

Does your heart welcome Jesus or offend Him

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Ephesians / Prayer; Strength; God: Faithfulness / Ephesians 3:14–21

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Introduction

Many of you get stuck in a rut in your Christian walk.

It is as if you live as a Christian, but Christ appears distant in your life.

Its not as if, He has made His home in your heart, and so you might even wonder what is wrong.

I believe our passage explains the process that happens from being strengthened by the HS in your heart to being filled with the fullness of God for His glory.

I pray you will empowered inwardly, to welcome Jesus in every area of your heart, that will enable you to be strengthened through His Love to love others, to grasp the vastness of His love resulting in you being filled with the fullness of God for His Glory.

How to have a welcoming heart for Jesus?

1. Divine empowerment 14-16
2. Divine residence 17 a
3. Divine love 17b-19a
4. Divine fullness 19b
5. Divine glory 20-21

1. Divine empowerment 14-16

Ephesians 3:14–16 *ESV*

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

After having digressed starting the prayer in Eph 3:1 Paul prays.

In Eph 1:1-3:13 Paul taught some of the doctrines of the Christian life.

But from Eph 3:14 on-wards, he begins to exhort the believers to live out the Christian life.

In Eph 1:15-23 Paul had prayed that the believers would know the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance and the greatness of his power.

But here in Eph 3:14-21 Paul prays that to the Father that He might strengthen the inner man that leads to Christ making His home in them , leading

to love and being filled with the fullness of God.

- 1st prayer he prayed they would know the power
- 2nd prayer 2 he prayed that they would **use the power, to be more Christlike(filled with the fullness of God)**

Its one thing to know your resources, but its another thing for the believer to actually use those resources.

A certain rich English eccentric named Julian Ellis Morris liked to dress like a tramp and sell razor blades, soap, and shampoo door-to-door. After a day's work he would return to his beautiful mansion, put on formal attire and have his chauffeur drive him to an exclusive restaurant in his limousine. Sometimes he would catch a flight to Paris and spend the evening there.

Many Christians live something like Mr. Morris, spending their day-by-day lives in apparent spiritual poverty and only occasionally enjoying the vast riches of His glory that their heavenly Father has given them. How tragic to go around in the tattered rags of our own inadequacy when we could be living sumptuously in the superabundance of God's unspeakable riches.(Macarthur)

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

Because of believers :

- being spiritually alive
- united in the corporate body of Christ,
- having confident access to God the Father,

I Paul bow my knee .

Paul was not prescribing a posture for praying.

Bowing the knee suggested submission to God the Father.

In Psalm 95 we see a similar image of submission and worship to the Creator God, that is the ultimate authority

Psalm 95:3–7 ESV

³ For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice,

Knowing the greatness of the power in Christ directed towards the believer, Paul prays in submission to the one in absolute authority(right to command and the power to enforce) for enablement of that power.

He prays to the Father

As a believer you too can come to the Father with your requests.

Paul describes the authority of God His Father.

15 the father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

Paul is not teaching the universal Fatherhood of God

The bible reveals 2 fatherhood.

that of Satan

John 8:44 ESV

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

That of God, in which the requirement to call God your Father is that you love Jesus.

John 8:42 ESV

⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.

Every family in heaven and earth named refers to the saint from all the ages, those in heaven and those remaining

They are the only ones who legitimately being named by God their Father

When you are saved, you come into Gods spiritual family and He is your Father.

In Gen 2:19 Adam named the animals, which implied Adam's authority over the animals.

Just as any parent in the OT named their children and had authority over them, so God names all the saints on heaven and on earth, which emphasises His authority over them.

That is why Paul bow's the knee, Its a way of praying with the understanding that God is in charge.

(a key to having a welcoming heart to Jesus is understanding that He is in charge, not you.)

16 that according to the riches of his glory

This phrase explains according to what standard God is being asked to answer Paul's request

If you ask someone who is rich to give you R50, and that person gives you 50 rand then that person gives you out of his wealth.

But if that person gave you say R100 000 , then he might be giving to you according to his wealth.

So giving according to the infinite wealth of God, it implies a staggering , limitless amount.

What does Paul ask for?

he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Paul asked His Father for divine empowerment.

The grammar indicates that there is some degree in doubt that God might grant this request.

It means ultimately that its in Gods hands whether He will do so and not your hands.(Its a prayer)

If its accomplishes His will, His purposes and plans, then it will happen.

