

w/b 24th May 2020

the next step

stepping out and following where He leads

Jesus' summons is simple - 'Follow Me!'

As His disciples, those who have responded to His call, the church is, by definition, a people on the move.

As Ruth said to Naomi, so His church says to Jesus, 'Where you go, I will go.' We are bold, therefore, both as individuals and as a local fellowship of believers, to step out in faith and to follow where He leads. 'The next step' is always the most important one and it's what that 'next step' looks like for ourselves that this series of studies addresses.



You can find the background to this short series here.

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12. Glory to God!

(Ephesians 3.14-21)

[w/b Sunday 24th May 2020]

“.. rooted and established in love ..”

After the ‘digression’ of vv.2-13, Paul finally gets round to the substance of a further prayer for the Ephesian believers.

Given that this is the second time in three chapters that Paul has prayed at length for them, it’s worth considering whether we ourselves fully appreciate the extent to which the health of our life as a local expression of the family of God is dependent on faithful and persistent prayer.

Do we rely on well-run ‘programmes’ – or on earnest prayer (not, of course, that the two are mutually exclusive categories)?

[There are 7 questions as ever, all important - but your Community Group may well choose to concentrate on just some of them. Key questions in this study are probably 1, 4 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

There should be, as usual, a video introduction to this study, available under ‘Resources/Live streams and videos’ on the website.

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1. **Read Eph.3.14-21.** Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians provides a great model for us: sometimes we wonder how we should pray for people and fellowships known to us: here’s how!

As a model for your own praying what helpful lessons do you learn from reading these verses?

Do you struggle to know what to pray when praying for other fellowships?

2. Read Eph.3.14-15. These two verses are important! They help us see why, point to how, indicate to whom, and explain to what end, we engage in such intercessory prayer.

When Paul writes "*For this reason*" to what is he referring?

Does 'posture' in prayer matter, or is Paul simply speaking metaphorically when he says he *kneels* in prayer?

Why do you think Paul specifies that it is before *the Father* that he kneels?

3. Read Eph.3.16-17a. The fact of Christ's indwelling His people by His Spirit is a given: what Paul is praying here is that they might have a growing awareness and experience of this reality.

Why is this awareness of Christ dwelling in our hearts so important – what difference does it make to you?

Why do you need God to “*strengthen you .. in your inner being*” to this end?

4. Read Eph.3.17b-18. Here’s the second part of Paul’s request to God for the Ephesian believers: his concern, clearly, was that the life of the people of God should radiate the love of God.

What do you think lies behind Paul’s statement that it is only “*together with all the saints*” that we can grasp the full dimensions of the love of Christ?

What has helped you to grasp how wide, long, high and deep is the love of Christ

How has that affected your living?

5. Read Eph.3.19. It’s not simply an intellectual ‘grasp’ of the love of Christ which Paul longs they may have, but a ‘knowledge’ of that which is so vast it can’t ever be fully known.

How can you know what surpasses knowledge?

What do you think Paul means by our being “*filled to the measure of all the fulness of God*” (compare Eph.1.23)?

6. Read Eph.3.20. Paul's intercessory praying was never merely a 'shopping list' of requests: at the back of his praying was always a desire that God's glory should be made known.

Do you 'limit' God in your prayers?

When Paul speaks of "*His power that is at work within us*" to what is he referring?

What difference does the knowledge of His power at work within you make in the way you live your life?

7. Read Eph.3.21. Paul's praying, like his ministry – indeed like his whole life – culminated in the ascription of glory to God.

How (if at all) does an ultimate desire for the glory of God alter the way you pray?

In what ways do you think Paul envisaged God being given glory in and through the life of the church at Ephesus? And in what ways is God glorified in the church here?