

Imperatives - Enlarged Vision and Experience

by Devern Fromke

The sermon calls for believers to seek an enlarged vision of God's purpose beyond personal salvation, emphasizing the need for spiritual growth and understanding.

Duration: 59:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:18, Ephesians 3:13-16, Philippians 1:12, Philippians 1:14

Topics: "Vision"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recalls a conversation with two young girls about writing a theme on God's ultimate purpose in the universe. He emphasizes that understanding this larger purpose is crucial for believers to truly grasp God's plan for their lives. The speaker suggests that this purpose revolves around God's son and his fulfillment and consummation. He encourages listeners to shift their focus from themselves and their own desires to align with God's larger purpose for his son.

Transcript

Seems always to be my joy and privilege the first night to look over the group and see who's here. And I can assure you tonight it's a real joy to see folk who've gathered from so many, many places. I marvel at the goodness of the Lord in bringing us together.

All the way from Seattle, Washington, and down in the southern part of California, Texas, Carolina, Michigan, Indianapolis, and Canada, and then all up in the New England states, Florida. Where did I miss? Germany. And we have some from Taipei, I understand.

And London. Oh, excuse me. That was not deliberate.

You know, yes, brother, I was registering that in my mind all the way from Manila. Well, why did we come? Why are we here? I am very much burdened for that. Because if it's just another conference, you could have found one at home much closer.

But I am sure that, as we suggested in the little brochure that went out, God, back in the days when Israel was gathered, blew the trumpet and they gathered because they wanted to hear a word from the Lord. And I am sure our gathering this year is not just because we have some little anticipation of a new blessing or a new joy or a new thrill, but that we are here with an expectancy that God will make more clear and more real than ever before that which He is doing in this hour. I must tell you, before we go to prayer now

and we look to the Lord in His word, I have been greatly burdened these last few weeks.

I do not know how to put it in words or how to express with just a deep sense within that this is a very important year in our gathering. And we are about at the verge either to settle into just a nice gathering or to press into the thing that God really wants for this country, that is, that which fits into His larger purpose. And I do pray that as we are gathered, there is that inner sense within, the cry of our individual hearts, O Lord, do not let us be satisfied with mere fellowship.

You will pardon my saying this, but as I gathered this evening before our evening meal, I thought, oh, isn't it wonderful having seen brothers so-and-so for a year and sisters so-and-so. And it's quite a family reunion after four years. It really is.

And some of you who have come that we haven't seen, we haven't been here before, but we've seen you in other places. It's a real joy. But you know, there's something, I was thinking there's something quite dangerous about just knowing one another after the flesh, just enjoying our fellowship, as it were, on this basis.

And it was one of the reasons I kept telling Brother Chase and some of the others, I would rather not come. You need another voice, someone who will really step on their toes. I'm beginning to love them too much.

It's harder. But I pray that the Lord will give us His own voice and there'll be a very real sense of knowing what He wants to say. And it'll not be Brother Sparks or Brother Kong or Brother Fronky, but it'll be the Lord speaking.

And that all this, the tendency to just gather for that kind of fellowship will be laid aside. There'll be the expectancy that we'll hear the voice of the Lord. Well, I don't need to tell you that because some of you have been praying about it.

You're as much aware of it as I am. But I would tonight, before we look into the Word, I would that we might gather our hearts now just in one cry unto Him and ask that He will speak to us and that we might honor the Holy Spirit in our midst. That's not a doctrine with us.

We must learn to honor His ministry. And that we will know what it is to truly exalt the Lord Jesus to His rightful place as Head and Lord. And how then best to glorify our Father.

Shall we pray together? Lord, we do not rush into Thy presence tonight. We do not come merely with our ambition or our desire for this meeting or these days of gathering. But we are here opening our hearts as a group of people assembled, claiming that we might truly know Thy voice in our midst.

