

[The Book of Ephesians](#)

Chapter 3

“How deep, How Wide His love is”

[Return to The Word MP3.com](#)

A Saguaro Cactus starts life as a shiny black seed the size of a pinhead.

- ☞ **After 1 year** it is only $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch tall.
- ☞ **After 15 years** it will only be about **12 inches tall**.
- ☞ **After 50 years** it is still just **7 feet tall**.

It is not until a Saguaro reaches 75 years old that it begins to grow it's first arms.

The Pacific Redwood on the other hand can begin it's life growing more than 39 inches a year, reaching heights of over 300 feet in just 60 years.

The Chinese, have a bamboo tree that seems to absolutely not grow at all the first 4 years.

- ☞ **For the first 4 years**, there is no growth, no change, it almost seems to be dead.

Then suddenly, something happens during the **5th year**, that Bamboo tree that did nothing for 4 years will suddenly shoot up 90 feet in about 60 days!

- ☞ **You see** during those first 4 years the Bamboo Tree is developing it's root system, storing up nutrients, storing up energy.
- ☞ **Then on that 5th year**, having developed a good root system deep into the soil, it grows to over 90 feet in just 2 months.

I don't know about you but many times when I look at my life as a follower of Jesus Christ, I don't think that I see much growth.

- ☞ **Ever feel** like that?
- ☞ **Ever get frustrated** with the progress that you are making as a follower of Jesus?
- ☞ **Ever get disappointed** in yourself?
- ☞ **I sure** do...

It is because we are not like the Redwood tree that grows up quickly.

- ☞ **We** are like the Bamboo Tree.
- ☞ **There are many months** and years of effort and work that goes on before we ever start to see any real growth in our life.

You know what the problem is with that majestic Redwood that grows 39 inches a year and reaches a height of over 300 feet?

- ☞ **Having not taken the time** to develop a deep and intricate root system, even thought it might be 300 feet tall, over 2,000 years old and weigh millions of pounds...

- ☞ **Did you know** that a gust of wind can knock one of those mammoth giants over?
- ☞ **Because they didn't have** a big enough root system to support that growth.

E. M Bounds said that *“Faith is increased by exercise, by being put to use. It is nourished by painful trials”...*

Ephesians 3:17-19

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...

The Lord wants for you to be Blessed, did you know that? He wants for you to know and understand how Deep and how wide His Love is for you.

- ☞ **He wants to see** us succeed in your attempts at following Him

But many times, we get so impatient If we don't see any real growth in ourselves.

- ☞ **Our spiritual growth** in the early years, is very much like the first 4 years of the Chinese Bamboo Tree.
- ☞ **In those years**, where we don't see any apparent growth so we assume that there hasn't been any growth at all.
- ☞ **But we cannot see the root system** that is being developed to support the growth that will come later.

What we forget, is that the Lord, in his great love for us, is working on the inside, where we can't see the changes.

He is putting us into situations that change our heart, and sometimes, those changes stir around in there for years.

Then suddenly, we begin to get it! We start to catch on. *“The Lord is growing me up through my trials and struggles.”*

If you continue to follow Jesus and allow Him to take the time that He needs with you, suddenly you will begin to see, just How wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is

Ephesians 3

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—

2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**),

5 which **in other ages was not made known** to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,
9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God **who created all things through Jesus Christ;**
10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,
12 in whom **we have boldness and access** with confidence through faith in Him.
13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
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.
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.

Paul said that he was a “**Prisoner of Jesus**”.

Now there are two kinds of prisoners in this world.

1. Those who are made prisoners against their will.
2. Those who willingly make themselves prisoners.

You can unwillingly make yourself a prisoner to an addiction.

- ☞ **You can also make yourself** a prisoner to Jesus Christ, and so serve Him with all of your heart.
- ☞ **You can be made a prisoner** of despair, loneliness, worry, doubts, anger, pride or many other emotions, because of something that someone else has done against you.
- ☞ **You unwillingly** become a prisoner of these things because of your circumstances.

The Good news is that if you have been a prisoner of despair, loneliness, worry, doubts, anger, pride or something else because of other people, **YOU CAN ALSO WILLINGLY CHANGE THAT!**

- ☞ **Paul was formerly a prisoner** of anger and pride, but he changed that when Jesus Changed him.

Who’s prisoner are you this morning?

- ☞ **If you willingly surrender** your life to Jesus Christ, you can now be His Prisoner.

- ☞ **But what a different imprisonment** it is to belong to Jesus, from everything else in this world.

In Israel, very often people would get themselves over extended in debt, or fall into debt by circumstances of their life.

- ☞ **When they did**, they would many times “*Sell themselves*” into the service of a household where they would live, work and serve for a period of 6 years.
- ☞ **After 6 years**, the Law of the Bible was that all servants must be set free.

