

引言 INTRODUCTION

Growth is the result of turning your potential into a reality. You will stop growing if you stop learning. At one Friday fellowship meeting, I was trying to play songs on the TV from my phone. A coworker installed a new device. Another brother explained how it works. Then I commented: “I’m too old to adapt to new technology.” He responded: “That’s just an excuse for not willing to learn.” And he was right! There are always better ways to do things. It is arrogant and ignorant to say that we have known enough. We should keep growing in our knowledge, skills, career and health. The question is: are you growing in your relationship with God too? Do you often feel weak in your faith? Are you showing enough love for others? Do you desire to become more like Jesus? Someone said there has to be a divine dissatisfaction in us. We should always want to be a better Christian. This message is for you if you feel that way. So far, Paul tells his readers a few things in this letter. God rescued them out of spiritual death and gave them a new life. He also put Jewish and Gentile believers into a new body called the church. But God’s work in them is far from finish. He intends to give them abundant heavenly privileges. God is doing the same things in us today. Just imagine how different your spiritual life will be when you allow God to work in you. Also, what kind of church we will become when a majority of our members strive to please God. Years ago, the U.S. Army had a slogan: “Be all you can be!” We can tweak that and make it: “Be all God wants us to be!”

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 增長聖靈的能力 Grow in the Spirit’s Power

Our focus today will be on the three things Paul prays for the Ephesian church. Your Bible may capture those petitions with three “that.” First, Paul prays that his readers will grow in the power of the Holy Spirit. We see that 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.** The source of this power is our Heavenly Father. He is the ultimate power plant in the universe. He uses His strength to create and sustain everything. Paul tells us in chapter 1 that God employs His power to resurrect Jesus from the dead. God infuses the same power in us and raises us from our dead souls. He also lifts us up in our spirit and enables us to sit with Jesus in heaven. His power keeps flowing in us after we are saved. Such energy will not change us into super heroes. But it will make us mature saints. We will become more like Jesus as we rely on God’s power. Paul tells us that this force is ministered in us through the Holy Spirit. The moment when we received Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit came into our hearts. He will stay there forever. As part of His work, the Holy Spirit helps us in our spiritual growth. God does not force His way in us. He gives us the freedom to listen or to reject the Holy Spirit. Our choice will bring out contrasting outcomes. We will stumble and fall if we insist on ourselves and resist the Holy Spirit. But if we yield to the Holy Spirit, He

will exercise God's power to change our lives. The Father is our power source, and the Holy Spirit is the means to release His power. Paul continues to tell us that the target of God's power is our inner being. He is talking about our new life in Christ. Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 4:16 – **So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.** The “outer self” is our physical life. It will only get old and weak as we age. However, “inner self,” which is our new life in Jesus can continue to stay young. The more we come to know the Lord, and the more we submit ourselves to Him, the more we will become like Him. Nowadays, there is a new trend to differentiate between physical versus biological age. Your physical age is fixed by your birthdate. Whereas, your biological age is an indicator of your health. It is determined by factors like diet, sleep, exercise, family medical history, drinking and smoking habits, social life, etc. We can slow down the negative impacts of aging if we maintain a healthy lifestyle. After all, who wants to take daily medication, home-bound all day and feel pain here and there? However, no matter how hard we try, our physical conditions will finally go downhill. Besides physical and biological ages, we should also pay attention to our spiritual age. God wants us to stay active and strong in our new life. The only way to achieve that is to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. How does that kind of Christian life look like? There will be more love for God. We can experience joy and peace whether things are working well or not. We will have courage and humility to admit our faults. We will also show grace and forgiveness to others. Instead of being impatient, we leave room for people to grow. We will become a more godly person when the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us.