If it would be the voice of a prophet that would shake and jar and stir and awaken the lethargy, the carelessness, the indifference that's so prone to commit upon Thy people, we pray that there will be that voice in our midst. If it needs to be the voice of enlightenment to lift someone who's been going through the bondage, heavy, struggling, needing Thy own liberty and victory, we pray, Lord, Thou will have that voice of comfort and encouragement of insight. And Lord, for Thy people who are gathered coming from various fellowships, we pray that there will be the enlarging of vision.

Oh, dear Lord, this is a desperate hour in which we live. We must have a word from Thee. We must have a clearer seeing than we've ever had before.

And we pray tonight that as we come to Thy word, the Holy Spirit may make the word very real and very living and very quickening, encouraging, strengthening. Give us that clear seeing, that crystal clear seeing, dear Lord, because Thou art here to breathe upon the word and to make it to be Thy word personally to us. We thank Thee tonight for gathering Thy people from such a wide area.

We pray, dear Lord, that Thou will break down quickly any of the things that hinder us in a real coming into a oneness of mind and spirit. Take away the strangeness. Take away our proneness, dear Lord, to be self-conscious and help us to lose ourselves in Thee and an expectancy in Thee.

We pray tonight, Lord, that Thou will take this service and may Thy anointing, Thy anointing be very real in our midst. And wherein, Lord, You have a word to speak to any heart. The point of the real need tonight, don't miss us in this first service.

Don't let us go along meeting after meeting just in a mere ritual or performance of some little service. But, oh, Lord, let there be a real sense of Thy Spirit unveiling, uncovering our hearts before us. We ask in the name of the Lord Jesus with thanksgiving.

Amen. Amen. I'd like for you to turn to the book of Ephesians tonight.

Ephesians chapter 1. I think in the times that we are sharing with you, perhaps the second session in the morning from now on, we will be asking the Lord to take us from day to day, but probably we'll be speaking on what I'd like to call some of the imperatives of this hour. The first that I want to share with us tonight is found in Paul's two prayers for the Ephesians. We know that in the first chapter and in the third chapter of Ephesians, we have two very wonderful prayers before us.

I like to call this first prayer in Ephesians 1, beginning with verse 15, a prayer for enlarged vision. Can you imagine the Apostle Paul considering this church at Ephesus, a church that has gone a long ways in the Lord? What would he share with them? What would their need be? Well, we'll look at it. Ephesians, the first then, is that prayer for the enlargement of vision.

Then when we get to the third chapter, I think that Paul's burden in prayer is for the increased experience in what they have seen. Not merely a knowing of some of these things, but the fulfillment of it in their life. So we have the first prayer of the enlarged vision, then the third chapter, the enlarged experience, or the fuller outworking of it in their lives.

I think I must be very open with you in this first service tonight and simply say that as I've moved among the Lord's people now for some 20 years in various places, I keep having an increased burden. I can't get away from it. It presses upon me once again tonight.

I do not see that Christendom or that God's people are going to ever come to that full thought the Lord has unless we can get a hold of this principle we want to deal with in chapter 1. Paul is praying. He says in verse 15, Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all

principality and power and might and dominion in every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

It seems that Paul reaches a point at verse 15 where the groaning deep within is, Oh God, that this people might see something more and something else, something larger. I like to put it in these terms. We'll try this tonight.

I don't know whether we'll need this light to be turned out. I like to picture it as though Paul is saying that here is the large framework. Here is the large framework that God wants us to live in.

He says, Oh, that their eyes might be opened. Oh, that they might see. See what? Oh, that they might grasp something else.

Grasp what? Here he's saying, first of all, in verse 18, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling. Another translation says, what is the nature of this calling that they have? And what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints? You see, the great majority of Christendom tonight is living not in what I call the larger framework or horizon of God's purpose and working, but I like to picture them pretty much right here. We usually start with Adam and the fall.

And we find man in his fallen condition, desperately in need of help. In this condition, we see man needing to be delivered from the slavery of sin and of the devil and the world and the flesh and all of these things. And our difficulty is that too much of the time we deal here in a small framework that's very wonderful and very necessary.

