

—{1}. **Ephesians 3:14-21** **“A Pastor’s Praise”**

A. Introduction

1. How do you think of Paul?

- a. well, first of all, we think of his being an apostle
 - (A) one who saw the risen Lord Jesus Christ
 - (B) one who was directly commissioned by Jesus Christ
 - (C) and particularly, as one sent to the Gentiles
- b. we see him too as a travelling missionary
 - (A) accompanied on his missionary journeys by his team
 - (B) and traversing much of the Roman empire
 - (C) evangelizing people as yet unreached by the gospel
 - (D) bringing them in faith to Jesus Christ as Saviour
 - (E) and forming those new believers into local churches
- c. but in this message and the next
 - (A) which are taken from Ephesians 3: 14-21
 - (B) it is Paul, the pastor, who is speaking to us
 - (C) ‘pastoring’ the local churches formed under his ministry
 - (D) his pastoral care is shown throughout his letters
 - (1) in his loving greetings to churches and individuals
 - (2) in his gentle correction when they strayed
 - (3) in his praising and encouraging them
 - (4) in his teaching them spiritual truth
 - (5) in his prayers for them
 - (E) in fact, our next message, Lord willing, looks at Paul praying for his people, “A Pastor’s Prayer”
 - (F) today we find Paul, the pastor, leading his people in worship, “A Pastor’s Praise”

2. particularly, let us look at the last two verses of our Scripture reading: “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding 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.” (Eph 3:20-21)

a. let us consider these verses under two headings:

- (A) the occasion for praise, and,
- (B) the expression of praise

B. The Occasion for Praise

1. verse 20 gives to us two occasions or reasons for praise

- a. first, we should praise God for what He is like
- b. second, we should praise God what He has done

2. the first occasion or reason: What God is Like

a. we cannot expect a single verse, or even book, to tell us all about what God is like – all eternity will scarcely suffice

- (A) but, based upon what is in Ephesians chapters 1 to 3
- (B) describing God’s tremendous plan and purpose

- (1) of providing salvation by grace in Jesus Christ
- (2) to form those saved into one new body, the church

(C) Paul centres our reasons for praise based on what God is like to three wonderful facts about God

- (1) His tremendous power
- (2) His amazing generosity or largesse
- (3) His foresight or wisdom in discerning our need

b. His Power Now to Him who is able to do ...

(A) we have been looking at some of the attributes of God in our Sunday morning Bible class, and recently we looked at His Power; and barely scratched the surface

(B) but one key statement we read, was what Jesus said ‘... but with God all things are possible.’ (Matthew 19:26)

(C) God is able ... literally, God has the power to do

(D) and this alone makes Him to be worthy of praise: ‘... for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and

the glory, for ever. Amen' — Matthew 6:13 (AV)

- c. His Largesse to do far more abundantly beyond ...
 - (A) 'overflowingly' – Ps 23 ... my cup runneth over
 - (B) 'immeasurably more' (NIV), superabundantly (L&S); a Pauline coined word used here and 1 Thess 3:10, 5:13
 - (C) Jesus gives a picture of the largesse of God: 'Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.' (Luke 6:38)
 - (D) surely a cause of praise to every believer!
- d. His Foresight beyond all we ask or think, ...
 - (A) when we come to our heavenly Father in prayer
 - (B) He not only knows what we will ask, but all our need
 - (C) and He answers not merely in satisfaction of our need
 - (D) but, He is '... God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.' – 1 Timothy 6:17
 - (E) surely we have every occasion to worship this our God

3. the second occasion or reason: What God has Done

- a. again, God has done so much more than we can cover — indeed, John writes of Jesus Christ, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25)
 - (A) but just think for a moment of two things God did:
 - (1) God exerted His power
 - (2) God applies this exerted power to us
- b. Power Exerted according to the power that works ...
 - (A) God's power is not just a dormant capability
 - (1) one that indeed exists, but does nothing
 - (2) but rather it is a power He exercises
 - (3) for example, one of His titles, 'Creator,' shows this
 - (B) so God has wielded His power in achieving His plan
 - (1) the plan that sent God the Son to this world

(2) the plan that purchased those enslaved by sin to become the people of the living God; ... but more

c. Power Applied that works within us, ...

(A) Rev. A. J. Gordon, once saw what looked like a man pumping furiously on a hand pump. As he watched, the man continued to pump at a tremendous rate; he seemed absolutely tireless, pumping on and on, up and down, without ever slowing in the slightest, much less stopping. Coming close, he saw it was not a man at the pump, but a wooden figure painted to look like a man. The arm that was pumping so rapidly was hinged at the elbow and the hand was wired to the pump handle. The water was pouring forth, but not because the figure was pumping it. You see, it was an artesian well, and the ever flowing water was pumping the man! ^{-(2)}}.

(B) the occasion for praising God is the recognition that all that is accomplished in our church, in our lives, is by the Holy Spirit flowing through us doing the pumping.

(C) "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13 NAS)

C. The Expression of Praise is found in verse 21:

1. in His Church to Him be the glory in the church ...

a. God's intention is that the body of His redeemed people

- (A) by the fact that He has saved them
- (B) by the grace that He has shown them
- (C) by the sanctification that He is working in them
- (D) by the way their lives and love reflect upon Him
- (E) should be to the praise of His glory

b. This we saw when we examined Ephesians ^{1:5a} He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ ... ^{6a} to the praise of the glory of His grace, ... ^{11b} ... according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ^{12a,c} to the end that we ... would be to the praise of His glory. ^{13a,c} In Him, you also, ... you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

c. so the church worships and praises God

(A) not simply by our gathering together to do so

(B) but by our being His redeemed people

2. in Christ Jesus to Him be the glory ... in Christ Jesus ...
 - a. yet this glory reflected on God by the church
 - b. does not take place in isolation
 - c. The church is named in the same breath as Christ Jesus. Christ and the church standing side by side, Bride and Groom glorifying the Father.
 - d. this verse is not about the glory that Christ Jesus brought to His Father in His earthly ministry when He could say, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." (John 17:4 NAS95)
 - e. but about His work as the glorified Christ, as the head of, and in union with, His church; and that is why ...
 - f. the expression of this praise is for both now and ...

3. in All Ages to all generations forever and ever. Amen
 - a. the expression of our praise has merely started!
 - b. it is to continue to all eternity, as we and our Lord hold sweet communion forever and ever

D. Conclusion

1. with these thoughts in mind let us now gather around the table of the Lord to remember His death until He shall come again

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2. Adapted from “Keep Your Hand on the Handle” by Ted Sunderland – Kerux illustration #26921