

Ephesians (Quality: Good)

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Date: 17 September 1961

Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 0 0] Let the Lord be pleased to help me. I should call your attention to a subject you will find in the epistles of the Ephesians chapter 3 and verses 20 and 21.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even 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.

Chapter 3 the epistle to the Ephesians and verses 20 and 21. This is one of the most wonderful words in the wonderful word of God.

And I do hope grace will be given to us, preacher and people alike, to contemplate it.

In this word there is to be found ocean depths. And in a sermon if one is helped to preach what might be called a sermon we could do no more than take out a bucket pool from those ocean depths.

[1 : 5 2] Angelic minds cannot explore the vast and fathom sea, the void of bottom, brim or shore, and lost in deity.

And I would as the Lord to help me look at this subject from three or four viewpoints. And this wonderful word is a climax to what the Apostle Paul was inspired by the Spirit of God to pen to these godly Ephesians.

I have often thought about the Apostle Paul and as he penned this epistle to the Ephesians how his mind must have gone back to when God first of all directed him to go to Ephesus and when he arrived there he found the nucleus of a church.

There were some godly Ephesians in a church state and the membership in number was twelve. And the Apostle Paul sought to help them and lead them into the things of God more deeply.

And he said, you will remember it, have you received the Holy Ghost since you believe? And the answer is surprising.

[3 : 4 0] We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. You and I nowadays would look askance at people with names on church rolls if they said something like that.

We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. But these members in this wee church at Ephesus were wrought upon by the power of the Holy Ghost although they could not put into words much about it as to the doctrine of which they were the subject by a gracious experience.

And then the Apostle Paul was helped of God to work a while at Ephesus and that little church was increased and established in the things of God.

And later on the Apostle Paul was found in Ephesus again and you can read in the Acts of the Apostles what happened and it says And many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found that fifty thousand pieces of silver so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

And now this was bringing about a beautiful picture of the church at Ephesus but Satan considered it and set to work if to be he could mar that work undermine the influence of it and not to take up the time and going into the details which you are all familiar with I should hope you remember that in the Ephesus marketplace they gathered together a great mob and there was a riot and they cried out for the space of two hours Great is Diana of the Ephesians and then God appeared on behalf of the Apostle Paul and he went on his way and departed to go into Macedonia and now you find quite a while afterwards the Apostle is inspired of God to pen this epistle to the Ephesians and I like to think when he penned this opening word and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins he must have paused as it were and he went back in his mind to the

[6 : 57] Ephesus marketplace he saw again the howling mob heard again their cry Great is Diana of the Ephesians and yet God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think and some of those rioting idolaters in the Ephesus marketplace were wrought upon by the grace of God and were numbered with the church at Ephesus and says Paul and you and you have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins you will see how the Apostle Paul could have preached to us on this word I have read from which I go I hope God will enable me to preach to you 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 and in opening up the subject

I would look at it like this think of the Apostle Paul in illustrating this truth the subject is so great I hardly know from which viewpoint to approach it but I will look at it from this viewpoint for a while think of the Apostle Paul from this viewpoint and that is how God is indeed able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think the Apostle Paul went about on his journey preaching the gospel and God used him mightily and gave great success to his ministry but Satan considered it and the Apostle Paul eventually was taken a prisoner and as you all remember when he was brought to trial being a Roman by birth he appealed unto

Caesar that he should have his trial in Rome which he had the privilege to do and then the devil must have thought when this had been brought about that the Apostle Paul was silent as regards his ministry and he would preach the gospel no more and the devil must have thought he had gained some specific advantage and even when the Apostle Paul was journeying to Rome you remember how he was shipwrecked and what happened and how God used him even then so that all on board that ship were saved and they all escaped safe to land although the ship was lost and eventually the Apostle

Paul arrived in Rome and you would have thought immediately the Apostle arrived there that matters would proceed and his trial would be advanced and that would be the end of the Apostle Paul but what do you read when he arrived in Rome and Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and received all that came in unto him preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence no man forbid in him all the while he was chained to a Roman soldier and I sometimes wondered if some of those Roman soldiers were wrought upon by the grace of God as they had to listen to the

Apostle Paul teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ and there is no doubt whatever that God over ruled it and much good was done and the Church of Christ was built up with a great increase but think of this not only did the Apostle Paul in that hired house of his preach the gospel but he did something of much greater importance according to the eternal purposes of God he was wrought upon while he was there inspired by the spirit of God and he penned epistles to the churches which are in the Holy Bible book divine during that two years when he was in his own hired house he penned the epistle to the

