**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**God is Able**

**Ephesians 3:20-21**

**February 9, 2020**

David Taylor

 We are about halfway in our series, Brought to Life; Brought Together, based upon the New Testament letter Ephesians. In today’s message, God is Able, from 3:20-21, we finish looking at Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21. Last week my main idea was that God *strengthens us* with the Spirit’s power so that we experience Christ’s Lordship and to grasp his love so that we are filled with God’s fullness. Then Paul turns from prayer to praise by describing God’s power and God’s glory. It is a fitting response to his prayer as well as fitting end to chapters 1-3, which describes the riches of God’s grace in Christ reconciling humanity to himself and reconciling enemies into one new humanity, the church, as part of uniting all things to himself. Ephesians 3:20-21 can be structured this way, God is able (20) and so God is glorified (21).

1. God is Able (20)

 Paul moves from praying for God’s power to praising God’s for his power. Paul’s praise lifts our eyes from belittling God with small minded thinking to a picture of God who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. First, he says that God is able, he is the able God. God is able or powerful to do whatever he wants for his children. Specifically, he is thinking of the fullness of God. God is able to fill you with his power and his presence for everything you need for life. You can never ask for too much of God in your life. Paul goes on, God is able to do far more abundantly. Just like his prayer, Paul is grasping for language to express God’s power as infinitely beyond human ability to measure it. God’s power is infinite and so his ability is inexhaustible. This is the same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead in a glorified body (1:19). But there is more, God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. God is able to do infinitely more than you ask or can think. God is able to do far more excessively beyond what we can ask him for or can think of to ask him. You cannot out ask God. But does that mean I can ask God for anything and everything? Does Paul put limitations on God?

 He is praising God for what he is able to do for us personally, the Spirit’s power that is already at work in us. God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to or by means of the Spirit’s power already at work in you. The Spirit’s power is internal, personal, and miraculous. The Spirit’s power is shaping to be filled with the fullness of God himself. Are you full of God? Are you so full of his power and presence which is the Spirit’s power and presence in your life? Is the Spirit’s power and presence evident in your thinking, in your marriage, in your parenting, what you do with your time, or your desire to serve others? God is able and so God is glorified.

1. God is Glorified (vs. 21)

 To him be glory in the church and in Jesus Christ throughout all generation, for ever and ever. Amen (21). God’s power at work in us has a purpose, to make a public display of God’s glory (1:6, 12, 14). God’s glory is the perfection of his existence. To glorify God means to ascribe to God his infinite worth with our words and our works. He is not saying that we add to God’s glory but we display his glory. You will always give glory to something.

 God’s glory is displayed in the church, God’s new covenant people, Jews and Gentiles, enemies reconciled to God and one another. God’s glory is now displayed in the church as God’s temple, where he dwells and meets with his people. The church is made up of disciples, Christ’s followers, those who have repented and come to faith in Christ for salvation. Not just as a onetime act but a lifestyle of repentance and faith, daily turning away from my sin and unbelief and turning toward Jesus as my only source of hope and life and joy. If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you might wonder how God is glorified in the church because it is often a mess, both in the New Testament and today. Let me address that two ways. *First*, we do not always see what God is doing because right now we see the church under construction. The foundation has been built but it is not finished. One day the construction will be finished. Until then, we get glimpses of it’s glory when we see God working in both the ordinary and extraordinary, the mundane and the miraculous. For instance, as the church gathers to worship and hear his word, experience his presence, pray for one another, love and serve one another, care for one another, we get a glimpse of it’s glory. As individuals come to faith and they are transformed, we get a glimpse of glory. *Secondly*, when we see the church not living up to the expectations of the New Testament, we are not as loving as we should be, not as holy as we could be, or not delighting in God as we want. This is exactly what Jesus said the church would be like. The church is made up of broken and sinful people who are in the process of transformation but will never be perfect until Jesus comes. God is displaying his glory in an imperfect church! So, in even in the midst of seeing God’s mighty works, we still see sin in the mix. We will experience that tension, glory and gory until he comes. So, we must be about our mission to make disciples who make disciples until he comes. Disciples are those who follow Christ, who are being spiritually formed by Christ, and who are faithful to the mission of Christ.

 This glory is centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ, to him be glory in Christ Jesus because he is the one mediator between man and God. The church gathers around and celebrates the risen Lord Jesus Christ who died and rose again. The church gathers around the gospel because it is by faith in the work of Christ that that reconciles us to God. Finally, this glory extends beyond our earthly existence, to him be glory throughout all generations, forever and ever, amen. As we gather and worship, we join the saints in heaven who are worshiping around the throne of God. God is being glorified in his church and in Jesus Christ now and will be glorified for eternity when all things are united under King Jesus. God is able so God is glorified!

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What does this passage teach us about God’s resources?
2. For what does Paul pray? Pause and pray through these petitions.
3. Why is it important to meditate on the love of God?
4. Why do we need the power of God?
5. Why do verses 20-21 encourage us to pray with great expectations?
6. Why should we pray for God to do amazing things, according to verse 21?