We speak of God's redemptive work at the cross, what he has done to deliver man from his fallen condition. But the question is this, why did God create man? So we'd have somebody to say, why did God create man? What was that purpose in his heart way back here in the beginning when God started the whole progress of things? I think we need to reckon with God's larger purpose and then see the redemptive purpose in its relationship to the larger thing that he's working on. Let us make a distinction then between God's redemption, his redemptive purpose, and this larger framework we call the eternal purpose in Christ.

It seems when Paul starts here in Ephesians, that he starts with God way back in the very beginning. Notice how verse three starts. It says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, way back here in the beginning, it says, according as he has chosen us in him before the casting down or before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

We start with God. This is Paul's starting point. We start with the God and Father who is looking from this horizon or this scope to this scope.

What is he working toward? What is the grand summation toward which all things are moving? What really is he after? This is the theme, the central, or let's say the overall larger theme that God has in view in bringing the real wonderful purpose of his son into focus. I remember, oh, it must be four or five years ago now, I was in a home down in South Carolina having some ministry. The first meal I ate at the home was a young man who was pastoring a small group.

I noticed two lovely daughters sitting at the table. One was an eighth grader and the other was a freshman. And in our getting acquainted those first few minutes, I saw they were very bright-eyed girls, very keen.

And I asked them, being a school teacher myself, I said, I wonder, do you like to write themes? What is a theme? Do you like to write themes? Their eyes both opened. They said, oh, we love English. I said, I'm going to be here for about a week, and I'd like to have you do something for me, and I will give you each \$2.50 if you will write a theme for me, a 25-word theme.

Oh, I don't know how much they'd had, but I'll tell you they were all ready to take my \$2.50. I could see them all reaching out because they were good students. And one of them looked at me and said, well, what do you want us to write this theme on? I said, well, that's a little more difficult to explain, but I want you to tell me what you think is God's great, glorious, ultimate theme in the universe. What is the thing that God really wants to do in this universe? If you can write that for me in 25 words.

Now, a theme is taking all these thoughts and developing them around one central idea. And I could tell with just a minute's look they thought we're going to get the easiest \$2.50 we've ever had. Never forget it.

I thought maybe I'd better spare them just a little bit of embarrassment because I'm kind of strict. When I hand out an assignment, I usually expect the right thing. So I said, now, just in case we get off on some tangents, I said, let's just talk a little bit.

What do you think God's great, grand, glorious theme is? What do you think the one thing that's most important to him that he's writing? What do you think that God's really after? The little eighth grader put up her hand and she said, oh, Brother Frommke, ever since, ever since I became a Christian and I invited Jesus Christ to come into my heart, most important thing to me has been getting saved and getting to heaven. And I'll not forget looking at her and saying, oh, how wonderful it is when the Lord Jesus comes into our heart and we know that we belong to him. We've been saved by the precious blood.

But I said, I don't believe that's the great theme of the scripture or the great theme that God is after. I said, no, I grant you up to this point, it's been the most important thing to you. But I asked the question and her eyes were quite quizzical.

She thought maybe they had a real heretic, just like some of you might at this moment, thought they had a real heretic at the table. I said, you know, did you ever stop to consider, did you ever stop to consider when God created Adam before he sinned and needed the Savior? Before man ever fell, what was the great purpose that God was working out? What was that wonderful thing that he had in mind? I said, if you can tell me what that is, then you can start writing your theme. Well, we went on for the service that night.

They kept scratching their brow every time they'd sit in the meeting. Won't you just tell us a little bit? I said, no, but I believe the Holy Spirit will. And I'd much rather have him tell you that larger thing that God is working towards in order that you can give yourself to it.

And your dedication and your consecration can be to that which God is after. Well, we discovered every time we got to the table and we got to talking, we discovered that the great majority of people are interested in God's purpose. Everybody will say, oh, praise God, he has a wonderful purpose.

Isn't that wonderful? And I'm interested in God's purpose, but the only difficulty is it's always God's purpose for, for me. And before we're through, we've got the whole universe. We've on God and

everything else that he's doing, and we read the whole Bible through our colored glasses.