But often times, the servants of a household would have a wonderful master who would treat them more like a son or daughter than a slave.

- ☞ **Often in those cases**, when the end of the 6 years of service were over, the servant didn't want to leave their masters house.

Exodus 21:5-6

5 But if the servant plainly says, “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,”

6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him foreve

They then become “**A Douulous**” or a servant forever.

Serving Jesus is very much like this.

- ☞ **Maybe when you first come to Jesus** and ask Him to forgive all of your sins, your life is a mess and you are filled with despair.
- ☞ **But over the process of time**, you become restored and you continue to serve the Lord you find that He treats you more like a Son or Daughter than a slave.
- ☞ **So you make the decision** to never leave the Lord, to serve Him forever.

When you do that you could say what Paul has said here in verse 1

Ephesians 3

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus...

AS YOU BEGIN TO SEE THE GREATEST GROWTH IN YOUR LIFE—IT WILL BE WHEN YOU REALIZE AND ACCEPT THAT THE LORD PUTS YOU INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR LIFE—THAT WILL PROMOTE THE GREATEST GROWTH

WHEN THE DISCIPLES ARRIVED IN THE COASTAL TOWN OF CAESAREA...IT SAYS THAT...

Acts 21:10-30

10 During our stay of several days, a man named Agabus, who also had the gift of prophecy, arrived from Judea.

11 When he visited us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit declares, `So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Romans.' "

12 When we heard this, we who were traveling with him, as well as the local believers, begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

13 But PAUL said, "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! For I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but also to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus." **NOTICE HIS ATTITUDE**

14 When it was clear that we couldn't persuade him, we gave up and said, "**The will of the Lord be done.**"

18 The next day Paul went in with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present.

19 After greetings were exchanged, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 After hearing this, they praised God. But then they said, "You know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and **they all take the law of Moses very seriously.**

21 Our Jewish Christians here at Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews living in the Gentile world to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They say that you teach people not to circumcise their children or follow other Jewish customs.

22 **Now what can be done? For they will certainly hear that you have come.**

23 "**Here's our suggestion.** We have four men here who have taken a vow and are preparing to shave their heads.

24 **Go with them to the Temple and join them in the purification ceremony,** and pay for them to have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that the rumors are all false and that you yourself observe the Jewish laws.

26 So Paul agreed to their request, and the next day he went through the purification ritual with the men and went to the Temple. Then he publicly announced the date when their vows would end and sacrifices would be offered for each of them.

27 **The seven days were almost ended when some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the Temple and roused a mob against him. They grabbed him,**

28 yelling, "Men of Israel! Help! This is the man who teaches against our people and tells everybody to disobey the Jewish laws. He speaks against the Temple--and he even defiles it by bringing Gentiles in!"

29(**For earlier that day they had seen him in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, and they assumed Paul had taken him into the Temple.**)

30 The whole population of the city was rocked by these accusations, and a great riot followed. **Paul was dragged out of the Temple,** and immediately the gates were closed behind him.
NLT

ALL OF THIS WAS PLANNED FOR PAUL—BY JESUS.

IN ACTS CHAPTER 9—JESUS TOLD ANANIAS TO GO TO DAMASCUS AND FIND PAUL—NOTICE WHAT JESUS TOLD ANANIAS ABOUT PAUL...

Acts 9:15-16

15 ...the Lord said, "Go and do what I say. **For Saul is my chosen instrument** to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel.

16 And **I will show him how much he must suffer for me.**" NLT

- **WHAT MADE PAUL SUCH AN AWESOME MAN**—WAS HIS ATTITUDE ABOUT THIS SUFFERING THAT JESUS TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS TO GO THROUGH.

PAUL NEVER BOASTED ABOUT HIS ABILITIES—HE ONLY BOASTED ABOUT HIS SUFFERING—BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT TRIALS WERE THE SOURCE OF HIS GROWTH—THAT SUFFERING WAS WHAT PREPARED HIM TO BE USED BY JESUS...

2 Corinthians 11:23-30 PAUL TOLD THE CHRISTIANS AT THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:

23 They say they serve Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but **I have served him far more!** I have **worked harder, been put in jail more often, been whipped** times without number, and **faced death** again and again.

24 **Five different times the Jews gave me thirty-nine lashes.**

25 **Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea.**

26 I have **traveled many weary miles.** I have **faced danger from flooded rivers** and **from robbers.** I have **faced danger from my own people,** the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have **faced danger** in **the cities,** in **the deserts,** and **on the stormy seas.** And I have **faced danger from men who claim to be Christians but are not.**

27 I have **lived with weariness** and **pain** and **sleepless nights.** Often I have **been hungry** and **thirsty** and have **gone without food.** Often I have **shivered with cold,** **without enough clothing** to keep me warm.

