

DAY  
4

## The Generosity of God Ephesians 3:14-21

When have you experienced someone's generosity? We often experience small acts of generosity, someone holding the door for us, giving above-and-beyond customer service, thanking us for our time. We've even experienced large acts of generosity from time to time, a teacher or a coach working to teach and develop us, a friend sticking with us through thick and thin, a parent who sacrifices their own needs over and over again for us. But all of these acts of generosity—big and small—are just a shadow, a glimpse, of the generosity of God.

Bible scholar F. F. Bruce said, "It is impossible to ask God for too much. His capacity for giving far exceeds his people's capacity for asking—or even imagining." Paul describes this as "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." Think of all the things Paul has described in Ephesians up to this point: Jesus' sacrificial love, God's plan to bring together Jews and Gentiles, God's new society, God's adoption of us as his children, Jesus' sacrificial death, the hope of Christ, and so many others. It wouldn't have even occurred to us to ask for these things. And yet, God in all of his overwhelming generosity has given us all of this!

When you look back at that list of all the things that God has done, it can help to put your own problems and requests into perspective. Surely the God who brings Jew and Gentile together is able to work

to repair your broken relationships. Surely the God who adopted us as his children is able to negotiate your work stress. Surely the God who died on a cross for us is able to help you flourish.

### There is no end to the generosity of God.

There is no end to the generosity of God. There is no request we can make that will take us beyond his capability, nothing we can ask for that he will say, "No, that's too much." God is with us and for us.

*Where do you see evidence of God's generosity in your own life? What is occupying your thoughts right now? Do you ever feel like your troubles are beyond God's help? Ask our generous Father to work in your life to give you all you need.*

DAY  
5

## The Glory of God Ephesians 3:20-21

For the past four days we have looked at this passage as a whole. Today, we zoom in on verses 20-21 and focus on glory.

A catechism is a series of questions and answers that people memorize to help them understand and remember the basics of Christianity. Perhaps you grew up in a Christian tradition where you took catechism classes and memorized a catechism. A well-known catechism, *The Westminster Catechism*, says that the chief end, or purpose, of man is to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Do you think of God's glory as your purpose? Not many of us spring out of bed in the morning and say, "I'm going to glorify God today!" But perhaps we should. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Everything we do should honor God and lift him up. We should always be lifting him up, giving him praise, making him known.

Not only do we *individually* glorify God by the way that we go about our daily lives, but as Paul says in verse 21, the church *together* glorifies God. Glorifying God is why we exist. When we love and serve one another in the way that God desires for his church, God is glorified, lifted up, exalted. There is something special about the way the Church, as one unified body, glorifies God.

God has placed us in a magnificent story where we each have a purpose to serve in glorifying him. No matter what we do as a job, where we live, how we look, how much we have, we are all part of the body. In 1 Peter 4:11, we are told that no matter what we do, God can be glorified in it. Listen to how that sounds in *The Message*, "That way, God's bright presence will be evident in everything through Jesus, and *he'll* get all the credit as the One mighty in everything—encores to the end of time. Oh, yes!"

*How can you live your life this week so that "God's bright presence will be evident" and he will be glorified?*



THE NEW COMMUNITY  
**THIS IS US**  
THE DEATH OF DIVISION  
**EPHESIANS**

*Sermon: God's Family (and Our Families)  
Week of July 18*

DAY  
1

## The Power of Prayer Ephesians 3:14-21

Does prayer come easily for you? It can often seem like some people are just naturally gifted at prayer, and the rest of us have to struggle. Sometimes prayer can feel just like having a conversation with a friend, and other times we fight just to get the words out.

What motivates you to pray? Paul opens this passage by using the words “for this reason.” What reason? Everything he covered back at the beginning of chapter 3. The great mystery of God that has been revealed. God’s big plan for Jews and Gentiles. God’s brand new society. For that reason, Paul is moved to prayer. Paul is moved to praise the father of this new family.

A lot of things can motivate us to pray. Fear. Insecurity. Overwhelming gratitude. Not only is Paul motivated by the great work that God has done, but he is also motivated to pray by the love that he has for the Ephesians. He genuinely wants good things for his friends in Ephesus. He wants them to experience the depth of the love that God has for them. He wants them to experience God’s best.

Paul knew the power of prayer. He knew that prayer was essential for the new community of God to flourish. Prayer is essential for our community to flourish, too.

*How about you? What is your prayer life like? Are prayers coming naturally to you these days, or is it more of a struggle? Today, try something different. Pray Paul’s words that you have just read in Ephesians 3. Pray them for yourself, pray them for the Christian community at Living Word Community Church, pray them for the Church globally. You might want to pray Paul’s words just as they are written, or use them as a stepping stone to guide your own words. However you choose, offer up a prayer for God’s people.*



DAY  
2

## God’s Power at Work Ephesians 3:14-21

Have you ever watched the battery on your phone slowly fade while you scramble around your house looking for a charger? Or have you ever experienced having multiple devices in need of a charger and only one charger plugged in? This is how we often think of the word *power*.

In our passage, Paul focuses several times on the word power. He wants the Ephesians to be strengthened with God’s power. He wants them to have the power to understand the depth of God’s love for them. And he wants them to understand that God’s power is at work within them. Each time that Paul talks about power, he links it with God’s generosity. God isn’t stingy with his power. He freely gives it when we ask.

And we need God’s power. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to truly “get” everything that Paul is writing about. This is deep theological stuff. It can be a little confusing, perhaps a little overwhelming. For the Ephesians, they might not have been used to the wild sorts of things that Paul was telling them: Jews and Gentiles together, the mystery of God revealed, God building a new society. But through God’s power they could not only understand this high calling, they would be empowered to live it out.

Back in Ephesians 1:19-20, Paul wrote about the power of God at work within us, saying that he has “. . . incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”

Did you catch that? The same strength that raised Christ from the dead is the same power of God that is at work within us. You might not wake up each day feeling powerful, but Paul reminds us that this great power is always accessible to us, we just need to ask.

*Where do you need God’s power at work in your life? Where do you need a fresh demonstration of God’s power? Ask him to continue to strengthen you with his power. Ask the Holy Spirit to be at work in your life.*

DAY  
3

## Rooted in Love Ephesians 3:14-21

Up to this point in the book of Ephesians, Paul has written quite a bit about Jews and Gentiles coming together and the new society that God is creating. It is quite a high calling to be a part of this new community. In our passage for today, Paul not only emphasizes God’s power, but the importance of God’s love.

A plant is dependent on its roots. If you treat the top part of the plant well, watering it and caring for it, making sure it gets the proper sunlight and temperatures, but the plant’s root system is in unhealthy soil, it will still die. Nothing can fix a plant that is improperly rooted. Paul writes that we need to be rooted in love. We need to be planted and established in love. We need to be rooted in God’s love to properly love and serve one another.

In Colossians 3:12-14, Paul writes, “So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It’s your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it” (*The Message*). This is a beautiful description of love, like a garment that we wake up and put on. Perhaps we don’t wear this garment naturally. Maybe there are days when we wake up and we don’t really feel like putting on love! But we love because of the one who first loved us.

Paul goes on to pray that we can grasp just how deeply God loves us. It is wide and high and deep! It is beyond even what we can comprehend. That is how deeply God loves us. And that is the love that motivates us to love one another well.

*Try something this week. Each morning when you wake up, visualize yourself putting on love like a coat. As you do, pray for God’s power and strength to help you love your neighbors well. Pray for God to empower you through his love to represent him well. Look at that list from Colossians 3. Do you struggle with any of the things listed there? Are you even-tempered, kind, content, humble, forgiving? If not, ask God to help you.*