

A PRAYER FOR YOU **Text: Ephesians 3:14-21**

–Bill Turner 2/2026

Paul's Prayer From Prison for You

Introduction:

1. This has been called the boldest prayer ever prayed...
2. It is a Prayer From Prison — that Paul Prayed For You

I. TO BE EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT (v.14-16)

A. A PRAYER FOR YOU (v.14-15)

1. A Prayer to the Father...

- a) When the Disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to prayer...
- b) Jesus “said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven...” (Lk 11:2)

2. To call God ‘our Father’ shows what a privilege we have in Christ!

- a) Jesus went to the Cross to adopt us into the Family of God
- b) Now We Don't Have to approach God as a Criminal before a Judge
- c) We can now go to God as a Child goes their Loving Father

B. A PRAYER FOR STRENGTH IN THE INNER MAN (v.16)

1. This is not asking for Physical Health or Strength of the Outer-Man...

This is a request for Spiritual Strength of the Inner-man...

2. The Inner-Man refers to your heart, your mind and spirit...

It is your True Self – who you really are.

- a) (2 Cor. 4:16) “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

3. The world focuses so much on the outward appearances that people forget that we are both Flesh and Spirit...

- a) “We are not Human Beings having a spiritual experience, we are Spiritual Beings having a human experience.” (Pierre de Teilhard)

C. THE NEED FOR STRENGTH IN THE INNER MAN...

1. Why is Paul asking for you to have spiritual strength within yourself?

Because This is where the Battle Takes Place! (Romans 7:22-23)

- a) A Battle Between our Flesh and Spirit...
- b) A Battle between our Conscience and our Ego
- c) A Battle between What We Know is Right and What We Selfishly Want To Do.

2. The Battle is Real — which is why Paul is Being Real... (v.14-15, 18-19)

- a) He is admitting that he doesn't always do what he knows he should do...
- b) And sometimes he does do what he knows he shouldn't do!
- c) This is the ugly truth of the Battle within us!

3. ‘O Wretched Man that I am...’

- a) “This is not the wretchedness of someone who is lost, but of someone who in his heart wants so desperately to be fully obedient to the law of God but finds himself still assaulted and overwhelmed by an opposing power that is still a part of himself.¹

4. ‘Who Will Save Me From this Body of Death?’

- a) It is not that Paul doesn’t know the source of his deliverance...
b) he is humbly admitting that he needs deliverance! He cannot win this battle Alone!
c) He cannot save himself by his own willpower apart from God!

5. He is admitting that He needs a Savior! – That Savior is Jesus Christ! (v.24)

II. TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST (v.17-19)

A. FOR CHRIST TO DWELL IN YOUR HEART BY FAITH (v.17)

1. Jesus died for your sins and He stands knocking at the door of your heart

- a) But the door of the heart can only be opened by you from the inside
b) He waits for you (**Revelation 3:20**)

2. He Asks to Be invited into your heart (John 14:23)

- a) This is a part of the Mystery of God’s Eternal Plan and Your place within it
b) (**Colossians 1:27**) Which is Christ in you – the hope of glory.

B. TO KNOW THE INCREDIBLE LOVE OF CHRIST (v.18-19a)

1. The DEPTH: How Deep Does the Love of Christ Go?

- a) All the way from the glory of heaven—down to a horrific crucifixion on a cross
b) A love so deep that He would rather die on a cross than live without you. (Phil 2:7-8)

2. The WIDTH: How Wide is the Love of Christ?

- a) So Wide that He died for every person who has ever lived or ever will live
b) So Wide that His Sacrifice casts our sins as far as the east is from the west.
c) The distance of the width of the physical universe! (Psalm 103:11–12)

Which is expanding at such an astronomical rate—it cannot be measured!

3. The LENGTH: When did the love of God begin?

- a) How Long will the love of God continue?
b) God said, “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3)

4. The HEIGHT: How High Does the Love of Christ Lift You?

- a) So High that it lifts you up into the heavenly places
b) to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places in Him (Eph 2:6)

C. A LOVE THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE:

- 1. Wide enough to include every person.**
- 2. Long enough to last through all eternity.**
- 3. Deep enough to reach the worst sinner.**
- 4. High enough to take us to heaven.²**

¹ Jack Cottrell, Romans, College Press NIV Commentary

² David Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary

III. TO HAVE THE FULLNESS OF GOD (v.19-21)

A. TO BE FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD (v.19)

1. **The strength of the Spirit we can have in the inner-man...
That Christ can dwell in our hearts by Faith...
That we can be filled with all the fullness of God!**
2. **There is a deep truth here that I do not fully understand...**
 - a) “Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be FILLED with God is a great thing; to be filled with the FULLNESS of God is still greater; but to be filled with ALL the fullness of God utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding.” (Adam Clarke)
3. **No wonder this has been called the boldest prayer ever prayed!**
 - a) J Wilbur Chapman used to tell how in his former life he had been living on the street.
 - “I got off at the Pennsylvania Depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, ‘Hey Mister, can you give me a dime?’ As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, ‘Father, father, do you know me?’ Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, ‘Oh my son, at last I’ve found you! I’ve found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours!’
 - Think about it, I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for 10 cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had!”³
4. **This is a small picture of What God wants for us—**
 - a) To be together forever with Him! — and to be like Him
 - b) To be filled with the fullness of God is to be Emptied of our Old Self
 - c) Only God can Do This! With Man it is impossible but with God All things are possible

B. GOD CAN DO ABOVE WHAT WE ASK OR THINK (v.20)

1. **You might think it’s too hard... you might fail... Your not strong enough**
 - a) And By Your Own Strength, apart from God your right...
 - b) We Could Not Save Ourselves by our own strength...
 - c) Only by the Blood of Jesus could we be saved.
2. **God made a way where there was no way—
by sending His son to die for our sins on the cross.**
3. **This is how we can have victory (Galatians 2:20–21)**

C. UNTO HIM BE THE GLORY in the Church for All Generations! (v.21)

1. **This is why ALL glory goes to God!**
2. **He did what we could not do... And What We Did Not Deserve!**

CONCLUSION:

1. **(Romans 8:1) There is now no condemnation for those in Christ**
2. **Jesus Paid Our Debt in Full at the Cross**
3. **Our Old Self is Buried in Baptism—Our New Self is Raised to New Life**

³ J Wilbur Chapman testimony from John MacArthur commentary on Ephesians, p.111.