

Sermon Title: What God Wants For You
Scripture Text: Eph. 3:14-17 (Ephesians #16)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 9-12-21

Well, after about a month hiatus from the Book of Ephesians for our annual foray into the world of "Provoke the Pastor," we return today to the Book of Ephesians, and we are going to put in at Chapter 3 and Verse 14.

Usually when we think about God's will, what we are thinking about is how to make good personal decisions. Well, that's a *good* thing. We spent several weeks talking about that, around this time last year. We want to make wise and godly choices so that we can live lives that truly honor our Lord. But in the passage before us today, there is a much deeper and, if you will, richer sense of pursuing the will of God.

This is the written record of an apostolic prayer that emanates to us glorious insights into what God's will is for you—not in where you're going to have lunch, where you're going to go to school, where you're going to work, something like that; but in terms of your spiritual growth and development.

And this is part of the flow of this precious book. It divides very neatly into two halves; we are near the end of the first half—which we will finish, Lord willing, next Lord's Day. But Ephesians Chapters 1 and 2 are all about what God has done for us: starting with His plan from "before the foundation of the world" when "He chose" you for salvation (1:4), for you to be "in Christ" (1:3; cf. 2 Thess. 2:13), and leading all the way into our eternal fellowship with Him, because He has brought us from spiritual death to spiritual life (2:5).

Chapter 3, Verses 1 through 13 is kind of a review and a reminder. Paul gives a hint at the beginning of this chapter—Chapter 3, Verse 1—that he is going to pray (cf. vs. 14), and then he kind of derails himself from the prayer and goes from Verses 2 through 13 with that review of all the things that God has accomplished for us.

And now, in Chapter 3, Verses 14 through 21, Paul wrote this prayer that we will understand the significance of all those things He has done for us, and that ultimately, we will "be filled up to all the fullness of God." (vs. 19). *That's God's will for you!* He wants you to continue to "grow" (1 Pet. 2:2), He wants you to be *filled up!* What does that mean? Well, I think by the time we finish this chapter, you'll have a pretty good idea.

This is going to teach you how to pray for yourself, and how to pray for every other Christian you know. We're not going to take the whole passage; we're just going to go from Verse 14 through the beginning of Verse 17 today. And from that, we will extract three exhortations: Number 1—Pray, Knowing Who God Is; Number 2—Pray For God's Power; Number 3—Pray For Christ To Be At Home. Let's dive in and see what that's all about.

First: Pray, Knowing Who God Is. Paul says, in Chapter 3, Verse 14—"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father..." (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted) Now, "For this reason" take you back to what he said at Chapter 3, Verse 1, where he said "For this reason," referring back to Chapter 2, especially the end of Chapter 2: how we've all been reconciled to Christ; and by being reconciled to Christ, former enemy-groups are now united in one body by faith in Christ.

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Paul is also referring back to the fact that God is in control of his circumstances, which were...well, *lousy* by anyone's measure. But he's reminding himself—and reminding us—that God is in control of all of this.

What provoked Paul to pray this way was the sound doctrine that he has been describing to us, and the good people who *know* the truth that God has revealed to us.

I'm afraid that often, when we pray, we sort of sell ourselves short on who God really is, and we pray as if our view of God is primarily that He's the One to run to with our troubles. Well, *He is that*, for sure. *Who else* would you run to when you're in trouble, except the One that can do something about it? But if we stop with *that*, we're really missing a lot.

If you check out the prayers of the New Testament, you'll find a lot more praying for spiritual issues in people's lives—a lot more of giving thanks to God for His faithfulness, a lot more of praying for spiritual growth and maturity—than merely praying for the current guest list at the hospital. I *pray* for people who are sick. I *pray* for people who are hurting. That's fine! We want God to raise them up, and for them to be at full strength to serve Him for His glory. But the *most* important work happens on the *inside* (1 Tim. 4:8).

So he says: "I bow my knees before the Father..." "Bow my knees" is the metaphor that he uses here for praying. Now, you can think about what is the best posture to be in for praying. Paul talks about bowing his knees. Well, that paints quite a picture, that you would "bow"—that's an expression of humility and submission (Phil. 2:10-11).

