



NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH GOLD COAST, QUEENSLAND

QUALIFIED FOR EVERY BLESSING BECAUSE
OF THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

BUILDING YOUR SPIRITUAL IMMUNITY

In Paul's amazing prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 he prays that we would '*be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man*' (Eph.3:16). We have an inner man as well as an outer man. The inner man is the spiritual part of us and the outer man the material part. The world concentrates on building up the outer man through such things as diet and exercise. The healthier we are the more likely our immune system will be to resist viruses and diseases. So it is with our inner man. The stronger it is the more we can withstand spiritual sicknesses.

Paul was in prison when he wrote this epistle. His outer man was breaking down. But he wasn't breaking down. He wrote to the Corinthians, '*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day*' (2 Cor.4:16).

Because his spiritual immune system was strong he was neither depressed nor discouraged, even though he was in prison. Likewise, he doesn't pray that the Ephesians might be delivered from their adverse circumstances but rather that they would be strengthened in their inner man so that they would be able to withstand the trials which come their way.

How do we build our spiritual immunity?

When we think about strengthening our inner man, our thoughts naturally turn to performing spiritual exercises like fasting, going on a prayer retreat, undertaking a Bible study course, etc. That's because we are basically works oriented. But this is not what Paul prescribes. He says we will be strengthened with might in our inner man as Christ dwells there by faith.

Faith has a specific object, and we see that it is the love of God that Paul prays we will come to know in greater measure, and to rest in. In fact he says we will never know everything that God wants us to know about His love in isolation. We will only '*...comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height (of) the love of Christ which passes knowledge...*' (Eph.3:18-19).

Love demonstrated

Also, we will never know the love of God if we do not understand the cross. John says '*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*' (1 John 4:9-10).

The word 'propitiation' refers to the appeasement of God's wrath concerning sin. The judgment that was due to us fell upon God's dear Son. In this is love! In John 13:1 we read that Jesus '*...showed them (i.e. the disciples) the full extent of His love*' (NIV). What is the full extent of His love? Jesus went on to explain: '*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends*' (Jn.15:13).

It was at the cross that God demonstrated His love to us in giving His Son to die in our place so that we might be redeemed and reconciled to Him forever. '*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*' (Rom.5:8).

The love of God is our default setting. It is our resting place. God causes us to rest here. No wonder the enemy will do all in his power to get us to doubt God's love. But the more we meditate upon and believe in God's love to us, so wonderfully demonstrated at the cross, the more we will experience Christ dwelling in our hearts. The result is that we will '*be filled with all the fullness of God*' (Eph.3:19). Does that seem impossible? Maybe that's why Paul concludes his prayer with these words, '*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*' (Eph.3:20!

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