2. 認識基督的大愛 Know of Christ's Love

Paul prays that the Ephesian believers would grow in the Spirit's power. Next, he prays that they would know more about Christ's love. He says in verses 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.** The phrase “so that” connects with the previous context. It shows that Paul is not praying for three separate items. The result of one petition will lead to the next blessing. The strengthening of our inner self is brought about by the indwelling of Christ. Jesus came into our hearts the moment we received Him, and He will be with us forever. He does not lead us by force. Rather, He guides us with love. That is why Paul continues to say that Jesus' indwelling secures us in a foundation of His love. “Rooted” is an agricultural term, whereas “grounded” is an architectural term. Both a plant and a building need a strong foundation so that the above-ground structure will stand. Likewise, our belief must be built on a clear understanding of Jesus' love. Paul encourages us to keep growing in that knowledge. In verse 18, he introduces four dimensions of Jesus' love: its breadth and length and height and depth. Paul is not teaching us geometry 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 high enough 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 fully grasp. Paul encourages us to comprehend that love together with all the saints. He hopes the church will be filled with people of love. Needless to say, love should not be a

head knowledge only. Such information must be moved from the heads to the hearts. We must be emotionally moved by Jesus' love. Jesus sacrificed for the mankind. But He also died for me! I am not a notorious criminal; but I am far from perfect. Why did He die for me? Subsequently, Christ's love will move from my head to the heart and further on to my will. If I truly believe that Jesus died for me, then I have to respond to His love. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 – **14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.** Our lives will be completely different if we are truly grateful for Jesus' love. How would you repay the Lord who saved you from eternal judgment? Nothing is too much! So many Christians find it burdensome to read the Bible, attend church meetings, offer money and participate in ministries because they do those things to please themselves or to fulfill others' expectations. Brothers and sisters: do you live for yourself or live for your Lord! His love for us should motivate us to love Him back. Then we will stop asking what is the minimum we need to do as a believer. We will reprioritize our weekend schedule and make church life first. We can have joy every time we wash dishes or scrub the bathroom. How does a church look like if its members are deeply in love with Jesus? There will be more care and compassion, and fewer conflicts and complaints. We will stop using secular value to deal with each other. We will speak sincerely from our hearts without guessing between the lines. We will accept our differences even when we disagree. Let us not just know Christ's love and talk love, but also show love and live out love.

3. 顯示天父的豐盛 Show the Father's Fullness

Paul prays that the Ephesian believers will grow in the power of the Holy Spirit and they will know more about the love of Christ. Thirdly, he hopes that as they increase in those two areas, they will show the Father's fullness in their lives. He says in verse 19: **And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.** The Greek words for "filled" and "fullness" come from the same root. One is a verb and the other is a noun. It is like we say we have to complete a project until it is completed. This filling by God is a gradual and life-long process. Paul uses the development of a child to adulthood as an analogy for spiritual growth in chapter 4. A child should not only grow in the body, but grow in the mind as well. A mature person will not be fooled by bad people. Likewise, a mature Christian will be able to discern between true and false teaching. Godly thinking will lead to words and actions that will benefit others and glorify God. You will do so even without thinking because it has become your second nature. People around you can tell that you are a Christian even before you say it. How can we achieve that? Paul uses drinking wine as an illustration in 5:18 – **And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.** A drunken person will be completely controlled by the wine. That is why the related traffic violation is called "driving under the influence" of alcohol (DUI). A drunken driver cannot operate the car as he should. It will cause danger to himself and others. I do not drink wine and one can of beer is all I can take. Afterward, I will be like a cooked lobster. The alcohol will control me and knock me to sleep. In comparison, people who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be under His direction. They will not perform

miracles unless God gives them the gift. But they will obey the Holy Spirit. For example, a shy person will boldly share the gospel with others; a person not so good at speech becomes an effective Bible teacher. Also they will care about people in need and they are willing to offer help. You will live the way God intends when the Father's fullness is in you. You simply cannot hide it! That reminds me of a conversation between a mother and her daughter. She was teaching the little girl that God lives in those who believe in Him. The child found that notion fascinating. She pondered 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. How different our Christian life will be when that happens? You will have hope even in hardship. Your faith will not change with circumstances because it is anchored in the unchanging God. You can react to people who are unfriendly and rude with love and kindness. It will be similar to the lyrics in Zach William's song "Less Like Me" – A little more like mercy, a little more like grace; A little more like kindness, goodness, love, and faith; A little more like patience, a little more like peace; A little more like Jesus, a little less like me. What kind of church FCBC will become if the majority of us are filled by the Father's fullness? I am sure there will be more grace and fewer grudges, more cooperation and fewer confrontations, and we will be eager to spread the gospel and not gossip. We will talk less about our stories but cannot stop speaking about God's glory.

