

INTRODUCTION 引言

Our world craves after power. There are electrical power, nuclear power and even manpower. From faster cars to faster internet; from stronger detergent to stronger glue. People hope to run quicker, lift heavier and climb higher. They aim to get more done in a shorter time. Some people are envy of the powerful guys at the top as well. Paul talks about power in the book of Ephesians too. God is the ultimate power source. He ministers His power over all things. He chose those He intended to save before He created the world. He revives dead souls and gives them a new life. He reconciles the Jews and Gentiles to each other and to Him and form the universal church. He raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Paul says that the same power from God is now in every believer. No, it will not change us into super-heroes. Rather, God empowers us to live as His children. Paul closes chapter 3 with a prayer. He prays for the readers of this letter and for all Christians. He prays that God will inject His power in them. We need to constantly make the same request for ourselves and for our church. Years ago, the U.S. Army has a slogan: “Be All You Can Be.” We can modify it to become: “Be all God wants you to be.”

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. To Grow 增長

Paul asks God for three things in his prayer. The Chinese Union Bible makes those petitions clear by using three “that.” It may be less obvious in some English translations. The complicated structure in the Greek text also makes the meanings less direct. First, Paul prays that believers will grow in their strength. He says in verse 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.** This power is derived from the riches of God’s glory. It is mighty and unlimited. God has an abundant supply of power for us to claim. James the Bible writer says we will not get what we need if we do not ask God. But he cautions us that we will not get it if we ask with a wrong motive. For example, we want something for our own pleasure. But God will answer us if we pray according to His will. God’s general will is written in the Bible. Therefore, the more we know about God, the more we know how to pray. It is like the relationship between kids and their parents. When kids understand more about the values of their parents, they can discern what kind of wishes will be granted. Paul encourages us to ask God to strengthen our inner being. Paul presents this concept of inner being in 2 Corinthians 4. In the context, he says that our outer self, meaning our physical body, will continue to wear out. That is a fact you cannot deny when you come to a certain age. You will become less active and more absent-minded. You will have less energy, but more wrinkles. In comparison, Paul says our inner self, referring to our new life in Jesus, should continue to grow. In other words, we should strive for spiritual maturity. Then, we will have more patience, peace and joy. We will overlook our loss and people’s offense. We will focus less on earthly treasures but more on heavenly rewards. We will increase our love for God and people. We will learn to see things not from our perspective or the world’s perspective, but from God’s perspective. Brothers and sisters: is your inner self in Jesus getting stronger? As we grow old, we need to grow up in the Lord too! Paul explains that this growth is ministered by the Holy

Spirit. It is not like we just bite our tongue and say: “I will try a little harder today!” You should agree how undependable we are. We often treat ourselves too nicely too. A few minutes more on social media, phone call or games can turn into an hour or more. Things we plan to do today can drag onto tomorrow or even next week. I have enough failures to know that I would rather rely on God’s power. Just like the song lyrics say: “They are weak but He is strong.” Then we can do the things that please God. For example, we will leave our comfort zone and tell our friends about Jesus. We will have the courage to apologize to the people we offend. We can put our phone away and read the Bible. We tap into God’s power and grow in our inner strength.

2. To Know 認識

Paul prays that we will grow in our strength. Next, he prays that we will know more about Jesus’ love. Look at verse 17-18: **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.** It may sound strange for Paul to ask Jesus to dwell in us. Doesn’t Jesus live in us through the Holy Spirit the moment when we received Him? Here, Paul does not refer to the initial indwelling of Jesus, but His ongoing presence. Your parents may live in another city or overseas. Suppose they decide to move in and stay with your family. Then your house will become their home. When Jesus comes into our life, He is not a tenant but the owner. Have you surrendered your master’s key to Him? The longer Jesus lives in us, the more we should know about His love. Paul uses two words to describe the process. “Rooted” is an agricultural term, and “grounded” is an architectural term. When the foundation of a plant or a building is secure, then the above-ground structure can continue to expand. We know that Jesus loves us and He died for us. But there is much more about His love we need to understand. Jesus’ love is so real that we can experience it every day. For example, He provides for all of our needs at the right time. He forgives our sins when we confess to Him. He accepts us even when we cannot bear with our shortcomings. We can feel His love no matter what situation we are in. Paul uses four measurements to describe the magnitude of Jesus’ love: its breadth, length, height and depth. Paul is not teaching a geometry lesson here. Some Bible scholars interpret it the following way. The love of Christ is wide enough to embrace the Jews and Gentiles. Its length stretches over the human history. Christ’s love elevates believers to the heavenly realm. It also goes deep into the chasm of sin to retrieve us. His love is far beyond what our finite mind can comprehend. God chose His people even before the world came into being. Jesus died for us even when we still hated Him. His example of love should motivate us to love those whom we may consider less lovable. For example, people with a different background, personality or lifestyle. Many newcomers said that our church family welcomes them with open arms. You do a great job in showing love to them. Let the love of God be a signature of FCBC next to our food. Besides, we should love our church family too. We need patience toward those brothers and sisters who may hold different opinions. Very often, our disagreements have nothing to do with Biblical doctrines. Let us learn to listen more and argue less. We also need to ask God for grace so that we can overlook minor mistakes. We love people but hate conflicts.

