as he is in his mind. The outward man is the one we see, the inner man is the one we don't see.

Now, does the inner man need strength? I have found that the older I get the more strength I need in the inner man. We all need strength in the inner man. Why is it that when temptation comes we can't resist? We are not strong in the inner man. Young people need strength to stand against the tremendous forces that are at work to destroy them. There is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Today we have the internet and cell phones. How much strength does it take to handle those right? It takes huge strength. Older people need all of that in all those areas but added to that are many new things when you grow older. Oh to be strengthened with God's power through the Spirit in the inner man! This is what Paul prayed for the Ephesians.

Consider further 2 Corinthians 4:16 in this light. Here Paul

says:

16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

18 *while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Our outward man here is the body. Though the outward man is perishing, and surely he is, the inward man is being renewed day by day. I think you cannot understand such passages as this until you meet many deep trials. And Paul calls these our momentary and light affliction. Yes, it is only in this life that we face these. But what our inner man experiences is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Consider yet again, Romans 7:22 regarding our inner man. Paul says:

22 *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

23 *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

Our inner man rejoices in the law of God. He rejoices in spiritual things and in truth and righteousness etc... But there is another law that wages war against the law of my mind. And in this context we have a weak Christian. And he is susceptible to the law of sin which is

in his members and it brings him into captivity. I believe Paul is speaking of his own experience as a young Christian. He understood the needs. So when he prayed for the Ephesian believers he prayed that they would be strengthened in the inner man.

Now consider further that Paul wants them to be strengthened with *might* in the inner man. The word translated 'might' is *dunamis*. It is power, ability, to be able. It is strength to be able to do that which we should do as Christians. Where does this strength reside? In the inner man and more precisely in the mind.

Jones points out that in the physical realm, when our immunities are weak we are susceptible to all kinds of sicknesses. When we come into contact with various germs these germs may find that in our bodies which is open to their attack, and if so, attack they do and we get sick. So we can do various things to build up our immunities.

It is like that in the spiritual realm. We can do many things to build up our spiritual immunities. Paul prays that the Ephesian believers will be strengthened in the inner man with power, with ability to resist the corrupting influences. In the physical realm we sometimes get sick with some infection. And the medical world has discovered things that will attack various viruses or germs and render them powerless. In the spiritual realm sometimes the spiritual penicillin that will cure us to simply to ask for prayer. And the devil will send in a lot of resistance to keep us from asking for prayer. This resistance comes in the form of things like pride. And there we are unable, not

having the power, not having the might to do this simple thing.

Sometimes we may have problems in our family. And we know we need to gather and pray. And as the head of the home, every demonic force will array itself against us. And only if we have a huge amount of might, or ability spiritually can we overcome and do what we know we should do. Oh how we need to be strengthened in the inner man with the Lord's might. In our own community there are many hurting families. There are Christian men and women who are spiritually sick and weak. They have hardly any ability to handle their own home.

Now you see, Paul realized that the Ephesians would come under attack. He knew that unless they were strengthened by the Lord's might in the inner man, they would not be able to stand up. I watch this in church members sometimes. I see them under spiritual attack. Sometimes it is hard not to shake somebody and say, "Wake up. Don't you see what is happening?"

Charles Haddon Spurgeon has said, "There is a point of grace as much above the ordinary Christian as the ordinary Christian is above the worldling" (Jones 3:131). What that means is that there is a vast spiritual difference between the non-Christian and the average Christian. But then there is a vast difference between the average Christian and the truly spiritual Christian. In other words there are many stages upward in the Christian life.

My wife gave me a book recently by Watchman Nee called, "The Normal Christian Life." The book starts like this, "What is the normal

Christian life? We do well at the outset to ponder this question. The object of these studies is to show that it is something very different from the life of the average Christian" (Pg. 9).

What is revival? Well, what needs revival? Anything that has gone subnormal. So revival is the restoration to normalcy. Watchman Nee said that normal Christianity is very, listen, very different from average Christianity! Average Christianity is subnormal. That is why the need for revival.

Now no matter at what stage in the Christian life we are, we need to be strengthened in the inner man with God's power. And the deeper one grows into the Christian life, the greater will be the battles with the evil one. You see, there are some things the Lord will not allow the devil to do to a young believer. But the more we grow the more may be allowed because God wants to work in us until we are as much like Christ as it is possible for us to become. And the more Christ-like we become, the greater the glory God gets, and the greater the battles with the devil will be. Many Christians grow very, very slowly. Jones says that at 50 years as a Christian many have hardly gotten anywhere.

May I ask you, do you want to grow as a Christian? Then dig in for the battle of your life. Tozer calls the Christian's life a battleground, not a playground. For anyone who lives the normal Christian life, Christianity is a battleground.

Now let me ask, what does the man of the world do when circumstances get difficult? Well,

some go to see a psychologist. Some turn to alcohol. Some to drugs. There are other options but none is like being strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man.

Now why would Paul pray like this for the Ephesian believers?

Well first, through many and various ways and through the fiery darts of the devil who will seek to destroy them, they might become weak and fail. There is no need to pray like this if there is no danger of becoming weak. The danger of becoming weak is a danger that all of us face. When is it when we succumb to sin? Is it not when we are weakened in some way? We are weakened when we give in to any temptation. We are weakened when we do not pray. We are weakened when we do not read the Bible. We are weakened when we are around people of negative influence. We are weakened in a multitude of ways. That is why Paul prayed that they might be strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man.

CONCL: I have used all my time giving the message, and let me only ask this: Do we sense our need to be strengthened by God's power in the inner man? If we are truly spiritual we do. And in short, this is what I think the answer in this text is: Get to know God.