But before you run out and buy kneepads and ask us to install kneeling benches in the church, realize: That's not the issue of what he's saying here. There are *many* different postures that people in the Bible adopted when they were praying. Yes, kneeling is one of them; and it's a good one. But they also stood, and sometimes they stood with hands spread open or lifted heavenward (Lam. 3:41). Sometimes they bowed the head, as if to acknowledge, "I'm not worthy to look You in the face." But sometimes, they lifted their eyes heavenward. And by the way: Their eyes were *open* when they prayed like that. Sometimes kneeling, sometimes falling down with the face to the ground, sometimes bowing with the face between the knees—or like the guy in Luke 18, standing afar off and "beating his breast," just expressing your humility before Him (vs. 13).

In other words: The physical posture may have something to do with reflecting the inner attitude of the soul at the moment that you're praying, but *it doesn't matter*, ultimately. Here, Paul said he knelt down to show his humility, his solemnity, in admiring the Lord and calling on Him on behalf of his Christian friends.

He says, "I bow my knees," and notice it says: "before the Father." "Before" is the translation of a little preposition that has several different connotations in the New Testament. When it's used like this, it has the idea of coming face to face. This is the same preposition used for: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God"—it uses this same idea of being face to face.

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Paul was conscious that in his prayer—even in a jail cell in Rome—in essence, in spiritual realities, he was coming face to face with God! Not in a *physical* way, but he had a sense of being "in the presence of God" (Ecc. 5:2).

And right away, he gives us a glimpse of what he knows is true of God; and hence, I say this first exhortation is: Pray, Knowing Who God Is. Look at Verse 15—"from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name..." When you call upon God, you are acknowledging that God is the Author of every intelligent being in the Universe! All angels and all of mankind are His creations. You're talking to "God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth."

So, He is *worthy* of our praise. He is *worthy* of our worship, He is *worthy* of our love, *worthy* of our total obedience, and *the only One* that we would ever want to pray to! In your prayer life, you'll never be any kind of a spiritual success; or in your walk with Christ, you'll never be any kind of a spiritual success, to a greater degree than you accurately understand who God is—and you *live* in light of who He is.

If you think of God as just the "Nice Guy in the Sky," if you think of being a Christian as a matter of treating other people well—*it is that*, but *infinitely* more than that; you don't want to fall into kind of a sentimental liberalism-concept. Other people think that they're talking about holiness, but they think of God as a "Cosmic Killjoy"—"If it's something *you* like, you know *God* doesn't like it, because *He* doesn't anybody happy!" You have to be *miserable* all the time, and you become an ultimate Legalist. And there are those who see God as a divine magician who is under contract to them, and that's where they get into all the Charismatic emotionalism, and "I'm going to do this so that God will be obligated to give me what I want!" What *pathetic* views of God!

Paul prayed on behalf of his friends in Christ that they would understand *who God really is*, and that they would *experience* who He is in their lives, because they would *walk* according to who He is. And that's precisely what God wants for you and me. As we walk out of this place today, He wants us to *know who He is*.

And then, look a little bit further, into Verse 16—"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory..." Now, stop there for a moment, and let's take that apart. The word "grant" is literally the word for "give"; it's a request that God would "give" something to you.

Get a load of *how* Paul wants God to give to you. God *loves* to give to His children (Ps. 84:11; Is. 30:18; Rom. 8:32), but he says, "I pray that He would give to you—grant you—*according to the riches of His glory*." He wants to *shower* good things upon you!

God's glory is the sum of all of His perfections, all of His attributes, all of the things that accurately describe them; put it all together, and that's His glory. It's all that He is: He is all-powerful, He is all-merciful, He is all-knowing, He is all-loving, totally righteous, all-wise, all-holy, all-true; He is omnipresent. I mean, don't diminish who this is you're talking to when you are praying!

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And God gives "according to His riches." God is not *frugal* about blessing His children! He *loves* to do it! Effective praying begins with understanding that you are praying to a God *who can perform!* He *really can* give to you! He can do *whatever needs to be done!*

I've kind of hinted at it already, and we're going to get to it next Lord's Day, I trust; but I don't mind if you let your eyes slip down a few verses, and go to where this prayer is *headed:* Ephesians Chapter 3, Verses 20 and 21. When he gets done praying for you, he's going to say this: "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

That's strong words! Prayer that is real prayer is addressed to that kind of God—the *only* God, Almighty God, who desires to bless you richly, "according to the riches of His glory."

