

- Good morning men
- Was it hard for anyone else to make it up here this year
- This last week was so crazy for me:
 - I had problems on job sites
 - Looked at the biggest paint job of my life
 - Had one of my employee's dad go into the hospital
 - So we were short-handed this week
 - And on top of all that I had to prepare a message
- But it's all for the glory of God
- Well I really hope all of you have taken advantage of this weekend
- And strengthened your inner man
- Because we don't have a lot of opportunities to really get away and dedicate a few days to the Lord
- Let's get right into it
- Up until this point we have talked about:
 - 1. How our inner man is strengthened with God's might**
 - 2. That Christ dwells in our inner man through faith**
 - 3. Our inner man is rooted and grounded in love**
 - 4. And to our 4th and final point, that our inner man is filled with all the fullness of God!**

- Let's read the verses again to make sure we stay on point

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- I am just going to touch on all these verses very lightly and review somethings that have been said from each session
- In the first session Pastor Rick asked us a question “what really matters?”
- Are we more focused on the outer man who is perishing or the inner man who is being renewed day by day
- Also, I love how Paul is on his knees praying
- At some point we have all asked for prayer for something
- And I'm sure when people have prayed for us

- It has been while they were driving, cooking, cleaning, working or whatever else you can think of
- But what if you found out that every-time they prayed for you they were on their knees
- Wouldn't you think a little differently about their prayer for you....Just a thought...
- I am not saying we should all be praying on our knees every-day but we should all have that posture with our heart
- A humble submissiveness to the Lord
- Cause let's be honest when you see a Christian man on his knees praying you know he means business
- Then it goes on to say in verse 16 **“That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory”**
- Let's pick on bill gates for a moment
- Bill gates net worth is 100.8 billion with a B dollar's
- If bill gates gave you 1 million dollar's he would be giving out of his riches
- But if he gave you one billion dollar's he would be giving you according to his riches
- God lacks nothing, he is spiritually wealthy
- And his riches and glory are without measure

- Then it say's **“to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man”**
- When you read this verse it's easy to think, of course I want to be strengthened with might through his spirit
- But think about that for a moment...
- Do you really want that?
- Cause to pray that is really to say no to every:
 - Evil
 - Wicked
 - Carnal
 - tempting
 - Lustful thing in this world
- Remember we are praying for the inner man to be strengthened through his might, not our own
- And to be strengthened is to resist not only your flesh but this world
- Moving on, verse 17 **“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”**
- In session 2 Pastor Randy gave us 2 Essentials
 - 1. “Recognize that “Christ dwells in your heart”**

And that when Christ dwells or abides in you, you experience the shekinah Glory

2. Recognize that “through faith Christ dwells in our hearts”

- He said “creator God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit want to dwell in you, God wants to commune and dwell through you”
- Back to verse 17
- Another way to describe the word “dwell” is to take up permanent residence
- This does not refer to the beginning of Christ’s dwelling at the moment of salvation
- Instead it denotes that Christ may, literally “be at home in”
- Or at the very center of or deeply rooted in the believer’s life
- We are to let Christ become the dominating factor in our attitudes and conduct
- But in order for those outward things to change
- the inner man must change
- Because the outer man is only an expression of the inner man
- You see, you’re a temple, or better yet you’re a house
- And when you allow God to dwell in you
- He needs to dwell in every part, as in every room of your heart
- Or do you only let him in the living room?
- Can he go upstairs in every room or what about those dark places where things are hidden

- We must remember when it comes to God we all live in glass houses, nothing is hidden from the Lord
- Continuing on, **“Being rooted and grounded in love”**

Psalms 1:3

He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

- A righteous man is like that tree that produces fruit in its season
- And is not easily shaken
- And like that tree, the man that’s rooted in Christ’s love produces bountiful fruit
- The word grounded here is the idea of a “foundation”

Matthew 7:25

And when the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock

- Storms always reveal foundations
- In other words:
“Those whose lives rest upon the unconditional love of God cannot be shaken”
- Verse 18 and 19

“May be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—” “¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- In session 3 Pastor Rick said “God is sovereignly bringing comprehension, but we play a roll in comprehending and that roll is engaging in the community of Christ.”
- You see, Paul is praying that the believers, that includes us would grow deeper in their knowledge of God’s love
- Listen brothers
 1. God’s greatness can never be fully grasped
 2. God’s love can never be fully understood
 3. And God’s glory can never be fully experienced
- But we can experience these things to a degree
- And on top of all these impossibility’s, including: unconditional love and an unknowable knowledge
- We are to be “filled with all the fullness of God!” Amen
- Let me start this morning off with a question
- If you had the choice and you do
- Whether you could have more of God or more from God
- Which would you choose?