結論 CONCLUSION

"Be all God wants us to be!" We can do that only when we rely on God. He is the source of all our heavenly privileges. We cannot live a life that pleases Him if we are disconnected from that power source. We feel the inconvenience when we lost power in winter. Some people experience a new problem just last month. Owners of fully electrical vehicles notice a few shortcomings of their cars. Quite a few church families own an EV. Just like any technology, there are always pros and cons. Some people have a hard time looking for a charging station around town. There is a long line everywhere. They also learn that they are able to drive a shorter distance before a recharge because part of the power is used to warming the cabin. In Chicago, news reporters said there were a large number of dead robots on the streets when the temperature dropped below zero. A great machine cannot function when it is out of power. The same is true for us. You may be a successful scientist, store-owner or engineer. However, you can be an effective Christian only when you are charged up with divine power. There is no short-cut to it. You must always plug in to the heavenly power source. You must spend time with God in daily Bible reading and prayer. You should also attend small group meetings to encourage each other. A church will be strong if individual members are filled up with heavenly juice in their spiritual batteries.

引言 INTRODUCTION

當你將潛能發揮出來的時候，你便自然會有成長。如果你停止學習，你就會停止成長。在一次週五的聚會中，我試著用手機在電視上播放詩歌。一位同工安裝了一個新的設備。另一位弟兄解釋它是如何操作的。然後我說：「我太老了，無法適應新的科技。」他回應說：「那只是不願意學習新事物的藉口。」他是對的！總是有更好的方法來做事。自認為把一切都搞懂了，是傲慢和無知的表現。我們應該不斷增長我們的知識、技能、專業和健康。問題是：你與神的關係也在成長嗎？你是否常常感到信心軟弱？你對別人的愛心足夠嗎？你渴望變得更像耶穌嗎？有人說我們的內心必須有一份屬靈的不滿足感。我們應該一直想成為一個更好的基督徒。如果你有這種感覺，這篇信息就是為你而寫的。到目前為止，保羅在這封信中告訴了讀者一些事情。神從屬靈的死亡中拯救他們，並賜給他們新的生命。神也將猶太和外邦信徒歸入一個新的身體，稱為教會。但是神在他們身上的工作還沒有完成。祂要賜給他們屬天豐盛的祝福。今天神也在我們身上做著同樣的事情。想像一下，當你讓神在你裡面工作時，你的屬靈生命將會有多麼不同。同時，當我們大多數的成員努力討神喜悅時，我們會成為什麼樣的教會。幾年前，美國陸軍有一句口號：「成為你能夠成為的人！」我們可以把它修改為：「成為神希望我們成為的人！」

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 增長聖靈的能力 Grow in the Spirit's Power

今天我們的重點是放在保羅為以弗所教會禱告的三件事。中文聖經用三個「叫」來表示這些請求。首先，保羅祈求他的讀者能夠增長聖靈的能力。我們在第 16 節看到：**求他按著他豐盛的榮耀，藉著他的靈，叫你們心裡的力量剛強起來**。這股力量的來源是我們的天父。祂是全宇宙終極的發電廠。祂以能力創造和維持萬有。保羅在第一章告訴我們，神運用祂的能力使耶穌從死裡復活。神將同樣的能力注入我們裡面，使我們已死的靈魂復活。祂也提升我們的靈魂，使我們能與耶穌一同坐在天上。當我們得救之後，祂的能力就繼續運行在我們裡面。這股能量不會讓我們變成超級英雄，但它會使我們成為成熟的聖徒。當我們依靠神的能力時，我們會變得更像耶穌。保羅告訴我們，這種力量是透過聖靈在我們裡面運行的。當我們接受耶穌基督的那一刻，聖靈就進入我們的心中。祂將永遠停留在那裡。聖靈部分的工作是幫助我們的靈命成長。神

