

The Empowered Church

Introduction

- A. [Tim Tebow]
 - B. How do we become a church that God empowers?
 - C. Ephesians 3:14-21
 - D. *“If we want to be empowered as a church by God, then each member must individually pursue it.”*
 - E. How does Paul’s prayer teach us about an empowered church?
 - a. Notice who he is praying for...(14-16a)
 - b. “you” – the church of Ephesus
 - c. He points out that there is an unlimited God working in them (20-21)
 - i. “power” – dynamite
 - ii. An active power
 - F. Why does it feel at time we are a powerless church?
 - a. [batteries]
 - b. What holds God’s power back in our lives?
 - i. Unbelief & un-confessed sin.
 - ii. Careless living & worldly motivations
 - G. From Paul’s requests in his prayer, we can find out how to access the full power of God...
 - H. The 4 building blocks of an empowered church: {one builds upon the other}
- I. We must seek God to make us grow stronger in our spiritual life. (16)
- a. Our inner self must be strengthened.
 - i. What is the “inner man”?
 1. This is Paul’s label of our rational self or consciousness...
 2. It is our spiritual side or life...
 - ii. Thus we are called to be strengthened spiritually
 1. We need to be strengthened for spiritual battles
 2. We need to be energized, revitalized, & empowered!
3. The outer man may grow weak, but the inner man needs to grow strong.
 4. [***“I never knew I’d ever live to be this old”*** – Billy Graham]
 5. *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”* – 2 Cor. 4:16
- b. We must understand the source of our strength. (16)
- i. Our spiritual strength comes in accordance to the riches of God’s glory.
 1. “according”
 - a. This is a key point to understand.
 - b. God doesn’t give us some strength...
 - c. He makes us rich with Him in strength.
 2. **How?**
 - ii. This happen through the empowering of the Holy Spirit.
 1. We have the presence of the H.S. at salvation...
 2. *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”* – Rom. 8:9
 3. But we need His power to truly live the Christian life.
 4. For our inner man to be strengthened by the H.S. we surrender to His control of our heart and mind.
 5. Thus we see Him grow us in the Word, prayers, worship, purity, & obedience.
 6. The Holy Spirit is the source for the church to be empowered!
 7. [**In Acts – the Spirits work in the church is referenced some 59 times!**]

“The 2nd building block...”

- II. We must seek God to make us grow deeper in love with Jesus. (17)
- a. We must personally develop a deeper relationship with Christ.
- i. Christ dwelling in our hearts here is not a reference to salvation.
 1. [Ask Jesus into your heart]
 2. Paul has already called the Ephesians “saints”...
 3. But here he is praying that they grow deeper in their fellowship with Jesus.
 - ii. “*dwell*”
 1. Lit. – “*to settle down & be at home*”
 2. Thus Paul pictures the heart as a home.
 3. We are called to develop a fellowship with Him that He feels at “*home*” in our hearts.
 - a. [Not surface level]
 - b. This means a life that draws the attention of Christ.
 4. We do this by living by faith.
 - a. We believe in Christ enough to truly follow him
 - b. [The Leader/Lord]
- b. Our love for Christ must be strong and firmly fixed.
- i. Paul uses 2 different pictures when praying for their deepness. (17b)
 - ii. Here we see that we need an unshakeable love for the Lord.
 1. “*rooted*”
 - a. This gives the picture of a tree.
 - b. Our love for God is where we need to seek our nourishment and Stability
 - c. [Okra stalks]
 2. “*grounded*”

- a. Lit. – “*to lay a foundation*”
 - b. It is a picture of a building
 - c. We must have such a deep love for Christ, that we can weather any trial in life.
 - d. [Vehicle Assembly Building @ Kennedy Space Center on Merritt Island, FL. – The massive concrete foundation, 4225 steel rods driven 160 feet into limestone bedrock]
- iii. “*Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”* – Matt. 22:37

“The 3rd building block...”

- III. We must seek God to make us grow wiser in His love for us. (18-19a)
- a. We must embrace the love of Christ in our lives.
- i. Paul prays that they comprehend & know the love of Christ.
 - ii. But this is a deeper prayer than just head knowledge.
 1. After all how do you “know” the unknowable?
 2. “*comprehend*”
 - a. Lit. – “*to lay hold of*”
 - b. [Apprehending criminal]
 - c. We are not called to just acknowledge Christ love, but we are to embrace it.
 - d. To make it our own...
 - e. To claim a deeper experience with!
- b. We must come to grips with the vast expansions of Christ’s love. (18)
- i. Christ love has immeasurable dimensions...
 - ii. It is the ultimate source of our spiritual resources...
 1. We will never lose it!

2. *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* – Rom. 8:38-39
3. [**Life Application Notes: “width” – it covers the breadth of our experiences and it reaches out to the whole world. “length” – it continues the length of our life. “depth” – it reaches to the depths of discouragement, despair, & even death. “height” – it rises to the heights of our celebration and elation**]
4. The Holy Spirit guides us in Christ love for us...
5. *“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”* – Rom. 5:5

iii. There is great power found in the love of Christ!

“The 4th building block...”

IV. We must seek God to make us fuller in our lives for Him. (19b)

- a. The ultimate goal is for God to have full dominance in our live.
 - i. Paul’s last prayer request was for them to be filled with the fullness of God...
 - ii. This was a prayer that they would live life to the fullest...
 1. *“that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”* – NIV
 2. God is the ultimate measure or standard of living full spiritual

3. We must seek out the that point in our lives where God has so much control & dominance over us that no self is left
4. When we become spiritually strengthened, we draw deeper to Jesus...
5. We draw deeper to Jesus; we grasp hold of His love for us...
6. We grasp hold of His great love; we become filled with the fullness of God...
7. [**But we are leaky buckets**]

iii. How do we know if we are living in the fullness of God? ...

b. To be filled with the fullness of God calls for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (5:18)

- i. To be filled by the H.S. is to be controlled by the H.S.
 1. [**Not amount**]
 2. We are to live under the full influence of the Holy Spirit.
 3. [**DUI**]
 4. When we are filled the Word controls us:
 - a. We pursue purity, confess all sin, die to self, surrender to God’s will, & depend on God’s power for all things...
 - b. This means we live and walk with the mind of Christ.

ii. We will experience the greatness of God in our lives as a result of total devotion to Him.

iii. What a wonderful mystery how our total submission to God will bring us ultimate power for God!

Conclusion

- A. Are you personally seeking God’s power in our church?
- B. Do you have access to the power of God?