28 Then, **besides all this, I have the daily burden of how the churches are getting along.**

29 Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?

30 **If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am.**

NLT

Victor Frankl—who went through the death camps of the Nazis—said that “people can endure any “what”—as long as they have a “why”.

PAUL COULD SUFFER GREATLY—BECAUSE HE KNEW WHY HE SUFFERED.

- **IT IS MY HOPE TODAY—THAT NUMBER ONE—YOU WOULD REALLY UNDERSTAND WHY YOU ARE SUFFERING—IF YOU BELONG TO JESUS.**

IF YOU ARE NOT SUFFERING—DO YOU REALLY BELONG TO JESUS?

- **BECAUSE EVERYONE WHO DECIDES TO FOLLOW JESUS—WILL LEARN JUST “How wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is” AS THEY SUBMIT THEIR LIFE TO THE STRUGGLES—THE PAIN AND THE DIFFICULTIES...**

EVEN JESUS LEARNED OBEDIENCE—THE SCRIPTURES SAY—THROUGH WHAT HE SUFFERED FOR US:

Hebrews 5:8

even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered NLT

Matthew 26:36-40

36 Then Jesus brought them to an olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, **“Sit here while I go on ahead to pray.”**

37 He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and **he began to be filled with anguish and deep distress.**

38 He told them, "**My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death.** Stay here and watch with me."

39 He **went on a little farther and fell face down on the ground,** praying, "My Father! If **it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me.** Yet I want your will, not mine."

40 Then he **returned to the disciples and found them asleep.** ... NLT

DURING OUR MID WEEK BIBLE STUDY IN JOSHUA—WE DISCOVERED HOW THE LORD IS CONSTANTLY—“**STRETCHING**”—OUR FAITH BY PLACING US IN GREATER AND GREATER TRIALS—THAT REQUIRE MORE AND MORE FAITH.

1. **WHEN THE LORD BROUGHT HIS PEOPLE UP TO THE EDGE OF THE RED SEA—**AFTER THEY WERE DELIVERED FROM EGYPT—THEY THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE CORNERED—WITH NO WAY OUT—THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WAS ON ONE SIDE—AND THE RED SEA WAS ON THE OTHER.
2. **MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE—“STAND STILL AND WATCH THE SALVATION OF THE LORD”**—AS THEY WATCHED—MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE WATERS—AND THEY OPENED UP—ALLOWING THE PEOPLE TO PASS THROUGH.
3. **WHEN THE LORD BRINGS HIS PEOPLE UP TO THE EDGE OF THE JORDAN RIVER—**IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA—**THE LORD PICKS THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME OF THE YEAR TO TAKE HIS PEOPLE ACROSS THE JORDAN RIVER.**
4. **ALL OTHER TIMES OF THE YEAR—**THE JORDAN RIVER IS ABOUT 100 FEET WIDE—WITH MANY CALM PLACES TO CROSS.
5. **THIS TIME OF THE YEAR THAT THE LORD HAS CHOSEN FOR ISRAEL—**IS DURING THE SPRING MELT OF THE SNOW PACK ON MOUNT HERMON.
6. **THE WATERS RUSHING DOWN MOUNT HERMON COLLECT IN THE JORDAN RIVER—**AND SWELL IT TO OVER 1 MILE ACROSS—A RAGING TORRENT OF WATER.
7. **WHY DID THE LORD CHOOSE THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME OF THE YEAR TO CROSS THE JORDAN RIVER?**—BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT IN THE MOST DIFFICULT TIMES OF OUR LIFE—THAT IS WHEN OUR FAITH HAS THE CHANCE TO GROW THE MOST.
8. **IT IS IN THOSE MOST DIFFICULT TIMES OF OUR LIFE—**THAT WE DRAW THE NEAREST TO JESUS AND TRUST HIM THE MOST.

IT IS IN THESE TIMES OF DEEP AND RUSHING WATER ALL AROUND US—THAT WE REALIZE JUST “**How wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is**”

2 As you already know, God has given me **this special ministry** of announcing his favor to you Gentiles.

2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, NKJV

PAUL SAYS THAT “THE LORD GAVE THIS SPECIAL MINISTRY TO PAUL”

1. **IF I TOLD YOU TODAY** THAT YOU COULD HAVE YOUR ENTIRE PAST REMOVED—AND IT WOULD BE AS THOUGH IT HAD NEVER EXISTED.