從來不會勉強我們。祂給了我們自由接受或拒絕聖靈的帶領。我們的選擇將會帶來截然不同的結果。如果我們堅持自己，抗拒聖靈，我們就會犯罪跌倒。但如果我們順服聖靈，祂就會運用神的能力來改變我們的生命。天父是我們力量的源泉，聖靈是釋放祂力量的途徑。保羅繼續告訴我們，神的能力的目標是我們裡面的人。他是指我們在基督裡的新生命。保羅在哥林多後書 4:16 中解釋：**所以，我們不喪膽。外體雖然毀壞，內心卻一天新似一天。**「外體」就是我們的物質的生命。隨著年齡的增長，我們的身體只會變老、變虛弱。然而，我們的「內心」，就是我們在耶穌裡的新生命，可以繼續保持健壯。我們越認識主，越順服祂，就越像祂。如今，有一個新的潮流區分實際年齡和生理年齡。實際年齡是由你的出生日期決定。然而，你的生理年齡是你健康狀況的指標。它是根據飲食、睡眠、運動、家族的患病歷史、飲酒和吸煙習慣、社交生活等因素決定的。如果我們保持健康的生活方式，我們就可以減慢身體的老化。畢竟，誰願意每天吃藥，整天待在家裡，到處感到疼痛呢？然而，無論我們如何努力，我們的身體狀況最終都會走下坡路。除了實際和生理年齡外，我們還應該關心我們的屬靈年齡。神希望我們的新生命保持積極和強壯。達到這個目標的唯一方法就是依靠聖靈的能力。如此的基督徒生命會有什麼表現呢？這樣的信徒會更多的愛神。無論是在順境或逆境中，他們都有喜樂與平安。他們願意謙卑地承認自己的錯誤。他們也會向別人施予恩典和寬恕。他們有耐心，給別人成長的空間。當聖靈的能力在我們裡面運行時，我們就會成為一個更敬虔的人。

2. 認識基督的大愛 Know of Christ's Love

保羅祈求以弗所的信徒能增長聖靈的能力。接下來，他期望他們能更認識基督的大愛。他在 17-18 節說：**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。**17 節「使」這個字把上下文連貫起來。這顯示保羅並不是為三件獨立的事情禱告。一個祈求的結果將帶來下一個祝福。我們新生命的增長是基督內住的結果。當我們接受耶穌的那一刻，祂就進入了我們的心裡，祂將永遠與我們同在。祂不是用武力來帶領我們。相反，祂用愛引導我們。因此保羅說耶穌的內住使我們建立在祂的愛的根基上。「根」是有關植物，而「基」是談到建築物。植物和房屋都需要堅固的地基，這樣地面上的結構才不會搖動。同樣，我們的信仰必須建立在對耶穌的愛的認識之上。保羅鼓勵我們不斷增長這方面的認識。在第 18 節中，他提到耶穌的愛的四個角度：長、闊、高和深度。保羅在這裡並不是在教我們幾何數學。一些聖經學者這樣理解。基督的愛寬廣，足以容納猶太人和外邦人。它的長度橫跨人類歷史。基督的愛將信徒提升到至高的天上。它也深入

罪惡的深淵來拯救我們。祂的愛超過我們有限的頭腦所能理解。保羅鼓勵我們與眾聖徒一起明白這種愛。他希望教會充滿愛。當然，愛不應該只是頭腦的知識。這些訊息必須從頭腦轉移到內心。我們必須被耶穌的愛所觸動。沒錯，耶穌為人類犧牲自己。但祂也是為我而死！雖然我不是罪大惡極的壞蛋；但我肯定遠非完美。祂為何為我而死？這樣，基督的愛就會從我的頭腦轉移到我的心裡，然後進一步轉移到我的意志上。如果我真的相信耶穌為我而死，那麼我就必須回應祂的愛。保羅在哥林多後書 5:14-15 中說：**14 原來基督的愛激勵我們；因我們想，一人既替眾人死，眾人就都死了；15 並且他替眾人死，是叫那些活著的人不再為自己活，乃為替他們死而復活的主活。**如果我們真正感謝耶穌的愛，我們的生命將會完全不同。你將如何報答拯救你脫離永恆審判的主呢？再多的付出還是不足夠的！許多基督徒覺得讀聖經、參加教會聚會、奉獻金錢和參與事奉是一種負擔，因為他們是為了達到自己的目標或滿足別人的期望去做。弟兄姐妹們：到底是為主而活，還是為己而活呢？耶穌對我們的愛應該激勵我們更愛祂。如此我們就不再問我們要做到什麼最低要求。我們會重新安排週末的時間表，把教會生活放在第一位。每次洗碗或洗廁所時，我們都會感到喜樂。如果教會的成員都深深愛耶穌，那麼教會會是什麼樣子呢？那裡就會多一些關心和同情，少很多衝突和埋怨。我們將停止用世俗價值觀來看待對方。我們會發自內心真誠地說話，不用猜測言外之意。就算我們意見不同，我們也會接納別人。讓我們不只認識基督的愛、談論愛，更要表達愛、活出愛。

