

Sunday, February 9, 2025

The Love Of Christ, Which Passeth Knowledge

This is the seventh in a series of sermons through the book of Ephesians, and today we will be finishing up chapter 3. In my last sermon, we went over a digression that Paul went on about his ministry involving the mystery of Christ as it relates to Gentiles being made “fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:6). If you recall, Paul was going to start a prayer back in verse 1, but digressed; he is picking the prayer back up in verse 14. You may also recall that the book of Ephesians is roughly divided into a section that focuses primarily on doctrine (chapters 1-3) and a section that focuses primarily on practice (chapters 4-6). There is, of course, a lot of overlap between the two. Today’s passage is a fitting end to these first three chapters.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21)

I think it makes sense to break the passage into three parts. Verses 14-15 are about the posture of the prayer before the Father. Verses 16-19 contain the content of the prayer. And verses 20-21 are a concluding doxology.

Posture Of The Prayer To The Father

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (Ephesians 3:14-15)

Again, the “for this cause” is him picking back up where he left off in verse 1. It points primarily back to the end of chapter 2 but certainly also includes elements of his digression in the first part of chapter 3. As a refresher, chapter 2 ends with Gentiles and Jews being joined together as fellowcitizens, of the household of God, and builded together as a holy temple which is the habitation of God:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

That is why he bows his knees unto the Father. Can you picture this man, chained to a Roman soldier, dropping to his knees to pray? It's common, though not required, to pray on your knees. There are several postures of prayer recorded in scripture, from standing (1 Sam. 1:26) to lying prostrate on your face (Mt. 26:39). Whatever posture you take depends largely on the circumstances you're in. To kneel is a physical sign of respect, submission and humility. Certainly, whether or not you're in a situation where you are physically kneeling, this should be the posture of your heart. His language indicates that this prayer isn't a one-time event – he regularly offers up similar prayers to the Father. We should be praying prayers like this, too – for ourselves, and for each other. This body has a deep need of prayers like this.

The One addressed in the prayer is the Father. He's the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – a reminder that we are children of God and are able to enter into His presence because of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is only in, through, and because of Him. There's no other way. The whole family in heaven and earth is named of Him. We're part of a family, beloved. A large family. Larger than you think. It consists of all the saints on earth, and all those glorified in heaven. Some even think the elect angels are included here. Our family name comes from God. In the scripture, to name something frequently shows dominion, like when Adam named the creatures in Genesis 2. He is our Creator, and our Lord and King – He has dominion over us. When you go to pray, remember that you're talking to a great King, but also remember that you're part of His family – you're going to speak to the Father. Remember it also in how you behave – you're obligated to obey Him and not besmirch that name. To be a part of this family comes with wonderful privileges, but it also comes with sober responsibilities.

Content Of The Prayer

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

So, in this humble posture, Paul proceeds to intercede for the Ephesians. He wants them to experience all the benefits and blessings of being the temple of God. Don't lose sight of the

big picture – these are the things that are available to us who comprise the temple of God, and they should be sought after. There are several petitions in the prayer, and they build on one another up to a crescendo. It starts with this: “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” This is about spiritual strength. That’s always a good place to start. This strength comes as a gift from God – this isn’t something that we can produce by going through self-help curricula or reading “The Power Of Positive Thinking.” It comes from the treasure house of the glory of God, and it comes exclusively by the Holy Spirit – it is one of His many blessed functions to strengthen us. The prayer is that it would be “according to the riches of his glory.” This is a big request! The glory of God is referring to the sum total of His attributes. The idea is that He will strengthen us according to the vast wealth of His glory – this isn’t going to be a begrudging, chintzy strengthening! It’s a strengthening that is with might – that is, with power. The power of God has been a constant theme so far in this epistle, and he’s coming back to it here. It is by the mighty power of God that we are strengthened. The same power, you’ll recall, as was employed in raising the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

He's asking for the “inner man” to receive this blessing. This would be our inner being – mind, soul, intellect, will, thoughts, understandings, personality – as opposed to our physical bodies. The inner man needs strengthening because we’re weak – spiritually weak. We’re inclined to sloth, doubts, evil thoughts, fears, depressions, little faith, etc. Paul tells us elsewhere that “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16). We require regular renewing; regular strengthening in the inner man. It’s a lifestyle - if we don’t take part in regular maintenance of the inner man, using the means that God has given us, you may look up one day to realize that you’re a spiritual pygmy, not enjoying the spiritual blessings that are available to you, and ill-equipped to handle the vicissitudes of life.

