



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Ephesians

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God Can

Dr. Steve Walker

Amen. I told you that was exciting. So one of the things Randi didn't mention is you know throughout the year are giving will more than adequately meet the needs of our ministries for that month and often we will look around for churches in the community that are doing good gospel work. And they may just be a lot smaller than we are. They may be struggling a little bit. We find out those details of without them knowing and then we just send them a check. We sent several checks out this year for ten thousand dollars just unbeknownst to them to say hey this is from your brothers and sisters at Canyon Hills. God's met our needs, we want to encourage you to keep doing what you're doing and they open it up and there's a check. And I would love to be a fly on the wall when they when they get those, but they are always right back with incredible letters of praise.

We also do the same with a lot of the local ministries in our community that are trying to do the right thing for God's work and God's glory. And we'll just share some of that extra with them when God provides and so we want you to know that and feel good about the fact that God is using us to impact lots of people in ministries even beyond this walls of this church.

So here's the last step members take that card. All you need to do is one of two things put the letter Y in the right hand corner of the card meaning yes we approve or the letter N. meaning no we don't approve. Make sure your name is on that and then we'll call the ushers forward right now to begin receiving our offering if you guys will come. Go ahead and let's do that together.

And while they're doing that let's get our Bibles now open to Ephesians chapter 3. Would you do that with me please?

All right. Ephesians chapter 3. We've been going in case your our guest today. Welcome to you. Welcome to budget Sunday. Hope you were thrilled with that. I can just think of the person who invited you at your first time you're sitting next to your friend thinking oh my lord you guys do this every Sunday. No we don't. But you're here and we're glad you're here we're going through the book of Ephesians verse by verse and for the first three chapters Paul's had one thing in mind and that is to remind us of what we once were to remind us of who we were before Christ came into our life and started making a difference.

The first three chapters Paul wants us to remember we were all in spiritual darkness dead in our sins following the waves of the world. We were children of wrath like he wrote. Like the rest of mankind we were living out the passions and desires of our own flesh of our own minds and Paul. But he doesn't want to leave us there to wallow in our past. That's not his point.

In the first three chapters he just wants us never to lose our amazement that God has made us alive together with Jesus he doesn't want us to forget where we've come from.

He's encouraging us to be grateful for the matchless grace of God poured out on us through the shed blood of his own son Jesus Christ for our forgiveness rescue rescuing us out of darkness and into his, what Paul says his marvelous light. That's what Paul wants to do in the first three chapters.

Now right before he takes us into the deep waters of Chapters 4 through 6 to show us what it looks like to live in that marvelous light what it looks like to live every day based on the difference Jesus has made in our lives. He you get the sense that he realizes we just need to stop for a second and take a deep breath. It's one preacher said just Paul, it's almost like he just wants to stop before he launches into Chapter 4 just so that we can take an inhale of God's grace because we're going to need God's grace in order to to live out this Christian life.

And so he prays this prayer over us at the end of chapter 3 a prayer that we would be filled with all the fullness of God through the inner strength that comes from the dwelling of His Holy Spirit that's already in us.

He prays this prayer and now we conclude the prayer. Today we talked about the prayer last week and now we conclude his prayer and you get the sense that he gets the end of his prayer. He's writing it down as he's praying and there's a sudden burst of adoration. This sudden burst of worship that he just launches into as he as he finishes his prayer and gets ready to write the next three chapters so that's where we come to today. Let's stand for the reading of God's word.

We're going to pick it up at the beginning of the prayer just to take a running start to the two verses we'll look out today. This is what we covered last week. Paul writes, for this reason verse 14 I bow my knees before the father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named that according to the riches of his glory. He may grant you to be strengthened with power

through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you are being rooted and grounded in love have the strength to comprehend with all the saints. What is the breadth and the length and the height and the depth to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God?

And now here it is, now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think according to the power at work within us to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever amen amen. That is the conclusion of his prayer. Why don't we pray before we sit?

Lord God in heaven I pray that you would just open our hearts wide open to the wonder of what your great apostle prayed here. God help us to see, help us to understand, the bigness of your greatness. God we pray you would increase our faith today and how good you are in the name of Jesus amen amen.

Well in these two verses it feels like Paul ascends to an even higher, I don't even know what to call it, a higher dimension of faith in our almighty God. He just kind of launches himself and I think these words at the end are meant by the Holy Spirit to bring us closer to God that God who will loan promises to hear and to answer our prayers? And so Paul just concludes this prayer by just broadcasting proclaiming declaring that God can do.

That's really what he's saying here. He is saying God is Able. Three of the most incredibly comforting words in all of the Bible, God can do it because he is able and it's a good reminder. It's a great reminder that although God is supreme although he is unequalled imperfect or transcendent this God we just worship is not impersonal nor is he disinterested in the details of your life.

