

## **"I Bow My Knees ..." #2**

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:14-19).

In our last article it was shown that when Paul wrote "I bow my knees," essentially he was saying, "I pray." It was pointed out that Paul's prayer for these Ephesians was composed of five requests, that: 1) they might be strengthened with power through the Spirit; 2) Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; 3) they might be able to apprehend with all the saints; 4) they might know the love of Christ; and 5) they might be filled unto all the fullness of God. The first of these requests was examined in that article, to which we refer. He prayed for them:

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The heart is the essence, the center of man. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pro. 23:7). The great commandment is that one love the Lord with all his heart (Mt. 22:36f). We are to sanctify Christ as Lord in our heart (1 Pet. 3:15). Given the necessity of all these things, Christ must dwell in our hearts -- He must live, abide, rule, control our hearts. When He controls our hearts, He will control our bodies.

The writer is clear how this is to be done: Christ dwells in our hearts by faith -- not a literal dwelling but a real dwelling nonetheless, because He has control of the person in whom He dwells. Paul wrote elsewhere, "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer that live but Christ that liveth in me. And that life I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). The passage just cited is the best commentary one could make on Paul's statement "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Please notice that not only does Christ dwell in the Christian, the Father does as well, as also does the Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 1 Cor. 6:19f). Those who insist on a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in man must come to grips with the fact that the same Word which says the Spirit dwells in man, says that the Father and Son dwell in man as well. If the Spirit's dwelling is literal, the dwelling of the Father and Son also are literal. On the other hand, if Christ dwells in man by faith (and He does), then that is the way which the Father and Spirit dwells in man.

"That ye ... may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth." This is an elliptical statement, meaning that it lacks a word or words, but the sense can be understood from the context. Paul prayed that these brethren might be strong to apprehend (know, perceive, understand) but he does not expressly state what he wished for them.

Some understand that Paul prayed the Ephesians would apprehend the breadth, etc. of the "love of Christ." Yes, but, inasmuch as this is stated in terms which imply that in addition to apprehending the "breadth, length, height and depth" they were to know the love of God. This indicates that the things which Paul wished Ephesians to apprehend was something in addition to understanding Christ's love. That "something additional" will be the subject of the next article.

Jim McDonald