3. To Show 彰顯

We need to grow in our inner strength and know more about Christ’s love. Thirdly, Paul prays that God will show His glory through us. He says in verse 19: **... that you may be filled with**

all the fullness of God. Paul is praying that God's greatness be overflowing in us. God has filled us when we are saved. However, we should keep pursuing the fullness of God. It is like a growing process from an infant to an adult. Paul says in Ephesians 4:13 that God hopes: **we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.** We see the same word "fullness" here. Paul highlights two areas of attention: unity of our faith and the knowledge about Jesus. He then goes on to describe that mature Christians should be like grown people in two ways of. First, they can discern right from wrong. Strong believers will not follow false teachings that contradicts the Biblical truth. Second, they can properly exercise their body functions. They will use the gifts and talents God has given them to build each other up in a church. Localized churches are stations God sets up in the world to show His glory. Churches are similar to franchised stores of a corporation. Every McDonald's restaurant or Shell gas station represents their headquarters. They cannot sell goods from their competitors. It works the same way in churches. Jesus Christ is our CEO. The Bible is our standard operating procedures. We preach the gospel and lead ministries based on God's Word. If we follow God's directions, then His glory will fill this place. It will shine so bright that it cannot be hidden. That reminds me of a conversation between a mother and her daughter. She was teaching the girl that God lives in those who believe in Him. The child found that notion fascinating. She pondered on it for a moment, she then responded: "Mommy, God is so big. How can He fit inside me? If He comes into my life, then He will surely squeeze out from my body!" That is so cute. But the little girl was exactly right. If the fullness of God is in us, His glory will be oozing out from our lives. We will brag less about ourselves, grumble and gossip less about other people, but thank and praise God more all day. We will attract less attention to ourselves from our good work, but reflect God's glory to others. People outside of our church can see that God is actively working in here. They can find genuine kindness from people who give without expecting anything in return. Then they will not only come here for physical food, but also seek after spiritual nourishment from God.

CONCLUSION 結論

God has a purpose for each of us and for our church as a whole. God hopes that we can be all that He wants us to be. The three things Paul prays for are the results of God's work. Paul hopes that God will strengthen us with His power, increase our knowledge of Jesus' love and fill us with His fullness. God takes the initiative in all three areas. However, we must allow God to work in us. We must submit to the Holy Spirit. Then we will have the desire for spiritual pursuits. Let me conclude with an analogy. Most of us have a cellphone. It can perform a lot of fancy functions depending on what Apps you installed on it. Every Christian has the same App called the Holy Spirit in them. The Holy Spirit has been downloaded to your life when you received Jesus. He stays in you and will never leave. For a phone App to exercise its functions, you have to activate it and use it. Then your phone will turn into a GPS, a TV, etc. Similarly, we must activate the Holy Spirit before He can perform His functions. We yield to Him and let Him direct our thoughts, speech and actions. Then God can use us for His purposes. We show grace to others rather than getting mad. We forgive and not hold grudges. We encourage others instead of criticize. We become compassionate but not indifferent. We let the Lord take over and direct our lives the way He intends us to be. If everyone is like that, then our church will become a channel of God's blessings. Do you want to see that happens? Will you pray the way Paul prays?

INTRODUCTION 引言

我們的世界渴望能力。有電力、核能甚至人力。從更快的汽車到更快的網路；從更強力的洗潔精到更強力的黏膠。人們希望跑得更快、舉得更重、爬得更高。他們的目標是在更短的時間內完成更多事情。有些人也羨慕那些坐在高位置上有權力的人。保羅在以弗所書也談到了能力。神是一切能力的終極源泉。祂運用祂的能力掌管萬有。祂在創造世界之前，已經揀選了那些祂計劃要拯救的人。祂甦醒沈睡的靈魂，並賜給他們新的生命。祂使猶太人和外邦人彼此和好，並與祂和好，組成了普世教會。祂使耶穌基督從死裡復活。保羅說，現在每一個信徒都擁有同樣來自神的能力。它不會把我們變成超級英雄。神給予我們能力，是要使我們活得像祂的孩子。保羅以禱告結束第 3 章。他為這封信的讀者和所有基督徒禱告。他祈求神將祂的能力灌注他們。我們需要不住地為自己和我們的教會懇求同樣的事。多年前，美國陸軍有一個口號：「成為你希望成為的樣子」。我們可以把它修改為：「成為神希望你成為的樣子。」

