

## DOXOLOGIES

### SERMON #3: HIS POWER ENERGIZES US, GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST [Eph. 3:20-21]

Doxologies: To him be glory....

*Eph. 3:17-19 - (May) Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

***Eph. 3:20-21 - 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.***

#### Introduction

About one-fourth of the NT occurrences of the word “glory” outside the Gospels are in Paul’s early letters (Gal, 1Th, 2Th) and prison letters (Eph, Phil, Col, Philm). Today’s text is one of my favorite doxologies, texts, sermons. God’s glory in the church, God’s glory in Christ Jesus, forever.

The formula begins to sound familiar, power, to him who is able.

Before we study the doxology, we must see the context.

#### Text and Context

We are concluding Part One of Ephesians. Paul has presented the foundations. Now we come to the climax, describing God’s eternal purpose, Christ, the church, all believers together, peace and unity. God’s fullness made manifest and visible in the world.

A concluding prayer, 3:15ff.

Do not miss the irony in vv. 17-19—may you comprehend that which is incomprehensible; may you experience (know) that which is beyond understanding.

These ideas are what excite me about Christianity. Things happen beyond my expectation, God acts unexpectedly, spontaneously, incredibly. How is it possible?

- Christ’s dwelling in us through faith
- We can be rooted and grounded in love, God’s love for us
- We are strong
  - To comprehend profound things
  - To know the love of Christ
  - To be filled with God’s fullness

That would be enough, WOW. One sermon would hardly be enough to grasp such things. But that is only introduction to the doxology.

#### Power

Power described, bigger than you have ever thought. Beyond your mind’s capacity. Abundance, our thinking and imagining, our planning and dreaming are puny by comparison. We measure the things that impress us, and God looks at something bigger. We live in physical realities; God’s goals are for spiritual realities. We think in the ways of our culture—measure involvement, participants, dollars, budgets, buildings. God see the harvest that will occur with few or with many laborers, the harvest that will occur with few or many dollars. God sees multitudes. God sees multiplication and we are using addition.

I do not claim to understand it, but I have seen something of God’s power. Hard field, difficult place, church triples in a little over a decade. Different place, church doubles in 8 years. These are not 10 to 20, these are not little places. We are talking hundreds, doubling, tripling. Quickly.

A church adds 25% to its membership, 33% to its membership, in one year. 150 to 200. A church goes from nothing to 500 in 10 years, it keeps adding, 100/year. Making disciples, baptisms, discipleship.

I share specifics because we think it is not possible. We do not preach like it is possible, we do not assemble like it is possible, we do not know how to do church, the practice of the NT church. We have methods, but we do not have Spirit. We suffer from the sameness, we do not expect anything different.

There is so much I would like to say, but the point is only that we grasp the point of God's power. This is of God. Get out of God's way. Let go and let God.

### **Power within us**

Now another incredible truth, God makes it possible for his power to operate within us, to energize us (literally). Our energy for doing God's will is not of ourselves. "According to" reminds me of last week's study. God's power, according to... Within us! Do you believe it? What you cannot do, God can do. God will do. Abundant, beyond human capacity.

### **To him be glory**

In the church. The glory of God dwells in the church. Can you believe it? Can the world see it? Can our neighborhoods see it? Can our friends see it? In the church means also, in each one of us. God's glory dwells in us, partakers of the divine nature, image-bearers; image of God people. How does your life need to be changed so that the glory of God dwells in and is visible in the church? So that people see Jesus in us.

In Christ Jesus. Seems more obvious. God's glory dwells in Christ Jesus. This is not locative, in the body of Christ, in the church. This is more likely "in the gospel of Christ Jesus." In the power and wisdom of sending his Son, all that has been said in Chapters 1-3.

Forever and ever. Throughout all generations. Without end. Always.

Forgive me for not expanding these points in these written notes. My heart and mind overflows with explanations and examples. I trust you will let the text function in your own life and that you also will seek to be impressed personally with the message of this doxology!

This doxology is one of the more easily memorized because it has been set to music. *"Now to him who is able to do, immeasurably more, than all we ask or imagine, according to the power, that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations!"*