This strengthening of the inner man is always something we need, but it is especially appropriate for this prayer. Why? Because of the magnitude of the things that he’s praying for, namely, the indwelling of Christ in our hearts, knowing the love of Christ, and being filled with the fulness of God. These are weighty issues! We need strength to bear them. We’d buckle under the weight of them otherwise, fleeing in unbelief and despair. We have our own sinful selves to contend with, but we also have Satan to contend with. Our inner man has a bullseye on it for his fiery darts. He’s powerful, he’s crafty and he’s hateful. Sometimes, by the time he’s done with you, you’ll be shell-shocked, wondering if you’ve ever even been saved at all! All the host of hell will be unleashed on you to try to hinder you from receiving the blessings prayed for in this prayer. So, I say we need strengthening in the inner man.

Next, we come to this: “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” (This, incidentally, is the only place in scripture where it uses this specific language of Christ dwelling in our hearts.)

The “heart” is at the very center of our being. It is the driver behind everything you do or say. It is the core of who you are. I take this to mean that the aim of our being strengthened is so that Christ may indwell our hearts by faith. Our faith is the means by which He dwells in our hearts, and that faith is one of the elements of our inner man that needs to be strengthened. You have to lay hold onto this promise of Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith! Remember, he’s praying for people who are already saved. Don’t forget that. This may cause a bit of confusion, though, because if we’re already saved, then Christ is already in our hearts. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Why, then, pray that Christ would dwell in our hearts if He’s already there? I think the key is in the word “dwell.” The idea is to take up residence, to be at home, to be settled. This would be as opposed to a temporary visitor. You can be in a place and not be “at home” there. This is why we need strength, beloved. Our hearts need to be prepared and furnished for a King who will be abiding there permanently. Consider your heart to be a great mansion. If you have sinful clutter and things you wouldn’t want Him seeing strewn around the house, you haven’t prepared Him a proper home. If you have rooms sealed off to keep a separation from the Lord Jesus, you haven’t prepared Him a proper home. If your affections and time are split between your sins and the Lord Jesus, you haven’t prepared Him a proper home. If your preparations are only half-hearted and temporary, remember His desire is to dwell there, not just to visit. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” (James 4:8). If you are harboring some bosom sin (darling sin, cherished sin) in your hearts, Christ isn’t going to be at home there. There is only one place in the four gospels where Jesus tells us about His own heart – “I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matthew 11:29). That is the type of Savior He is, and that is the type of heart He is at home in. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa. 57:15). Therefore, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23).

This isn’t just a figure of speech meaning that we have pleasant thoughts about and remembrances of and affections for Jesus. Those things are all true, but this is talking about Him truly, personally, and supernaturally dwelling in our hearts. But it may take us a long time before we realize that and experience that reality. It takes the strength of God to get there. I truly believe that a person can be saved and not yet experience this indwelling of Christ, or not always experience it, but isn’t it something we all desperately want and strive for? Wouldn’t we give everything for it? Remember that we’re dealing with a Person here – not some impersonal force or idea or influence. This is talking about where you reach the place where Christ Himself is at the very center of your lives – in your heart of hearts. Where your

thoughts, your wills, your affections are dominated by and in line with Him. Where you really do “have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16). Where you’ve gone beyond merely knowing things about Him to knowing Him. Where you’re in fellowship with Him. It would be where you reach the place that the following is true for you, by experience: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20). How many of us can truly say that it is our experience that “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”? Is that your experience? Is that what characterizes your life? If you can’t say that about yourself, you desperately need this prayer. There is an inverse relationship between Christ dwelling in your heart and worldliness.