In reading through commentaries on Ephesians, there is one by a pastor named John Eadie, from a different generation; and I love the way he described this idea of God granting to you "according to the riches of His glory." You know, if you're a little older, and you use some different words, it kind of sounds like you're *smarter*. This is just glorious.

His commentary here: "There is no fastidious scrupulosity or anxious frugality." I haven't used those words together *ever*, okay? But *this is God:* "There is no fastidious scrupulosity or anxious frugality on the part of the Divine Benefactor. He bestows, 'according to the riches of His glory,' His own infinite fullness!" And He *loves* to share it with His kids; He *loves* to spread it in the family.

Paul could pray as he did because he comprehended the generosity of God's grace. So, Pray, Knowing Who God Is. And then now, we're going to get to a specific: Pray For God's Power.

Let's read all of Verse 16 this time: "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man..." Here's the first specific request in this prayer for you: "to be strengthened."

The word "strengthened" is the translation of a word that means "manifested power." It's often used in connection with God's *creative* power, that people would see God creating things in you—not *physical* creations, but molding you into His image.

And so, "strengthened" is the request—"strengthened *with power*"; interesting combination of those two words: "strengthened *powerfully*." The word for "power" translates the Greek word *dunamis*; and yes, it is the word from which the English word "dynamite" is transliterated. It's the ability to perform *anything*. And so, putting together "strengthened" and "power" means this is a prayer that the kind of strength that is inherently belonging to God—the kind of strength from which He creates—that it will be manifested *in you*.

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How can that be? How can a quality that belongs only and exclusively to God be manifested in people like us? Well, the answer is in the next phrase: "strengthened with power *through His Spirit*"—that's the key. The Spirit of God is the agency that invigorates and gives strength to Christians (cf. Ezek. 36:27). It's another way of describing the Spirit-controlled life. It's a matter of being "strengthened with power through His Spirit."

It's a work of "God" that takes place "in you" (Phil. 2:13; cf. 2 Thess. 3:5; Heb. 13:21). God calls you to do certain things. He calls you to act certain ways. He will *always* strengthen you to be the kind of person you're supposed to be, and to do the kinds of things you are supposed to do. It is the work of His Spirit.

And His Spirit works on us—I love this phrase—"in the inner man." That's a way of describing, if you will, *the real you* (see Ps. 51:6; cf. Rom. 7:22; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 3:4). "Inner man" would be another one of that collection of different descriptions for everything about you, other than your body—heart, soul, mind, will, emotions; it's the "inner man," it's the *real you*.

Spiritual power is a characteristic of every Christian who submits to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit (cf. Ps. 119:32, 173). This is not something that is reserved for an elite class of Super-Christians; it's for *every child of God*, if we'll just discipline our minds and our spirits to study the Word of God (Ps. 119:38, 133)—to understand it, to live by it, to pray according to it, and to seek to serve Him for His glory.

Now, when you hear that phrase "through His Spirit in the inner man," you might be thinking, "What's that *other verse* where I've heard that?" Well, I thought the same thing. It's Second Corinthians Chapter 4, Verse 16—"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our *inner man* is being renewed day by day." There's the contrast: "inner man," "outer man." The body is the "outer" you, if you will; the "inner" you lives in the body.

You know, physically, after you reach your peak of physical development, probably as a young adult—from there on...if you're young, I don't want to break it to you, but the top of the hill is coming *real soon*, and it's all downhill from there! But, spiritually speaking, you can gain *a lot of momentum* in those downhill years. And as a Christian, the "inner" spiritual person should grow stronger and stronger by the work of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). It *is* the work of the Holy Spirit that enables you to serve God throughout your life (e.g., Rom. 8:26), because He energizes you, vitalizes you, and empowers you (Acts 1:8). That's a concept that Paul is going to develop much more fully in the next chapter—actually, in the whole second half of Ephesians, we'll see it much more.

