

## Ephesians 3:16b, Part 1

0214

If the social niceties and politeness is were stripped away, would we see Jesus? Would we hear Jesus? That's what I want for me. Do you want that for you?

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

So to begin, in this phrase here, Paul begins from verse 16. That according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you...

Now that word 'grant' sounds like an asking of permission, or a giving of permission. If you grant someone something, you sort of give this permissive sort of thing? Yes, you may do this, or yes, you may have that, or yes, you may go there.

But the word that Paul is using actually, is not a word asking that God may allow something, it's just the word 'didomai.' It is the word that means 'to cause to make something happen,' sometimes it's translated 'to father.' So Paul is stil—remember last week, we talked about how the first three chapters of Ephesians are Monergistic, meaning that God is the only actor, God is the only one doing the things in chapter one, two, and three.

Now, chapter three, four, and five, I'm sorry, four, five, and six—if I can get my numbers, right—chapters four, five, and six, are us and God together us in the power of the Spirit, and God together. But the first three chapters are God and God alone. So see clearly how this is still in this section in which this is this is all God, not grant or not allow, but instead cause this to happen, may you according to the riches of your glory, grant or cause to be grant, or I'm sorry, grant or cause to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

So this next word 'strengthen,' and this is the request: may You grant, cause, and here's the first request is the request of strengthen to be strengthened.

And so we notice here that it's in the passive form, it's not to strengthen something else. But to be strengthened means that the action is being done to you. To be strengthened means that something is strengthening you, something from outside of you is acting upon you to strengthen you.

So God is the one doing the causing, Paul prays that God would cause them to be strengthened, this passive form of this verb 'to be strengthened.' And the strengthening here has three components or three, I guess you could say subsets or three conditions to it. The being strengthen, has, first of all to do with power to be strengthened with power, secondly, through the Spirit, and then thirdly, in your inner being, or inner person, or actually, I prefer 'inner man,' because that's literally what Paul said.

The he literally said, inner man—'anthropon,' that's just a word—for not male—but humanity, mankind. So that works well for me. But if your translation has being or person, your inner person, your inner being is all getting at the same idea.

So this strengthening that Paul's asking for has this threefold condition: strengthening with power, through the Spirit, in the inner being, the inner person, or the inner man, the inner humanity.

So let's take these one by one: the strengthening here—actually, we'll come back to that—the strengthening with power. So the causing speaks of God during the acting, this being strengthened speaks of something outside of ourselves, acting upon us. And then with power, that also you see how the whole flow of everything is speaking of something Paul is asking for something to be done to them. He's not asking that something within them would be discovered, or something within them would be ignited or, some sort of fire would be lit. He's asking for something to happen to them, that God would cause them to be strengthened with a power that is not their power, but not the—Paul's not asking that you would discover your own power or you that you would, you would find the light within yourself.

You know that that is an idea that if you really grasp this idea of—of finding a light within you, or finding a power within you, or discovering your true self, or on and on, we could go—if you really get your mind around that, and you look for it, you will see that everywhere in our world. And you will see that that has absolutely infiltrated Christianity today. This idea that in you is some sort of light, or some sort of hope, or some sort of power, or some sort of something that you just got to discover it, you just got to figure out how to pray the right prayer, you just got to figure out how to read the right books or the right devotion or, listen to the right preacher, or do something in order to ignite the fire within you or discover your inner light. Once you train yourself to see that you'll see it everywhere.

It's thoroughly pagan. Because the Christian worldview says nothing about finding something within ourselves. It says to us that something outside of us must come to us and must change us from the outside in.

And so, this power that Paul asked to come to them, this is something that would have that would have really resonated with the Ephesian believers. If you can remember way back this far way back to chapter one, verse one, as we began talking about just the context of Ephesus, and the believers there, and their background, we talked about just how thoroughly—not just pagan they were—but thoroughly occult. The entire ancient world was wrapped up in the occult and dark magic and different things. The whole, the whole ancient world was that way. But nothing, nothing exceeded Ephesus in terms of their interest in the occult and black magic and dark powers and demonic things.