[12 : 36] Galatians and to the Ephesians and to the Philippians and also the second epistle to Timothy and the little epistle to Philemon and also to the Hebrews he penned an epistle so that instead of going around on his missionary journey God causing him to be the prisoner not of Nero I call the prisoner of the Lord deeper down than being the prisoner of Nero I call the prisoner of the Lord and he says again the prisoner of Jesus Christ but God God overruled God overruled all that Satan had attempted to do and out of the eater came forth meat out of the strong came forth sweetness so the apostle Paul could have made it very plain to us unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think maybe the apostle Paul when he was

Satan prisoner and he did appeal to Caesar was very cast down as he thought he was coming to the end of his labours on Zion's walls but God had got other purposes yet to fulfill through the apostle Paul and these things were overruled God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think not only so I think of another illustration of this truth and that is when the apostle Paul and Barnabas godly men as they were had a clashing in their judgment and you remember that Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them when they went on another missionary journey that the apostle Paul was not so well disposed to John

Mark at that time as he was afterwards and so it says the contention was sharp between them and Satan thought he had gained another advantage but the upshot of it was that Barnabas took John Mark and went one way preaching the gospel Saul took with him Silas and went another way preaching the gospel so that they did double the work that they would have done had they gone together as was first purpose and there again Satan's mischief was overruled for the good of the church of Christ and it will ever be like that in this was the son of God made manifest that he might destroy the works of the devil remember that and remember too God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think and now leaving that viewpoint of the subject

I want to come to things a little closer to you and me as regards the dealings of God with our souls and when you look at the chapter where the text is found as the conclusion of it there are some outstanding things referred to by the Apostle Paul and I go back a moment to make this comment when you think of what that church at Ephesus was at the first and how it grew afterwards think how evident it is God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think for in this epistle to the Ephesians you get the deep things of God outlined especially in chapter one and it was evident that these godly

Ephesians could enter into these things because they had so grown in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ God but think think of what the apostle Paul says here I wonder if any of you thought in your heart as I read it to you oh if God in his great mercy would only condescend to bless me according to this blessing set forth in the context here 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 surely that is what some of you would be oh so glad if God would be pleased to do it for you enter my heart redeemer blessed enter oh ever honored guest not for a transient hour alone oh come and fix thy lasting throne that

[18 : 30] Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith you may say oh it seems too much to hope for such a sinner as I am him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ask for it and keep asking Jesus will not your cry forget you shall obtain the blessing yet remember that and it says here that ye being rooted and grounded in love what a word in that is rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all signs what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of

Christ which passeth knowledge you look at it you think on it you may ponder it in your heart and you say it is so high I cannot attain to it aye I am here on God's behalf to tell you it is attainable him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think who can tell but what God will be gracious unto you and look at this beautiful definition of love what is the breadth and length and depth and height and now that means breadth without any boundary and it means length without any ending to it everlasting in its nature depth and that means outing who remembered us in our lowest state for his mercy endured forever deeper down than the

Adam fall itself depth depth of love but it is depth without a bottom remember that what do you sing if you ever do sing it oh love thou bottomless abyss my sins are swallowed up indeed covered is my unrighteousness hey from condemnation I am free in Jesus blood through earth and skies mercy eternal mercy Christ yes death without any bottom to it the love of God God is love and then it says height and that is height without any top to it when you have reached the greatest height in your soul's experience in knowing the love of God shed abroad therein you can still go to heights illimitable heights without any top it is a heavenly place in Christ

Jesus yes how good it would be nowadays if more of this love could be known and felt in the church of Christ surely it is almost our greatest lack need that ye being rooted and grounded in love ask God to do it for you God only knows the love of God oh that it now was shed abroad in my poor stony heart you notice I said that to realize this love is almost our greatest need there is one need just a little greater and that is a gracious conviction of sin to bring home to us our great need of it convince us of our sin then lead to Jesus blood and to our wondering beauty the secret love of

God and that is what I mean you say I wish I knew more about it do you the Lord bless you then and remember him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or see and now let us look at this subject from another viewpoint him that is able to do what ability is this you must understand this is a particular ability that is referred to in this great word before us it is not the ability that God exercised when in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth what might be termed speaking with great reverence naked ability nor is it the ability that God exercises every day worldwide whereby the Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works no what ability is it it is the ability that Jesus

