

If you asked me to write 58 lines and put 82 superlatives in it, I wouldn't be able to do it. Okay, I want to say to you again that chapter 3 is the most difficult chapter to understand because Paul is constantly throwing in superlatives. He has a point. In fact, a large part of what Paul writes in this particular passage should be put in parentheses. So, you could ignore the parentheses. We read the sentences, and the sentences then become very simple, but this man is obviously boiling over with a sense of the mercies and the glories and the kindnesses of God toward Himself and toward the Gentile brothers and sisters, and he simply can't stop saying it. That means that this is a very passionate letter. Passionate toward the Lord and His mercies. Passionate in its sense of thanksgiving.

We are in Ephesians 3. I may have to ask somebody to read this for me. *For this reason*, now if somebody will tell me what *For this reason* is, I would really appreciate it. Everything he's been saying, and now he says, for this reason. What is the reason? For this reason. I would like for two or three brothers to take it upon themselves to read everything that has been written up until here and come into the meeting tomorrow and give us some idea of what *For this reason* is, you already have it? What do you think it is?

I don't know if *For this reason* I was made a minister because of the mystery, because of Christ, because of the body, because the church, because the witness to the angels but there is some reason, and that last verse we looked at, he says to them take courage, don't lose heart it's for your sake that I'm put in prison it may be for this reason. I have no idea why he said *this. For this reason, I would like you to come to a private conclusion about this for yourself.* Would you do that? I would have said *For this reason*, in the verse before, therefore, that you not go faint or frightened at what you're going through, and not lose heart because of my bondage in prison, but it is for your sake and for your strength and for your glory that these things are happening. And then he says, "For this reason," what that reason is, I cannot say for certain, but I can tell you this: it brought Paul to his knees. What brought Paul of Tarsus to his knees there in a prison house in Rome? I do not know, but he fell on his knees before God and prayed for the Colossians, the folks in Hierapolis, and the Laodiceans. And this was what he prayed. And it's very difficult to follow.

For this reason, I bow my knee before the Father, the creating Father, for whom every family in heaven and on earth derives His name that the Father might grant you, according to the riches of His glory, put it in parentheses, that He would grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man. Now, let's read what it says. *I fall on my knees that the Father might grant you to be strengthened in the inner man that you, according to the riches of His glory, be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the...* You have to say 84 because this is not an individual, and this will become patently clear as we go on. The inner man is the inner man of the church. Yes, it is your inner man, and yes, it is true that you have an inner man, but this is addressed to a people. *That He has made of the Jews and the Gentiles one new humus, one new human, one new humanity, one new human, one new species.* And this is that same reference that He will strengthen you by His Spirit in this inner human, this inner person that you are.

Therefore, I have to believe that *For this reason* is in reference to *I hope you don't lose heart*. And maybe it's not, but that's just about as close as I can get, and I'm willing to be talked out of it, but perhaps he fell on his knees before the Father, the creating Father, the Father of heaven and earth, and asked the Father, that you, a people might be according to His riches of His glory, strengthened with great power. That the inner man be strengthened, that the inner man be strengthened with power, your inner man be strengthened with power by means of the Holy Spirit. That's why I bow my knees before the Lord Jesus Christ. And may God make that the prayer of church planters, that people who faint in the church, and there is constant fainting in the church, that the church will be strengthened in the inner man in the midst of crises and things you don't understand that Jesus Christ's power and Spirit will work in the inner man of the church, that the church be strengthened, and if the Holy Spirit will strengthen the inner man of the church, it will fall out that the inner man of the individual is also strengthened.

Forgive me for being personal again, and I have not discussed this. Brother, forgive me for picking on you. He said to me that every time he comes to a conference, he gets picked on. Man, I'm getting caught lying more this week. Peter said you got picked on, and you didn't say that, alright, fine. And nonetheless, it's true. Alright, Peter was standing there interpreting for me, was he not? And I understand that...okay, I'll pass that one up. Has the inner man of the church in Atlanta been weakened in the last few months? Has it strengthened a little in the last few days? Did that strengthen the inner man of each part of the brother of the church? It's been too soon, but has it been an encouragement to you? Alright, that's the point I'm trying to make here. When the church gets strengthened, the individual parts also get strengthened. The inner man of the church is important. And it is also the responsibility of the church planter to see that those things happen when a church gets down. And brother, in case you didn't notice, I was operating in my office last week when I came there. I was there to encourage, help, and strengthen. You noticed that? Praise the Lord.