And if we were to write our theme like these girls would have, we talk about the great, grand, glorious purpose that God has for me. Now, don't get alarmed. God has a purpose for you, but you'll never be able to really find them.

You'll never really be able to grasp. You'll never quite get what we're wanting to know of God's purpose for us until somehow we can get exploded out of ourselves as a center. And we can begin to see things in relationship to that larger purpose that he has for himself, which would have taken place if we'd never touched this globe.

That larger purpose that God has for his son, which is going to find its fulfillment and its consummation in his lovely son, and why he puts him out on display and holds him out is the object towards which our attention turns. Well, I'll not forget. I kept waiting service after service.

It was fourth night, I believe, in the meeting. We got into Ephesians. We began to talk a little bit.

I never can repeat the messages because we just stop and start sort of, but I remember we were talking from Ephesians, and I looked back, and I saw the light bulb go on in the freshman, and she began to write. I'm sure she had a hundred words before the service was over, and I said, twenty-five. You know, it's quite difficult for some people to be very brief.

It's been one of my big problems through the years, as some of you know. But God, through those days, I believe, really did something in the hearts of those two young girls. I'll never forget, and I've just sort of been praying, Lord, are there some more eighth graders and freshmen that we can include in what I would like to have God unveil as that larger, grand, glorious thing that He's working towards, which we need to get a hold of? You see, what happens is this.

When we start with man and the fall, and we get man saved, and he knows that he's saved, and he's saved by grace, then the average pastor sits back, or rather, has a difficult time with those who are sitting back in the church pew. The pastor pours out his heart week after week, Sunday after Sunday, trying to encourage and enthuse the people to be better Christians, to live, to give, and to do more for God. But they all say, in one way or another, when they get to the door and shake hands, don't get excited.

I say, what are you worried about? I say, I'm just waiting for the rapture. Don't get excited. We have created something in our country.

We have created in Christendom something that we don't like, but we don't know just what it is, or how we've done it. And I'm saying that a great difficulty tonight is simply that the great majority of people live within this little narrow framework, as though the full program and the only program, the really only thing that God is interested in, is just redemption. Now, bear with me for a little bit.

I know that shocks some of us, and I am just as concerned for seeing people converted, being really brought into a full knowledge of the work of the cross as any of you. But I know that something happened to me one day that I will never be able to explain. Something took place when my little, narrow vision exploded, and I began to see that God from the very beginning had planned something as a wonderful goal, as a wonderful purpose, that He was working out in His Son, and that sin was not necessary.

The fall was not necessary. Man didn't have to sin so that God would have somebody to save. We're not careful.

If we're not careful, we go around and we get the whole thing so mixed up that pretty soon God becomes responsible for sin. I say repeatedly tonight, God had something in His heart when He began this wonderful, glorious, eternal purpose that's in His Son that didn't require sin as a means for accomplishing or the fall. Now, I know that man sins, and so God is incorporated.

God has brought all of this travesty in as a means by which he can realize what he's after. But in no way is God responsible. Well, let's start where Paul starts.

Genesis, you remember, starts with Adam, at least the chapter after. But when Paul starts, it's before creation. He goes way back when things are still on the drafting board.

He goes way back when it's still in the planned stage. And I love this. It seems that he's saying in verse 4, according as the Father, as He has chosen us in Him, that is in the Son, before the foundation, before the casting down of a world system, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

It seems that what he's saying is, as he looks down to the very end, he's planned that he should have those who would be immediately before him as his joy, as his fellowship, in his love. Weiss puts this translation, and he says, those who are in his immediate presence continually before him. This gives us a picture of the enjoyment and the satisfaction he will have from these.

It brings us to see likewise that when he is satisfied, then we likewise enter into an enjoyment. So, he says, verse 5, having previously marked us out or predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself according to the good pleasure of his will. We've said on other occasions here, and I repeat tonight, that once God has lifted us from our sinful condition and has given us life in Christ, this life, this life is unto something and it is for something.