Let's pray

- Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was meant to encourage and strengthen them
- And that is my hope for you today brothers
- I love the fact that Paul is not walking us through this ridiculously audacious prayer
- But he is praying us through it
- Obviously what Paul is praying here cannot happen
- We finite beings cannot contain an infinite God

2 chronicles 6:18

“but will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple...

- So why is Paul praying this?
- Well what Paul is really praying for is that
- We would be filled to our fullest extent of our human capacity that we would flow with God's strength, love and knowledge
- We will never be God nor will we be little god's
- Sadly, there are some that believe that
- But what we can be is greater men than we are

- Conforming more and more to the image of Jesus Christ as the spirit floods us with his fullness and we become partakers of the divine nature

- **2 peter 1:4**

“by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...”

- Since our theme is “strength training”
- Id like to give you guys a workout plan that you should do every single day in hopes that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

FIRST WORKOUT (PRAYER)

- When Paul prays in verse 19 for us to know the love of Christ
- He isn't praying for a head knowledge but an experiential knowledge
- He is praying that we would experientially know the love of Christ
- He saying I want you to come to a place in your life where you experience the life changing power of Christ's love
- Listen, you could quote every verse, attend every service and men's bible study
- But if you haven't experienced God's love there will be no significant change in the inner man
- And if anyone has experienced God's love it's Paul

- I tell the youth this often: imagine this,
- Someone has offended you, sinned against you and done every wrong thing to you
- Would you die for them?
- Would you willingly lay your life down for them that they may live a great life
- Cause that's what Christ did for you
- Ephesians tells us we were enemies of God and children of wrath
- So ultimately Jesus died loving his enemies
- But now we are adopted as sons of the living God
- And it's in those moments of prayer and reflection with God that you experience:
His love, his grace, his mercy, his patience and his kindness
- And it's when you experience God in those moments change is undeniable
- You see to pray to God is to say:
I trust you God,
I lean on you God,
I submit to you God
- I don't know about you guys but I want to experience more of God's love everyday

- On weds night I was sitting in our life group
- And I saw my phone vibrate and light up
- And like a millennial I looked at my phone
- I had received a message on face-book that said:

Monte this is Jeramie, James masons brother from high school (keep in mind I haven't talked to or seen this guy in 13 years) I need some direction. How'd you go through what you went through and still come out on top? This will be my second treatment center, and I've lost a lot. What do you do? How do you pray? Is there someonelisting? I don't know where to start.

- My point in sharing this is when you experience the love of God
- Even those around you can see Christ in you
- When we die, I'm sure at our funerals people will say a lot of good things about us
 - He was a hard worker
 - He was a good dad
 - He was a good husband
 - He was a good man
- But all we should care about is if they saw Christ in us
- Maybe some of you are thinking I have never experienced God's love

- “I’ve heard a lot about it and read a lot about it but never experienced it”
- Let me tell you something...
- Because the devil love to sneak in and say
- It’s because God doesn’t love you, that’s a lie from the devil
- And if your troubled about this can I encourage you to pray something very simple every day
- Say “lord help me to experience your love” that simple
- “I want to experience what it is to be loved by you God” and I promise if you pray that fervent prayer you will be changed
- And this brings us to our

SECOND WORKOUT (WEAKNESS)

- As men we want to not only be strong but look strong
- Remember session 1 “we are doers” and it’s in our nature to want to carry the full load of all our problems
- But we must confess we are weak

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- I love that is say’s “rest upon me”

- We just need to rest in God's strength
- You know why it's made perfect in weakness?
- Because then only God gets the glory and can be praised
- When we confess to God not just the fact that we are weak but inadequate
- Then we are agreeing with him
- And we make room for him and create a welcoming environment to receive the fullness of God
- It's so funny how we have such a hard time showing weakness, even to the God who knows every part of us

Psalms 51:17

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and contrite heart- These oh God, you will not despise”

