

Ephesians 3:20–21

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.

Giving Glory to God **Ephesians 3:20-21**

INTRO:

Leading up to our text today the Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers. He prayed for us to be divinely enabled to grasp the incredible theological realities in **chapters 1-3** and to apply these truths to our lives. His prayer has three requests. First, we need to be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man, in order that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Second, we need this spiritual strength to grasp Christ's love, which is far too vast to be fully understood. Finally, Paul wanted us to be filled with all the fullness of God, to be fully submitted to the Spirit of God who lives in us that He might produce the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Paul closed his prayer by breaking into a session of praise to God. He praises God by focusing on His infinity. If we just get a small glimpse of the wonder of Who our God really is, we will never be the same again.

I. Praising God's Infinity (v. 20)

II. Giving To God His Rightful Glory (v. 21)

I. Praising God's Infinity (v. 20)

Ephesians 3:20 ***“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,”***

A. Who is this God to Whom we pray? Who is this God of Whom Paul made these enormous spiritual requests? He is our God ***“who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”***

1. Why it is important to praise God in prayer? Praise is a vital part of the discipline of prayer. Praise, the reciting to God His attributes and what He has done, reminds us vividly of the nature of the One to Whom we are praying.

2. Perhaps some in the Ephesian church wondered if Paul had asked too much from God. These are not small spiritual requests. **(1)** Would we be bold enough without Paul's example to ask for strengthening in the inner man? **(2)** Would we have the audacity to request the spiritual were-with-all to comprehend Christ's love which is so vast we cannot understand it? **(3)** Would we even think to ask that we might be filled with all the fullness of God? How did Paul have the spiritual spunk to boldly ask these blessing for us?

B. Paul's boldness was rooted in his knowledge of Who God is and how big God is. God is infinite. He has no boundaries. Just look at Paul's expression of praise to God.

vs.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."***

The heart of **verse 20** is a descriptive phrase. It tells us how Paul thought about our God to whom all glory ought to be given. Literally translated, **verse 20** reads in the Greek, ***"To the One being able to do beyond all things superabundantly above the things we ask or think, according to the power working in us."***

1. Do you see how the Apostle piled up adverbs to make his point? First, he wrote our Heavenly Father is able to do beyond anything that we could ask or think. In other words, God can do anything. No matter how great things we could ask from God, He can do more. We teach a song to our children which says, *"My God is so big, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do."* The Apostle would *"amen"* this statement loudly.

2. Paul wrote, while we sit and think about great things God can do, He is far greater than anything we can think up. In fact, He can do infinitely more. The Greek word translated ***"exceedingly abundantly"*** is a word made up of a root and two prepositions. The root means ***"over and above"*** that which is necessary. To this Paul adds the first preposition which makes this mean, ***"exceedingly over and above."*** Still, this is not enough for the Apostle, because God can do above all that we could ask or think. He can do more than above all that we ask or think. To sum up this compound Greek word means, ***"in over abundance; beyond all measure, superabundantly."*** So, Paul wrote, God is able to do far beyond exceeding above all that we could ask or think. God is infinite! Paul is trying to describe an infinite God in human language.

C. Do we think of God in this way? Why don't we? Doesn't the Scripture show us a God who is this great and majestic? Yes it does. Yet, we often forget how great our God is and settle for a God who is far too small.

1. God is so majestic and great that we cannot comprehend how great He is. We cannot conceive of the power that created the universe and called worlds into existence. Nor, can we wrap our brains around the wisdom of the Father who devised the plan of redemption and sent His Son, God the Son, in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, to become incarnate in human flesh and to die on a cross so we might have life and salvation in Him.

2. We cannot grasp this truth. Because our God is infinite in power, wisdom, holiness, and love, we can rejoice in the fact that He is ours, if we belong to Him. I love Isaiah 40:10-11.

“Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”

D. Although God is infinite, He is not abstract. This infinite God is working in our lives. He does all this by ***“the power that works in us.”*** This power is a Person. He is the Holy Spirit of God.

II. Giving To God His Rightful Glory (v. 21)

Ephesians 3:21 ***“To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”***

A. Having seen how Paul understood God, now let us understand His final prayer request in this prayer. He desires our God receive all the glory due Him through His church.

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

B. How is God glorified in His church?

1. First, corporately, we give glory to God in His church by making sure we are His church. **[1]** He must have the pre-eminence. He must call the shots. His Will and His alone must be done in it.

Colossians 1:17–18 ***“And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, in order that in all things He may have the preeminence.”***

This is precisely why we have talked about congregational government being each one of us seeking the Lord's Will and voting accordingly. **[2]** We also make sure He is glorified in His church when we do church His way! Church must be

God centered. It must be about what we can do for Christ and what glory we give to Christ, not about what Christ can do for us.

2. Second, individually, we give glory to God in His church by making sure we give glory to God in each of our lives. We noted before the emphasis in this book on *“all in all”* Christ fills the corporate whole because He fills each individual part. The requests Paul made in this prayer are for each one of us. The motive is so God may be glorified by the Son in the Church as a whole!

Remember the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's words in **Matthew 5:14-16**? *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* Is God being glorified in His church here? This is our purpose.

Hymn #394 *In My Life Be Glorified*