You remember the story from Acts, when there was this revival taking place in Ephesus, you remember how invested they were in the cult of Diana. And you remember how all the magic books that they had in the city there, and there's this big revival and people are starting to believe. And so they'd have this big bonfire, where they bring all these books of magic words and phrases and everything, they have this big bonfire—Luke tells us it was 50,000 pieces of silver worth of books—and then people get all mad, and there's this big riot over it.

So the city of Ephesus, much more so than the rest of the ancient world, was invested in dark things, in the occult and black magic. And so they would have had a real appreciation for power, particularly spiritual power. We all do. We all have, we all have that same interest. In our world today. There's no less the presence of dark things in the occult in our world today. It's just more sophisticated today. But the Ephesian world, the Ephesian culture was a culture that would have been enamored with supernatural power with spiritual power.

So Paul says: that you may be strengthened with power, there's power from outside of yourself through the Spirit. Again, the whole flow of the context is speaking of something outside of themselves, that is being brought to them that has been given to them, Paul is asking to be given to them.

So through the Spirit. So the spirit is the actor here. Remember, we talked last week about how this the spirit is the Empower-er, the one who does the empowering. In chapter one, he was the one who did the sealing for our blessed hope. Now here in chapter three, he is the one who does the empowering, in fact, that's consistent with how the whole New Testament presents the Spirit: the Spirit is the worker, He's the Empower-er, He is the worker, he is the one who brings power to the children of God.

In your notes. Here, there's just a few examples. This is by no means exhaustive, but some examples of how consistently the New Testament connects together: the Spirit and the power of the Spirit.

Acts one verse eight, "you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

Romans one and verse four, "In power, according to the spirit of holiness."

Romans 15, verse 19, "By the power and signs and wonders, of signs and wonders, and by the power of the Spirit of God."

Or First Corinthians two and verse four, "The Spirit and of power."

First Thessalonians one and verse five, "Our gospel came to you not only in Word, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit."

And it's just a small sampling of how the New Testament connects together—the Holy Spirit and His working, his power that he brings.

So this this power that Paul asked for through the Spirit, and this power is going to be prayed for Paul to come upon the inner man or the inner person. So the spirit of the person, we said last week, that the very heart of who you are, the inner man. We talked about last week is that is what you are, when your body lies in the grave, the part of you that is that is alive and conscious that—that's your inner man, your inner humanity, your inner being. So that is the part that is that is the aspect of us that Paul was praying that this power would come to through the Spirit.

So the Spirit, if you want to use that word, the spirit needs to be strengthened by the Spirit. It's only the Spirit that can strengthen the spirit of a man. The physical aspect of our world cannot strengthen our spirit, is the Spirit who strengthens the spirit of a man.

So this is these components here the strength to be strengthened in our with power through the Spirit, in your inner man. So let's talk for just a minute about the inner man or the inner person, the inner self. Paul is the only one in the New Testament that uses this phrase, he uses it three times in talking here to, of course, the Ephesians, he uses it to the Romans, and he also, of course, uses it to the Corinthians.

And by this inner man, this is in Paul's mind, again, the very core of who we are, and what we are, it is what we are when everything else is stripped away. The inner self, that which lives forever, our bodies will live forever, but they will have to be resurrected in order to live forever. So your body right now, in a sense, will live forever, you will live forever in that body, although it will be resurrected and changed—thank the Lord. But your inner being is what will live forever with continuity, without the interruption of physical death and a time in the grave.

So the inner man, we talked about that last week, the inner man as opposed to the outer man. So there we have this outer man pause, we're gonna look at a passage of scripture in just a few moments in which Paul speaks

about the outer man and he compares it to the inner man, the inner man is the one who lives for eternity without that interruption of physical death. And that is the thing that we said last week, really deserves the bulk of our attention, because that is the part of us that will live forever. And in that sense. And so it's interesting for us to think as Paul is speaking here about the inner man, he's asking for the strengthening to come to the inner man, it's interesting to think of our own life, and just how much attention we give to our outer person as compared to our inner person.