We're like a little babe that has life. We are a child. The Greek word is a *technon*, a little child who has just received the life of God.

But there's something else that God is working toward, and that is the taking of all of these who now come to share the life and placing them, placing them as they are individuals built together, framed together, shaped together, placing them as one new man, one corporate man in this glorious placing, then they become the sons of God, the sons in full rights, full privilege, full authority, living unto the thing that God has ordained. You see, our problem when we read this word adoption, our Western conception is going out to an orphanage someplace and bringing a child from some broken home or someplace where parents have passed off, bringing someone outside the family, bring them into our family. We say that's adoption.

Now, that's our conception of adoption. But as I understand through the Scripture, God's conception of adoption is the taking of one who is already in the family, one who already shares the life. And in the fullness of the time of the Father, in that fullness of time, the placing of that child in the position where he can share some of the rights, some of the privileges, some of the authority, the placing of that child as a son.

And so, instead of being a *technon*, they become a *heos*, H-U-I-O-S, one who then begins to enjoy the privileges of sonship. I don't know how far I should go in this. Some of you may have seen the investiture of the Prince of Wales the other day.

And I thought as I saw this queenly mother with a technon, a child, that's what he'd been up to that moment. There he stood and she took all of the marks, all of the things that she was going to invest him with in the placing of this son, this child, in a position of sonship. Now, it doesn't fit all that we're speaking of.

And yet I thought how wonderful. And when the boy child looked up and his mother was getting the crown ready to put on his head, he ducked under to help her a little bit. I thought he's been doing that since he was a baby.

You could see that coy look on his face as he was. You didn't see this, did you? You missed something, Brother Sparks. I thought of you as I was.

I thought, oh, how wonderful a picture this is of one who has been a child in the family all of these years, now finally coming to the place where he's receiving some rights and privileges. You remember Isaiah back in the Old Testament said, unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder and so on. And I thought when she was investing these rights, oh, how wonderful that one day God Himself is going to bring into position those who have been technons and enjoying right now the spirit of sonship, learning how more and more to walk after the Spirit.

But in that day when his son and the corporate son comes into the full position that God has planned and all things come to head up in Him, how wonderful, how wonderful the privilege that is ours. And this causes me to say then that as long as we're living in this little narrow framework, we're interested primarily in our inheritance. Paul says, beginning in verse 7 of this first chapter, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

We can think of all the things that become ours that are available to us because Jesus Christ died. Forgiveness, we have life, we have all of this that comes as an inheritance. What is necessary if we're to receive an inheritance? How do you get an inheritance? Someone usually dies, and it's through His death.

Jesus Christ died. We come to enjoy the inheritance, and this is it. All I think is saying of the Ephesians, oh, I want you to remember now, this is your inheritance through the death of Christ.

But there comes this deep groaning within, and you sense Him praying in verse 15, oh, that they might have an enlarged vision, not only seeing the inheritance that we have in Christ, but coming to the larger framework, He's praying, oh, that they might see, that they might grasp God's inheritance in the same. That is His inheritance, His inheritance. I think the majority of us have spent our life alive to what we get through Jesus Christ, what is ours, and we must not minimize it, never.

But there comes a time when God wants to explode this little narrow framework in which we're prone to live, and bring us to the place where suddenly we begin to see that which God has called His people to. And then the cry of the heart is, oh, God, that you might have your inheritance in the same. I honestly believe, brothers and sisters, that there's an undertone about every life that gives it away.

What do you mean by an undertone? There's something of a deep, a deep awareness that you have in every life. Either they are living primarily cooped up in what they can get from the Lord, what God can do for them, the things that they have through the work of Calvary, and that's about as far as they go. Or you sense that largeness, that expansion, that something that has brought them in line with the larger purpose

that God is after.

And just as surely as you sense or you hear that groan within a life, just so God gets something out of it, just so He is satisfied, just so He has the glory, the relatedness is always a different direction, always a different direction. But as long as I'm relating everything that's happening just to me, I have that deep undertone for me. How am I going to make it through? Is this necessary? I'll hold on to the bitter end.

