

"The Mystery of Christ, Part Three"

Ephesians 3:14-21

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*14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with
might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;
that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,
18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth,
and height;
19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God.
20 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,
21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without
end. Amen."*

Vs. 14,15: The true God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the source of every concept of fatherhood that exists everywhere in the world. To attack fatherhood and the authority of the Father is to attack God himself, for creation reveals the nature of God. There is no innocent feminism, and any role for women or men that is not defined in terms of the God as the creator and source of fatherhood is bound to fail, for it is under the judgment of God. Women cannot rebel against male authority without rebelling against God himself. They can seek redress for male abuse and corruption of power, but they cannot strike out against male authority for involves attack on the name of God himself. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus. He is the First Person of the Holy Trinity and never had to learn what it means to be a Father for He is the Father of Eternity. The very concept of family in the whole world derives from the very essence of God. This is God in Trinity, and every blessing to the world comes from Him, the only true and living God.

Vs. 16. "According" not "out of." When God bestows His treasures, He is not made poorer. His store of grace is not depleted, no matter how much He gives. This passage shows that this strengthening is by grace, for it is granted by God, and is not the result of man's obedience. It means to "bestow a gift."

"Strengthened with might in the inner man." You will either be strengthened in the inner man to sin; or you will be strengthened with might in the inner man by grace. The first strengthening is

to sin, and that comes by the law, for “the strength of sin is the law,” Paul tells us. The natural man is strengthened in sin and rebellion. “Spirit” here stands for the Gospel in the same way it stands for the Gospel in Galatians 3:1,2. It is by the hearing of faith the Spirit strengthens the inner man to true righteousness and holiness.

How are men energized to obedience? the answer is here: by the Holy Spirit. It is by the Spirit and only by the Spirit. The works of the flesh cannot connect us to God, for the flesh is under the wrath and curse of god.

Vs. 17. This connects the Holy Spirit to Christ. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is Christ. Where Christ is, there is the Holy Spirit. The two, along with the Father, can never be separated from each other. When the grace of the Holy Spirit is granted through the Gospel, the result is an implanting of Christ in the heart—not according to essence, of course, for we are always human, but after his image and likeness. This is why the Spirit is called the “Spirit of adoption,” because we are strengthened to cry “Father,” for we know we are sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

This means we are “rooted” and “grounded.” The roots go down to support us and sustain us. The rooting and grounding is in love, not in terror or fear. No man can worship God in spirit and in truth if he comes as a slave, afraid of punishment. We come in love and thankfulness because of the Gospel. Christ has purchased us with His blood. Not fear, but rather love,, because we have been accepted of God through Jesus Christ. We have not received a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind. We do not cringe before the altar, but “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

This is true worship. This is the reason we are commanded to pray “Our Father...” for our prayers are the prayers of His children. So the HC says:

Q120: Why did Christ command us to address God thus: Our Father?

A120: To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer that childlike reverence for and trust in God, which are to be the ground of our prayer, namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith than our parents refuse us earthly things.[1]

Q121: Why is it added: Who art in heaven?

A121: That we might have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God,[1] and from His almighty power expect all things necessary for body and soul.[2]

Vs. 18, 19. We do not try to define breadth, and length, and depth, and height. God has more grace and treasures of wisdom and knowledge than you and I can imagine. But we will only know it if we are taught by the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge. This is the order then: Through the gospel the Holy Spirit is granted so that I might be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Love springs up in my heart through the gospel and I begin to see things clearly.

Filled with the fullness of God. Not that we become incarnations as Christ was, but that we are filled with the gifts and grace of God. As we read in John 14:

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.
 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.
 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.
 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
 19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.
 20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.
 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.
 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?
 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

This is true worship. Without this, all other ceremonies, or lack of ceremonies, temples or lack of temples, riches or lack of riches—nothing else avails.

There are certain things that are contrary to spiritual worship:

1. To assign to God the attributes of the creature. See Romans 1:

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. erefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen

 - a. This is the reason why the incommunicable attributes are so important.
 - i. Independence
 - ii. Immutability
 - iii. Infinity
 - iv. Simplicity. Not composed of parts or pieces that come together to form Him.
 - b. Without these attributes God is just a creature in our minds, encased in time, and subjected to changes. You may think you are honoring man when you

attribute to God the qualities of a man, but God gives you over to immorality and service of the creature.

2. To deny the holiness of God by blurring the distinction between God and man.
 - a. What is the church for? If you do not immediately answer “for the worship and the praises of the One true and living God.,” your understanding of the church is defective and might be idolatrous.
 - b. We are called to holiness, to separation unto God who is wholly separate. This separation is not of the body, as though we are to go out of the world; the separation is of the soul and spirit: we are to have no earthly conception of God. We do not worship idols; we do not serve God by them.

3. But What of Jesus Christ: Did He not become a man. Do not pictures and images of Christ re-enforce the incarnation of Christ and do not they have a place in the worship of God. Let the apostle Paul answer: See II Cor. 5:15-17

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Vs. 19-21 There is a power that works in those who believe. We are to be taught by his word and spirit, so as to be filled with His Spirit and exercise the gifts that he has given to us.

We do not know Christ after the flesh. He is not now despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We see him now as the Son of God: We must know Him after the Spirit, and not after the flesh.

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.

Therefore: Away with your images and crucifixes. Away with your wimpy and feminist pictures of Christ; away with your icons. All you can show is Jesus after the flesh, and knowledge of him after the flesh does no good at all. You must see him as the Son of God and worship Him as God, who was manifest in the flesh.

Amen and Amen.

God bless you.