

Ephesians 3:20-21 - Ending with Faith and Praise

Intro - After two weeks focusing on the Passover & Lord's Supper we are back in Book of Eph. We pick it up in the middle of a prayer...actually, the end of a prayer. 3:14-21 is the second prayer thus far in Ephesians. The first one was 1:15-23. Both prayers are asking God to increase the believers understanding of who He is and what He has done for us. We have been given every spiritual blessing in Christ ^(Eph. 1:3) and we don't understand how rich we are (1:17-18). The prayer in Eph. 3 is very Trinitarian and asks for us to understand Trinitarian love ...which is incomprehensible. This prayer asks for the impossible (3:18-19) so it is a great prayer of faith. This prayer begins with faith and ends with faith. It also begins with praise and ends with praise. This prayer concludes with the common "Amen" meaning "let it be." Amen not only calls on God in faith, but it calls on us to agree with its content and so pray in the same way. So let us try to add our "amen" to this Apostolic prayer and make it part of our prayers of faith & praise.

ENDING PRAYER IN FAITH

- Prayer is a declaration of dependence.
 - It acknowledges our impotence, ignorance, incompetence, and inability.
 - Prayer says, "God, I can't...but You can." 2 Chron. 20:12
- Eph. 3:20a "Now to Him who is able..."
 - This prayer ends with a great statement of faith about God's ability.
 - The apostle has just asked for the impossible - 3:18-19
 - ...but with God all things are possible. HE IS ABLE!
 - "Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung; tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue..."
 - Prayer embraces our inability AND God's ability.
 - Matt. 19:25-26 (when we pray salvation for a sinner we are praying for something impossible)
- Faith is a trust in The God who is able.
 - Faith is only as good as its object. The Object of our faith is worthy & able.
 - Gen. 18:14 Rom. 4:19-21
 - Luke 1:37 2 Kings 3:18 (NIV)
 - Jer. 32:17 As we speak our prayers remember Who we speak them to.
 - Remember that God spoke the worlds into existence.
 - God is able with one word to do the impossible & incomprehensible.
 - M. Luther - "Your thoughts of God are too small."
 - January Bible Study - "God can do more in response to one prayer than we can in 100 years of planning and prodding."
- God answers better than our prayers of faith.
 - 3:20b "...far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think..."
 - Song - "I Can Only Imagine" no we actually can't because it is so much better
 - 1 Cor. 2:9 (not just in what awaits us heaven but in how His answers us on earth)
 - M. Luther - "We ask for silver but God gives us gold."
 - 2 Chron. 25:9 3:20 God answers us better than our prayers.

- CHS - "When God does not answer His children according to the letter, He does so according to the spirit. If you ask for silver, will you be angry if He gives you gold? If you seek bodily health, should you complain if instead He makes your sickness turn to the healing of spiritual maladies? Is it not better to have the cross sanctified than to have the cross removed? Was not the apostle more enriched when God allowed him still to endure the thorn in the flesh, and yet said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee?"
- We pray for no pain & suffering.....God gives us perseverance & strength
 - We pray for happiness But God give us holiness
 - We ask for "cotton candy" But God gives us Christian character.
 - We ask for silver....God gives us gold
- The prayer of faith believes God can & will answer...and will answer better than we ask.
 - 3:20
 - (Luke 17:5 / Mark 9:24)

ENDING PRAYER IN PRAISE

- This prayer ends with a doxology & benediction - 3:21
 - Doxology = glory/praise (GR - *doxa*)
 - Benediction = blessing
 - The prayer ends by blessing & praising God...giving Him glory/*doxa*
 - Rev. 5:11-14
- The prayer asked for God to be glorified in the church.
 - 3:21
 - The world curses God but the church should bless God. Ps. 103:1-5
 - M. Henry - "*The little rent of praise that God receives from the world is from the church.*"
 - We should pray that God's name would be hallowed in the church.
 - The church is tempted to win the praise of men instead of offering praise to God.
 - We are to glorify God not ourselves - John 3:30
 - We should pray to that end - Psalm 115:1
- God is glorified in His Son
 - 3:21 *"to Him be glory....in Christ Jesus..."*
 - The Son glorifies the Father - John 17:1, 4
 - We glorify God when we focus and talk about how Jesus glorified His Father
 - We glorify God through the Son. Jesus is the only Mediator - 1 Tim. 2:5
 - Jesus mediates God's blessing to us.
 - Jesus mediates our prayers to God for us (in Jesus name)
 - Jesus mediates our praise to God.
 - We praise (& pray to) the Father through the Son and by the Spirit
- This formula of praise & prayer is an everlasting formula for everlasting praise.
 - 3:21c *"....to all generations forever and ever..."*
 - We are to teach the next generation how to pray & praise correctly/acceptably.
 - Psalm 78:5-7

ENDING PRAYER WITH AMEN

- Amen is saying "*let it be/let it happen*" Faith (Faith glorifies God - Rom. 4:20)
 - God is able - AMEN! God is to be glorified - AMEN!