

Forerunners for Christ Los Angeles

January 12, 2024 – Praying the Apostolic Prayers – Erlinda Cruz

Strength in Christ Abiding in Us

Ephesians 3:14-19 is a prayer to experience more of God and also gives insight into Paul's approach to discipling young believers. Paul presented four stages in our growth in God as indicated by the four times he used the word "that," designating four distinct aspects of spiritual growth.

- Stage #1 (3:16) - We pray that the Spirit strengthens our inner man (mind and emotions) to enable us to love and obey Jesus. It takes God's power to love God and to understand His heart.
- Stage #2 (3:17) - Jesus dwelling in our heart or manifesting His presence on our hearts.
- Stage #3 (3:18) - We receive a greater capacity to comprehend how He sees and feels about others.
- Stage #4 (3:19) - We are equipped to walk in the fullness of God's purposes in each season of life.

Today, we continue to meditate on Part One of Stage #2.

"...I bow my knees to the Father... from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell [manifest His presence] in your hearts... that you... may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ... that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3:14-19

Stage 2: Christ Dwelling in Our Heart—Christ Abiding in Us

Jesus dwelling in our heart, or manifesting His presence on our hearts, enables us to feel God's love as our life progressively becomes more deeply rooted and grounded in experiencing God's love. Paul connects two ideas together in 3:17—they are two sides of one coin pointing to the same truth.

"...that He would grant you... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts [manifest His presence] through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend... the love of Christ..."

Ephesians 3:17-19

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That Christ may dwell in our heart: This speaks of an on-going or somewhat continual experience of His presence to convince us of His love in contrast to an occasional sense of it.

Christ abides in us: The Spirit dwells in our spirit instantly at our new birth. Jesus progressively “abides in us” or manifests His presence in us by inspiring our mind and emotions (John 15:5).

“...He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...”

John 15:5

One distinctive quality of the new covenant is that He puts or writes His word on our heart and mind by illuminating our mind and inspiring our emotions (Hebrew 10:16).

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them...”

Hebrews 10:16

Jesus’ manifest presence dwelling in our heart speaks of the Spirit actively inspiring our mind and emotions. In other words, He reveals and convinces us that God loves us in a personal way.

You are welcome to read/meditate on John 15.

(To be continued.)