

# Ephesians

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[ 0 : 00 ] May the Lord be pleased to help me. I shall call your attention to the subject you will find in the epistle to 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 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.

The epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 3, and verses 20 and 21.

This is a great word for sinners born again to contemplate, and I do hope grace will be given to us to do so.

There is in it, if one is helped to contemplate it aright, ocean depths, and all we should do, as grace is given to do that, will be to draw a bucketful out of those depths which are indeed unfathomable.

[ 1 : 41 ] I would, first of all, look at the setting of this subject. I have many times admired how the Spirit of God inspired the Apostle Paul in penning the epistle to the Ephesians, and in the epistle itself, there is abundant evidence that God, with whom you and I have to do, as sinners born again, is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

And remember, it is said, according to the power that worketh in us. Faith in Jesus can repel the darks of sin and death.

Faith gives victory over hell. Who can give us faith? Oh, it must be our concern, Lord.

Increase our faith. I sometimes think of some scriptures, and how little is known nowadays, of what they proclaim.

Jesus said, Be not afraid. Only believe. All things are possible to him that believe it.

[ 3 : 14 ] And now, can you picture in your minds, if I can bring it before you to contemplate, how the Apostle Paul must have felt when he was inspired of God to pen this epistle to the Ephesians.

As he was inspired of God to pen it, he would go back in his mind to when he was first of all at Ephesus.

And in the Acts of the Apostles, you will find that in his missionary journeyings, he came to Ephesus. And he searched around to find out if there were any people taught of God there.

And he found a wee church. The membership of it, twelve. And, I have no doubt, the Apostle Paul was glad to light upon that church.

And as his heart overflowed with concern, ever to do poor sinners good, he inquired of these Ephesian believers, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

[ 4 : 35 ] The answer is surprising. We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And now, there is a lesson there for you and I to heed.

And that is, there may be those who are taught of God, the root of the matter is found within, but as yet, they cannot answer many questions about the foundation truths of our most holy faith.

And now, the Apostle Paul did not condemn those Ephesian believers, nor be critical of their ignorance as to whether there was a Holy Ghost or no.

You might think, I should think, everybody who has a name on a church roll knows that. But, there are those who are designated in the Word of God little ones.

even so, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. And now, the Apostle Paul, he instructed those Ephesian believers, and as they had only been baptized with the baptism of John, which was under repentance, after further instruction, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[ 6 : 11 ]    Ephesus, and the little church at Ephesus, was put upon a right basis. The foundation was strengthened, and the members in the church were instructed, and taught the way of God more perfectly.

And then you find, the Apostle Paul labored on in Ephesus, until at length, his labors had reached to such a pass that there came the riot of which you read in the Acts of the Apostles in the Ephesus marketplace, when for two hours long, the Ephesian idolaters cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

And there was quite an uproar. And then, it was placated by the town clerk at Ephesus, and the Apostle Paul was constrained to go on with his missionary journeyings, but in the Acts of the Apostles, you read what had been the outcome of his labors at Ephesus.

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.

[ 8 : 01 ]    Yes, the Spirit of God did work mightily at Ephesus, and then, some years afterwards, when the Apostle Paul pens the epistle to the Ephesians, what does he say?

And you, hath he quickened, who were dead, in trespasses, and sins. And beyond all question, some of those rioters in the Ephesus marketplace, who had been idolaters, were wrought on by the Spirit of God, and made to be true worshippers, and others of whom the Apostle Paul knew, added to the church there.

think how his heart must have beat a little quicker than usual, as he penned those words, and you, hath he quickened, who were dead, in trespasses, and sins.

Here is an evidence of him that is able to do, exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think. if you had stood on the pavement of the Ephesus marketplace and looked on all the rioting going on, heard them shouting, greatest Diana of the Ephesians, you would never have dreamed that the Spirit of God was going to work there, and some of those shouting idolaters were later on to tell of the grace of God and exhibit in their lips and lights the effect of it.

Dear friends, you must never limit the grace of God. You must never limit what the Holy Spirit may be pleased to do.

[ 10 : 03 ]    I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy. And do remember, God is indeed able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Then there is another opening up of that line of things, when you find our subject where it is in the conclusion of the chapter.