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts. 86. Your hearts. Now, what's fascinating about this, brother, who's been counting, is that the last time this term was used, it was in your heart, one heart of a church. And I don't know why he had a singular in the first one and a plural in the second; I have no insight into that, but somehow, he has slipped from thinking of the heart of the church to the hearts of his people. So, it's very definitely a plural. He's speaking now of the parts, the pieces of the church, *that Christ may dwell in each individual heart through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded, and this is really hard to follow, in love may be able to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and depth and height.* This will drive you crazy. The man stops in the middle of the sentence, so that you may be able to understand the length, the height, and the depths. Paul, the length and height, the depth of what? And he's such a poor writer that it's hard for us to get this. The "and" is all-important in 19. He's introducing not only the breadth, the length, the heights, and depths, but also the knowledge; *and to know the knowledge of the love of Christ. I bow my knee before the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that your inner man might be strengthened so that, in that being strengthened, Christ will dwell in your*

hearts and you will be able to discover the heights, the lengths, the depths, and the knowledge of the love of Jesus Christ for you and the love of Jesus Christ, period. And in discovering the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in this moment of discouragement, over which I am praying for you and your hearts, that you might end this discouragement. Discover the fullness of the Christ who is in you, and that you will be able to plummet the depths and know the heights and the breadth, and also know the knowledge of the love of Jesus Christ.

I wish he would have put a period there, but he didn't. So, we have to ask, what is this about? And the answer is that love of Jesus Christ surpasses the knowledge that I've just asked you to have. That Christ may not only dwell in you, verse 17, but that in His dwelling in you and you're coming to comprehend in your hearts by faith, having been rooted and grounded in love, comprehend with all the other saints. Come on, Paul, get to the point. What is the height, the length, and the depth of the love of God, the love of Christ, and the knowledge of the love of Christ? And then he says, by the way, that height and depth and breadth and knowledge can be known, which surpasses knowledge. But somehow if you can touch the height and the length and the breadth and find that Christ dwells in you and you believe and you know that by faith, your heart knows it by faith and you begin to plummet the heights and the lengths and the depths and the breadth and the knowledge of Christ which you cannot know the heights and lengths and the depth and the breadth and knowledge of. Nonetheless, touching these things and coming to know them.

I think even as I speak, you're thinking individually. Check it out. Is it not true? Did it not shift gears? I knew it did. It will shift back again. There is no way that you, the individual, can know the fullness of spiritual things. You got a little cup, saints, you better know that. And if some preacher preaches to you that you're supposed to explore the heights, the lengths, and depths and threads of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, which also surpasses the knowledge of the heights, the lengths, and depths of breath. After the meeting is over, you grab him by his robe, then say to him, 'Do you know the heights and the depths of the knowledge of Jesus Christ?' Have you discovered all these riches which are in Him? And the answer has got to be no. But if Christ dwells in your hearts, and that's how He started, Christ dwells in your hearts, that you, as a group, then in this hour of discouragement might turn that discouragement into encouragement. And you, as a people, plummet the breath, measure the height, know the width, and discover the knowledge of His love which surpasses understanding. Then that body of believers, with each of you touching Him and each of you being filled with what you can be filled with, then the church of Jesus Christ suddenly is filled with all that has just been spoken of.

The church contains the fullness of God. And the church ministers to the church, and each one of us discovers God, and we discover these incredible things. And therefore, the church ministers to the church, and we do come to know the length, the height, the breadth, the knowledge of the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, which passes understanding. You touch these things as a body, then the body knows all the fullness of Him who is all of God Himself. Is that not more comfortable? Is that not more hopeful? Then I would say to a church, when you get down, and you've really been through it, each one of you start mining for the love of Christ. Take some time

to fast, to pray, to repent, and start mining the love of God in Christ Jesus, and come and bring the little part you've got, and you might once more find His fullness. At least, brothers and sisters, that's what this passage says.

Is this liberating? Does this help a little bit, sister? They're not going to be able to dump it on you anymore, sister. You're going to say, "No, I'll take about this much of that, you're trying to dump, and I'll be responsible, I'll take my little part in that." Forget responsible. Did you know that word is not in the New Testament? Isn't that neat? No demand for responsibility in the New Testament. The rest of it we make up by faith. The word responsible or responsibility does not appear in the New Testament. That's something to chew on.

I'm in 3:19. Hence, know the knowledge of the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up. Filled up with the fullness of God Himself. All that God is in the church, all His fullness, each of us carrying a little of Him. Amen.