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. To Grow 增長

保羅在禱告中向神祈求三件事。中文和合聖經用三個「叫」字清楚地指出那些願望。有些英文翻譯本可能意思不太明顯。希臘原文中複雜的結構使它的意思不那麼直接。首先，保羅祈求信徒的力量增長。祂在第 16 節說：**求祂按著祂豐盛的榮耀，藉著祂的靈，叫你們心裡的力量剛強起來。**這種能力來自神豐盛的榮耀。它是強大而且是無限的。神有充足的能力供我們支取。聖經作者雅各說，如果我們不祈求神，我們就得不到需要的東西。但他提醒我們，如果我們的動機不對，我們也不會得到回應。例如，我們想要一些東西用作個人享樂。但如果我們按照神的旨意禱告，祂就會回應我們。神的普遍旨意都寫在聖經裡。因此，我們越認識神，就越懂得如何禱告。這就像孩子和父母之間的關係。當孩子們更多地了解父母的價值觀時，他們就知道什麼樣的願望會得到實現。保羅鼓勵我們求神堅固我們心裡的力量。保羅在哥林多後書第 4 章中提到我們裡面的人這個概念。在上下文中，他說我們外在的自我，就是我們肉身的體將繼續衰弱。當你到了一定年齡你就無法否認這個事實。你會變得不那麼活躍，但是卻更健忘。你的體力降低，但皺紋會變多。相比之下，保羅說我們內在的自我，指的是我們在耶穌裡的新生命，應該是不斷成長的。換句話說，我們應該為靈命成熟而努力。然後，我們就會有更多的耐心、平安和喜樂。我們會輕看個人的損失和別人的冒犯。我們會忽視地上的財寶，而更多地關心天上的獎賞。我們會更愛神和愛人。我們學習從神的角度，而不從我們的角度或世界的角度來看事情。弟兄姐妹：你在耶穌裡的內在生命是否越來越強壯？我們都會變老，但是我們更需要在主裡長大！保羅解釋說，這種成長是靠聖靈的幫助而來的。我們不是咬著舌頭對自己說：「今天我會

盡量努力！」你應該同意我們自己是多麼的不可靠。很多時候，我們對自己太好了。在社交媒體、電話或遊戲上多花幾分鐘可能會變成一個小時或更長時間。我們今天計劃做的事情可能會拖到明天甚至下週。我有太多的失敗經驗，以致我寧願依靠神的力量。正如詩歌所說：「我雖軟弱，主剛強。」然後我們才可以做討神喜悅的事。例如，我們會離開我們的舒適區，告訴朋友關於耶穌的事。我們會有勇氣向我們冒犯的人道歉。我們可以把手機收起來多讀聖經。我們靠著神的力量，使我們心裡的力量不斷成長。

2. To Know 認識

保羅祈求我們的能力增長。接下來，他禱告我們能更多地認識耶穌的愛。請看第 17-18 節：**17 使基督因你們的信，住在你們心裡，叫你們的愛心有根有基，18 能以和眾聖徒一同明白基督的愛是何等長闊高深。**保羅要求耶穌住在我們裡面，這聽起來可能很奇怪。我們接受耶穌的那一刻，祂不是藉著聖靈住在我們裡面嗎？在這裡，保羅不是指耶穌最初的內住，而是祂持續的同在。你的父母可能住在另一個城市或海外。假設他們決定搬進來和你的家人住在一起。那麼你的房子將成為他們的家。當耶穌進入我們的生命時，祂不是房客而是主人。你把你擁有權的鑰匙交給他了嗎？耶穌在我們裡面的時間越久，我們就應該越認識祂的愛。保羅用兩個詞來描述這個過程。「根」是一個農業的用詞，「基」是一個建築的用詞。當植物或建築物的地基穩固時，地上的結構便可以繼續擴展。我們知道耶穌愛我們，祂為我們而死。但我們需要更多地認識祂的愛。耶穌的愛是如此真實，我們每天都能體驗到。例如，祂在準確的時間供應我們所有的需要。當我們向祂認罪時，祂就赦免我們。就算我們無法忍受自己的缺點，祂也接納我們。無論我們身處任何境遇，我們都能感受到祂的愛。保羅用四個量度的單位來描述耶穌之愛的大小：它的長、闊、高、深。保羅在這裡不是談論幾何數學。一些聖經學者是這樣解釋的。基督的愛足以包括猶太人和外邦人。它的長度跨越了人類歷史。基督的愛將信徒提升到天堂。它也深入罪惡的深淵救拔我們。祂的愛遠超過我們有限的頭腦所能理解的。神甚至在創造世界之前，就已經揀擇了祂的子民。當我們仍然恨祂之時，耶穌已經為我們而死。祂愛的榜樣應該激勵我們去愛那些我們認為不那麼可愛的人。例如，不同背景、個性或生活方式的人。許多新朋友說，我們教會大家庭張開雙臂歡迎他們。你們向他們表達愛，這一點做得很好。除了我們廚房的招牌菜之外，讓神的愛成為我們教會的標誌。此外，我們也應該愛我們教會的成員。我們學習對持不同意見的弟兄姐妹有耐心。很多時候，我們的分歧與聖經的教義無關。讓我們學會多聆聽少爭論。我們還需要向神祈求恩典，使我們能輕看對方的小錯誤。我們要愛他人，但厭惡衝突。