And now in the immediate context, there are the desires that weld up in the apostle Paul's breast, which he expressed concerning the church of Christ to Ephesus.

And I might say in passing that one thing is very noticeable. The church of Christ to Ephesus must have grown in grace to a great degree and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Christ.

Because the epistle to the Ephesians is one of the deepest epistles which the apostle Paul ever penned. There is a wondrous solidity in the truth set forth in the opening chapters chapters, and I have thought of one or two things set forth therein that I do not know any man ordained of God to preach who would like to venture to preach from those scriptures unless he had something extra special from God to attempt it when he would have the grace given to him to do it.

- [ 11 : 49 ] It is not just ordinary doctrine, but it is the deep things of God, and the epistle to the Ephesians would not have been penned with those deep down truths in if the Ephesians were not able to enter in to them.

Remember that. And now, leading up to our subject, let us look at the immediate context, and says the apostle Paul, 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.

Do follow this along, dear friends, for it is instructive that he would grant you, mark the comparison, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man.

It is just what you would like, dear friends, some of you, if not all of you, I hope, how glad you would be to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man.

And then the apostle Paul advances that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. What you read elsewhere, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- [ 13 : 22 ] Oh, how glad you would be to have that religion and that grace bestowed upon you, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And he goes on, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the bread and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, which is to say, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.

Reason will never help you to enter in to the love of Christ as to its length or breadth or depth or height.

The thing is impossible. He who will enable you to do it is he who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.

Sometimes you have said and sung, it may be, feelingly, God only knows the love of God, all that it now was shed abroad in my poor stony heart.

- [ 14 : 41 ] Look at this beautiful reference to the love of Christ. The Apostle Paul speaks about the bread of it.

And remember, it is a bread without any boundary. When you have gone as you feel, to what looks to be the horizon of it, you can go just as far as you have already been, and then go farther still.

It is bread without boundary. Remember that, because it is such a bread that it embraces a number which no man can number.

People of every kindred, tribe, and tongue are embraced in this bread, and yet there is room. There is no limit to it.

remember that, the love of God in its bread. Then, the apostle Paul speaks about its length, and yet it is a length which has got no end to it.

- [ 16 : 03 ] From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. God, who can begin to think about the length of the love of God? Not as the world the Savior loves, he is no fickle friend, who once he loves, he never leaves, but loves them to the end, to the end of their life in time, and then they enter upon it eternally.

Yes, forever and ever is the length of it, God. But then, the apostle Paul speaks about the height, height of the love of God, but then it is height without any talk to it.

If you were favored to ascend into heavenly places with Christ Jesus, you may in your soul's experience go up to a great height, but when you were there, you can still go much higher still, there is no top to it.

It is height without a top. Yes, much might be said along that line of thought, but then he speaks about the depth, and yet it is depth without a bottom.

Do think of it as grace is given, depth without a bottom, and remember what you sing, O love, thou bottomless abyss, my sins are swallowed up in thee, covered is my unrighteousness, from condemnation I am free, and Jesus used blood through earth and skies, mercy, eternal, mercy, Christ.

[ 18 : 03 ] Death, how deep is the Adam fall? no mortal tongue can ever tell you. The word of God puts it like this, who remembered us in our lowest state, for his mercy endureth forever.

But however deep the Adam fall is, the love of God goes deeper still underneath it, because all those whom he has loved with everlasting love were delivered out of it.

And however low you may be in your soul's experience, underneath the everlasting arms, yes, if you would know just a faint outline in your own soul's experience as to the depth of the love of Christ, ask God to help you, you will need him to do it, ask God to help you contemplate the sufferings of Christ.

And remember when he was in that darkness on Calvary's cross as verily man, and the cry burst forth, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

There you get some evidence of the depth of the love of Christ. And now the apostle Paul desired that these godly Ephesians should know the love of Christ from that viewpoint.

[ 19 : 49 ] What is the bread and length and depth and height? heart and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. And then he comes to this, and you in reading it may feel, alas, where am I as regards my religion, my profession, and my little hope in God, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Do think, dear friends, for I wish you, dear friends, well, do think, I say, of the fullness of God.

And the apostle Paul desired for these godly Ephesians that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. You say it is so high, I cannot attain to it.