But think this through, so that it isn't just *theoretical*. Paul prays that you will "be strengthened with power" *by* the Holy Spirit working in your "inner man." Now, how does that *actually work*? Well, there are several things that hint at where our spiritual strength comes from. There are a couple of commands in the New Testament that say: "Be strong"—Second Timothy Chapter 2, Verse 1 and Ephesians Chapter 6, Verse 10. We'll see the Ephesians one when we get to it, before terribly long here.

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And in those contexts, it says: "Be strong" in His "grace" (2 Tim. 2:1), and the other one says: "Be strong" as you put on the "armor of God" (Eph. 6:10-11)—so those are sources of strength. "We stand" in His "grace" (Rom. 5:2). How can I have His strength? I'm weak! Well, *He's strong!* He's in me, I trust Him, He will *use me* and *strengthen me* for what He calls me to do. I put on the "armor" so that I can face the spiritual battle around me (cf. 2 Cor. 10:4).

There's another source of strength mentioned. There are *several* others: Psalm 138, Verse 3—"On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul." What else makes you strong? Well, it's implied in our passage, too: Prayer (see Ps. 10:17; 119:28). "I *called* on You" and "You made me bold with strength." He gives us what we need in order to enable us to do what He wants us to do.

There's another classic passage, and I'll bet you know one verse of it, whether you know that's where it comes from or not: Over in Isaiah Chapter 40, Verses 28 through 31. Listen to this: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God"—Yahweh, usually translated "the Lord"—"The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired." People around here are so nice; they know I'm old and decrepit, and so they'll call me or e-mail me and say, "I know you're really busy and I know you've had a bad week..."—thank you for that; that's just my standard of living. But you don't have to say that when you call on God! He has *never* had a bad week! He has *never* had a bad day! He *never* sleeps! He *never* slumbers! (Ps. 121:4) He *never* gets tired; He *never* runs out—and that's while He is *constantly* giving out of "the riches of His glory"!

[Continuing in Isaiah 40]—God "does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary." That's probably the part you've heard, but don't go quoting that if you're not going to talk about the first part of it! God is who He is, and He increases power to the weakest.

And he tells us there that the source of strength—he calls it "waiting on the Lord." What does that mean? It means patiently trusting Him is how we find His strength manifested in us (cf. Ps. 40:1). It's kind of like over in Second Corinthians Chapter 12, Verses 7 through 10; that's where the Apostle Paul says that in our "weaknesses," we experience His strength. If I think I can do something, if I've got it knocked, I'll just *go do it*. It's hard to call upon God for strength when you don't feel like you need it—but *we do need it!*

And what about, as the song says, "When we reach the end of our hoarded resources...He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again" (Annie J. Flint, "He Giveth More Grace").

So, Paul's prayer is that we would "be strengthened" by the power of God, brought to us by "His Spirit" in our "inner man."

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So, as we look at his prayer, the exhortations to us: Pray, Knowing Who God Is. Pray For God's Power—don't be ashamed to ask for His power; you *need it*. And then: Pray For Christ To Be At Home. Just the beginning of Verse 17, and that's all the further we're going to go today, and I think you'll see why. Ephesians 3:17 begins this way: "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..."

We need to stop and think about this a little bit, and we need to look carefully at what this marvelous concept is that is here. What could Paul possibly mean by praying for Christians to have Christ in their hearts? Isn't He *already there*? Well, yes, He is! Same Paul, same jail cell, different letter to a different church, he said this to the Colossians: "to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory"—have you ever heard a phrase like that before?—"the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Christ is already in you (Rom. 8:9)—so, what's he doing, praying that Christ will be dwelling in your heart? You know Jesus made a promise back in John Chapter 14—the same night that he established the Lord's Table; He said this, in John 14:16 through 17—"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you." And that was fulfilled, beginning in Acts Chapter 2—the Holy Spirit came and indwelt the believers in Christ.

This is true for *all* believers: First Corinthians 12:13—"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6). We *all* have the Spirit within us—we have Christ in us (see Jn. 14:18).

So obviously, he's *not* talking about the concept of the Holy Spirit *indwelling* believers. The key to understanding this lies in that word "dwell." Paul was praying "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." You have to pick a good word to translate it in English, and "dwell" is as good as we can probably get. We could circumlocute—and that's what we're going to do—to explain what this means.

