

# Prayer 08 Christ in the Heart

by Bob Clark

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*Bob Clark's sermon highlights the transformative power of prayer and the necessity of having Christ dwell in our hearts for spiritual enrichment.*

**Duration:** 38:49

**Topics:** "Christ In You"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of comprehending the tremendous power of God and its impact on our behavior. He references the story of Israel piling stones as a demonstration and reminder of God's power in bringing them through the Red Sea. The speaker also mentions a prophecy in Jeremiah about a new day when God's deliverance will be remembered differently. He then highlights the significance of faith in understanding and seizing the plans and purposes of God, emphasizing that every believer has access to this power. The sermon concludes with an invitation for those who are unsure of their relationship with God to seek assurance through the Word of God.

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## Transcript

I don't have the advantage that you do, hearing the voices blending, going that way, but I certainly enjoyed that and I thank you very much for your ministry and music. This has been a refreshing week for myself. For some reason or other, the believers in Houston are not very melodious and it's just pleasant to hear.

I almost hate to say this, but I attribute it really to all the Scotties that are out there. There must be a good number of us. And I thoroughly appreciate that nice singing.

Why don't you turn in your Bible to the book of Ephesians. The book of Ephesians and chapter 3. We've been thinking about the place of prayer in the Word of God and the importance of prayer and the treasured privileges that it is for us to be able to come into the presence of our gracious God and Father, unburdening our hearts and being so mindful of the exhortations, the opportunities, the vast spectrum that there is provided for us for fellowship with God. And one of the very treasured portions of Scripture is the prayer that the Apostle utters on the behalf of his believers that he has come to love and enjoy and from whom he has been separated for four years.

He is now in prison and he has written a prayer in this letter in chapter 1 and you might remember that in chapter 1 his prayer was for enlightenment doctrinally and his heart soared and lifted us along with him into the heavenly places for the rich blessings that are available to us. At the end of the book, in chapter 6,

his prayer is for encouragement and there the encouragement is at a very personal level. But here in chapter 3 his prayer is for enrichment spiritually and one very specific avenue of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to create the mind, the life, the attitude of Christ in the hearts of his believing children.

A lovely goal for us to have as well. You might remember in chapter 1 the prayer that was designed for enlightenment doctrinally, it had a climax in it, the grand conclusion of the prayer and one of the last objectives was that we would be able to comprehend the tremendous power of God that is operating to effect the purposes of God on our behalf. Back in the book of Joshua, chapter 4, the nation of Israel were told to pile some stones in the river bed and then up on the far side of the river Jordan and whenever the children would come by and say, what are these stones for? The parent would be able to say to their child, it's a demonstration and a reminder of the power of God who brought us through the Red Sea and also brought us into this land.

In the book of Jeremiah, chapter 23, the prophet says that there is a new day coming and when that day is operative in the future, the nation of Israel will be told that God would no longer be the God who delivered them through the Red Sea and through the river into the promised land but he would be the God that would be known as the God that drew them from all over the world and brought them into their promised land. Well, in Ephesians, chapter 1, the demonstration of the power of God today, for the Jew it was passed through the Red Sea, in the future it will be for his time when the people, the earthly people of God are drawn from every nation, tribe and tongue and reassembled. That will be the demonstration of his power and that will be the testimony and for us, the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe was wrought when he raised our blessed Lord Jesus out from among the dead and seated him far above principalities and powers and all forms of dominion and names and titles in this age and in every age and every name that ever will be named.

He will be supremely the titular head over all things and somehow, by the grace of God, you and I are drawn into that august company and welded to be the filling out of him that fills all things. With those kind of goals in mind and that kind of blended declaration of the power of God strong on our behalf, the Spirit of God moves the Apostle to plunge into some beautiful statements all the way through chapter 2. New positions, new truths, affirmations of closeness and unity. Into chapter 3 he begins to be moved by the Spirit of God to declare his great apostolic appointment and this unusual, unique message that is his.

That the Jew and the Gentile, all those barriers have been dissolved in the body of Christ and now there's a third society, a spiritual company of people drawn from every walk and climb and tongue and welded together by an indwelling Holy Spirit sharing the very life of Christ. That head of that spiritual organism is in the glory. But you and I have this special privilege of being drawn together if indeed you have been quickened by God.

