

**Palmetto Baptist Church:** June 21, 2020

**The Engine Behind God's Will:** Ephesians 3:16-19

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

### **Prayer is the fuel that feeds the engine of God's will. (14-15)**

- The Priority of Prayer
- The Posture of Prayer
- The Process of Prayer

#### ***Painting the Picture:***

Remember the first time you drove a car by yourself? Remember the first time you filled the car with gas by yourself? You didn't need to know HOW IT WORKED, you just needed to know THAT IT WORKED (kept the car running from point A to point B.

- This is a picture of "child-like faith" ("child-like humility") from Matthew 18:1-4. Prayer Works!

After driving the car for a while, you begin to experience problems (weird noises, different smells, occasional jerks, and even **CHECK ENGINE LIGHTS**...). These problems require a closer look under the hood to see what needs to be fixed. If you are anything like me, this means that you take your car into a mechanic as soon as possible because you have no confidence in your own ability to fix the problem on your own. (I am describing the majority of us. 😊)

Perhaps I am describing your experience with life right now?

- Job: Did your job start out fulfilling but now has turned into a burden? Have you run into a difficult boss or an annoying coworker? Imagine being one of the 7 police officers who are members of our church. What must life be like for them with the real threat of anarchy and the cries of defunding their departments.
- Marriage: Did your marriage start out like a dream come true but now you have run into the reality that the honeymoon is over? Has the joy of a new baby turned into a tremendous lack of sleep an uncertainty about how to navigate the uncertainty of parenting? Or may be you have tried to expand your family and the Lord said "NOT YET" or even "NO."
- Health: unexpected accident or illness

- Overall perspective on life: Did you start out ready to conquer the world only to find yourself struggling to conquer the demands of facing the day... you are lacking peace and purpose.

This morning, I would like to invite you to join me in taking a closer look under the hood of finding and fulfilling God's will. We will do this by examining the parts connected together in the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 3:16-19. But first let's start with understanding the basics of how an engine works. 😊

After you take the time to fill up your car with gas and you turn the car on...

- The fuel-air mixture enters the cylinder when the red valve is open
- The spark plug ignites fuel-air mixture in the cylinder
- Exhaust gasses exit the cylinder when the blue valve opens
- This creates a boost of pressure that moves the piston up and down
- The piston is connected to the crankshaft by a piston rod
- The process is repeated over and over again to create movement (ACTION)

How does this relate to prayer?

Prayer is the process in which believers call out to God (fueling the car) with complete confidence that the engine will work according to its design. This morning I want to suggest that many times PRAYER DOESN'T APPEAR TO WORK because we fail to believe that God is WHO HE CLAIMS TO BE and able to exceeding and abundantly above all that we ask or think!

Now let us not miss out on the CONTEXT OF EPHESIANS... Paul was driven to prayer after meditating on God's plan to REDEEM THE ELECT (THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST) and bring together JEWS AND GENTILES into one NEW BODY (THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH).

## I. God the Father offers strength. (16a)

- Strength: the ability to fight against the temptation to avoid the outworking of God's plan
  - Perhaps Paul was tempted to give into the pressure of segregation as seen in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. He was, after all, a Pharisee of Pharisees... trained at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:5)
  - This strength to fight temptation is a gift from God.

### I Corinthians 10:13

<sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation **he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**

## I. *God the Father offers strength. (16a)*

## II. **God the Holy Spirit provides power. (16b)**

- Power: the ability to endure under difficulty
  - We always face difficulty in this sin-cursed world. It is the result of what takes place for those who try to find and follow God's will.
- In your inner being
  - This strength is manifested in the inner man (note that the strength does not always produce the transformation of the external circumstances, it produces energy internally to handle whatever you are faced with in this world!)

## III. **God the Son produces love. (17-19)**

- A. Jesus wants to make your heart His home.
- Dwell: reside, take up residency, live with
  - In your hearts through faith:
    - Hebrews 11:1 – “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...”
  - Notice the overlap between the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling presence of Jesus in the life of the believer in the following texts: Romans 8:9-11; John 14:23; 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Romans 8:9-11

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

2 Corinthians 13:5

<sup>5</sup>Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

John 14:23

<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**

## Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "**Behold, the dwelling place<sup>[a]</sup> of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,<sup>[b]</sup> and God himself will be with them as their God.**<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

- Second to bringing Him glory, God created man to have an intimate relationship with Him! He started that way in the Garden of Eden. He will end that way in the New Jerusalem. He has made a way between now and then to enjoy an intimate relationship with Him.
- Notice that an awareness of the presence of Jesus dwelling in your heart will make you adjust your actions and expectations. You will be driven to holiness and rock solid confidence in a God who can do the impossible in and through you!
- My Heart Christ's Home by Robert Boyd Munger<sup>1</sup>

My Heart Christ's Home By Robert Boyd Munger "Robert Boyd Munger (1911-2001) was a Presbyterian minister who wrote this timeless work in 1951. It was a vividly compelling then, and I have found no other essay on the ABC's of the Christian life, other than Scripture itself, so impacting as Munger's wonderful work still today." (Quote from a Christian leader)

- The Library, the dining room, the living room, the workroom, the rec room, the hall closet... transferring the title.