That's where Paul is taking us. He's writing here he's ending his prayer and it reads in verse 20 almost like this staircase or this kind of ladder of faith that's climbing towards heaven and the God who can.

And so he wants to take us kind of up towards heaven to say hey this is the God we're praying to. And I think his first point of emphasis is that God can, and that God can do all that we ask all that we ask.

You see the prayer he just prayed for us and verses 14 through 19. It was already exceeding the limits of our finite faith in God. I mean he's praying for huge things. He's praying that we would be strengthened with power through his Spirit in our inner being. He's praying that our whole lives will be rooted and grounded in love. He's praying that we'll have the ability to comprehend the incomprehensible love of Jesus Christ for us through his death on the cross. He's praying that we would be filled with all of the fullness of God. That's pretty big stuff. And he wants us to know that not one single syllable of that prayer is beyond the possibilities of God's omnipotence.

God can do all, all that we ask.

I love the prophet Jeremiah I'm just wondering if Paul maybe had these words in his mind from his old testament and Jeremiah 32 God or Jeremiah says Ah Lord God, it is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your orchestrated are are your outstretched arm; nothing is too hard for you. And don't you love that, it's almost like childlike faith. Jeremiah I had this epiphany.

It's like oh God, you made all this. Nothing is impossible for you it's like it dawned on him. And I think maybe that's Paul's point. He prayed that we would be filled with all the fullness of God. Now I just between me and you I have no idea what that means. I tried to explain it last week. I did my best to try and get my head wrapped around what Paul was praying.

Here's my conclusion. I'm not even sure Paul knows exactly what that means in the sense that it's so big to think that we would be filled with the fullness of God. I don't know what that is but I wouldn't mind it being true. Like whatever it is it's positive right. I mean do you agree with me. Nod with me so I don't think I'm nuts up here, like do you want the fullness of God in you. I think that would be cool. He's asking God for that. It's huge. And he's saying I prayed that because God has already filled us with his holy spirit and if God is willing and able to put his very own holy spirit in us then we could surmise that God can do all that we ask.

I think Paul is saying don't ever ever be reluctant to ask God, don't be afraid to ask God because God can do all that we ask. Nothing is too hard for him but he doesn't stop there. Not only can God do all that we ask but God can do more than all that we ask or think of asking. That's what he's saying here now to him who is able to do more than we can think ask or think.

I wonder if you've ever been in that place in your life. Most likely a place of trial and tribulation that place where you don't have the words you don't even have the words to pray. It could be you've been praying a long time about something and nothing seems to be changing and you get to that place. I have to tell you I've been here. That place feels like you're at the bottom of the barrel of your supply of faith that feels like you're just at the end of the rope you're just hanging on by your fingernails. You don't you just run out of words you don't even know what to ask God for anymore because whatever you're asking certainly isn't happening.

Guess what, God's not limited by that. We can find comfort even in those moments. Romans 8 reminds us of these precious promises. Likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know what to pray for as we are. But the spirit himself intercedes for us while with groaning too deep for words the Spirit intercedes for the Saints according to the will of God.

You see because God's spirit is in us we we're never left to ourselves to know how and what to say and ask God for even in those moments when we don't even know what to ask God for. And so the good news the comforting news is that God's own spirit that resides in his children carries our needs to God himself especially when we're too spiritually weak to know what to even pray anymore.

Paul says God can do all that we ask. He can even do more than we ask or more than we can even think to ask. That's good news. That's that's that's comforting but Paul's not done yet. Not only can God do all that we ask and more than we all that we ask. But then he says God can do far more abundantly than we can ask or think. You see it right there in verse 20. It's as if Paul wasn't willing to limit God with the ability to just do more than we ask. So he adds far more. And this is how I picture it.

Paul's writing is letter and he's just praying he's writing out his prayer and he's going Hey you guys I know what I just prayed for you seems crazy. But listen God can do what we ask no cross that out. No no God. God can do more than all we can. No it's not. God can do far more abundantly than all that we ask! That's it just you get the sense that with childlike faith he's just like don't limit God. Don't put any limits on God, here because he can do more than you can even think about asking him to do.

That's kind of exciting. Now let me give you a choice. Give me two choices, you pick one in your head. Choice A you can have God answer all your prayers, exactly according to what you ask him, that's your first choice. Choice two or B you can have God answer all your prayers to the fullest and highest potential for your good and His glory.

A you have a choice. You can have God answer every single one of your prayers exactly the way you ask him or B you can have God answer your prayers but only to the fullest and highest potential for your good and His glory.