Don't be surprised at what I'm going to say. And why not? God is able to make all grace abound toward you.

Your God with whom you have to do, is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

[ 21 : 09 ] What do you see? The fullness resides in Jesus our head, and ever abides to answer our need. The Father's good pleasure hath laid up in store a plentiful treasure to give to the poor.

And you remember that godly John in his gospel says, blood now, heaven will heaven's masa so have to xu moving.

All is recorded for the godly Ephesians that he should bring them face to face with him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

According to the power that worketh in us. I say again, Lord increase our faith. Dear friends, this is the truth of the matter.

When prayer is a burden and task, no wonder I little receive. O Lord, make me willing to ask, since thou art so ready to give. And now there is another thought in approaching the subject which I want you to ponder in your heart.

[ 22 : 37 ] It says at the end of the Ephesians epistle, written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus. That is to say, he wrote at the Apostle Paul's dictation.

But the Apostle Paul at this time tells us that he was a prisoner, supposed to be Nero's prisoner.

But in two chapters he says, for this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.

And then he says again, I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

What I want to set before you is this, that when the Apostle Paul was taken a prisoner and being a Roman citizen, he appealed unto Caesar that he might be tried in the court at Rome.

[ 23 : 49 ] And you read in the epistle to the Romans that he had a great desire, by whatever means it might be, that he might go to Rome to preach the gospel there.

And when at length, having endured the shipwreck of which you read in the Acts of the Apostles, when at length the Apostle Paul arrived in Rome, desiring still that he might preach the gospel, what happened?

Instead of the Apostle Paul being lodged in a prison, maybe in solitary confinement, the word of God tells us, 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 forbidding him.

There he was, and his accusers did not arrive. And it seemed as though they had forgotten altogether about the Apostle Paul, and what they wished to lay to his charge.

[ 25 : 06 ] But the Lord was appearing on the Apostle Paul's behalf. But, it may be, Satan, felt he had gained an advantage.

And now the Apostle Paul could no longer go on his missionary journeys, wherein he had done so much good in building up churches, and founding them. The devil may have thought he had triumphed in the cause of Christ, in opposition to it.

No. No. This word says, him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask for things.

And now what happened? Well, the Apostle Paul dwelt in his own hired house for those two years. Apart from preaching the gospel to all who came to him, he was inspired of God to pen the epistle to the Galatians, the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistle to the Colossians, the epistle to the Philippians, the epistle to the Hebrews, the second epistle to Timothy, and the little epistle to Philemon.

And all these epistles are in the New Testament, making up the word of God in its entirety, so that while the Apostle Paul's mouth, apparently as the devil thought, was closed, no longer to go on missionary journeys, yet he was doing work ten thousand times more profitable still, and even more to the glory of God, as down through the ages, the epistles to these churches have been read by the godly, and by grace given, they have sought that their life should be lived according to the pattern set forth therein.

[ 27 : 07 ] Yes, dear friends, God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.

And now to look at the subject from another viewpoint of it. It opens up like this, Now unto him that is able to do.

What does this word able mean? What ability is it? It is not the ability whereby God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth.

Because that was simple, I say that with great reverence, simple for God to do, and God said, and it was so, by the breath of the Lord were the heavens made.

God spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. And that was God at work as the creator, showing his ability as the creator.

[ 28 : 22 ] And this ability is not the ability that God exercises in his everyday providence whereby the Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works.

No, it is ability that was acquired by Jesus Christ when he came down into this world on behalf of all that vast host God had ordained to life eternal.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And to save sinners he had to have a human nature.

And the word of God says, a body hast thou prepared me. And we see at Bethlehem in the manger cradle a little babe. And that little babe is verily God, verily man.

Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Because it was essential that Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God in his divine nature, he could not suffer, bleed, and die.

[ 29 : 44 ] Then, he must have a body like our own yet without sin, in which as verily man he could suffer all that the law demanded that poor sinners like you and me might be saved with an everlasting salvation.

Remember that. And it says in the Hebrews epistle which will give you somewhat of an understanding of what this ability really is, for it became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death that is the devil.

And it says also in another chapter who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from that death and was heard in that he feared.