2. **YOU COULD KNOW WITH CERTAINTY**—THAT YOU WERE GOING TO HEAVEN.
3. **THAT YOU WERE GOING TO BE A KING** THAT HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF AN ENTIRE REGION OR NATION.
4. **THAT YOU** WILL BE JUDGING THE ANGELS.
5. **THAT YOU** WERE TO RECEIVE A SHARE IN ALL OF THE TREASURES OF THE UNIVERSE.
6. **AND THAT FOR ALL OF ETERNITY**—PEOPLE AND ANGELS WOULD POINT TO YOU AND USE YOU AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT GODS LOVE IS LIKE.
7. **ALL YOU WOULD HAVE TO DO IS SAY**—“**YES JESUS**”—**I ACCEPT YOU AS MY LORD AND SAVIOR**”.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT THIS WOULD BE REALLY GOOD NEWS TO YOU?

- **WELL**—ALL OF THESE THINGS AND SO MUCH MORE—ARE WAITING FOR THE PERSON WHO OPENS THEIR HEART TO JESUS THIS MORNING—AND SAYS “**YES**” TO HIM.
- **PAUL SAYS**—“**MAN WHAT A CUSH JOB I HAVE**”—**I GET THE PRIVILEGE OF TELLING PEOPLE THAT GOD LOVES THEM...!**
- **GUESS WHAT?**—**YOU HAVE THE SAME AWESOME JOB**—YOU GET TO TELL PEOPLE JUST HOW MUCH THE LORD LOVES THEM!

3 As I briefly mentioned earlier in this letter, God himself revealed his secret plan to me.

3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, NKJV

JESUS REVEALED HIS SECRET PLAN TO PAUL

4 As you read what I have written, you will understand what I know about this plan regarding Christ.

4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), NKJV

5 God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now he has revealed it by the Holy Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets.

5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets NKJV

6 And this is the secret plan: **The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God's children.** Both groups have believed the Good News, and both are part of the same body and enjoy together the promise of blessings through Christ Jesus.

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, NKJV

Deuteronomy 29:29

29 "**The secret things belong to the LORD** our God, but those things which are **revealed** belong to us and to our children forever...NKJV

THERE ARE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN HIDDEN SINCE BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE—THAT HAVE NOW BEEN REVEALED TO YOU!

1. **PAUL SAYS** THAT JESUS PERSONALLY REVEALED THESE MYSTERIES TO HIM.

2. **THEY WERE** NOT REVEALED TO ANY OTHER GENERATION OF PEOPLE BEFORE— BUT HAVE NOW BEEN SAVED FOR YOU.
3. **AND THIS IS THE FATHERS SECRET PLAN—“YOU HAVE AN EQUAL SHARE IN ALL THE RICHES THAT THE FATHER GAVE TO JESUS.”**

THE JEWS BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE THE ONLY ONES CHOSEN BY THE LORD—FOR HEAVEN—BUT HERE—WE LEARN THAT IT WAS SECRETLY THE FATHERS PLAN ALL ALONG TO SAVE ALL THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN JESUS.

Romans 11:11

11 Did God's people THE JEWS stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! **His purpose was to make his salvation available to the Gentiles**, and **then the Jews would be jealous** and want it for themselves. NLT

WHAT A SNEAKY LORD WE SERVE! (SNEAKY IN A GOOD WAY)

1. JESUS OFFERED ETERNAL LIFE AND FORGIVENESS TO THE JEWISH NATION OF ISRAEL—THROUGH JESUS—BUT THEY REJECTED IT.

Matthew 23:37-39

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! **How often I have wanted to** gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, **but you wouldn't let me.**

38 And **now look, your house is left to you, empty and desolate.**

39 For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, 'Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' " NLT

AND SO—THE LORD TURNED HIS OFFER FROM ISRAEL—TO US—IN THIS AGE THAT IS CALLED “**THE CHURCH**”—JESUS IS OFFERING YOU THE SAME BLESSING THAT HE OFFERED ISRAEL.

- **BUT THIS OFFER WILL NOT LAST FOREVER**—AFTER ALL THOSE WHO WILL COME TO JESUS HAVE COME—
- **JESUS WILL AGAIN TURN HIS OFFER BACK TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL**—AND AT THE MIDWAY POINT IN THE 7 YEAR TRIBULATION—WHEN ISRAEL SEES THE ANTICHRIST GO INTO THE TEMPLE AND ERECT A STATUE OF HIMSELF AND COMMAND ALL THE WORLD TO WORSHIP HIM AS GOD—THEN ISRAEL WILL REMEMBER WHAT JESUS SAID TO THEM IN MATTHEW 24:

Matthew 24:15-16

15 "Therefore **when you see the 'abomination of desolation,'** spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. NKJV

22 And **unless those days were shortened**, TO 3 ½ YEARS no flesh would be saved; but for the **elect's sake** ISRAEL those days will be shortened.

AS ISRAEL FLEES JERUSALEM—ON THEIR WAY TO JORDAN WHERE THE ROCK CITY IF PETRA IS—THEY WILL BE PROTECTED BY THE LORD FOR 1260 DAYS OR 3 ½ YEARS.

