

*“Being Strengthened with Might in the Inner Man”
Ephesians 3.16*

INTRO:

If we are praying for others in the church, brothers and sisters in the Lord, what would you and I pray for? Most likely we would pray for temporal things—things like health, wealth, and prosperity. It is not wrong to pray for these things. Still, these are not the things that Paul prays for his readers. Paul’s first prayer request for them and for us is, ***“that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner person.”***

While not praying for our temporal blessings, he does pray for our eternal and spiritual health, wealth, and prosperity. In order to wrap our minds around this prayer request, there are three questions that we need to ask and answer.

I. Who Is The Inner Person?

II. Why Does He Need To Be Strengthened?

III. How Is The Strengthening Accomplished?

I. Who Is The Inner Person?

A. Paul begins his prayer with a very important request. He asks the true and living God of the universe to grant us that we might be strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inner man. This immediately causes us to ask the question, "What is this inner man?"

B. Who or what is this inner person that Paul desires to be strengthened? To answer the question we need to explore two other texts that speak of this person called the inner person.

1. **Romans 7:21-23** is the first reference to the inner person. ***“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God in the inward person, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”*** Here Paul is talking about the struggle that goes on in his body between his redeemed new nature and the old man sin. He says in **verse 22** that he delights in the law of God in his heart of hearts, the inner person. In the part of him where the real Apostle Paul dwells, that person that no one sees but God, that person delights in and desires to carry out the good and righteous commands of God.

The **inner person** is the spiritual part of Paul that is responsive to God. Although part of Paul does not want to obey God, the part of him he calls the inward man does want to do what God would have him do.

2. ***The other reference that we need to look at is in 2 Corinthians 4:16.***

Paul in this context is talking about the struggles of the ministry. He speaks eloquently of the trials and tests that he was willing to endure to bring the gospel to the Corinthian believers. Our response may be, ***“Paul, how do you keep going? How can you hold on in the midst of such trouble? How do you keep on keeping on?”*** He would say that he understands God’s plan for this present age. ***“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”***

The word translated ***“renewed”*** is drawn from the Greek word for new that means ***“new in quality.”*** Every day God is making a brand new me. Here again the inner person is the real person. He is seen in direct contrast with the outward man, the man everybody sees. He is the man that really counts.

C. Now coming back to Paul's prayer in **Ephesians 3**. Who is this inner man that Paul prays for strength for? **(1)** He is who we really are; the one that lives where only God and each of us can see. **(2)** He is the part of us who sees and responds to spiritual realities. He is the part of us who loves and delights in God. **(3)** He is the part of us that God created anew when He saved each of us and he is the part of us that God wants to make new every day.

II. Why Does He Need To Be Strengthened?

A. Now that we know who this inner man is that Paul asks the Lord to strengthen, we now need to ask the question, "Why does he need to be strengthened?"

B. The obvious answer is because he isn't strong enough already. How do we know that?

1. Just look at Paul's experience. In **Romans 7:22**, Paul spoke of the fact that he delighted in God's righteous law in the inner man. But when we step back and look at the larger context we survey the field of battle in Paul's life. He found that in himself he wanted to do right yet, because of the remaining sin in his body, he could not do what he wanted to do, but rather did what he didn't want to do. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit strengthening the inner man that victory over sin and the ability to live to please God became ours. Can we identify with the Apostle Paul in this? Do we often fail in our struggle with sin? That is one reason why the inner man needs to be strengthened.

2. **2 Corinthians 4:16** is the second example of Paul's experience. Paul says there, ***“Therefore we do not lose heart.”*** We don't quit. Why? Paul does not quit because, although the outer man is falling apart, the inner man is being renewed every day.

3. **A strong inner person accomplishes three things. (1)** A strong inner person allows us to overcome adversity, because our focus is the sufficiency of God. **(2)** A strong inner person also allows us to keep from giving up because he is drawing strength from the infinite supply of the Holy Spirit. **(3)** A strong inner person is the best defense against the psychological and emotional onslaught of Satan's forces. The inner person sees reality as it really is, and he (the inner person) sees God as He really is.

C. So, in view of this, is our inner person strong enough? No. So, Paul prays that our inner being be strengthened by power through the Holy Spirit?

III. How Is The Strengthening Accomplished?

A. **Prayer is a key.** Paul knew that and that is why he prayed that we would experience this strengthening. How do we usually pray for ourselves? "Lord, change our circumstances." "Take away this trial." Perhaps, we should pray, "Lord, strengthen us in our inner man that we might grow through all of this. Have we prayed that way for someone else? Have we prayed this way for our self?"

B. **The Holy Spirit is the source.** *"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner person" (verse 16).* This strengthening comes from the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit in our lives. We can have this enablement as we yield control to Him.

C. When God the Holy Spirit strengthens us with power in our inner person, He doesn't just zap us. **He uses the Word of God to transform us and to be the source of our strength.**

D. Paul wrote to show us the viewpoint of the inner being that is being renewed everyday. ***"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).***

CONCLUSION:

This first request is unusual in that we do not usually think in these terms. Yet, it is an important one. If we are to be able to receive the rest of the blessings that Paul asks for us, and if we are to carry out the practical admonitions, we must have the strengthening ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Let us pray for it. Let us dwell on the Word and submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit of God in order that we might experience this strengthening in our lives. Paul is not praying for theory but for reality. Let us seek to know and have that strength that he is praying for.