

EPHESIANS THREE, TWENTY AND TWENTY-ONE

Intro: Our great verses tonight have to do with the power of God--what God is able to do. This is power which He possesses in Himself, which He has always had, and which He always will have!

These two verses have a companion verse in the OT: Jer. 33:3, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

In Ephesians they come at the end of a prayer.

They also come at the end of the doctrinal section of the book.

We find Paul here in a position similar to that which we see at the end of Romans 8--and he hopes that his readers are with him. His contemplation of God is so overwhelming that it seems like he is more in heaven than he is on earth!

He has just completed some of the most wonderful words to be found any place in Scripture as he has described what we have in Christ and what it means to be in Christ. Twice he has stopped to pray, and it is to be noted that the epistle ~~ends~~ begins right where Paul finishes the third chapter--in adoration and praise to God.

If we could read and understand even a part of the first three chapters, and then enter into the prayer found in 3:13-19, we would then be in a much better position to share with Paul in his adoration of God.

One thing for certain: We never need fear the effect of the great doctrines of Scripture. This is evident in Romans, and it is evident also here. The truths of the Word of God will make worshippers out of us, or nothing else will!

But let us look at our verses. We see, first of all, that

I. PAUL'S THOUGHTS ARE FULL OF A PERSON: GOD. Both verses begin with, "Unto Him."

Note how he addresses his prayer in 3:14. How important it is for us to think of God as a Person--One who knows us, Who sees us, Who hears us, Who is able to help us, Who loves us far more than we can understand.

Paul's thoughts are so full of God that momentarily it seems that he has forgotten about his readers.

E. M. Bounds tells of the Marquis DeRenty who "ordered his servants to call him from his devotions at the end of half an

hour." When his servant went to call him, the Marquis had such a look on his face that he could not disturb him. "His lips were moving, but he was perfectly silent. He waited until three half hours had passed; then he called to him." The Marquis got up from his knees saying how short a half hour was when he was communing with Christ.

This is how we find Paul.

But what is he so concerned about in God?

- II. PAUL IS MARVELING AT HIS POWER. The entire 20th verse tells us nothing to do; it simply tells us what God is, and what He can do.

Our asking is usually limited by what we know. But we often know things about God which are never expressed in prayer.

There seems to be an obvious contrast in the words, "do" and "ask." We often will ask God ~~to do~~ things ~~for us~~ that we want instead of asking Him to do in us what we need. The point that Paul is making is that God is not limited by our prayers. How tragic it would be if He were! What if He never did anything but what we ask Him to do? And what if He always did just what we ask Him to do?

Paul wants us to know that He is not limited by us, but that over and above, in a way that is more than enough, He is able to do--"according to the power that worketh in us." What power is this? See v. 16.

Paul's prayer is concerned with the Trinity, and so is his doxology!

ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE GODHEAD ARE CONCERNED WITH THE WORK THAT IS GOING ON IN US! Cf. Eph. 2:10. And the point is this: When we see all that needs to be done in our lives and are often discouraged by the slow progress we seem to make, we need to turn to the One who has the power to make us all that He wants us to be.

Have you ever taken the Word of God to read the verses that tell us what God is able to do? Let me read some of them for you tonight, limiting myself just to the NT.

- 1) In Matt. 3:9 John the Baptist says, "For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."
- 2) When two blind men came to our Lord, He asked ;them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" When they said, Yes, He opened their eyes. Cf. Matt 9:28, 30.
- 3) Rom. 4:21, Abraham was "fully persuaded that, what he

- had promised, he was able also to perform."
- 4) Rom. 11:23, speaking of Israel, Paul says, "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again."
 - 5) Rom. 14:4, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be held up; for God is able to make him stand."
 - 6) 2 Cor. 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you . . ."
 - 7) Phil. 3:20, 21, speaking of our Lord, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned . . ."
 - 8) 2 Tim. 1:12, "For I know whom I have believed . . ."
 - 9) Heb. 2:18, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to help them that are tempted."
 - 10) In Heb. 5:7 our Lord is pictured as praying to "him that was able to save him from death."
 - 11) Heb. 7:25, Wherefore he is able to save ^{them} to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 - 12) In Heb. 11:19 we read of Abraham, "Accounting that God was able to raise him (Isaac) up, even from the dead, from which also he received him in a figure."
 - 13) Jude 24, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power; both now and ever. Amen."

Is anything lacking? Can you even read these verses and not feel your heart drawn out to God in praise? This is exactly what Paul admonishes us to do in v. 21.

III. PAUL EXHORTS THE CHURCH AS TO WHAT THEY SHOULD DO (cf. v. 21).

"Unto Him"--the One described in v. 20 and before, "be glory." We can never repay Him except with our praise and worship.

Where should he be praise? "In the church." What is the church? It is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23)--made up of every believer in this present age who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. This means you and me, fellow-believers! This tells us who should give glory to God.

But notice: We are so unworthy in ourselves that even with our praise we can only approach God "by Christ Jesus." Let us never forget this! This answers the how.

How long should this be done? Paul concludes this verse with a combination of words which commentators generally skip by or frankly confess that they cannot fully understand all that Paul is saying. Literally translated it would

sound something like this: "Unto all generations of an eternity of ages" (Hodge, p. 195).

BUT HIS MEANING IS VERY CLEAR. HE MEANS FROM NOW ON THROUGH-
OUT ALL ETERNITY!

Concl: Sometimes people say, What are we going to do when we get to heaven? There are many answers to that question, but one is before us tonight. WE ARE GOING TO SPEND ALL ETERNITY WORSHIPPING GOD.

How much time do you devote to worship now? Do you really think of Him as a Person? Have you ever gone to Him just to worship Him without presenting a single request?

Paul concludes this tremendous section with a hearty, AMEN! For one who walked on the ground that the Apostle did, nothing could delight him any more than to think of the whole church worshipping and adoring and praising God!

How does the last Psalm end? "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord," which in the Hebrew is simply, Hallelujah.

While we rejoice in the truth of v. 20, let us not forget to respond to v. 21.