Revelation 12:6

6 Then the woman **fled into the wilderness**, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. NKJV

WHILE ISRAEL IS FLEEING TO PETRA—NEWS OF THEIR ESCAPE WILL REACH THE ANTICHRIST—AND HE WILL SEND HIS ARMIES AFTER ISRAEL—TO DESTROY HER...

Revelation 12:14-17

14 But **the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness** to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 3 ½ YEARS.

15 **So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman**, THIS IS HIS ARMIES that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

16 But **the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood** which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. THE LORD WILL OPEN THE EARTH AND SWALLOW THESE ARMIES

17 And **the dragon was enraged with the woman**, and **he went to make war with the rest of her offspring**, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. THESE ARE THOSE THAT ACCEPT JESUS DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD NKJV

AND SO—ISRAEL WILL NOT REJECT JESUS FOREVER—AT THIS MIDWAY POINT—SHE WILL ACCEPT HIM...

Romans 11:25-26

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, **that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, NKJV

PAUL CONTINUES IN EPHESIANS 3

7 By God's special favor and mighty power, I have been given the wonderful privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. NKJV

8 Just think! **Though I did nothing to deserve it, and though I am the least deserving Christian there is, I was chosen for this special joy of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ**.

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, NKJV

NOTICE HERE—IN PAUL—WE SEE THE CORRECT ATTITUDE OF THE SERVANT OF JESUS.

1. THEY HAVE A VERY HUMBLE AND GENTLE SPIRIT.
2. THEY DO NOT THINK HIGHLY OF THEMSELVES.
3. THEY ACTUALLY CONSIDER OTHERS BETTER THAN THEY ARE.
4. **THESE ARE THE KINDS OF PEOPLE THAT THE LORD USES GREATLY.**

- **MOSES BEGINS LIFE**—AS A BABY OF A FAMILY OF SLAVES.
- **HE IS TAKEN INTO THE HOUSE OF PHARAOH**—AND RAISE LIKE HE WAS HIS SON.
- **WHEN MOSES BECOMES A MAN**—HE REJECTS HIS RIGHT TO BECOME KING OF THE WORLD—AND INSTEAD GOES TO LIVE WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE—SLAVES OF EGYPT.
- **MOSES SPEND THAT NEXT 40 YEARS** LEARNING TO BE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.
- **IT WAS BECAUSE** MOSES REGARDED HIMSELF A NOTHING—SOMEONE WHO IS COMPLETELY UNQUALIFIED TO DO ANYTHING FOR THE LORD—THAT THE LORD CHOSE MOSES.

Exodus 33:11

11 Inside the Tent of Meeting, **the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.** NLT

Numbers 12:1-3

1 Aaron criticized Moses because he had married a Cushite woman.

2 They said, "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Hasn't he spoken through us, too?" But the LORD heard them.

3 Now **Moses was more humble than any other person on earth.** NLT

DAVID WAS JUST A YOUNG SHEPHERD BOY IN ISRAEL...

1 Samuel 18:18

18 "Who am I, and what is my family in Israel that I should be the king's son-in-law?" David exclaimed. "My father's family is nothing!" NLT

2 Samuel 7:18

18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and prayed, "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" NLT

PAUL HERE IN EPHESIANS SAYS:

8 Just think! **Though I did nothing to deserve it,** and **though I am the least deserving Christian there is,** **I was chosen for this special joy of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.**

THE MAN—OR WOMAN—OR YOUNG PERSON THAT JESUS REALLY USES—IS THE ONE WHO DOES NOT THINK HIGHLY OF THEMSELVES.

1. **THE ONE WHO REALIZES THAT IF IT WASN'T FOR THE LORDS MERCY—THEY WOULD BE LOST.**
2. **THAT THERE IS NO GOOD THING IN US—APART FROM JESUS LIVING IN OUR HEARTS.**
3. **THAT JESUS LOVE FOR US WAS SO GREAT—THAT HE WAS WILLING TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING TO PURCHASE US.**

BUT—WE GET SO IMPATIENT WITH OURSELVES—AND WITH EACH OTHER—WE WANT TO QUIT—THROWN IN THE TOWEL—GIVE UP SO EASY!

We need to be like the man who was driving his car in heavy traffic—when suddenly it stalled just as the light turned green.

After several attempts at starting the engine failed—with a chorus of honking horns behind him...

He got out of his car and walked back to the first car behind him and said: **“I’m sorry but I can’t seem to get my car started.”**

“If you will go up there and give it a try—I’ll stay here and honk your horn for you!”

WHAT A GREAT ATTITUDE!

Ephesians 4:2

2 Be humble and gentle. **Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults** because of your love. NLT

Hebrews 10:34-37

34 You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail. When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity.

35 Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you!

36 Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.