"Dwell" translates a word here in Greek that is a compound word: *katoikeō*. The root of it is *oikos*—which is not a yogurt, it's a house. The noun *oikos* is "house." There's a verb—*oikeō*—that means "to live in as a home." This is that verb with a prefix attached to it: the prefix *kata*. Literally, *kata* means "downward." Often, when it's used as a prefix to a verb, it intensifies the meaning of the word. So when you put that with the word "dwell," it means "to settle down and be at home." You say, "Make yourself at home" when the company comes. They *don't*, and you're glad. But in the case of Christ, we want Him to settle down and be "at home." And there's another interesting factor, in that this verb is in the aorist tense—that's the one that implies "finality"; so the sense of it is: praying something like, that Christ might finally settle down and feel completely at home in your hearts (cf. Ps. 5:4).

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And notice how that happens: "through faith"—"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts *through faith*." As you continue to trust in Him, as you continue to obey Him, for every need, moment by moment, under the control of the Holy Spirit—He will settle down and be "at home" in your heart. In other words, this is a way of yet again describing the Spirit-controlled life (Gal. 5:16), which we will major on in the second half of Ephesians.

But *katoikeō*—that verb is used for living in a place to the extent that it becomes a center of operations; really "at home" there, "based" there. And the word is used to describe the residents of a city, as opposed to those who are just "passing through." You get the idea.

Over in Colossians Chapter 1, Verse 19, and Chapter 2, Verse 9, it describes the "fullness" of God dwelling in Christ. In James 4:5, it describes the Spirit of God having control of a believer's life.

So, to allow Christ to "dwell in your heart through faith," as Ephesians 3:17 says, means to allow Him to make your life a place that is "pleasing" to Him (Heb. 13:21). In John Chapter 14, Verse 23—not long after those words that we read a little bit earlier—it says: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word'—there's "Trust and Obey"—"and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.'" Slightly different wording, but it's the same concept.

Now, this thought is so rich, I want to stop here, as far as forward progress in Ephesians, and I want to emphasize this for our application.

A gentleman by the name of Robert Munger was a pastor many years ago. He wrote a booklet that was given to me at a crucial time in my early spiritual development; it's called: "My Heart, Christ's Home"; it's just a little thing, and it's a *very* clever and *very* insightful and accurate exposition of this verse. In the booklet, Jesus is portrayed as going room-by-room through a house; and in the analogy, the house represents various aspects of the owner's life.

They went to the Library—that was the control room of the house, like the mind; Jesus has to be in charge of what you're putting into your mind (Ps. 19:14; 2 Cor. 10:5).

They went to the Dining Room—which represents the desires and the appetites; and we need to give Jesus full control of our desires and our pleasures (Lk. 9:23).

They went to the Drawing Room—that was an intimate, comfortable, quiet place; and in Munger's little booklet, he pictures the Lord saying about the Drawing Room, "This is indeed a delightful room! Let us come here often. It is secluded and quiet, and we can have fellowship together." (Ps. 62:8; 1 Thess. 5:17)

They also went to the Workshop—that's the place where the tools of production were kept; and Munger portrays the Lord saying, "What *are* you producing with your life for the Kingdom of God?" and the owner said, "I have not much skill or strength," and the Lord's response is, "Let *Me* have your hands; I'll show you how to use these tools." (Matt. 11:29)

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They went to the Rumpus Room—or, the Play Room, as it would be now. At first, the owner did not want the Lord to come to this room in his life. He said, "Certain associations and friendships, activities, and amusements that I wanted to keep for myself are there; I evaded the issue of these." The Lord said, "Can I go with you?" And Munger says, "Then we went down into the Rumpus Room of the house, and He transformed it. He brought into life *real* joy, *real* happiness, *real* satisfaction, *real* friendship. Laughter and music have been ringing in the house ever since!" (Prov. 29:6; Phil. 4:4)

Now, I'm going to let Pastor Munger's words tell you the story about the chapter called "That Hall Closet"—here's what he says:

"There is just one more matter that I might share with you. One day, I found Him waiting for me at the door. There was an arresting look in His eye. He said to me as I entered, 'There is a peculiar odor around here. It's upstairs. It think it is in the hall closet.'

