

**25.03.07 Coromandel Baptist 10:00 a.m.**

***Glory in the Church***

Bible Readings = Eph. 3:14-4:3; Col. 3:12-17

**Introduction:**

- (1) Last Sunday, we considered the opening section of Paul's great prayer in Ephesians 3:14ff.
- (2) The reason for his prayer to the Father was the wonderful reality of the *access* that we have to the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit (as in Eph. 2:18).
- (3) We have this access by the Father's own grace, as in his Son he has abolished the enmity between us and himself, so that we are no longer 'children of wrath', but his adopted sons. In that Cross all human enmity was destroyed, as the anger and hatred we have had for our heavenly Father was laid upon Christ, who bore its guilt away for us.
- (4) So the one new family has access to the Father, recognising that he has created this new humanity by his own grace.
- (5) However, the matter is not just that we have 'access', nor that that access it to the Father. The even greater wonder is that he has purposed that this new community be filled unto his own fullness...to all the fullness of God. This is the full adoption as sons to which we have been called. As we are filled with his fullness, he is glorified in us, and so we are glorified in Him.
- (6) This could only be possible as the community was rooted and grounded in love, for God is love. We could not be filled unto all of his fullness, lest it be with the fullness of love.

***This week we aim to see how the love of the Father, experienced in his family, is the means by which his glory is seen: in meekness, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love.***

**1. The Way God Is**

(1) In Gal. 5:23-24 we read that the fruit of the Spirit is, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law'. This is an unusual statement grammatically: a singular noun (fruit) and a singular verb (is) with multiple descriptions. This has led some to comment that the fruit is love, and that all the other descriptions are the consequences and concomitants of love.

- Whatever the case, if God is love, then this is a description of the way God is.
  - This is a description of the fruit of the Spirit (i.e. the fruit of God himself). None of these things arise from within our flesh.
    - They stand in contrast to the deeds of the flesh (in Gal. 5:21ff.) which arise 'from below'. Left to ourselves, this is what *we* produce.
  - So the fruit of the Spirit is/are the life of God.
- Why mention this passage from Galatians when we are doing a series on Ephesians?
  - From now on (Eph. 4-6) Paul virtually gives us a description of what it means for a community to be filled unto all the fullness of God, and to be rooted and grounded in love. As we go through we will find time and

again the same sorts of words and phrases used to describe this new life of faith in Ephesians, as was used in Galatians

- See, for example, the opening verses of Eph. 4:1-3, to which we return shortly.

(2) What must not escape our notice is that (a) this is the way God is and (b) this is how it is that we are to the praise of his glory, or the praise of the glory of his grace.

- (a) This is the way God is...i.e. Gal. 5:23f. is a description of the *character of God* (as revealed in and through the Spirit). In him, there is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness,...etc. If anything, it is the family likeness being revealed in the Father's children, but it is not the credit of the children that it is so!
  - God has revealed himself to us (each and all) in exactly this way. When we hear and believe the word of the gospel, we have a revelation brought to our hearts that this is the way God is and has always been towards us. In the Cross we see that he is love, good, kind, the bringer of peace, faithful to his promises, etc.
    - § As we go on hearing and believing the word of his grace, so we go on living and growing in the fruit of his Spirit...i.e. we go on being rooted and grounded in love and filled unto the fullness of God.
- (b) This is the way God is glorified in us.
  - Paul has already said that we have been chosen in Christ to be to the praise of his glory, or the glory of his grace (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). It is not just that we will sing songs to praise his grace and glory, but that we will be to the praise of his glory. I.e. we will not just *praise* his glory, but *be* (in some sense) his glory.
    - § This is picked up at the end of Paul's doxology in Eph. 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen
  - How are we his glory? By living in his character and reflecting that to the principalities and powers. In Eph. 3:10 God has purposed to reveal his wisdom to the rulers through the Church.
    - § This is because the rulers have had us in their sway (Eph. 2:1f.) and now by the grace of God, we have been released from bearing their image, to bear the image of the Father, by being united to the Son. We have been predestined to the adoption as sons (Eph. 1:5), to be holy and blameless before him (Eph. 1:4), and all this in love.
  - Thus, where we walk in humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and love so we reflect the glory of God as his beloved community.
    - § In so doing, we are walking according to our true status. We have been given the gift of sonship, and in walking in these ways we are walking as mature sons!
  - E. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, p. 289 'we become willing participants not just in what God does, but in the way he does it. We have all grown up and been immersed in a pre-resurrection world of means in which power and money, information and technology, lust and avarice, pride and anger are the usual and approved ways for accomplishing the work of the world. They work, as a matter of fact, very well. They work efficiently. A clever and determined person can get

almost anything he or she wants by perfecting and practicing these ways.’ But this is not the way of the Father or his family...rather, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and love are the norm.