37 "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. NLT

Ephesians 3

9 **I was chosen to explain to everyone this plan** that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; NKJV

10 **God's purpose was to show his wisdom** in all its rich variety **to all the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms**. They will see this when Jews and Gentiles are joined together in his church.

10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, NKJV

PASTOR CHUCK SMITH—THE FOUNDER OF CALVARY CHAPEL—TELLS THE STORY OF HOW AFTER 17 YEARS IN THE MINISTRY—HE WAS DISCOURAGED—FRUSTRATED—AND READY TO GIVE UP THE MINISTRY—BECAUSE IN 17 YEARS—HE HAD NOT SEEN ANY REAL GROWTH IN HIS MINISTRY.

1. **HE WAS CALLED TO GO DOWN TO A LITTLE CHURCH IN COSTA MESA—WHERE THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN PRAYING AS TO WHETHER OR NOT CHUCK SHOULD COME THERE TO BE THERE PASTOR.**
2. **WHEN HE ARRIVED—THERE WERE JUST 25 PEOPLE.**

3. **BUT AS THEY BEGAN TO PRAY TOGETHER**—AND FERVENTLY SEEK THE LORD IN PRAYER FOR HIS LEADING AND DIRECTION—THE CHURCH BEGAN TO GROW.
4. **AFTER 1 YEAR THEY WERE AT 100 PEOPLE.**
5. **ONE NIGHT**—SOMEONE LAID THEIR HANDS UPON CHUCK AND **SAID THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS GOING TO GIVE CHUCK A NEW NAME THAT MEANT—**“SHEPHERD OF MANY SHEEP.”
6. **THAT HE WOULD HAVE** A WORLD WIDE RADIO MINISTRY—AND MANY OTHER THINGS THAT HE WAS GOING TO DO.
7. **THE OTHER CHURCHES** IN COSTA MESA WERE ALSO VERY SMALL—AND THEY BEGAN TO NOTICE THIS GROWTH IN CALVARY CHAPEL.
8. **THESE OTHER PASTORS** SAID PUBLICLY BEFORE THEIR OWN PEOPLE FROM THE PULPIT—“IF GOD CAN DO THAT FOR CHUCK SMITH—HE CAN DO IT FOR US TOO”.
9. **CHUCK SAID THAT HE LIKED THAT**—BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT HE WAS NOTHING THAT THE LORD SHOULD EVER USE HIM TO DO ANY GREAT WORK.
10. **BUT THEY JUST KEPT TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD VERSE BY VERSE**—AND PRAYING AND ALLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DIRECT THEM.
11. **TODAY—36 YEARS LATER**—YOU ARE ENJOYING THE FRUIT OF A MINISTRY THAT NO ONE THOUGHT WAS EVER POSSIBLE.

OVER 1,000 CALVARY CHAPELS ALL OVER THE WORLD—SOME OF THE LARGEST CHURCHES IN THE WORLD—ARE CALVARY CHAPELS.—TEACHING THE WORD—AND LOVING PEOPLE

1 Corinthians 1:27

27 But **God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise**, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; NKJV

IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT—JUST LOOK AT ME!

- **AND YOU KNOW WHAT?**—I AM JUST A FOOL ENOUGH TO ALSO BELIEVE THAT **BECAUSE I KNOW THAT I AM NOTHING—THAT THE LORD CAN USE ME—AND ALL OF YOU—AND TAKE OUR LITTLE CHURCH AND MAKE US INTO SOMETHING TRULY MIRACULOUS.**

AND GET READY—BECAUSE I KNOW WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT HE IS GOING TO DO IT—UNDER ONE CONDITION...

- **IF YOU WILL PRAY WITH ME**—AND ASK THE LORD TO DO IT—AND CONTINUE TO PRAY AND ASK THE LORD TO DO IT—AND NOT LET HIM GO—UNTIL HE DOES IT!

11 This was his plan from all eternity, and it has now been carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, NKJV

12 Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come fearlessly into God's presence, assured of his glad welcome.

12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. NKJV

NOTICE WHAT IT IS—THAT GIVES YOU ACCESS INTO THE THRONE ROOM OF THE LIVING GOD—WHO MADE ALL THINGS...

1. **OUR TRUST IN JESUS.**
2. AND **WHAT HE HAS DONE.**
3. ARMED WITH THOSE 2—YOU CAN WALK THIS MORNING INTO THE THRONE ROOM OF THE LIVING GOD—AND SPEAK DIRECTLY TO HIM!

Hebrews 4:16

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. KJV

HOW GREAT—“**How wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is**”

13 So please don't despair because of what they are doing to me here. **It is for you that I am suffering**, so you should feel honored and encouraged.

13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. NKJV

THIS IS THE HEART AND ATTITUDE OF A PERSON WHO IS MATURE IN JESUS.