"As soon as He said the words, I knew what He was talking about. Yes, there was a small hall closet behind lock and key. I had one or two personal things that I did not want anybody to know about, and certainly I did not want Christ to see. I knew that they were dead and rotting things. And yet I loved them and I wanted them so for myself that I was afraid to admit that they were there.

"I went up the stairs with Him and as we mounted, the odor became stronger and stronger. He pointed at the door and said, 'It's in there! Some dead thing!'

"I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the Library, the Dining Room, the Drawing Room, the Workshop, the Rumpus Room, and now He was asking me about a little 2 x 4 closet. I said inwardly, 'This is too much. I am not going to give Him the key.'

" 'Well,' He said, reading my thoughts, 'If you think I'm going to stay up here on the second floor with this odor, you are mistaken. I will take My bed out on the back porch. I'm certainly not going to put up with that.' And I saw Him start down the stairs.

"When you have come to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen is to sense His fellowship retreating from you. I had to surrender. 'I'll give You the key,' I said sadly, 'but You'll have to open the closet. You'll have to clean it out. I haven't the strength to do it.'

" 'I know,' He said. 'I know you haven't. Just give Me the key, just authorize Me to take care of that closet, and I will.' So, with trembling fingers, I passed the key over to Him.

"He took it from my hand, walked over to the door, opened it, entered it, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there, and threw it away. Then He cleansed the closet, painted it, fixed it up—doing it all in a moment's time. Oh, what victory and release, to have that dead thing out of my life!"

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Well, finally, in his booklet, Munger has a chapter that speaks of "Transferring The Title"—in other words, the change of attitude from viewing yourself as hosting Christ in your life to Him being the Master, turning over your life to Him: He is the Master, you are the slave; you belong to Him (1 Cor. 7:22-23; Eph. 6:6). *That* makes all the difference.

That's what it means, Beloved, to have "Christ...dwell in your hearts through faith"—to set up operation there, to make it His headquarters.

Well, as we close, I requested a song this morning; we sang it a little while ago. I was working ahead because I was going away this week, so it was by Wednesday—which it usually happens Friday night or Saturday. I knew how I wanted to wrap this up, and I chose this song; so I asked Dirk and Bruce to put it in the two services. I love this song; I learned it when I was a young believer. And then, I read about this song. It's called "My Jesus, I love Thee." It's by a man named William Featherston. It was "Contemporary Christian Music" if you were in America in the third year of the Civil War, 1864.

William Featherston was contemplating John 21:15, where Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Really? Do you *love* Me?" And Peter said, "Lord, You know that I love You." And he was meditating on that. William Featherston was age 16 when he wrote this song! There's even one source that says he was *12* when he wrote this song, but a preacher probably made that up. Listen to this, and make this your prayer. The cool thing is that ever since I decided, on Wednesday afternoon, that I was going to finish the sermon this way, I've had this song in my mind—I'm going on *four days now of nothing but this song*, over and over and over, and I can't get enough! I love you too much to sing it to you. You know the tune. But let this sink in:

My Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I love Thee because Thou has first loved me
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath,
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow:
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow:
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

Sermon Title: What God Wants For You
Scripture Text: Eph. 3:14-17 (Ephesians #16)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 9-12-21

Let's pray:

Oh, Father, we know You because of that Jesus whom we love—Your Son, whom You sent to die, that we might live. Father, what a powerful word-picture that is, that one of Your servants wrote, that we would allow You to peruse all the rooms, all the corners of our lives. And Father, there are those things that we maybe foolishly have thought that we could hide from You; how silly! Clean them out, we pray, as only You can. Father, there are those things that we do, that we think, that we feel—and we confess them to You, that we know that they are wrong; but Father, we also confess to You that we hate that we love them—it's so hard to let go. Please, our Father, "strengthen" us with Your "power" in the "inner man," that Your Son might "dwell in our hearts through faith" and set up shop there, that we might walk in those "good works" which You have designed beforehand for us to "walk in them." That way, we know that You will receive the glory; for we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.