Here it is though he were a son yet learned the obedience by the things which he suffered. And now Jesus Christ as barely man lived his life under the law kept it in every jot and tittle and at the end of his wondrous life he declared I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

[ 31 : 39 ] And having done that work wrought out a righteousness for poor sinners who have none of their own wherein to appear before God he went up Calvary's hill and he died in their stead because he was made as to his manhood made of a woman made under the law and the law said the soul that sinneth it should die and now Jesus Christ as barely man stood in our stead on Calvary's cross you see a scene of massless grace is Jesus in the sinner's place dying in the stead of poor sinners like you and me and in Isaiah the word of God declares all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned every one to his own way and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all when on the cross he cried it is finished and it is it is finished cried the

Lord in his dying minute holy ghost repeat the word full salvation in it his holy humanity was laid in the grave but not to abide there no he saw no corruption came that Easter morn and the word went forth the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon and now when Jesus Christ rose from the dead the whole church of Christ rose in him at the same time in mystical union with him as the church's living had and that is a guarantee that however low you may seem even in a grave as it were in your soul's experience the power of his resurrection can bring you up out of that grave and enable you to live before God and man and now we come to what this ability is it is the ability which he is able to exercise as the mediator between

God and man there is one God one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus and this ability is the power of his resurrection yes and he can exercise that ability to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think in regard to our own cases our circumstances however hard to be understood they may be it would be good if you and I could more often ponder it in our hearts and better still take a proper advantage of it what do you sing sometimes thou come into a king large petitions with thee bring for his grace and power such none can ever ask too much and now when you get home and you have a little leisure you turn up in the word of

God where the word able comes regarding Jesus Christ and you will see that he is indeed able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think just imagine if I may use that word ponder in your hearts prayers that you think not put into words the multitude of your thoughts prayers that you think as well as those wherein you ask to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think oh that should help some of you who cannot always put into words what you feel to be the subject of yet you were like Mary and she pondered these things in her heart I've often thought of a word of godly David and he says in

Psalms 42 I pour out my soul in me no words were spoken them that think upon his name dear friends are going to heaven as well as those who are eloquent and can put into words what they feel before God yes now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask you will find he is able to deliver he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God in Jesus name he is able to keep yes he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think let us look at that a little as I come more toward the amen it may be some of you who are here in the attitude of worship you have got your cases maybe you have your special circumstances in which you live and move and you realise that you need divine aid and now here it is

[ 37 : 35 ] I was going to say and I will here it is for the asking and remember that is not just what the preacher thinks about it listen to what Jesus said never man spake like this man 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 yes what do you want God if he will deal graciously with you to do for you you say I want him to make me fit for eternity I want him to give me some religion to live by and die by I want him to put the great question out of question I want a gracious assurance

I am indeed a pilgrim to Canaan bone I want what is recorded in his word the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God I want that blessed witness in my own soul's experience all I can tell you poor sinner is this God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think in regard to it who can tell but what God will be gracious to you approach my soul the mercy seat where Jesus answers prayer and humbly lie at his dear feet for none can perish there you will not be the first to perish there the thing is impossible then let it be unthinkable able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask for things you might have a hope a well grounded hope that

God has indeed begun his good work in you and is carrying it on but there are those whom you love you may look round your family circle and you may look round others in the causes of truth where you belong whom you wish well and you wish them well for time and eternity and you might say as you look upon them oh that they were wise oh that they understood this oh that they would consider their latter end what a word this is for godly fathers and mothers as well as those of us who were pastors of churches and looked round on a very large family young and old and middle aged it is a word to encourage those of us who preach to go labour on spend and be spent although you may say sometimes who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed but you must not fall appraise to such considerations you must look to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think and say great

God thy kingdom come with reverence we would pray may the sovereign scepter sway let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children oh God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think in convincing poor sinners and bringing them in guilty before God but he says I will be inquired of by you all house of Israel to do these things not only so you might be in a cast down state and you might be in Satan's Sin you might be having your religion in your profession riddled in Satan's Sin until you hardly know what you are or where you are in things divine and wonder if you know anything at all that God has wrought in your soul you are in your soul's feelings at the ends of the earth but what are you to look at it with a fatalistic eye no no look you should be a look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth for