1. **THEY RECOGNIZE** THAT EVERY EVENT OF THEIR LIFE—IS ORDAINED OF THE LORD.
2. **THAT IT HAS** THE PURPOSE OF CAUSING GROWTH.
3. **THAT IT HAS** THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING GREATER TRUST IN JESUS.
4. **THAT IT WILL** TURN OUT FOR GOOD.
5. **THAT WHEN OTHERS** SEE US SUFFER THROUGH TRIALS—AND WE TELL THEM THAT “**WE ARE TRUSTING IN THE LORD**”—AND WE HAVE A GREAT ATTITUDE TOWARDS OUR TRIAL—IT WILL ENCOURAGE THEM.

AND IF WE PRAY IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT TRIAL—AND THAT LEARNING PROCESS—AND THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AN ANSWER—WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THE LORD HAS DELAYED OUR ANSWER—BECAUSE HE WANTS TO GIVE TO US—MUCH MORE THAN WE HAVE ASKED FOR...

There was a young mother who was at the checkout counter when a toy truck caught the eye of her son.

“**Mommy—a truck, can we buy it?, please?**”

With his birthday only a few days away, they had already used the money they had to buy the young man his first bicycle—**the one thing that he wanted more than anything else in the world.**

The young mother told him “**No**”

“**You never say yes to anything...**”, he complained, retreating into disappointed silence.

SOMETIMES—WE REACT THE SAME WAY—WHEN WE ASK THE LORD TO DO SOMETHING—OR HELP US IN A TIME OF NEED—AND THE ANSWER DOESN'T COME.

- **WHEN WE PRAY FOR SOMETHING THAT THE FATHER CHOOSES TO WITHHOLD—IT IS BECAUSE HIS “NO” TODAY IS A PRELUDE TO THE “UNIMAGINABLE BLESSINGS” THAT ARE COMING TOMORROW—JUST HOLD ON!**

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Empowering

14 **When I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray** to the Father,

15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.

16 I pray that from **his glorious, unlimited resources** he will give you **mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit.**

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, NKJV

OH—IF WE ONLY REALIZED—HOW MUCH HE LOVES US—AND THAT HE WANTS TO BLESS OUR LIVES EVEN MORE THAN WE ARE ASKING HIM TO BLESS.

1. **BUT THE BLESSINGS THAT THE LORD WANTS TO BRING INTO OUR LIVES—ARE “ACCORDING TO HIS PLAN”—NOT OURS.**
2. **WE HAVE SUCH A VERY LIMITED VIEW OF OUR LIVES—WE CANNOT SEE ANY FURTHER THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT.**
3. **BUT JESUS—SEES WHAT IS NEEDED TOMORROW—AND WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO BE ABLE TO OPEN UP THOSE FLOOD GATES OF HEAVEN TO BLESS YOU.**
4. **AND SO—HE WORKS IN YOUR LIFE—EVERY SECOND OF YOUR DAY—TO POSITION YOU THROUGHOUT THE DAY—INTO THAT PERFECT SITUATION THAT WILL TEACH YOU AND GROW YOU—SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RECEIVE ALL HE HAS PLANNED FOR YOU.**

Jeremiah 29:11-14

11 **For I know the plans I have for you,**” says the LORD. **“They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.**

12 In those days when you pray, **I will listen.**

13 If you look for me **in earnest, you will find me when you seek me.**

14 I will be found by you,” says the LORD.

LAST WEEK WE DISCUSSED THE FACT THAT JESUS—WHEN HE HAD HEARD THAT HIS FRIEND LAZARUS WAS SICK AND NEAR DEATH—INSTEAD OF GOING TO HIM IMMEDIATELY—AS WE WOULD EXPECT JESUS TO DO—WAITED 2 MORE DAYS.

John 11:1-3

1 A man named **Lazarus was sick.** He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha.

2 This is the Mary who poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick.

3 So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, **“Lord, the one you love is very sick.”**

5 **Although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus,**
6 **he stayed where he was for the next two days and did not go to them.**

7 Finally after two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's go to Judea again."

17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, **he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.**

**WHY—IF JESUS LOVED LAZARUS SO MUCH—DID HE NOT GO TO HIM IMMEDIATELY—
THAT IS WHAT WE WOULD HAVE DONE—RIGHT?**

- BUT JESUS LET LAZARUS DIE—**WHY?**

**IN BETHANY WHERE LAZARUS WAS FROM—AS EVERYONE WAS GATHERED AROUND—
WHO HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR JESUS TO COME—WHEN HE DID NOT COME RIGHT AWAY—
THEY BEGAN TO LOOSE HOPE—WHEN LAZARUS DIED.**

- THEY THOUGHT THAT IT WAS ALL OVER.

John 11:21

21 Martha said to Jesus, **"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**

34 "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see."