What do you choose? Ok hallelujah. One person got it right. Now I would guess that most of you would choose B or at least many of you. Some of you are like well let me hold on here a second. You're still working on it but let's just assume that most of you would most of them in first service would because they're way more spiritual than us they got up earlier today than we did. But I'm guessing it's the same for the service so let me say something else.

If you choose B as awesome as it sounds that God would answer all of our prayers. According to the fullest and highest potential for our good and His glory. What this means is that he may lovingly refuse to answer our prayers the way we think he should answer them.

If we truly want B it's going to mean that we understand that God will need to from time to time maybe if not often refused to answer our prayers the way we're praying them there's a very famous poem that captures this spiritual reality. It's been around for I don't know decades longer than I can remember and but I can't find the author I think it may be an anonymous poem. Several of you have heard it. Some of you have it in your Bibles or on a bookmark. You'll recognize it I think. But listen to how this poem expresses what Paul is writing about here.

I ask God to spare me pain. God said no suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me. I ask God to make my handicapped child a whole God said no her spirit is whole her body is only temporary. I ask God to grant me patience. God said no patience is a

byproduct of tribulations. It isn't granted. It is learned. I ask God to make my spirit grow and God said no you must grow on your own but I will prune you to make you fruitful. I ask God for all things that I might enjoy life and God said no. But I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things and I ask God to help me love others as much as he loves me and God said finally you have the idea.

You see sometimes God doesn't remove the mountain but instead he gives us the strength to the climb it. And I think that's what Paul is wanting us to see. I think it's what the prophet Samuel had in mind when he wrote and Samuel for Samuel 22 this God His way is perfect 2nd Samuel 22 I'm sorry. His way is perfect. The word of the Lord proves true. He is a shield for all those who take refuge in him so when we don't see God answering our prayers exactly the way we want to let's learn to be willing to trust that God is able to do far more abundantly than we can ask or even think of asking because he is committed to answering our prayers to the highest and fullest potential for our good and for his glory.

Is it any wonder Paul sings in verse 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever amen. You see I think Paul singing right here. I think he's writing and he just broke out in song and just started singing. I have no evidence for that, I can't prove it, I just think that's what Paul's doing. I can't wait to get to have and I'm going to ask him. Paul tell the truth when you were right in the end the chapter 3 did you just start singing that. I think he's going to say, "Of course I had to I couldn't help it."

He saying your god cannot only do the impossible for us. But I think number two he's saying God can be seen through us he will be seen through us in verse 21. Paul ends his praise for God's unlimited power by acknowledging that the grand purpose of his power is so that his glory will be seen in all the earth forever and ever.

What is it about God's glory that he wants the whole world to see it? Why is Paul declaring proclaiming and praising and singing to God Be The Glory? Why is that so important? I think we have to understand what God's glory is. Let me define it first and then it might make more sense God's glory is a visible beauty of His infinite greatness and worth. Go ahead and put that up there. There you go. Underlined the word visible, God's glory is the visible beauty of His infinite goodness and worth. It's the visible expression of his perfect an excellent character of Paul's declaring that God's unlimited power and wisdom in answering our prayers is first so that God can be seen in his church. He says right there in verse 21, to him be glory in the church.

It's through God's divine abundance and power in our lives that we see the glory of His goodness and kindness. It's in our lives that we see the glory of his patience and his forgiveness the glory of his wisdom and his compassion the glory of his strength and his comfort.

Peter wrote it this way and first Peter Chapter II. You are a people of his own possession. Here it is that you may proclaim the excellence's of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light the excellence's of him. We are to proclaim that that is his glory. The visible

beauty of His infinite greatness and goodness and worth it is God's people who are meant to showcase God's excellence's in our life together.

And so when we witness a brother or sister in Christ go through a horrible loss or tragedy in our life but miraculously they never seem to lose their joy. When we witness a brother and sister and cries experience painful betrayal in their life but they remain close to God. When we witness a brother or sister in Christ in this thing we call life together as the church make horrible sinful choices, yet through their humility and repentance God redeems their life giving them a second chance. When we witness a brother or sister in Christ forgive someone who more than anything else deserves their vengeance or their punishment, we are declaring the excellency's of his glory amen. That's where we see it all day long. One thousand nine hundred and four of you in one hundred and sixty two life groups see His glory in each other.

Paul's declaring that because God can because God is able as Glory cannot only be seen in the church but now he says God can be seen in his son and this may go without saying but think about this he says glory to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus.

You see it's through though Jesus is fully God the glory that is his is that he willingly took on human form and it's in his human form that that God provides not only the church but the whole world with the visible beauty of His infinite greatness and worth and goodness. In fact that the writer of Hebrews captures this perfectly.