I am God and there is none else and there is this lovely scripture do believe it all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God yes and remember him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask to think in comforting poor sinners comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God and you want comfort but you want God to be the author of it preachers may preach on subjects to do with comfort but you want the reality of it and that is what a man cannot receive except it be given him from heaven but God delights to give it that is what I am aiming at in preaching this line of things I want you not to pour over yourself too long and look within with many a question in can ever

[ 43 : 38 ] God dwell here but to look up to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or even think and remember his mercy can reach even you yes much might be said along that line of thought another viewpoint of it is this God is able to do exceeding abundantly in helping us in everyday life in supporting us you look back over life's journey as you have lived it and some of you have journeyed far and some not quite so far and now if you tell the truth and you ought to do that what is the truth as you review the way you have come along having obtained help of God I continue unto this day and now there might have been many a day when you could say very little about the help you obtained because it was just here a little there a little line upon line precept upon precept it was gradual he lends an unseen hand he gives a secret prop you can say very little about it it is not as though you set up an

Ebenezer by the wayside that day those days I'm afraid seem often few and far between when you set up Ebenezers and waymarks and raise eye heaps but every day the help of God is afforded yes our good guide and saviour has helped are and is by his favour we are what we are and remember as you look back and see the help afforded you can thank God and take courage to look forward and remember thy love in times past forbids me to think thou would leave me at last in trouble to see able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think think of what God is able to do in reviving your dried up parts soul when you can only say if you say anything leave not my soul destitute margin reading make not my soul bear take not thy holy spirit from me but

God is able to do it he has promised what he promises he will fulfill and he has promised floods upon the dry ground the parts ground shall become a pool there is help in God for you there is hope in God yes however hard to be understood your soul's experience seems to be there is another thought here think of what God is able to do when it comes to making known his name as Jehovah Jireh the Lord will provide it and you know this at least I hope you do did ever trouble yet before and God refused to hear thy call lack to anything by the way and they answered nothing you know dear friends bread has been given water has been sure and much more than that



God has made his goodness to pass before you in the way and if you look back at your beginnings and then look along the way you have come to where you are sit down before God before you go to bed and do it and you will see that for you he has done exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or even think think of where you are where you live in your own home your family circle and what God has done for you therein and in your business whatever it is and think of when you set out to follow on to know the Lord and where you were then you were found this though thy beginnings were small yet shall thy latter end greatly increase able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even think in providing and in protecting had you been alive in

Nebuchadnezzar's day and seeing the three Hebrews plunged in that fiery furnace you would have thought alas poor men that would be the end of them and very speedy will it be no no Nebuchadnezzar looked on afar off and said did we not cast three men bound into the fiery furnace low I see four men walking there walking and the form of the fourth is like to the son of God and it was demonstrating that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even think the power of the fire was quenched and they walked in the midst of the flame but the smell of fire was not found on them all that was burned were there bonds and this God we humbly hope is our God yes able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even think there is just one more thought and that is this he is able to do above all that we can ask or think in forgiving our sins oh you might be saying depth of mercy can there be mercy for a wretch like me who is to say there is no mercy for you the devil may suggest that when

[ 49 : 54 ] Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross that you must not expect to think for a moment that he had you in his mind you being the sinner that you are but then you are not to credit the devil's lies the devil is not omniscient he does not know how matters really are between your soul and God for that is impossible look at it like this 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 yes there is oh he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think in pardoning poor sinners though they seem to be rebels of the deepest die think of that wretched Manasseh Judas king who made Jerusalem streets run with rivers of blood had you stood on the pavement and looked on and saw it you would have thought he was just fit fuel for hell fire no no

God who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think when Manasseh was taken captive it is said in his affliction he called upon the Lord his God and his sins were blotted out and his redeemed spirit is in the realms of bliss and you sing about the blood of Christ that crimson flood is free to take away a Mary or Manasseh stain listen and sins more vile than they the hymn writer stretched a point there and sins more vile than they what did the Saviour say all manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men but this is the way if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness yes do think these things over dear friends 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 this will be the final fruition of what he is pleased to do for whatever you may ask or think as faith lives and moves in you unto him be glory in the church by Christ

Jesus throughout all ages world without end amen or to end time or end or ...

... ..