35 **Then Jesus wept.**

36 The people who were standing nearby said, **"See how much he loved him."**

37 But **some said, "This man healed a blind man. Why couldn't he keep Lazarus from dying?"**

43 Then **Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"**

44 And Lazarus came out, bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!" NLT

MARTHA—EXPECTED JESUS TO ANSWER HER PRAYER BY COMING IMMEDIATELY.

- **THE OTHERS WHO WERE STANDING AROUND SAID—"WE DON'T UNDERSTAND—JESUS WAS ABLE TO HEAL THE BLIND MAN...—WHY DIDN'T HE COME AND HEAL LAZARUS?"**

BUT JESUS—DID LOVE LAZARUS—AND ALL THOSE WHO WERE THERE—AND JESUS CRIED WHEN HE SAW HOW BROKEN HEARTED THEY ALL WERE.

- **BUT THEN—JESUS ANSWERED THEIR PRAYER IN A WAY THAT THEY DID NOT EXPECT—HIS WAY—AND IN HIS TIME...**

ALL JESUS HAD TO DO—WAS GO TO LAZARUS GRAVE—AND CALL HIS NAME—AND HE CAME OUT ALIVE...

- **AND BECAUSE JESUS WAITED—EVEN THOUGH IT WAS HURTFUL—WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT IT WAS EVEN HARDER EVEN FOR JESUS TO WAIT—**
- **BUT HE DID WAIT—SO THAT THERE MIGHT BE EVEN A GREATER GOOD THAT WOULD COME OUT OF ALL OF THIS—THAN ANYONE EVEN IMAGINED.**

WHEN THEY SAW JESUS CALL LAZARUS BY NAME—EVEN THOUGH HE WAS DEAD—NOW THEY KNEW THAT JESUS HAS THE POWER TO BRING THINGS THAT ARE DEAD—BACK TO ETERNAL LIFE!

17 And I pray that **Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him.** May **your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love.**

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, NKJV

1. AS WE EXPERIENCE THE DELAYS IN ANSWERED PRAYER.
2. AS WE EXPERIENCE THE HEARTACHES THAT JESUS SUSTAINS US THROUGH.
3. AS WE EXPERIENCE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THIS WORLD AND OTHERS PUT ON US—AND JESUS MAKES THEM TURN AROUND FOR GOOD.
4. **AS WE WATCH JESUS CALL BACK FROM THE DEAD—THOSE THINGS IN OUR LIFE THAT WE THOUGHT HAD NO HOPE.**

VERSE 17—“JESUS BECOMES MORE AND MORE AT HOME IN OUR HEARTS—AND WE LEARN TO TRUST HIM MORE AND MORE.”

- **AND WE BEGIN TO** “**DEVELOP DEEP ROOTS INTO THE SOIL OF GODS INCREDIBLE LOVE**”

18 And **may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is.**

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- NKJV

THEN WE BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND JUST HOW WIDE—HOW LONG—HOW HIGH—AND HOW DEEP JESUS LOVE FOR US REALLY IS!

19 **May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it.** Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. NKJV

THIS IS WHAT I LOVE ABOUT JESUS—YOU WILL NEVER GET BORED SERVING HIM.

1. **ON THAT FIRST DAY** THAT YOU GIVE YOUR HEART TO HIM—HE GIVES YOU A GREAT BIG PACKAGE OF BLESSING.
2. **THEN EVERYDAY THAT YOU CONTINUE TO SERVE HIM**—EVEN IN THE TOUGH TIMES—HE GIVE YOU EVEN A BIGGER AND MORE AWESOME PACKAGE.
3. **AND THIS CONTINUES ENDLESSLY ALL OF THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE**—AND INTO ETERNITY WHERE YOU WILL NEVER FINISH OPENING ALL OF THE PRESENT THAT HE HAS FOR YOU...

20 Now glory be to God! **By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.**

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, NKJV

THIS IS THE WAY—THAT JESUS WANTS TO WORK IN YOUR LIFE..

1. **“EXCEEDINGLY—ABUNDANTLY—ABOVE ALL THAT YOU COULD ASK OR EVEN IMAGINE.”**
2. **THAT MEANS—THAT IF YOU MADE A LIST OF ALL THAT YOU WANT JESUS TO DO IN YOUR LIFE—AND THE LIFE OF OTHERS—YOUR LIST CANNOT EVER BE AS BIG AS HIS LIST THAT HE HAS THERE IN HIS POCKET—THAT HE HAS ALREADY PLANNED TO GIVE YOU.**

1 Peter 2:6

Anyone who believes in him will never be disappointed."

Proverbs 23:18

18 For surely you have a future ahead of you; your hope will not be disappointed.

Ephesians 3

21 May he be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages. Amen. NLT

21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. NKJV