EPHESIANS 3:14-21

*“The Inner Man”*

**Scripture:**  Ephesians 3:14-21

**Memory Verse:** *“...to be strengthened with might through the Spirit in the inner man.”*

Ephesians 3:16

**Lesson Focus:** To be filled with the Holy Spirit in the “inner man.”

**Introduction:** “Strength Test”

 Ask the kids: How many of you like tests?

 Well, we are going to have one here today.

 We are going to have a “strength test.”

Tell the kids to lie on their bellies. Say, that we are going to see how strong they are? Tell them that you will count to 3 and they are to do as many pushups as they can.

1, 2, 3

(Make it fun and have some leaders participate.)

Say to the kids, some of us are physically stronger than others – but today we are going to talk about getting strong “Spiritually” on the inside.

**Activities and Craft:** Coloring Page, Activity Page

Craft for 1st and 2nd Graders: “Strengthened by the Holy Spirit” Necklace

**Bible Study:**

Last week when we ended our lesson with Ephesians 3:13, Paul was encouraging the Ephesian believers to not lose heart, to not give up. He knew that they might be discouraged because Paul was in prison. Now as we move to verse 14 we will see the beautiful prayer that Paul prays for them.

**Ephesians 3:14-15: *The Reason for Prayer***

√ What was the reason that Paul was praying for them? Because he did not want them to be discouraged that Paul was in prison.) Paul was the one in prison – but he is thinking of them and how they were taking that news. Paul actually began this prayer in Ephesians 3:1, but then got side-tracked by discussing the “mystery of Christ.” But now he gets back to his prayer for the Ephesians believers and for us. He even uses the same words; “*for this reason”….*

When Paul says that he is kneeling in prayer this was not a common practice at this time. Jewish men did not kneel in prayer – they would stand. But Jesus modeled kneeling in prayer, (Luke 22:41) and I’m sure his disciples followed Jesus’ example.

√ From verse 15 – how is the whole family in heaven and earth named? Once we believe in Jesus for our salvation – we belong to God’s family. (Ephesians 2:19) God is our heavenly Father for all of those who believe.

**Ephesians 3:16 – 19: *The Prayer Requests***

1. **Prayer Request #1**: “Strength” Ephesians 3:16

Paul knows that God has infinite “riches” of grace that He wants to give to His family. Just like a millionaire that dies and leaves all of his money to his children. God will give to us, out of His riches of grace; all of the spiritual blessings that we need to live out this life. Our Heavenly Father will give to us the strength that we need.

√ But how are we strengthened? (By His Spirit)

√ Where are we strengthened? (In the Inner Man)

√ What is the “inner man?” (Our soul, and the part of us on the inside that belongs to God.)

√ When someone gets sick – whom does he go to get better? (A doctor)

We can only be strengthened on the inside by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are trying to live the Christian life in our own power – we will not do well. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the power of God.

2 Corinthians 4:16; *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet he inward man is being renewed day by day.”*

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**Jesus**

**Old on the outside**

**New on the Inside**

The Bible clearly teaches that every day we can change on the inside. But we need the power of the Holy Spirit to do that in us. We can grow stronger and stronger on the inside – even though we are growing older and older on the outside.

1. **Prayer Request #2:** Fullness of Christ; Ephesians 3:17a

Paul prays that they will be “full” of Christ. When we believe that Jesus died for our sins and that He is the only way to God…then the Holy Spirit comes and lives inside of us. Have you ever heard the phrase “I have Jesus living in my heart?”
When we believe we get the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit helps us become more like Jesus.

 √ Do you understand who the Holy Spirit is?

√ Do you understand how important the Holy Spirit is in our lives?

√ How can we get more of the Holy Spirit’s power?

√ How can we be “full of Jesus?

1. **Prayer Request #3:** Love - Ephesians 3:17b – 19a

√ What does Paul mean by being “rooted and grounded in love?”

Illustration #1: Plants: Bring in a small plant. Ask the kids if they know how plants grow?

(Being planted in soil and watering helps the roots to grow. The roots get all of the water and the nutrients to the plant so that it will grow. Without good roots – the plant would die.)

Illustration #2: Buildings: Any building needs a good foundation. What happens if the foundation crumbles? (the whole building would fall.)

Paul knows that our “inner man” needs to sink our roots deeply into the love of God. Paul also knows that God’s love needs to be our foundation. When we meditate on the love of God and how much God loved us to send Jesus as our Savior – then our roots and foundations grows.

But Paul gives us even a bigger “picture” of God’s love.

He tells us he wants us to get our “brains” around the fact of:

 The width of God’s love

 The length of God’s love

 The depth of God’s love

 The height of God’s love

 √ Why is Paul using all of these words of measurement?

 Because you cannot measure God’s love – it’s beyond any measurement!

This is our “spiritual exercise,” to continually try to grasp or to “take hold” of God’s unmeasurable love. This is to be our life’s spiritual exercise. This is something that we need to do every day. We need to spend serious time thinking about and reading about and praying about God’s love.

√ Do you do that?

√ Will you try to do that this week?

But we do not have to do this alone. We are to do this with all of the saints or God’s church. We are to come together and spend time helping each other begin to grasp the love of God. And to realize that the love of Christ passes anything that we can comprehend. Together we can focus on Christ’s love!

 **Prayer Request #4:** The “fullness” of God; Ephesians 3:19b-21

Paul wants us to know the love of Christ. He wants us to meditate on the Cross and what Jesus did for us. When we do we will be “filled up” with the fullness of God. That is why Jesus presents Himself as the “living water” that will never run dry. When we think about Jesus and spend time getting to know Jesus better – then the Holy Spirit fill us.

Jesus is the “fullness of God.” He and the Father are one and He represents exactly who God is. In other words – there is nothing missing out of Jesus’ life.

1. John 1:14
2. Colossians 1:19
3. Colossians 2:9

√ What do you do when you are thirsty? (you drink)

Illustration: You may bring in a pitcher of water and a glass. Pour into the glass as you talk to the kids about thirsting for God.

Our souls are constantly thirsty. When we spend time with God through prayer, bible study and worship then it’s like taking a drink from this cup. We realize how much God loves us and it fills us up with Him. The Holy Spirit does this in our lives and we can never be full enough. Daily we need to ask God to fill us.

Isn’t it amazing that God wants to do that!

Paul says at the end of his prayer that God not only wants to fill us with who He is, but that He wants to do it exceedingly abundantly above anything that we ask or think. God wants to surprise us!

**Conclusion:** Just like you take care of yourself physically so that your body is healthy – you

need to pay attention to your “inner man.” We are missing out when accept Jesus as our Savior and then do not continue to grow. We are missing out on the “fullness of God”

Spend time this week asking God to fill you with the power of the Holy Spirit. Spend time with God so that you are overwhelmed with how much He loves you.