And you will know if you have been quickened by God and you will know if you have been given spiritual birth and life because you will have believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that at Calvary's cross he died bearing the guilt of the sin of the world and your personal individual sin. You will gladly acknowledge him as your personal Savior, taking that open step by an open confession and baptism you will announce to the world you're part of his great kingdom. And you will then have a confident assurance of your sins forgiven and upon your confession of Christ and having believed in him, we are taught earlier in this very book, that after you believe that gospel message the Spirit of God sealed you.

He came within you and sealed you, making you permanently his own. Anything less than that needs to be questioned whether you're really a part of the body of Christ or not. And if you're not really sure that you have those blessings, and if you're not confident about that this evening, I urge you don't leave the auditorium.

When others are leaving, give me the privilege and the pleasure of showing you from the word of God how you can be sure that you are a child of God and have been quickened and born of him. Look at the apostle, his heart is so filled with this remarkable message, a divine revelation, and he announces that he was made a minister of this in verse 7, a servant according to the gifts of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship, the stewardship, the new economy of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the ecclesia, this called out company of believers who have been quickened by God, indwelt by the Spirit, and live a spiritually attuned life with him. By that company of people might be made known the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore, in view of these things, wherefore, I desire that you faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory, and for this cause, for this cause, this truth that's been given to me, this ministry, for which I am gladly suffering, that you do not think that your faith has been placed in the wrong thing just because I am in a Roman prison.

That you will not be disheartened or discouraged or disappointed that this is not an ongoing thriving thing the way you might have anticipated. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. This is a prayer for the realization of the things that he has been speaking of and has taught the believers.

In chapter 1 there is a great work of grace to the glory of God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit operating concurrently, each with a threefold work, and each effecting this grand purpose of God. Then he prayed that they come to the enlightenment of this great doctrine.

Now he pours out his heart to these beloved spiritual children, and he comes to the spot where he realizes there is a tremendous need that all of this becomes real. Not just theory, but personal enrichment at a deep spiritual level. And the only way that can be effectively operated within us is through prayer.

At the very outset then, I am reminded that if my physical children, or my spouse, or those for whom I have affection, or any for whom I seek to serve in the body of Christ, if they have spiritual needs and seem to be in any way deficient from the beautiful program that is laid out in this epistle, then it is important that I pray that something dramatic be realized in their lives. And that dramatic activity is a unique empowering and

effective enabling by the Spirit of God. We're going to observe in these words, when we look at them in a little detail, that there is a provision for this realization made.

The provision is the Father of every family in the earth, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and a sense and a presence of the indwelling Christ. That's the provision that's made. Hopefully, the purpose of this realization for which he is praying now, the prayer, is to realize in a practical experience these things that have been stated.

The provision is the deity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit operating together to effect this. Now, the purpose is to establish Christ's presence in the life of the believers of Ephesus. And not only that, to enhance his personal preciousness to us.

And then thirdly, to ensure the plentitude of God in us. Now, this seems beyond our human comprehension. And indeed it is.

Just as Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth, to the things of God are not perceived by the natural man, and certainly not the carnal man who is walking just as the men of the world. But if we're going to be spiritual men and women, and we're going to soak our souls in the word of God, there is something that becomes yours by the activity of faith. Our Lord Jesus urged those that were thirsty to come and drink of him.

And he said, Be coming to me, and be drinking of me. And if you do this, you will be believing in me, and out of your being shall flow rivers of living water. This, he said of the Spirit.

A unique ministration of the Spirit of God. That when I begin to make real my personal appropriation of the Lord Jesus, mentally, spiritually, with the activity of my will, when I embrace spiritual things, there is that which is potentially supernatural about our Christian faith. And there can flow from us rivers of living water, that we can be a source of blessing to others.

Well, that goes beyond our comprehension, but we understand that if I believe it, it will be effected. If I accept these things, we were told, the exceeding greatness of his power to those of us who are believing ones, in a nominative case. If we are those who are the believing ones, if we practice reading and accepting the truth, and allowing it to have its effect upon us toward the ultimate effect of God's end, there shall be, really, a dramatic work wrought in us that goes beyond our human faculties.

Now, this is exactly what he is praying for here. A most remarkable enabling. And he knows that God is able to do it.

And he uses some superlative statements at the very end, in verses 20 and 21, and they are designed, in effect, to say, and blessed God, you are able to do it, if we will allow him. That's what's implied in the statement at the end of verse 20, according to the power that worketh in us. We shall be as Christlike, and entering into the spiritual blessings, proportionate to the degree to which I allow the power of God to operate within me, by my own human acquiescence to truth.