In all prayers you should know that God can say no, later or yes to your requests.

Paul prayed that the believers might be granted to be strengthened(made strong, become strong, mightily strengthened)

Strengthened with what?

with power, (the potential to exert force in performing some function, **to have the controlling influence**, the influence over reality in a supernatural manner), to be the ability, the capability

What is the instrument God uses to strengthen the believer

Through His spirit.

The HS is the 3rd person of the trinity that strengthens the believer.

Where does this strengthening take place?

In the inner being, your heart which is your inner control centre.

A computer has an inner control centre called the CPU, which controls the actions of the computer.

A while ago I upgraded my CPU, to process things better on for my work.

Likewise a believers hearts, is upgrade, but not with limited man made power but the infinite power of God through the HS.

This includes your mind, your emotions, your attitudes, your conscience and your decision making.

In essence Paul is praying that God would strengthen the hearts(the inner control centre) of believers through His Spirit

Jeremiah 17:9–10 ESV

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

¹⁰ “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Even though believers have circumcised hearts, regenerated hearts, believers still have thoughts , emotions, desires, attitudes and decision making practices that

are worldly.

The remnants of the sinful nature continue to affect the believer after salvation in many areas.

To love God with all your heart, you need the power and enablement of the HS, to strengthen and empower you to think, feel, desire and decide to do Godly actions.

I know in my own heart, how often I fail, to love Jesus whole heartedly,

how often I worry which is sin,

I fear the world and sicknesses instead of God, which is sin,

I desire and lust for the things of the world that is sin.

I make decisions without consulting God which is sin,

Every day I sin in my heart. My heart, I confess is not welcoming to Christ in so many ways.

You and I need the HS strengthening to deny the self, to confess your sins, to repent, to forsake wicked thoughts, emotions and desires and to put on godly thoughts emotions and desires.

Application

the 1st key step to have a welcoming heart is to, repent and trust in Christ death and resurrection and welcome Him in as the one in authority

but 2ndly to understand your need for the strength of God in your hearts to think, feel, desire and do as God wants you to do.

That is something each of us should pray for, that God would give us that infinite power, to strengthen us in the core of our beings to honour Christ.

This will result in a second reality.

2. Divine residence 17 a

Ephesians 3:17 ESV

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

Dwell= to take up residence in, to reside, to settle down in, to inhabit.

John wrote that the Father and the Son would make their home(come and live with them) with the believers who might love Jesus and keeps His word.

John 14:23 ESV

²³ Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

So loving Jesus and obeying His word preempts Jesus and the Father residing with a believer.

But he also wrote that he would leave a prepare a place for them

John 14:2 ESV

² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Jesus promised that as he went to heaven to prepare a place for them and would one day welcome them there, so it would be possible for them to prepare a place for Him in their hearts now while on earth. He could come and make His home with them right here.

After Pentecost the disciples understood that the body of believers had become a temple of the living God and that God could through the HS indwell the believers heart.

At salvation Christ through the spirit enters your heart(your inner person, the controlling centre of your being) But even though He is in you, there still may be

many areas in your heart that is not under his submission.

Robert Boyd Munger, a Presbyterian minister preached a sermon which he later changed into a best selling book entitled My heart, Christ home.

In it he made an allegory, illustrating this passage

That Christ may dwell, could be translated that Christ be settled down and be at home in your heart by faith.

In his book he explains the doctrine that Jesus Christ through the HS will actually enter a heart, settled down and be at home there.

Robert illustrated the heart as a home with rooms.

The study(library) represented the mind, and as Jesus enters he finds trash and all thoughts of worthless thoughts and images of the mind, which he throws out and replaces it with His word and the image of Christ if you allow him.

The dining room represented the human desires and appetites for the things of the world (prestige, materialism, fame etc) (1 John 2:15-17). Jesus enters and does not eat any of these dishes, but states that food that would really satisfy is to deny these desires and to do the will of God.

The living room represents the quiet times you have with Christ, in which the believer has fellowship with Jesus through prayer and reading His word. Robert emphasised that Jesus waits there every morning desiring to have fellowship with you, but we often get so busy that we neglect this time with him.

The Garage being the work room in which the believer utilises his few skills and talents, yet when Christ enters in He through those meagre skills and talents accomplishes great things for the purposes of God. (John 15:5)

And so on and on Robert goes talking through various rooms of a persons life, and only as the believer cleanses the room of sin does Jesus settled down and

make it his home.

