

Studies in Ephesians

Lesson VII

TEXT: Ephesians 3:10—4:3

^{3:10} His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom his whole family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

^{4:1} As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Footnotes:

- a. Or “whom all fatherhood”

Questions for Discussion

1. When members of God's family experience suffering, it can lead to discouragement—not only for them but for the entire church. Paul tells the church at Ephesus: "You should not be discouraged when I suffer for you" (chapter 3, verse 13, CEV).
 - a. What "antidote" to discouragement does the apostle give us in verses 11-13?

2. Right on the heels of this admonition, Paul offers up a courageous prayer for believers.
 - a. What does Paul ask for, on behalf of the church? Identify the key element of his prayer (vv. 14-21).
 - b. Should we be incorporating any of these truths into our corporate prayers?
 - c. Can we say with confidence today that "God's power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine" (vs. 21b, CEV)?

3. In chapter 4, verse 1, Paul once again describes himself as a "p_____ of the L_____."
 - a. By characterizing himself as a captive of Christ, what is Paul implying about his predicament as a prisoner of the State (at this time, in Rome)?
 - b. How does this tie in with Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:4-9?

4. Because Jesus has the ultimate claim over our lives, how are we to "walk" (vs. 1)? What does this *mean* and *not mean*?
 - a. What attitudes characterize our new life in Christ (vv. 2-3)?