§ Also cf. Mic. 6:8...note the verbs: what we are to do, what we are to love doing to others...we do justice (even if others do not) we love to show mercy and walk humbly (since if God did not show mercy to us what hope would we have). e has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

## 2. The Exceeding Abundance of God’s Power

(1) We have already commented on the theme of ‘lavishness’ in Ephesians.

- See, for example, Eph. 1:6-8; 2:4; and now again here...the super abundance of his power.
  - In prayer is God always doing more than we think? And is he doing more than *all* we can ask for, or even think? And in what way is he doing this?? ‘exceedingly abundantly above and beyond all we ask or think’.
    - § But this exceeding abundance (a very emphatic term in Greek) is in accord with his power at work within us...what power? The power by which re raised us from the dead with Christ (Eph. 1:19f.)
    - § Remember back to the beginning of the series on Ephesians: seeing things truly i.e. from the perspective of where we really are, raised up with Christ. If you are in Christ you are looking at a resurrected person every time you look in the mirror! Dead, buried with him, now raised up with him. In this place we become willing participants in his action.
- It is that power of the resurrection which is at work, always doing more than we can ever imagine. Raising us from the dead of our own ability and accomplishments, disillusionments and failures...always the resurrection power of Jesus is at work.
  - As an example, look at the actual resurrection of Jesus. Did he tell them about it before hand? Did they believe it? When it happened did they expect it? But were they glad that it happened?

§ The joy is in the unexpected!

(2) Our ‘inner man’ must be strengthened by the Spirit for Christ to dwell by faith.

- Not because Christ is not there, but because he is. We have been united with him, raised with him, etc. But the inner man needs constant strengthening by the Spirit to receive the truth of this by faith (especially in the light of the battle in which we are engaged, as in Eph. 6:10ff.)
  - We have to be strengthened in the Spirit that by faith we may understand where and who we are, so that we can be ready for all the fullness. Inner man.
- It is a prayer that we might know and possess what we already have. It is that we might see what has freely been given to us in Christ, and wrought in our hearts by the Spirit. It is to see things as they *really* are, not as they *seem* to be.

(3) This exceedingly abundant power is at work now, but for an end point. Is it possible now for a man or woman to be filled with God? When that happens, what happens? Our capacity is enlarged to be filled more!

- There are limitations now, because of factors such as a mortal body, indwelling sin, the conflict in which we are engaged, so we await the fullness of our adoption as sons, but by faith now we can be strengthened to be filled unto all the fullness that is possible now.

### 3. Being Filled With Glory

(1) So, in what way is there glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus?

- As we live and walk according to where we really are, so the glory is seen. The glory is the glory of God's own character, so the glory is seen in:
  - Humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, love
    - Cf. 1 Cor. 13; Phil. 2:1-11; Mark 10:35-45
- The theme of love in Ephesians is plain: 1:4; 15; 4:2, 16; 5:2; 6:24.
  - So many other places in which we learn that there is nothing else but love. See John 13:34-35; 15:17; Gal. 5:6, 13; 1 John 3:10-18; 4:10ff.; etc.
  - No 'means to an end' for any Christian living.

(2) Unity in the bond of peace

- We do not *create* any unity. That has been created through Christ (Eph. 2:14ff.).
  - The unity lies in our being of the Father's family, with access to him in Christ through the Spirit.
  - In this place, Peace has been declared (Eph. 2:17). This declaration of peace has to do with God's removing of our sin and the judgement against out guilt.
    - The declaration of Peace, is the other side of the declaration of our justification. The redemption we have = the forgiveness of our trespasses according the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7), so in Christ we are holy and blameless before him (Eph. 1:4); and have the Spirit as our pledge and seal (Eph. 1:13-14).
  - So we 'walk worthy' not because we seek to obtain something from God, but because we have already received it all from him.
- How do we maintain that unity? Humility, meekness, forbearance...forgiving as we have been forgiven; laying aside all things that do not belong to love such as sexual immorality; not letting sun go down on anger, and thus not giving devil an opportunity, etc.
  - I.e. in all cases, looking to others as God has looked at us: not counting trespasses against us. And in all cases knowing that such life is not within ourselves, but is from God.