The indwelling of Christ results in us “being rooted and grounded in love.” He takes this language from agriculture and architecture, and each image provides its own insight. To be “rooted” is to grow extensive, sturdy roots, so you’re firmly entrenched. Don’t think of a shrub – think of a redwood or some other huge tree, where there is a giant root system. The characteristic of a tree is that it’s a living organism. The roots continue to grow and develop, and the larger the root system, the bigger the tree. An interesting fact about redwood trees is that their roots are relatively shallow and they intertwine with the roots of surrounding redwoods. It’s the intertwined root systems that give them their strength. We’re all planted in the same rich and fertile soil, and the text says that that soil is love. Our roots are intertwined there. We’re joined together, drawing vital nutrients and life from that soil.

To be “grounded” means to be sitting on a solid foundation. “He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.” (Lk. 6:48). Think of giant skyscrapers in New York – they are attached to bedrock. The idea is firmness and immovability. You can’t mess around with the foundation of a building. You can’t rush into getting the building built if there’s no proper foundation. You can’t take anything for granted with it – it must be right. The text says that we are grounded in love. Make sure the foundation is right! If you build something on the wrong foundation, it doesn’t matter how ornate or prosperous it seems to be, it will eventually come crashing down.

So, what is this “love” that we’re rooted and grounded in? Well, I think it is multi-faceted. It certainly includes the love of Christ for us, and specifically that we know that He loves us, personally. If you’re wishy-washy about that, wandering around unsure if He really loves you, then you’re not rooted and grounded in anything. And of course, “We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19). Anybody can talk and debate about God – but do you love Him? And if we love Him, we’ll be obedient to Him and desire to live holy lives – “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15). We’ll love our brothers and sisters in Christ – “If a man

say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” (1 John 4:20-21) We’ll love our neighbors – “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Galatians 5:14) We’ll love our enemies – “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:44-45). That would involve a genuine desire for their well-being, just like God’s love. Our love is intended to be like God’s love – free, liberal, active, selfless, essential (i.e., because God has regenerated us, we love because it’s in our nature to love, not because someone did something to merit the love), etc.

A spirit of love is the sum and substance of a truly Christian spirit; otherwise, you’re no different than every other worldling you live among. This is so vitally important – this isn’t something to be glib with or to give lip-service to. This is your very soul we’re talking about! Are you rooted and grounded in love, or not? If love isn’t what defines you, that is problematic. If you find yourself uncomfortable with these verses and dismissing them, downplaying them, or redefining them to accommodate your sin (“that verse can’t possibly mean that I’m supposed to actually love my enemies, because I’m fundamentally a vindictive person who hates my enemies”), that is problematic. If you find that you do things out of a sense of duty, but not out of a sense of love, that is problematic. Our lives should be based on love. Upon honest examination of your heart, if you don’t find that that’s the reason that you do what you do and say what you say (though imperfectly!), then there’s really no need for you to go on any further in this prayer. You need to spend some solid time asking for spiritual strength such that Christ would dwell in your hearts by faith, and that you would be rooted and grounded in love. [See “Charity And Its Fruits” – Jonathan Edwards.]

Having been rooted and grounded in love, he goes on to pray that we “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” Beloved, how you think of God is one of the most important things in your lives. It impacts everything – how you think, how you act, how you respond to things, etc. If your image of God is that He is primarily vengeful and wrathful, but as a side note, He sometimes loves, let me suggest to you that your image of God is not just skewed but it’s unbiblical. That’s not the God of the Bible. The love of Christ is not a sideshow. It’s not some minor thing to be flippant or cavalier about. It’s not a thing to give uncomfortable, occasional lip service to. It’s not something to be ashamed of. It’s not something that is weak, cowardly, maudlin, mushy, or sappy, and it doesn’t make you a weak, cowardly, maudlin, mushy or sappy person to search it out and rejoice in it. In fact, it is so far

from being weak that it requires the power of God for you to even begin to understand it. Our translation says “may be able to comprehend” but the original language is much more forceful. The phrase “may be able” means “to have full strength.” “Comprehend” means “to lay hold of and make one’s own” or “to seize and take possession of.” The prayer is that you’ll have the full measure of strength needed to be able to grab ahold of this. And this is done “with all saints.” Comprehending these things is for all saints – no exceptions. And it is only for saints – nobody else. And the indication is that this isn’t an individual effort – we comprehend it together, as a body, by edifying one another, etc.