The chapter kind of ends in a fizzle here. This glorious, glorious, glorious prayer. I'm just going to read it because I don't know anything else to say about it. *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly everything else I have written in this book up until now beyond all that I have asked of Him as I am laying here sitting kneeling here on my knees for you, now, to Him who is able to do even exceedingly abundantly all these superlatives that I've stuck into this book, speaking of the grace, the glory, the gentleness, and the kindness of God's mercies and graces, now, to Him who is able to encourage you who are in prison, because I'm in prison, now to Him who is filling up every little part of you that the fullness of God might come and rest in the church. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that which I have asked of Him and which we have asked of Him, or thought about, according to the power that works within us. Go ahead and clap? It's worth it.*

What power is working in us? It's the power of an indwelling Lord in each member, and then the power of a living Lord also indwelling a girl, a body, a people, a building, a house, a citizenship of a country, and I left out two or three others, but in an indwelling Lord, the power that comes about because of an indwelling Lord? No! The power that comes about through an indwelling Lord in the church. *He will do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask, all that we think, according to the power that works within a body of believers, a plurality, a corporation.* And then just he ends with a praise: to Him, be glory through all generations forever and ever and ever.

This is one of the most sectarian statements I have ever read in my life. This is, talk about denominating. Oh, brothers, we need the glory of God. Oh, brothers, to Him be glory. Glorify Him, brother. Glorify Him, sister. I hate to tell you this, but according to that passage, this is a very narrow-minded man. The glory of Jesus Christ and the glorying, do you understand what I'm saying? The glorying of Jesus Christ belongs chiefly in the church, in the assembly. *To Him be the glory in the church forever and forever world without end.* Amen, amen, amen. Well, one of the things I hope someday to do is get around to churches and teach them how to worship the Lord;

I've never had that privilege, so that they might know what it is to glory Him, to glorify Him for that place for Him to receive glory for glory to be in His body.

Now, sister, I ask you, have you ever asked, have you ever heard of a more sectarian man than that? He is putting Jesus Christ almost exclusively in the church. How many lines do we have, brother David? 63. And those 63 lines and 93 plurals are references to the church. Is that not true? Are references in the church, to the church, or from the church? 90. How many, and we're at the end of chapter one? Tell me you're not impressed.

I must say it again so simply, the Christian life was not designed to be lived. The scripture wasn't even designed to be read...alright, we're going to read it individually for the rest of our lives, but brothers and sisters, context is plural. What a load to lift and what a load to lay down. It is not me; it's us. It is not my journey; it is our journey. It is not my Christian life to satisfy Him; it is our Christian life to satisfy Him. It is not my longing to know Him; it is her longing to know Him. And I'm part of her, and the height and the depth and the breadth and the length do not belong to me as an individual to be responsible for, but rather it is to her.

Now I would pray to the Lord that God would open our eyes further, Lord Jesus, until we literally see by revelation. We walk into a room together, and I'm just a part. There is a human being in this room. There is only one human being in this room. This human being is on the journey. I'm helping this human being discover Christ by bringing my little discovery, but she, or this person in this room, is the one who's doing the discovery, not me. And if you've ever been in a meeting when you have seen someone unveil Christ and someone else got it and unveil more of Him spontaneously, and the revealing of Christ then bounced over to someone else, and to someone else, and we said here the other day, the church can always outreach any man. And another one sees something, and suddenly you are caught up corporately in an understanding of the heights and the depth and the breadth of the riches and the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus in the church. To Him be glory in the church forever and ever, world without end. Amen and amen.

You talk about freedom. You know, Lord, I have a feeling that the half has not been fancied. And I pray for the strengthening of the churches. Pray for the saints who love the Lord, just because it feels so good, sisters there and brothers there; all of her. May the churches be strengthened, oh Lord, may the churches see the church, may we as individuals both remain individuals before you with all of our relationships, and walk with you. Oh Lord, melt us too, until we see ourselves as a part of the whole. We have asked so many times, God bless us. Lord, I ask You, God, bless the girl. Lord, pour Your blessings out on her, and surely, we will be blessed. Pour out your faithfulness on her, and surely, we will be faithful. And when she stands before You a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, without blame or indictment, we will be in her as part of that glory. Lord, open a revelation to us that's been lost. Let us see. Lord, show me that I am just a member there, but you're flowing through me. Show me more than I know now of what membership means within her walls and within her. Show me this nation that is she. Show me the citizenship that is hers. Show me the body that is hers. Show me the city that is that girl. Show me

that my strength lies in her, and that her strength lies in You indwelling her and her many pieces.
And Lord, show us things we cannot understand or speak or know except by experience and do
exceedingly above all that we ask or think. Amen.