In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, we find these words: "That (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:16). Or, as another has translated, "That Christ may settle down and be at home in your hearts by faith." Without question one of the most remarkable Christian doctrines is that Jesus Christ Himself through the presence of the Holy Spirit will actually enter a heart, settle down and be at home there. Christ will make the human heart His abode. Our Lord said to His disciples, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). It was difficult for them to understand what He was saying. How was it possible for Him to make his abode with them in this sense? It is interesting that our Lord used the same word here that He gave them in the first of the fourteenth chapter of John: "I go to prepare a place for you .. that where I am, ye may be also." Our Lord was promising his disciples that, just as He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them and would welcome

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usna.edu/Navigators/files/documents/MHCH.pdf>

them one day, now it would be possible for them to prepare a place for Him in their hearts and He would come and make His abode with them. They could not understand this. How could it be? Then came Pentecost. The Spirit of the living Christ was given to the church and they understood. God did not dwell in Herod's temple in Jerusalem! God did not dwell in a temple made with hands; but now, through the miracle of the outpoured Spirit, God would dwell in human hearts. The body of the believer would be the temple of the living God and the human heart would be the home of Jesus Christ. It is difficult for me to think of a higher privilege than to make Christ a home in my heart, to welcome, to serve, to please, to fellowship with him there.

One evening I invited Jesus Christ into my heart. What an entrance He made! It was not a spectacular, emotional thing, but very real. It was at the very center of my life. He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the cold hearth and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful fellowship. I have never regretted opening the door to Christ and I never will - not into eternity! This, of course, is the first step in making the heart Christ's home. He has said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20). If you are interested in making your life an abode of the living God, let me encourage you to invite Christ into your heart and He will surely come. After Christ entered my heart and in the joy of this new relationship I said to Him, "Lord, I want this heart of mine to be Yours. I want to have You settle down here and be perfectly at home. Everything I have belongs to You. Let me show You around and introduce you to the various features of the home that you may be more comfortable and that we may have fuller fellowship together." He was very glad to come, of course, and happier still to be given a place in the heart.

### **The Library**

The first room was the study - the library. Let us call it the study of the mind. Now in my home this room of the mind is a very small room with very thick walls. But it is an important room. In a sense, it is the control room of the house. He entered with me and looked around at the books in the bookcase, the magazines upon the table, the pictures on the walls. As I followed His gaze I became uncomfortable. Strangely enough, I had not felt badly about this before, but now that He was there looking at these things I was embarrassed. There were some books were there that His eyes were too pure to behold. There was a lot of trash and literature on the table that a Christian had no business reading, and as for the pictures on the walls - the imaginations and thoughts of the mind - these were shameful. I turned to Him and said, "Master, I know that this room needs a radical alteration. Will You help me make it what it ought to be? - to bring every thought into captivity to you?" "Surely!" He said. "Gladly will I help you. First of all, take all the things that you are reading and looking at which are not helpful, pure, good and true, and throw them out! Now put on the empty shelves the books of the Bible. Fill the library with Scriptures and meditate on them day and night. As for the pictures on the walls, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but here is an aid" He gave me a full-size portrait of Himself. "Hang this centrally," He said, "on the wall of the mind."

I did, and I have discovered through the years that when my thoughts are centered upon Christ Himself, His purity and power cause impure thoughts to back away. So He has helped me to bring my thoughts into captivity. May I suggest to you if you have difficulty with this little room of the mind, that you bring Christ in there. Pack it full with the Word of God, meditate upon it and keep before it the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus.

### **The Dining Room**

From the study we went into the dining room, the room of appetites and desires. Now this was a very large room. I spent a good deal of time in the dining room and much effort in satisfying my wants. I said to Him, "This is a favorite room. I am quite sure You will be pleased with what we serve." He seated Himself at the table with me and asked, "What is on the menu for dinner?" "Well," I said, "my favorite dishes: money, academic degrees and stocks, with newspaper articles of fame and fortune as side dishes." These were the things I liked - worldly fare. I suppose there was nothing radically wrong in any particular item, but it was not the food that should satisfy the life of a real Christian. When the food was placed before Him, He said nothing about it. However, I observed that He did not eat it, and I said to Him, somewhat disturbed, "Master, don't You care for this food? What is the trouble?" He answered, "I have meat to eat that you do not know of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." He looked at me again and said, "If you want food that really satisfies you, seek the will of the Father, not your own pleasures, not your own desires, and not your own satisfaction. Seek to please Me and that food will satisfy you." And there at the table He gave me a taste of doing God's will. What a flavor! There is no food like it in all the world. It alone satisfies. Everything else is dissatisfying in the end. Now if Christ is in your heart, and I trust He is, what kind of food are you serving Him and what kind of food are you eating yourself? Are you living for the lust of the flesh and the pride of life - selfishly? Or are you choosing God's will for your meat and drink?

**I. God the Father offers strength. (16a)**

**II. God the Holy Spirit provides power. (16b)**

**III. God the Son produces love. (17-19)**

**A. Jesus wants to make your heart His home.**

B. Jesus wants you to unite with a church.

- You (plural)

- Being rooted and grounded in love (perfect tense; a picture of the church in Eph. 2:20-21)

C. Jesus wants you to worship with a church

- Strength to comprehend **with all the saints**
- **The breadth and length and height and depth** (BKC: “These measurements most likely describe not the thoroughness of comprehension but the immensity of the thing to be comprehended.”)

D. Jesus wants you to experience the love of Christ (seen in the mystery of Christ leaving heaven to come to earth and die for sinful man)

E. Jesus wants you to experience the love of Christ through the church.

- Only Jesus was the complete fullness of God on earth.
- Therefore, Paul is referring to the fullness of God that we can experience together when we worship and serve the Lord with other believers (Ephesians 1:22-23).

## **Application:**

Is your check engine light on?

What truth about God needs repair in your life?

- Faith in God’s strength to fight temptation
- Trust in the Holy Spirit’s power to persevere under trial
- Confidence in the Love of Jesus to motivate your obedience

Are you willing to return to the practice of calling out to God with Child-like faith?