So think about your outer person, and how much attention and how much energy and how much focus you give to your outer person. So all of us prepared our outer person this morning, hopefully, some of us prepared our outer person a little better than other people prepared our outer person, we'll leave some names off of that. But we all prepared our outer person in some way: we got dressed, we hopefully showered it, we fed it, we just fed it a little bit ago, we brought it down here. We may or may not have prepared our inner person to come here this morning, right. But nobody's here this morning who didn't prepare your outer person.

In fact, there's not a day of your life, that you don't prepare your outer person to meet the world. But I guess it could be if you sort of do the pajamas thing all day, but most of us in most situations, there's not a day in which we don't prepare the outer person to engage the world.

But I would suggest that there are many days that we don't prepare the inner person to meet the world. So we feed the outer person, we give attention to the outer person, how much time and thought and energy do we give to how the outer person looks to making the outer person look better and dress better and be presented better. There are so many today in our world that spend just incredible amounts of time and energy in physical fitness, in tuning their outer person to be the most fit and the most presentable possible, or to live the longest.

And there's nothing wrong, of course, with physical health. Paul says that physical exercise benefits a little. However, in comparison to the amount of energy that we give to our inner person, it can be quite startling when we as believers who know in our hearts and in our souls, that the inner man is what lives forever. It's startling to consider just how little attention we normally, on a normal day, give to our inner person.

But just beyond the whole, getting dressed and physical fitness and feeding your inner your outer person that, just think about how much of your life is involved with the outer person. So let me just throw a few concepts out there and think about these things in connection with your outer person and you will begin to see how the vast majority of your life is concerned with the outer person. Think about comfort. Think about success. Think about security. Think about pleasure. Think about entertainment. Think about purpose and goals. Think about your job. Think about, really, think about anything in your life. And you're really thinking about something that is most likely geared toward the outer person.

Now, again, we are not just souls living in a body, that we're going to use this body up and be done with it. We are souls and bodies together. However, the scriptures, as I said last week, warn us against the predominance, the preoccupation with the outer. It's the inner that the scriptures are concerned mostly about, and it is this inner that Paul is pleading with the Lord, that God would strengthen them in their inner man.

You know those videos, probably all of us have seen those little videos, they're, they're funny, they're cute, in which they usually go the same sort of way—there's somebody who maybe had a wisdom teeth pulled or something like that, and they're on the way home from getting the wisdom tooth pulled. And they're just they got the gas. And they're just sort of saying these crazy things—you know, those videos? What are those videos about? What are they demonstrating, they are demonstrating a person for whom the norms of society the social niceties have been laid aside. The anesthesia, the medication has caused them to set aside sort of the niceties

that we normally go about our life with. And they're just sort of saying what comes out of their head, right. And that can be funny.

But that can also be really sad when you think about it. Because I don't know about you, but one of the things that strikes fear into me is that maybe there's a situation in which I'm under anesthesia or something like that, or here's a worse case scenario: and this is a scenario that really hits home for me—so many of us, when we reach a certain age, we have a state of mental decline that is faster than our state of physical decline. And so we reach a stage in which our mental facilities—and you don't need to elbow anybody over there, Jim—in when which our mental facilities are no longer capable of maintaining the social niceties and the politeness that's expected of us.

And so what comes out of us, well, really has no more filter. I have been quite aware of people in that situation in life, you probably have to, and can be a really, really painful thing that strikes fear into me into which that that time that most likely will come from me—in which the filters of social niceties are gone and what's left? Nothing but the inner man.

What comes out at that point is the inner man. And that scares me to death. I don't know about you. But what I want is when that time comes, that God has so prepared my inner man, that even with the social niceties stripped away, what comes out is still Jesus. I'm so far from that. And maybe this is something that you can meditate upon to that if the social niceties and politeness is were stripped away, would we see Jesus? Would we hear Jesus? That's what I want for me. Do you want that for you? That's what Paul wants for the Ephesians he wants their inner man to be so strengthened that whatever else is stripped away, they still hear Jesus and see Jesus and talk to Jesus because their inner man has been so strengthened and so this is the heart of what Paul is asking for God to do, to strengthen with power through the Spirit in the inner man.