That undertone gives us a way. But you hear something of the largeness in Paul's own heart back in Philippians. He says, brethren, I want you to know that the things that have happened unto me are for the furtherance of the gospel.

Whatever comes, just so the Lord can use it, just so God can work it around. All things work together for my good. I hate to admit how long I interpreted that verse that way.

I'll have to tell you of a missionary friend we were sitting one evening after service. She'd been on the field, I think, for two or three terms as I walked into the Parsonage that night. She's sitting by the fireplace.

I saw she'd been weeping. She said, sit down. After a moment or two of silence, she looked up and she said, you know, something really happened to me tonight.

I had an explosion. That was her way of putting it. I had an explosion take place.

I said, oh, tell me about it. She said, well, you know, for years, all my time on the mission field, I'd bite my lip whenever things were going hard and I'd pound my fist a little bit and I'd stiffen my backbone and I'd look up and I'd say, all things work together for good. But she said, all this time I'd been enduring because I knew it would work for my good.

She said, but oh, I've been miserable to work with. And if people only knew the inner complaint and the deep dissatisfaction and all the grumbling and complaining because here I've been so dedicated and consecrated to the Lord and yet he let all these things happen to me. She said, tonight God showed me how small my little world was, how everything that happened, I'd only been relating it to my betterment, my enlargement, my victory.

And she said, I've misinterpreted Romans 8.28 all these years. But she said, I found a new verse tonight. I said, oh, tell me about it.

She said, it's over in Philippians and I just quoted it to you. She said, I found that God has released me from relating things just to myself as a center. And like Paul, I can say, brethren, I want you to know that the things that have happened unto me are for the furtherance of the gospel.

Lord, if you can get something. You see, beloved, we can talk about the thing that was amazing to me as our dear sister opened up her heart. I found how much she knew about the cross and the victorious life and the deeper life.

We all have a lot of knowledge of these things, but there comes a time when God works a real explosion. A real explosion that somehow enlarges, enlarges, and we no longer see just the whole of our life in this little framework of being conformed to the image of the Lord and all the victories that God has wrought. I say tonight, and I don't want to be misunderstood, our big difficulty in Christendom tonight is that while people think they're living with a larger conception and their cry is, oh God, that you'll get your purpose

worked out, that thing you're working in and through Jesus Christ will be realized.

Yet all the time we have a peculiar way of relating it back. We have the knowledge of it, but we go through something. Why did this happen to me? Lord, I'm dedicated.

I'm more consecrate. Things seem to get worse and the pressure has come. Well, I wrote a book on this about seven years ago, and I'm just discovering in a whole new way how much knowledge I've had and how much God wants to bring it into reality.

Notice this phrase that Paul makes in verse 17. I want us to see it again. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

I wish I could hammer those three or four words there. In the knowledge of Him. In the knowledge of Him.

You see? All the knowledge that we get is to be a byproduct, but it's primarily the knowledge of Him. Oh, this is what we're after these days. You'll have to pray.

I am groaning that God will make this real to us in our fellowship together, but our problem is that we get so many bits of knowledge, but they're all unrelated and they're just knowledge out here, and God's wanting to focus us in upon the one that He's interested in. And then everything else flows out of this. The knowledge of Him.

We'll see, I believe, I trust. The knowledge of Him. The knowledge of Him.

Shut up to Him. The knowledge of Him. You see, everything that the Father is doing is, first of all, for His lovely Son.

He's put Him out on display. He's saying, I want you to see Him. The thing's moving to that end.

It's all being accomplished by Him. It's all being accomplished in and through Him. He won't let us get away from Him.

And so He's praying, oh Lord, oh Father, help them to see the larger framework, the eyes of their understanding, the inheritance that God is going to get in the saints, and the nature of the calling, the nature of this calling. Quickly, let us just look at a few verses in the third chapter. Once again, Paul launches in in the third chapter, and I find him getting to the same place about verse 13.