My own acceptance of facts. My own willingness to yield to the things that are said in the word of God. It's a remarkable secret, and yet such a simple, blessed joy for any who can embrace and accept it.

First, he says, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is in verse 14. Remember, in chapter 1, he was called to pray to the God of our Lord Jesus, because he was seeing the Son as a man, as a representative man, who had experienced certain things on our behalf, as the titular head of a new

race of people, and because God was able to do that in him, he shall effectively operate in us, who are part of his spiritual children, his new race, the people that are found in Christ, in spirit, in this new condition, as a result of God's quickening power.

Now he turns to the Father, and he says, for this reason, or for this cause, these things that we have mentioned earlier, we see, firstly, the posture of prayer. I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom, and I think if you have a revised Bible, or your margin would say something that's an improvement on the authorized version, every family in heaven and earth is named. He is not speaking embracively and in generalities, like he is the general Father of all families, but it is every family, every individual, it's a genus, it's a generic term.

He is the Father of every family named, every existing kind, not Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith, but man, angels, demons, animal life, every family. He is the Father of every family, and every family that is in existence, that has ever been named, he is the Father, the paternal leader, or creator of this. And actually, in the Greek language, there's a little play on words, because he's making a statement using the term patria and pater, and he is saying, you are the Father, and this is the family, every family.

Now, why such a broad statement? Because the things that are being dealt with in this prayer, he recognizes, or I assume that he is directing his prayer to the Father of the Lord Jesus, who is our forebear, our spiritual life communicator, the Lord from heaven, the last Adam, the second man that has created spiritual life and quickened our souls, and we have become part of a family as believers. But this one, who is the Father of every family, has certain potential powers latent to himself that he can convey to us, and he bows his knee to him. King Solomon bowed publicly upon a scaffolding so all of Israel could see him, and he knelt down and raised up his hands.

We cannot legislate that we can only pray on our knees, but it's suggested throughout the word of God, Daniel, three times a day, even though it imperiled his life. Peter chose to move over into the quietness and put everyone else out of the room and kneel by the side of Tabitha to raise her from the dead. Our Lord Jesus Christ took a stone throw in the dignity of his unique person into the garden, just a stone throw away, and knelt down to talk to his Father.

It's a position of humility, of dependence, of a sense of weakness, and yet of reverent communication. Do you remember the apostle when he met with the saints at Ephesus, and there they knelt to pray together. In the very next chapter, with the believers and the disciples at Tyre, there in the sand on that beach, they knelt down in the sand and prayed together.

A picture of man humbling himself before God. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that you can measure a man by fabric, the fabric in front of his mirror and the fabric in the knees of his pants, which is worn the most. Jonathan Edwards, in his little pastoral room where he spent much time in prayer, it is frequent for all who go there to come to that little pastoral study and have drawn to their attention by the side of a hard wood-framed bench, right into the oaken floor, two spots, grooved out, where the man spent time on his knees in prayer.

Certainly not to impress anyone, but for the thought of meekness and humility before a great God, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of every family of the earth. What a great source of life and power! To him I bow, and he has a purpose, that he would grant you, the believers at Ephesus, with all of their weaknesses and frailties, according to the riches of the glory, or the riches of his glory. How do we understand, according to the riches of his glory? If Mr. Rockefeller, with his wealth and reservoir,

had been given some kind of service, and he reached into his pocket and took out a one-dollar bill, and gave it to the man who rendered him service as a tip, he gave out of his riches.

But, if he reached into his pocket and took out a hundred-dollar bill, he was giving according to his riches, proportionate with, consistent with, in harmony with, and this is what the prayer is, that God would grant us according to the riches of his glory. In harmony and consistent with this great wealth that is his, he is petitioning that his children over there at Ephesus would be given something, that God, our Father, would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. Actually, literally, you cannot take the language out of the Greek language and say, to be strengthened with might.

It doesn't make grammatical sense to be empowered with empowering, and that's what it is. It's a superlative statement, and it has to be changed in some way to make grammatical sense in our English language. And I think it's Bishop Moule that delights to develop in his exposition on this portion, and he has some delightful meditative things to say about the power of God's latent spiritual worth, the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, how? By his Spirit in the inner man.

Down into the inner person. The essential you. What you really are as a person.

Down deep in there. Not just in our mind. That wouldn't be adequate to translate the expression.

It's locative within our person. Now, there's many things that I have in my head that do not affect my person. There's many things that I have learned and have retained ever since I was a child that do not really influence and control me.