I want you to turn to the right to Hebrews I want you to hurry. Hebrews chapter 1 hurry up. You guys are listening a little too slow this morning we need to hurry up. Hurry up the listening, Hebrews chapter 1. We're talking about the fact that God wants the whole world to see his glorious starting in the church and starting in his son. Look at Hebrews chapter 1 long ago many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom also he created the world. He Jesus, here it is, is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature and he upholds the universe by the word of his power after making purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high having become as much superior to Angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Look at verse three. He is the radiance of the glory of God in his life of perfect obedience, Jesus said yes to God's law in our place. When we in our disobedience were saying no. In his death on a cross Jesus said yes to God's judgment taking our place so that we might not have the bear it and being made sin for us His body was buried in dishonor but it was raised in glory, Second Corinthians chapter 5.

And so we see everything we will ever need to see and know about God in the sinless life substitutionary death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ Amen. That's where we see all of God in the face of Jesus. And so with all that Paul proclaims back in Ephesians chapter 3 at the end. To God Be The Glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations. Forever and Ever Amen.

And so here's the question Why does God insist on being glorified is he some needy vacuum in need of our approval or our adoration. Let me give the answer to the question Why does God insist on being glorified. Here's the answer. Because the glory of God is what we were made for. It's the goal of our very existence. To see the visible infinite beauty of all of his greatness and worth you see Psalm 19 tells us that the heavens are telling of the glory of God, God created the heavens as we sang today to a roar of His glory. In Isaiah chapter 6 verse 3. We're reminded that the whole earth is full of his glory. God created the whole earth to reflect his infinite goodness and greatness.

So God's glory fills all the earth not so that he can satisfy some celestial need for our approval no god is to be glorified because here it is God's glory is the source and some of all full and lasting joy.

It is why we were created to know and experience the glory of God forever and ever which is the only thing in this crazy mixed up world that can provide us with lasting joy. In this sin broken Joy robbing world that we are living in we see the glory of God and it's in that that we find all of our joy.

Is it any wonder that Paul explains in Second Corinthians chapter 4 that Satan worked so hard to blind the minds of unbelievers? Second Corinthians 4 tells us of Satan working overtime the blind the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel; and in that same chapter Paul writes these words just a few verses later he says, For God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge here it is of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

The goal of our salvation is so that we can see again, the goal of our salvation is so that we can see that which sin blinded us from. Blinding us from seeing the infinite beauty of all of God's goodness and greatness and worth. And I pray that most of you in this room can see it today. You can see his glory the glory of this infinite God who can do more than we could ever ask or even think of asking abundantly more.

He is the God the only one true God and source of all of our joy. I pray that today our eyes would be open greater than ever with greater faith. Never being afraid to ask God.

Lets Pray. Father in Heaven may we be a church filled with perfect vision perfect eyesight. God may we be a church with our spiritual eyes clear and focused on the infinite beauty of your majestic goodness greatness and worth. Oh God I pray that we would see it in each other and I pray we would always see it in the face of Jesus. God I pray for those who don't see it. I pray that today might be the day of their salvation. In Christ name amen.

Truth be known. Some of you don't see it. Listen to me now. If you find yourself thinking whoa I want that but I don't see it. There's only there's only a few reasons why you don't see it. A. you've ignored Jesus. You just kept Jesus out there somewhere you heard about him but you

just don't bother with them. B. you've mocked Jesus. You just say you know what Jesus is cool whatever. But there's all kinds of Jesus is out there and you and you and you mock him by putting him on the same level as you know man made religions in Gods or third you've just flat out rejected him. You don't necessarily disagree with him. You don't necessarily hate them you just don't want anything to do with them. In those three cases you will always remain spiritually blind. That's what the first three chapters of Ephesians was about. But Jesus came so that the blind may see and the deaf may hear.

If you find yourself right now saying I am ready I want to I want to repent of that. I want to ask Jesus to forgive me of rejecting him or ignoring him or mocking him I want him to forgive me of all my sins. I want him to be my savior I want him to come into my life and forgive me and let me see the glory of God in him. And that's why they're standing here right now if you want to come and say hey how do I take that first step what do I do? That's why they're here, they've been where you're at, they know what that first step is like come before you walk out of the room and may this be the best Christmas you've ever had.

And if you just need someone to pray with you because this holiday season is tough for whatever reason, just come on up and say hey can you just say a prayer for me, we're going through it this week, I just need God's grace right now they'd love to pray for you.

Then we'll look forward to being back together, Christmas Eve there are six services there all exactly the same. Pick one, hopefully we'll all fit.

See you next weekend.