- I would think God wanted a strong heart
- And a strong spirit but no he just wants us to receive him
- But we cannot receive the fullness of God when we are filled with:
- Our own strength, power, pride, fear, worry, and stress
- **Even David told God in the 139th psalm**

“Search me, oh God and know my heart, test me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”

- I am not sure how much more-weak you can be with God
- When you say search me/test me
- Cause you know he is going to find something
- And when he finds it and we agree with it
- Then we can be “strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man”
- You see, when we pray, and we confess we are weak
- We welcome God’s presence
- And we allow the fullness of God to invade our inner man
- And we are consumed by his love, grace and mercy
- As men we need to start letting God be God
- And allow him to do what only he can do
- And that is change the inner man
- But there can be many problems, let me give you 2:

1. God can’t fill you if your already full

- We have to remember in order to be filled we must first be emptied
- Emptied of what? Ourselves and this world

2. God can’t fill what he doesn’t have

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

- Remember our body is a temple
- And we need to offer, present and yield it to God
- We are to give the totality of our life to Christ
- Because our body should be the vehicle of the expression of God
- God can't change a heart if he only has half of it
- So let's be men that find God's strength in our weakness
- and open our-selves up to God
- And say:
I need you God
I can't do this on my own
I'm too weak
I need you to guide me
- Just like a muscle has to be broken down to be bigger and stronger
- As Christian men God allows us to endure certain things in hopes that we might grow closer to him
- A.W. Tozer said "It is doubtful whether God bless a man greatly until he has hurt him deeply"

- And it's in those moments of weakness and brokenness we receive the fullness of God...
- So far we have worked out **“prayer”** and **“weakness”** and this brings us to our
- **THIRD WORKOUT (FAITH)**
- I love what Pastor Randy said “Faith is complete trust in creator God and then placing ourselves in His hands”
- Can we be brutally honest right now?
- We all have faith borders
- We all have a limit to believing what God can and cannot do
- And those borders can come from our:
 - Knowledge of God
 - Experience with God and faith in God
- Over the last year or so I have study and read more books than I ever have in my entire life
- And I realized something
- That I was putting God in a box
- I somehow thought that because I was reading and studying and seeking him with all my heart
- That I was somehow containing him
- But let me tell you something brothers

- God cannot be contained for he is the one who contains
- And as you grow in:
- His word
- His love
- And the body of Christ
- Then our faith begins to grow
- You see, God can only fill us to those borders
- And when we reach those borders that's when faith comes in
- That's when God requires us too:

Pray

Confess our weakness

And to be strengthened with might through his spirit

- And so often we have this microwaved faith
- That wants everything now, change me right this second God
- And that faith is unwilling to get on its knees
- Unwilling to say its weak
- And unwilling to fully trust God
- Brothers, our faith cannot grow if it is not challenged
- It's like Pastor Randy said

“our faith is non-negotiable in our relationship with our Lord and without faith you are ultimately separated from God and his son”

- If we don't have faith then we don't have God dwelling in us
- The bible tells us it's impossible to please God without faith
- But be encouraged
- Because when our faith grows
- Our capacity to hold more of the fullness of God grows
- And as it grows you start coming to those borders saying:
He is strong in my weakness
His grace is sufficient
And his mercies are new everyday
Nothing is too hard for my God
- It's time we stop fighting our battles on our feet and start fighting them on our knees
- You guys people are dying every single day, people are struggling with addictions, people are lost and broken and we need to live a faith that is real, that people can see
- And the only way to do that is to be filled with the fullness of God
- **Ephesians 3:20**
Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- Let me close with this
- In the beginning I asked you a question

- If you had the choice and you do
- Whether you could have more of God or more from God
- Which would you choose?
- I know you guys have had a lot of teaching thrown at you this weekend and might feel overwhelmed at this point
- But please listen...
- It all comes down to this...
- A relationship with Christ
- Apart from Christ we have nothing but in him we have everything
- My brother Andy is going to come up here in a minute and lead us in communion
- Communion is such a special time as we reflect on what Christ has done for us
- Let's take this opportunity and ask God to empty us of ourselves that we might be:
Strengthened in our inner man with his might
That he would dwell in our hearts through faith
That we may be rooted and grounded in love
In hopes that he would fill us with the fullness of God
- Let's stop asking more from God
- And start asking for more of God

- Let's pray