But this is the concept. Though my outward man perishes, for all reasons, the inner man, that real essential you that God is working with, down deep inside, what you really are, is the arena in which the Holy Spirit operates. And Paul is saying, according to the riches, inconsistent and in harmony with the riches that are yours, by your eternal Spirit, do a work deep in the heart of the people of Ephesus.

And, of course, for you and me. Now, what is the work? To be great preachers? To be dynamic missionaries? To be faithful servants? To be effective in the gifts that God has given? No, far greater than any of those. To be strengthened with supernatural power by the Holy Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.

Now, in the text, and being very careful or selective, it is perfectly possible for you, as a child of God, to be indwelt by the Spirit and not have Christ in your heart. The evidence of it is our impatience, our selfishness, our self-assertion. He was meek and lowly of heart, and he urges us to take this yoke and learn of him.

Our blessed Lord Jesus wants our inner person to be more and more accommodated to project him, and that requires a divine supernatural intervention. The old flesh in myself, that old nature, those sinful propensities, the principle of sin, although having been judicially dealt with and assessed to be crucified by our God, who says, I have been crucified with Christ, but nonetheless there is that principle that is operative within me, and all too often it asserts itself in my life. I become impatient, traces of willfulness, indifference to God's directive, willfulness in disobeying the Lord, which I have to constantly come back and confess to.

And Paul is praying for a deep inner enrichment in the light of everything that God has done for us, that we might be empowered with empowering by the Holy Spirit, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Now, there's no doubt that the Holy Spirit is in every one of these persons, and to affirm that we see in chapter 1 verse 13, Jesus Christ, in whom you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance of the redemption of the purchased possession. They were sealed.

In chapter 2 and verse 18, through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father. All of those believers. In chapter 4 and verse 30, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

There's no doubt that they have the Holy Spirit of God. That's not the question. The fact that they do have the Holy Spirit of God is the opportunity that we may have Christ in our hearts.

The character, the life, the person, the gentleness, the obedience, the graciousness, all of those blessed, gracious characteristics of our loving Savior, whom having not seen individually each of us in some degree, we love him. And now Paul says all to the Father of our Lord Jesus, and the Father of every family named in the earth, if you would graciously, kindly, according to the riches of your grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit that deep in the inner man, Christ might be formed. How is it possible? By faith.

We believe that the Spirit is there. You're not looking for him. You're not looking for something extra.

You're not looking for some phenomenon. You believe the truth that he is there. He must need the only freed and enabled.

And so we feed upon the word of God, and we practice believing the things that were taught from out of Holy Scripture, and yield to the impulses, and more and more we are offending him less, grieving him less, and giving grace to him less. We give greater freedom to him. The Apostle Paul says, you are in Christ.

You are no longer in Adam, but you are in Christ. We are no longer natural men, we are spiritual. We are no longer in flesh, located in the realm and the sphere of flesh.

You have been moved out of that. You and I are now in Spirit, inasmuch as the Spirit of God dwells within us. And because he dwells within us, there is the potential to yield to his impulses, and he can create a Christ-likeness in us.

Firstly, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. That, you think, well that's supremely. Oh no, it goes further than that.

There's another objective now for which he is praying. Notice in verse 17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all things what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. That's impossible.

That's four dimensions. So we can see we're not talking about physical, temporal, external things. But once Christ-like character is being created within us, there is made available for us who are simply believers, people who hear and accept the truth of Scripture.

And there's potential for us, for the Spirit to be freed. And when he is freed, to begin to create a Christ-likeness within us, then the next step becomes a potential possibility, being rooted and grounded in love. And the metaphor here is a tree in a building, something that has life and something that's been

constructed.

And we have this blending of sorts. We have been rooted and grounded in love. We will be able to comprehend.

Cata lumbanio, to lay hold, to seize upon, to take possession of. At Christmas time, the little children run down and they see that which has their name on it, and what do they do? That's right, they lay hold of it, seize upon it. That's the word.

That we may be able to comprehend with our intelligent person. Remarkable statement here, with all saints. That doesn't exclude any one of us, because it's still the operation of faith.

And I may be able to say, well, I've never had an education, and I'm not a very good student, and I'm not an omniscient, and that's just playing. And that's pretending. Because every one of us are believers, and the power of God is operative for the believing ones.

And by faith, spiritual things are made real and relevant to my life. And I am given the capacity to lay hold of and seize for myself height, depth, length, breadth, the fourth dimension, infinity, understanding the infinite and the immeasurable, the plans and the purposes of a holy, eternal God. And they become mine.