The point I believe Paul was making is that as the believer is strengthened by the HS, they are fundamentally strengthened to yield more and more areas of their heart and Christian lives to Christ which welcomes Christ, not only as the tolerated visitor, but Christ who is comfortable and settled and master in all the various aspects of our hearts through the Spirit.

The Character of Jesus becomes increasingly visible in a believers life.

1 Corinthians 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Application

1. You are the temple of the HS.
2. And Jesus wants to make his home in every area of your life, in your mind, what you think about, in your appetites, what you desire, in your time, in your actions and decision making.

Romans 8:13 ESV

¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

3. Will you allow Jesus to be master in all the various rooms in your heart.
4. Its worth thinking about every area of your life, your mind, your emotions, your attitudes, you decision making , your recreation, your serving in the church, your fellowship with other believers and asking this question, would Jesus be at home with what you are doing, would He be comfortable and even excited with what you are doing?

The third point, or the third result that flows out of Christ having His home in all areas of your heart is

3. Divine love 17b-19a

Ephesians 3:17–19 ESV

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

¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The result of Christ making his home (being settled down) in all the areas of your heart is two things

1. being connected and strengthened by His love to love others.

2. deeper understanding of his love.

1.that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Rooted=to be established, being fixed like a plant rooted in soil, taken root, personal footage of a believer,the sense of being connected to Christ, the life giving soil, the sustaining foundation.

Grounded= foundational, fundamental, become strengthened, provides a firm basis for belief or practice.

The result of Christ at home in your heart connects and sustains by His love and strengthens you to love others .

Like a hose pipe that is connected to the tap, to pour water, so your connected to the Tap of His love to share His love to others.

It secondly helps you understand his love.

May have strength or may have the ability, to comprehend (get the meaning of something, to understand and grasp) of the scope of His love

A love that covers all dimensions

As you are immersed in Gods word, as you walk in yielded-ness to His spirit, as Christ is made welcome in every area of your life, you grow with all the saints in a deeper understanding, a deeper comprehension of the the **vast scope** of the love of Christ.

like the longer you are married , the more you understand your spouse, in the same way as Christ has his home in your heart over time, you grow in your understanding of His Love, both in scope and quality

Not only a love great in scope, but also beyond our thinking.

and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,

The language Paul uses to describe the love of Christ is a love that beyond knowing, beyond human understanding/ thinking of love.

The language indicates that the believer is surprised and overwhelmed by the quality of Christ's love

“The early church Father Jerome said that the love of Christ reaches up to the holy angels and down to those in hell. Its length covers the men on the upward way and its breadth reaches those drifting away on evil paths.” (MacArthur)

God demonstrated this love in 2 ways:

1. He gave His son to die for you and me
2. He protects you (the believer) and gave eternal life

John 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in

him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 ESV

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Gods love :

- is sacrificial
- is self less giving John 15:13, it denies the self and gives to others
- is a fruit or result of walking by the spirit Gal 5:22-23

As you begin to grow and comprehend His love for you, it flows out in you loving others.

1 John 4:19 ESV

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

John 13:34, Loving others is commanded, but it also is an outflow of His love for you.

In application

If you struggle to love like Christ loved(sacrificially), might it be because Jesus has not yet settled as master in the various rooms of your heart.(Christ character is not seen in all the areas of your heart or life.

The tap of Christ love is opened only a fraction.

If Jesus has made your heart his Home, then your heart and actions will express the Love that God the Father has for you.

AS He does so the tap of His love opens more and more.

You should see it:

- in your love for you wife, or for your husband.
- in you love for your children
- in you love for your brothers and sisters in Christ
- in your love for your neighbour
- in your love even for your enemies.Mt 22:36-39

The inner strengthening by the HS leads(results) in Christ making His home in your heart, which results in Christ like love expressed and grasped results in the 4th point.

4.Divine fullness 19b

Ephesians 3:19 ESV

¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

19 that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The ability to comprehend the scope of Christ love and the love that surpasses human thinking results in you being filled with the the fullness of God.

As more and More of Christ love characterises your life, so more and more of Gods character fills the believers life.

God desires to fill you with Himself.

He wants you fully surrendered to Him, emptied of yourself, mastered by Christ,

strengthened in His love.