To “know the love of Christ” is to experience it. You can be doctrinally precise about it, you can debate about it, you mock and be disgusted at how phony Christians have abused it, but have you experienced it? Remember, we’re talking about a Person loving you, not about some cold, sterile doctrine. Here are a few thoughts on the topic of the love of Christ:

- To reiterate last week’s sermon, God is love. It’s essential to Him – ie, it’s His essence; it’s intrinsic to His very nature. It’s a fundamental thing that makes God God – take it away and you’re no longer dealing with God. He loves because He is love. It’s an active love – ie, you see it in His actions. Thomas Goodwin said, “Christ is love covered over in flesh.” If you want to know what it looks like for God to be love, look at Jesus Christ.
- It includes the eternal love between the three persons in the Trinity. Long before there was any creation for Him to love, this love existed between Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
- Breadth, length, depth and height. This 4-dimensional metaphor signifies the vast nature of the love of Christ. Wherever you look, there it is. We all have some notion in our minds of what the “love of God” is but it is bigger than you think it is, so we must not limit it to our feeble ability to understand. It’s not a simple thing.
 - Breadth – it encompasses far more people than you think. When we consider our small numbers, it’s comforting to think that we’re part of a “great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” (Rev. 7:9). I would venture to guess that there will be a lot more people in heaven than you might imagine. In the immediate context, one point is that His love extends beyond Jews to include the whole world – the Gentiles have been made “fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Eph. 3:6). “God so loved the world...” (Jn. 3:16).
 - Length – it goes from eternity past to eternity future. This is easy to say, but I challenge any of you to sit down and ponder that. You’ll quickly realize that you don’t have what it takes to fathom that concept. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). He will show us the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7).
 - Depth – look at the depths that Christ descended to to save us – He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the shameful death of the cross.

(Philippians 2:8). Look at the depths that He has saved us from – we were dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath, etc. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- Height – look at the height that He has raised us to, even sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6).
- The ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was on earth was marked by love and compassion. Is there any disputing this? He described it like this: “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” (Matthew 11:5). He did those things freely to undeserving people, and those actions displayed His character and nature. He certainly kept the law perfectly, including “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Leviticus 19:18). The Jesus that we read about in the gospels is the same Jesus today – “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” (Hebrews 13:8).
- His love extends to His enemies. We see that in temporal things, as when He commands us to love our enemies so that we will be like our Father in heaven, who “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mt. 5:45) and “is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” (Lk. 6:35). The further command in Luke 6 is: “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” (v. 36). But this love for His enemies is seen preeminently when He died for us – “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” (Rom. 5:10)
- He loves sinners. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). But He doesn’t love us AS sinners. In other words, He doesn’t love us because of our sin. He loves us as sinners whose sins He determined to deal with by Christ. He loves us only as we’re in Christ.
- This love passes knowledge. He’s praying that we might “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” This is an oxymoron, for effect. How can you know something that is beyond knowing? We can know it truly, but we can’t know it completely – it’s too vast and beyond our capabilities. We can know it by experience, but we can’t know it fully. We’ll know it more and more, even into eternity. There’s a cyclical nature to it – the more we know of it, the more we love Him, and the more we love Him, the more we know of His love for us. And I’ll repeat a question I asked earlier – wouldn’t you give everything to know the love of Christ?
- We can’t take His love at the expense of His other attributes, like holiness, justice, righteousness, wrath, vengeance. They all go together. In fact, there would be no wrath and vengeance if He was not love, because His wrath and vengeance are directed towards that which is contrary to what He loves. He hates the opposite of what He loves. About the Son, we read this: “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.” (Heb. 1:9). This same Jesus, this one who is love, preached more about hell than anyone else in the Bible. But this is a two-way street – we can’t take His love at the expense of His wrath, but we also can’t take His wrath at the expense of His love. To do so is

idolatry, and we imperil ourselves. It's like Hosea 7:8 - "Ephraim is a cake not turned." Burned on one side, raw dough on the other – worthless and inedible.