He's saying, oh God. He begins to pray, oh Father, that You will show them. Wherefore, I desire that ye faint not at the tribulation for You, which is Your glory.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, and that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

We said in this third chapter, it seems as though Paul is saying now that we get a glimpse of what God is working towards. Oh, that each one might know the inner strengthening, the inner expansion. Some people live in a mighty big horizon out here, but they've never had the inward enlargement, length and breadth and height and depth.

Oh, that God would enlarge right here to go along with right here. The objective, yes, the subjective enlargement to contain. And my prayer and groaning these days seems to be, Lord, let us get in the spirit of Paul's prayers, that as we fellowship together, that he will bring a newness and a freshness and an enlargement.

We'll not be content to live in our little framework, whatever it might be, but that God will enlarge in a way that's beyond our expectations. And I'm making this plea for us tonight. It will only come as we look to Him in this spirit of expectancy and prayer that I see in Paul.

It can't be taught. Minds that have been filled with so many verses, and you can quote Ephesians backwards and forwards. Only God can break in, make it livingly real.

But I believe He will as we invite Him to do that. This is the burden with which we begin the week. I know that there are those who may slip in and say, but aren't you interested in people being saved? I think it'll be an amazing week if someone doesn't really find the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior.

Every year now, this is the fourth year, we've had lives come who are in great bondage, needs, habits, yokes, things in their lives that fettered them. And I've had them saved, but thank God He has broken the bondage. He has set me free.

But you see, we're living, we're living in the larger framework of why God does this. Of course, He's interested in us, but He's likewise interested in liberating us unto the things for which He's laid hold of us. You look back through the whole history of Israel, and you find that there's one thing that rings out.

God was all the time delivering a people out of their immediate predicament, out of their bondage, and He was wanting to bring them in line and focus that they might be the people of His purpose. Here they are in Egypt, great bondage, crying out to get free from the yoke of the Pharaoh. How much did they really see? Well, God in mercy reaches down and He delivered them out of Egypt in order that He might bring them unto the things that He wanted.

The tragedy is that we only see our immediate deliverance. And you find the whole course of Israel follow right on through again and again. A leader steps in trying to enlarge, to bring them into the fuller things.

That same problem all through Israel's history has plagued the church and is our problem tonight. The question that confronts me continually as I deal with the Lord's people, Lord, how do you enlarge them to see what you want? We're so power conscious. We're so need conscious.

And in this day when all of the church is crying out and trying to be relevant to make the message relevant, to get right down and here we are. And God in mercy lifts and delivers. But if I understand the Lord's ways, He wants to bring us to see that which He has purposed, the large straight line thing He's working towards.

And that has a delivering power that liberates in a way that people can never be the same. We talk about God having a remnant in this day. We talk about the Lord raising up testimonies in various cities that can be a corporate expression of people who are built together.

But the cry that comes to my own heart as I move around is, oh God, you must have some people in whom it's more than knowledge and jobs and the material offers of this world. All of those things grow pretty dim because they've been caught by something that's bigger and else something better. And they're alive today.

Well, this is the burden of the week. Shall we pray? Lord, we would not impose our burdens on anyone. We want Thy burden.

We do not tonight, we do not tonight come into this first service merely to tell Thee what we want, but to open our ear and say, You lead us. You give us of Your anointing in Your direction. But we pray that in these days of fellowship, there will be a very real awareness that we are shut up for the Lord.

Oh, we want the fellowship with the Lord's people. We need the rest and the relaxation of getting apart. But I pray as regards each one, Thou will not let us miss Thy personal word, having unveiled that larger thing You're working toward.

Oh, dear Lord, help us to know our dedication, our giving to Thee and mine with it. We bring Thy people to Thee tonight. We claim in each heart there will be that kind of an exposure and that kind of a relief.

And Lord, we stand in need as we wait before Thee to know a fresh unveiling of Thyself hour by hour. Thank You for bringing us together now. Give us that expectancy of faith and confidence, we do ask in the name of the Lord Jesus with thanksgiving.

Amen.

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