Loving God and loving others reflects the character of God, God is love.

1 John 4:16 ESV

¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

God's aim in your life is to reflect him.

Romans 8:29 ESV

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Paul closes of his prayer with a doxology.

He ends off in praise and worship.

Application

This is ultimately what it means to be filled by the HS and walk by the HS.

Living this kind of Life, is commanded By God and so it is not optional for you as a believer

Ephesians 5:18 ESV

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

Galatians 5:16–17 ESV

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

5.Divine glory 20-21

Ephesians 3:20–21 ESV

²⁰ 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,

²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Here we see Paul affirming that God is not limited, but that He can do far more than our limited minds can think.

Never doubt Gods ability.

Sometimes we think that God might not be able to answer a prayer. The issue is never His ability, but whether its part of His will and plan.

Jesus promised

John 14:12–14 ESV

¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Through out Paul's ministry, he often affirmed that the effectiveness was not based on his words or wisdom, but demonstrations of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:4 ESV

⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

Apart from Jesus you can do nothing.

This means that everything you do for Christ and the kingdom depends upon Gods enablement.

John 15:5 ESV

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

God spoke this universe into reality simply by His word,

He is more than able to do far more abundantly than all that you ask or think,

21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

In Eph 3:10 Paul had taught how the church was the instrument in his had to display his wisdom to the angels.

The church brings God glory

And Jesus Christ brings God glory.

John 17:4 ESV

⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

Your and my response to God should be to bow our knees and worship Him .

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

To do everything in life for His glory.

Application

We answer the question, how to have a welcoming heart for Jesus?

1. You should pray for the HS strengthening in your heart, to have the inner resolve, the inner strength to yield everything to Jesus.
2. Allow Jesus to be master of every area of your heart. This means to think through every area of your heart and Christian life. How, begin in prayer.

Psalm 139:23–24 *ESV*

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!

²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

then

- a. Have **quiet times** with Jesus in prayer
 - i. devote yourself to reading His word and spending time in prayer
- b. In your **thinking**, you need to
 - i. evaluate is this something Christ would want you to think about?
 - ii. forsake wicked thoughts
 - iii. fill your mind with His word
 - iv. Filter what you fill your mind with: Tv, media etc
- c. In your **emotions**
 - i. evaluate if these emotions honour Christ or are they sinful? like worry, sinful anger, sinful fear etc

- ii. Choose to think and act in a godly manner contrary to your feelings, and ask God to change your emotions to being more godly.(follow the biblical commands that God gives with regard to various emotions like Phil 4 for worry

d. In your **desires:**

- i. evaluate what you desire, is it permitted or forbidden by Jesus
- ii. If sinful, choose to do the will of God , confess yours sinful desire and ask God to fill your heart with godly desires

e. In your **decision making**

- i. evaluate the decision biblically, according to biblical principles and according to what Christ would want you to do..
- ii. walk in yieldedness to the HS
- iii. make decisions based on what will line up with Gods word and bring Him glory

f. In your **relationships** , love sacrificially because God loved you

- i. your marriage
- ii. your parenting
- iii. other believers
- iv. practice the one another s
 - 1. for brother or sister in Christ facing trials, it may mean caring enough, to contact, encourage and if possible practically helping that person.
- v. with unbelievers

1. for the unbeliever love by sharing the gospel
 2. for a stressed person love by praying and encouraging them
 3. for a needy person love by helping as you can
- g. In all the areas of your life, open it to Jesus to rule over.
- i. your recreation
 - ii. your closet sins
 - iii. your service in the church
 - iv. your time
 - v. your money
 - vi. every facet of your life

Confess your sins

Repent of them

Avoid places of temptation.

Yield to the will of God and to His empowerment and obey Him

and you will be welcoming to Christ.

People will see more and more of Jesus in your life.

You will be glorifying God.

In conclusion

How to have a welcoming heart for Jesus?

1. Divine empowerment 14-16 is in answer to prayer, through the HS in your heart
2. Divine residence 17 a is the result of a heart strengthened, to love Jesus and keep His word, results in Jesus and the Father making their home in the heart of a believer.
3. Divine love 17b-19a is the natural outflow of Jesus mastering all of a persons heart
4. Divine fullness 19b, is what characterises a persons life that is reflecting Christ like character in all areas.
5. Divine glory 20-21 God is able to do, more than we ask or think, and all glory goes to Him.