- The world has redefined "love" to mean things like lust, infatuation, sentimentality, pluralism, tolerance and affirmation of sin, vague "niceness", etc. "Love" must be defined by the Bible; don't fall into the trap of defining it like the world does.

Moving on to the last, and climactic, petition in the prayer – "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Let's be clear what this does NOT mean – it does not mean that we will be deified; we are not going to become Gods. There are certain attributes of God that we can share – like love, purity, patience, etc. The prayer is that we would be filled to the brim (whatever our "brim" happens to be) with those attributes. Similar verses are:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:16)

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4)

The way I understand this is that we will become more and more like Christ, who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person (Hebrews 1:3). "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9). If the fulness of God is dwelling in Him, and He is dwelling in us, then the fulness of God is dwelling in us, and we are being continually "conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29) and "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18). The prayer is for this to happen. Like the rest of the prayer, if we had already reached this state, there would be no need to pray for it. But as we're not free from the presence of sin, this is a necessary and perpetual thing to pray for. Just look at the Lord Jesus. Have you ever been struck with how your heart and your actions are so different from His? This prayer is to rectify that disparity. It's a progressive thing. And God help you if you've been trying to justify or excuse yourself in your deficiency, or worse, twisting things around and redefining things to make it so He's more like you instead of you admitting that you're the one who needs to change to be more like Him. But this isn't just an individual thing – the prayer includes the fulness of God filling the whole body. The allusion is to the glory of God filling the temple in the Old Testament. That was just a type. The reality is that in this age, there's no need for a physical temple; we are the temple and habitation of God. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. 6:16).

Concluding Doxology

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

This doxology (i.e., ascription of praise to God) concludes the prayer, it concludes the section dealing with the joining together of Jews and Gentiles into one body, and it is really a fitting conclusion to the first three chapters of the epistle and transition point into chapter four. You may be thinking that all of this has been too good to be true. Maybe specifically that these petitions in this prayer are too lofty to be attained. You might be thinking, “Christ dwelling in my heart? Knowing the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Being filled with the fulness of God? Yeah, right. I don’t feel like I have any experience with those things. Maybe it’s not even worth praying about – it sounds impossible!” But he multiplies words here to say that it IS possible. In fact, it’s not only possible for Him to give you what you ask for, it’s possible for Him to give you even MORE than what you ask for; and not only can He give you more than what you ask for, He can give you more than what you can even IMAGINE to ask for. And this isn’t some theoretical, “pie in the sky” exercise of God’s power either – it is “according to the power that worketh in us.” Here we are back to the power of God. It’s a present reality. That power is already working in you – it’s the same power that rose you from spiritual death and gave you an interest in Christ; it’s the same power that has been sustaining you for all these years; it’s the same power that was at work when Christ was resurrected. What more evidence do you need that God can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think?

Unto this God be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. The language shows the close union between Christ and the church. This isn’t some general “to God be the glory” statement – he’s telling us exactly where we find the glory of God. It’s in the church! The very existence of the church displays the glory of God. We glorify Him when we worship Him, thank Him, praise Him, preach His Word, etc. All these things that he has been talking about in these first three chapters are found in the church by Christ Jesus, and only in the church. Not in other organizations. Not in “free agents” who don’t think they need to be associated with a local, visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And how long will this glorying go on? Forever! “Throughout all ages, world without end” – literally “to all the generations of the age of the ages.” He ends with a hearty Amen as an affirmation of everything he’s just said and thus concludes the first major part of the epistle. If I could summarize the whole epistle in one sentence, I’d say, “God has chosen you to be His children (chapters 1-3); now act like it (chapters 4-6).” Lord willing, we will move on to chapter 4 next time, where he will get into the practical outworking of everything he’s been talking about in chapters 1-3. “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.” (2 Timothy 4:22)