

8

Epistle to the Ephesians: Family Prayers (3.14-19)

- Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church
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Source:

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, 106-301 (highly recommended)

1. Introduction to the apostle's prayer (v14-15)
 - a. This prayer arises because of their position as fellow-citizens with the saints and as members of the household of God
 - b. Posture in prayer
 - i. Bowing the knees is an indication of reverence
 - ii. Whatever postures in prayer must be an expression of our hearts
 - iii. He bows his knees *unto* the Father
 - (1) "Unto" is a very expressive word which means 'facing' or 'face to face'
 - (2) When we come face to face with God and we cannot but bend our knees
 - c. He addresses His Father in prayer
 - i. Specifically, it is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - ii. Not the fatherhood of God but the whole family of the redeemed
 - (1) Some are already in heaven while the others are still on earth
 - (2) We must stress this in today's ecumenism
 - (3) We do not pray to Allah, Buddha or in the name of other gods or idols
2. The content of the apostle's prayer (v16-19)
 - a. "In Scripture the negative is always significant. It is almost as important as the positive" (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)
 - i. The apostle does not pray for any change in circumstances, either for himself or for them
 - ii. His prayer is not that he may be freed from prison so that he may return to preach to the Ephesians
 - iii. Neither does he pray for some kind of general prayer for them that God may bless them and that God may be good to them
 - b. But,
 - i. Characteristics of this prayer
 - (1) It is an exclusively spiritual prayer
 - (a) He directs his attention on the spiritual state
 - (b) This is his starting point and not physical concerns
 - (2) It is specific in its requests
 - ii. The apostle's first concern is the "The Inner Man"
 - (1) Dealing with our own spiritual state
 - (2) Building up the resistance of the Ephesians Christian

- (a) Prov 23.7; 4.23; Mark 7.20-23
 - (b) II Cor. 4.16
 - iii. "Strengthened with might"
 - (1) The need of the inner man to be strengthened
 - (a) He is at first a babe in Christ
 - (b) The existence of the devil, the adversary, the accuser of the brethren
 - (i) The real problem is the cunningness and the subtlety of the enemy
 - (ii) He is so powerful that he is able to conform himself unto an angel of light
 - (c) The very greatest that is offered to us - the possibility "that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith"
 - (2) Proof of argument
 - (a) I Cor. 3.2
 - (b) Heb. 5.14
 - iv. "According to the riches of His glory"
- c. That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith
 - i. He does so by the Holy Spirit of Christ who lives or abides in our hearts
 - ii. We know this by faith
- d. "Rooted & grounded in love"
 - i. Chiefly, we are to love by being rooted and grounded
 - (1) Rooted - the picture of a tree; Grounded - the picture of a building
 - (2) Its similarity
 - (a) Leading and central idea is permanence
 - (b) Depth and firmness; permanence and durability
 - (3) Its dissimilarity
 - (a) Tree - life, vitality, energy and growth
 - (b) Building - a strength which can withstand the stresses and the strains and all other influences that bear upon it
 - (c) I Cor 3.9
 - ii. What does this foundation mean?
 - (1) Love is the soil in which our Christian life will grow and built up and be Christ like or love must be lubricant in all our relationships in Christian life
 - (2) The devil wants us to ignore foundations and to rush to higher experiences