[24 : 44] Christ acquired when he came down into this world verily God and took into union with his divine nature the human nature when he was made of a woman made under the law and as verily man kept the law in every jot and tittle of its holy demands in him the father never saw the least transgression of his law in him we then perfection do and the saints in him a perfect tool it is the mediatorial ability that Jesus Christ possesses as the mediator between God and man remember that you read a word in the Hebrews epistle which will help you to understand a little of what this wonderful ability is and it says that

Jesus Christ was enabled to learn by the things which he suffered as verily man and thereby he gained a wonderful experience in all our afflictions he was afflicted and he has a perfect understanding of whatever the need of any poor sinner born again may be and he can deal with it my God shall supply all your need out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask all things and so you must understand that this ability is that ability which he possesses through the life he lived as verily man verily God when he dwelt on the earth as Emmanuel

God with us and now being that mediator ordained of God there is one God one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus Jesus on the eternal throne for mourners intercedes and he is able to say he is able to deliver he is able to make all grace abound toward us in our felt need of it in the asking for it remember that what is needed is this Lord increase our faith when prayer is a burden and fast no wonder I little receive oh Lord make me willing to ask since thou art so ready to give and I love to think of those words of Jesus Christ when he preached his own gospel as he alone could preach it what did he say do believe it ask and ye shall receive seek and ye shall find knock and it shall be opened unto you for every one that asketh receiveth and he that seeketh findeth and to him that knocketh it shall be opened such is the gospel of the grace of God him that cometh unto me

I will never no never no never cast out him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us and that power is faith all things are possible to him that believe us a very great scripture and very little understood especially in our own denominational life the saviour said to his disciples be not afraid only believe and without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him Lord increase our faith according to the power that worketh in us and how it might be

I hope it is some of you before God at this time sinners born again you are here with a case and you desire to get some help by the way some light on the dealings of God with you it may be you are in such a plight in your soul's experience you hardly know what you are and where you are in things divine you are not sure it may be even that you are born again and you would be oh so glad if God would only make it plain that you are and now this is a word to help you if ye being evil know how to give good things unto your children how much more shall your father in heaven give the holy spirit to them that ask him all to be out to plead this great word him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask of things assure my conscience of her part in the redeemer's blood and bear the witness with my heart that I am born of God the spirit of God can make it plain to you he delights to do it but the word of the

[31 : 17] Lord is I will be inquired of by you all house of Israel to do these things him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think in confirming our souls making it plain to our souls peace and profit we are indeed pilgrims to can unbound and then there is another thought here him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think in convincing poor sinners of sin and bringing them down at Jesus feet guilty needy suppliants for mercy it might be I'm only drawing a bow at a venture some of you have got those in your family circle and you have waited long on God if so be he would make them manifest as being his children as well as they are your children and you have said let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children but it may be you are growing old going on into life evening time and you watch the children looking for some evidence that your prayers are being answered and as yet you do not see that which would delight your soul to observe the evidence that they are asking the white of

Zion with their faces with the word what are you to do are you to conclude and give place to the devil in doing it there is no help in God no hope as regards their soul's eternal welfare no no you are to remember him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even think and wait on him still and it may be your prayers will be answered when you are gone the way of all the earth and that has happened hundreds of times with people taught of God that when those who offered up the prayer have done with all things beneath the sun and have entered into the rest that remaineth with the people of God then those prayers have been answered and the children have been brought upon in their terms yes much might be said along that line of thought and there is a word to help you they that sow in tears shall reap in joy he that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed should doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaths with him him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think and now think how God is able to do this altogether beyond what you may think he is able to do in supporting you as you journey on through life granting you grace to help in time of need sometimes you only journey on think yet pursuing and you have many anxious thoughts it may be about tomorrow and how things will be then when tomorrow dawn but this is the way walk ye in it him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think who hath delivered who doth deliver and we trust he will yet deliver us remember that he who has helped you with a too he will not leave you in trouble to see when tomorrow dawns no he which hath begun the good work in you has guaranteed to finish it whatever there may be in between the beginning and the finish of it he will perform it yes remember that ever on thy captain calling make thy worst condition known he shall hold thee up when falling or shall lift thee up when down and then there is another thought about this line of things him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think in the forgiveness of sins and now some of you as yet may not know what that inestimable mercy is through this man there is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins

God has given you hope good hope through grace but not yet have you been able to see Jesus as he died on Calvary cross in the stead of poor sinners like you and feel as you want to feel for me oh miracle of grace for me the saviour blessed and this great mercy forgiveness of sins oh it looms in your soul's esteem as the outstanding mercy of all mercies and you wonder shall I ever know it and rejoice therein this is the way walk ye in it if your heart to do it your soul's desire will be fulfilled him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think and remember you're not to think your own thoughts about it you're not allowed to do that you're only allowed to think what the word of

God declares you are not to think how can it be that God although he is the sinner's friend will ever be friends such a sinner as I know that I am can it be possible God will have anything whatever to do with such a sinner as I feel to be eh but you're not allowed to think like that you're only allowed to keep within the covers of the word of God and think of him who is the sinner's friend able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think you say oh I wish I could be sure Jesus Christ died for me then I should know what real happiness is if I could only be sure about it but it seems too much to hope for that he did die for such a sinner as I feel to be

I told you you're not allowed to argue like that think such thoughts I will tell you what you can think did Jesus die and not for me am I forbade to seek my God is there not pardon full and free proclaimed through Jesus precious blood is he not him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think yes he is what then all for the gracious king approach who set to pardon gives perhaps he will command my touch and then the suppliant lives he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think in the forgiveness of sins and now when you look into the word of God do think of some who did find mercy who seem the most unlikely to do so if you may word it like that

[40 : 03] I have in my mind Manasseh who made Jerusalem streets run rivers of blood and if you had lived then and seen that being done you would have thought as I have thought sometimes in pondering it that Manasseh was just fit fuel for hell fire and it looked like it no no him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask to think dealt with Manasseh and and in his affliction he called on the Lord his God and he obtained mercy yes and he was saved by grace and that mercy is still to be known and that grace still avails and who can tell but what God will be gracious unto you and there is another thought here some of you have been born again a long while and some of you have known the wonderful mercy of forgiveness of sins but it was a long while ago it may be and now in your latter days you are moving along in life's way oft times in much obscurity and you would hardly like to tell the truth as to how it really is with your soul's experience nowadays if you said something in scripture language you would say my leanness my leanness and it might be you were wishing

I hope it is so you were wishing hoping longing that you might have the joy restored that you have tasted handled and felt in the former days in the dealings of God with you and remember there is a word here him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or see and there is a word especially to help you recorded in the Old Testament and it says here and I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten the canker worm and the caterpillar and the palmer worm my great army which I sent among you him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to see in reviving his good work in our soul's experience much needed with many of us revive thy work oh

Lord in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known in wrath remember mercy what do you see all thy waste I will repair thou shall be rebuilt anew and in thee it shall appear what a God of love can do able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think and remember God as the God of all grace is able to do all this in providing for you whatever your need may be he can make crooked things straight rough places plain he can level down mountains and if you should be like that woman it's a reaper who looked in the barrel and found only a handful of meals looked in the cruise saw only a drop of oil remember the

God of Elijah still lives and he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think and make his goodness pass before us in the way and he can guarantee and he does that you shall go to that barrel every day and always find a handful there look in that cruise every day and always see a drop of oil to help you on lachee anything by the way and they answered nothing did ever trouble yet before and God refused to hear thy call much might be said under that heading but I must come to the amen him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think and remember not only in providing but he can do this in protecting you whatever your danger might be God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble and then there is this beautiful summing up now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think according to the power that work is in us and now you must find in your heart as a sinner born again an amen to this ascription unto him be glory in the church unto him be glory you have to come to that in the dealings of

God with you as you read elsewhere unto him be dominion what I mean is this it is the Lord inflown in life whose claims are all divine who has an undisputed right to govern me and mine and when he is pleased to do for you above all that we ask or think it will be in such a way that you will say as he does it or when he has done it not unto us O Lord not unto us but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy crusade this is heaven's own doxology unto him be glory in the church it will not be outside no unto him be glory in the church sinners born again a number which no man can number making up the church throughout all ages the church of

[46 : 47] Christ each one every one agrees all the glory all the glory all the glory Lord is thine unto him be glory in the church the man in the street the world land will continue to live on as he was born without any concern to give glory to God in what he does where he goes and what he has to save but all who make up this church the church of Christ militant are made to echo this beautiful description unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end and it means this and you think on it when you get home pray over it let but my fainting heart be blessed with thy sweet spirit for its guest oh God to thee I leave the rest thy will be done unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages and if God helps you to give him a little of it as you journey through life you will know in the ultimate issue it will be throughout all ages world without end Amen Amen