Not in my intellect only, but for me as a person. I embrace these things. And you know to some degree that's been yours.

You believe in the coming of the Lord. You believe that he's going to raise you up from among the dead. You know you're going to see your loved ones.

You have a clear conscience before God because your sin has been dealt with. Some people in this room cannot say that, but those of you who are believers know it to be true. You've embraced it, and you've made the invisible, the infinite, the eternal your very own.

And you're living in the light of it. Now he says, go further and allow Christ to be created in your heart, and these things will become yours that we will be able to know, gnosis, acquired, learned, understanding. We will be able to know the love of Christ which passes comprehension.

He seems to contradict himself, but there's something deep in the heart of the child of God who understands because of his great, eternal, deity character, he loves us. We are his, and we love because he first loved us. And we bask in the sunlight of that love, and it's such a deep assurance that even through the father-disciplined, child-training experiences, where there's weakness of body and financial pressures, we look beyond it and we believe that it's still just child training that hasn't affected our relationship with him.

We know that eternal things are real. We've made them. We have laid hold of the knowledge of the love of Christ.

And we begin to bear those peaceable fruits of righteousness, the details of which are in Hebrews 12, 5-18. Why isn't it a delightful thing to be a child of God? To have these exercises, to step out and be in contact with the infinite, the immeasurable. You can remember Mr. Gibbs telling me one time, taking a walk with him, and he said, laddie, and he pounded me upon the back.

If you know him, he's a very burly, strong man, or was. And he said, lad, get into the depths and swim. You can't swim in the shallows.

And his thought was, we must abandon ourselves spiritually to the grandest concepts we could possibly imagine of God, and enjoy them, and appropriate them, and give elasticity to our spirit and soul, to make things that are eternal real in our lives. And that's exactly what Paul is praying for. Enrichment, spiritually.

Enjoy eternal spiritual things. First, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, and, being rooted and grounded in love, be able to lay hold of and make yourself your own, length, breadth, depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that, you mean there's more? Yes, indeed. That you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

We must never think of filling and fullness in the term of a vessel, a glass with water. That sometimes is given to us, but that's not the concept of the word. It's not a commodity that brings us to maximum.

But it's rather what the Lord said in John chapter 16. He said, because I have told you I am going to way, your hearts are filled with sorrow. What did he mean? Overtaken.

Mastered. Completely overwhelmed with the thought that he was going to leave. There wasn't any degree of filling, but it was just that the thought just, they were filled with sorrow that he was going to leave.

Now, he says, in the same way, the thoughts of God can fill. The comprehension of God by the Spirit of God can fill us with all the fullness of God, the pleroma, the supreme adequacy, all sufficiency, and that can become very part and parcel of our persons. And if you're anything like myself, I sit and think, well those are words, but is it possible? And the apostle knows that that's how we're going to respond.

And he says, now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. That power is the indwelling Spirit. That power is our faith, giving way to his instruction, his impulses, his joys, his feelings, and there is little or nothing for us, in a certain sense.

There's nothing for us to do and there's no way for me to back away and say I'm unable. So, the thought is, if I can believe the truth, there is an opening for the Spirit of God to come in and to enlarge my soul. Now remember, this is a prayer.

This is a prayer for spiritual children. How do we pray? During the week we've been thinking about the beautiful opportunities to intercede for others, and how very Christ-like it is to address our Father on the behalf of others. How do we pray? Here is a valuable little lesson, that Christ might be in the hearts of the believers, that they might comprehend eternal things, that spiritual things would be so real and vital that we would be filled up, proportionate to the degree to which we are able to allow him to work in us.

My, it's a wonderful thing to be in the body of Christ. And as a result, Paul says back there in verse 10, that the whole purpose of this truth, this concept of the mystery, was that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. And so in verse 21, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout ages, world without end, or unto the generations of the ages of ages.

Great praise will come to God, and the wisdom of God, if I will but yield to spiritual things, making them free and real and genuine in my heart. How is that going to be when you start praying for me, and when I

start praying for you, and when we together begin to intercede in such a manner that these are the kind of things that will be wrought in our lives. God will get the glory, we shall be enriched, and there will be some kind of reward for those of us who have learned to pray.

Our gracious God and Father, we are truly very thankful for thy word. And there are portions of truth that just stagger our comprehension, and yet we realize a portion like this has been carefully preserved and accurately and detailedly brought over into our language that we might be able to read and believe.

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