3. To Show 彰顯

我們裡面的力量必須不斷增長，我們也要更多地認識基督的愛。第三，保羅祈求神藉著我們彰顯祂的榮耀。他在第 19 節說：**...便叫神一切所充滿的，充滿了你們。**保羅祈求神的豐富從我們裡面滿溢出來。當我們得救時，神已經充滿了我們。然而，我們

應該繼續追求神的豐滿。這就像從嬰兒到成人的成長過程。保羅在以弗所書 4:13 說，神盼望：直等到我們眾人在真道上同歸於一，認識神的兒子，得以長大成人，滿有基督長成的身量。我們在這裡看到「滿有」這個字。保羅強調兩個重點：我們在真道上的合一和對耶穌的認識。在下文他繼續描述成熟的基督徒應該在兩方面像大人。首先，他們能辨別是非。堅固的信徒不會被錯誤的教義所誤導。第二是他們能適當地發揮身體的功能。他們能運用神賜給他們的恩賜和才幹在教會中彼此建立。各地方的教會是神在世上設立的分部，透過它們彰顯神的榮耀。教會就像一家企業的門店。每一家麥當勞餐廳或貝殼加油站分店代表它們的總部。它們不能銷售競爭對手的產品。教會也是如此。耶穌基督是我們的總裁，聖經是我們的操作手冊。我們根據神的話語傳福音並帶領事工。如果我們遵循神的指示，那麼祂的榮耀將充滿這個地方。它會如此耀眼明亮，以至於無法被隱藏。這讓我想起一位母親和她女兒之間的對話。她跟女孩說神住在那些相信祂的人裡面。小孩覺得這個概念很令人驚訝。她想了一會，然後說：「媽媽，神那麼偉大。我怎可能有足夠的空間容納祂？要是祂進入我的生命，那麼祂一定會從我的身體裡擠出來！」太可愛了！但小女孩說得對。如果神的豐盛在我們裡面，祂的榮耀就必然從我們的生命中滲透出來。我們便會少吹牛，少向別人抱怨，少說閒話，而且每天感謝讚美神。我們不會故意吸引別人注意自己的好行為，乃是將神的榮耀反映給他人。教會以外的人便能看到神在這裡的作為。他們可以找到一些帶著真誠的善意，付出但不期望回報的人。如此，他們不僅來這裡吃飯，也會來尋求神屬靈的糧食。

CONCLUSION 結論

神對我們每個人以及我們教會整體都有同一個目標。神希望我們能成為祂希望我們成為的樣子。保羅所祈求的三件事都是神作工的結果。保羅希望神加添在我們身上的能力，使我們更認識耶穌的愛，並讓祂的豐滿充滿我們。這三個方面都是神採取主動的。然而，我們必須讓神在我們裡面工作。我們必須順服聖靈，然後我們才會渴望追求屬靈成長。讓我打一個比方來作結束。我們大多數人都有手機。它可以執行許多很棒的功能，就視乎你安裝了什麼應用程序。每個基督徒都有相同的應用程序，就是聖靈。當你接受耶穌時，聖靈已經下載到你的生命中。祂住在你裡面，永遠不會離開。要使手機的應用程序發揮功能，你必須啟動並使用它們。然後你的手機就會變成導航儀或電視等工具。同樣，我們必須先啟動聖靈，祂才能執行祂的功能。我們必須順服於聖靈，讓祂引導我們的思想、言語和行為。然後神便可以使用我們來達到祂的目的。我們會向別人施予恩典而不是怒氣。我們選擇原諒而不是記恨。我們鼓勵而不是批評別人。我們變得更有同情心，而不是冷漠。我們讓主掌管我們的生命，按照祂的心意而生活。若我們每個人都是那樣的話，我們的教會便會成為神祝福的管道。你期待那樣的結果嗎？你願意像保羅那樣禱告嗎？