3. 顯示天父的豐盛 Show the Father's Fullness

保羅祈求以弗所信徒增長聖靈的能力，並且更認識基督的大愛。第三，他希望隨著他們在這兩方面的成長，他們能夠顯示天父的豐盛。他在第 19 節說：**並知道這愛是過於人所能測度的，便叫神一切所充滿的，充滿了你們。**神恩典的充滿是一個漸進的、終生的過程。保羅在第四章用小孩子的成長來比喻靈命的成長。孩子不只要在身體上成長，也要在心靈上成長。一個成熟的人不會被壞人欺騙。同樣，一個成熟的基督徒能夠分辨真與假的教導。敬虔的思想會產生造就別人並榮耀神言語和行為。你不用思考便會自然做出來。你周圍的人也能看出你是個基督徒。我們怎樣才能做到這一點？保羅在 5:18 節用喝酒來比喻：**不要醉酒，酒能使人放蕩；乃要被聖靈充滿。**喝醉酒的人會完全被酒精所控制。因此在美國酒後駕車是稱為「在酒精的控制下開車」(Driving under the influence of alcohol)。一個喝醉的司機無法正常操作汽車，他會為自己和別人帶來危險。我不喝酒，一罐啤酒就能夠把我打敗了。之後我就會像一隻煮熟了的龍蝦。酒精會控制我並使我昏昏欲睡。相比之下，被聖靈充滿的人會接受祂的引導。他們不會行神蹟，除非神給他們那些恩賜。但他們會順服聖靈。例如，一個害羞

的人會大膽地與別人分享福音；一個不太擅長講話的人能成為一個有效的聖經老師。他們也會關心有需要的人，並願意提供幫助。當天父的豐盛在你裡面時，你就會按照祂的旨意生活。你根本無法隱藏祂的美善！這讓我想起一位母親和她女兒的對話。她告訴小女孩神住在那些相信祂的人裡面。小孩覺得這個概念不可思議。她想了一會，然後說：「媽媽，神那麼偉大，祂怎樣進入我的心中？如果祂進到我的生命，祂一定會從我的身體裡被擠出來！」她的形容很可愛，但她說得完全正確。如果神的豐盛在我們裡面，祂的榮耀就會從我們的生命中流露出來。如此，我們的基督徒生命將會有多不同？就算在困難中你也會有盼望。你的信心不會隨著環境而改變，因為它紮根於不變的神。你可以用愛和恩慈來回應那些不友善和粗魯的人。這就像一首現代英文詩歌「更少像我」的歌詞所說：多一點憐憫，多一點恩典；多一點仁慈、良善、愛心和信心；多一點耐心，多一點和平；多一點像耶穌，更少像我。如果我們大多數人都被天父的豐盛所充滿，第一華人浸信會將會成為什麼樣的教會？我相信，會有更多的恩惠，更少的恩怨；更多的合作，更少的矛盾；我們會熱衷於傳播福音，而不是散播謠言。我們會少講自己的故事，但不能停止講述神的榮耀。

結論 CONCLUSION

成為神希望我們成為的人！只有當我們依靠神之時，我們才能做到這一點。祂是我們所有屬天祝福的源頭。如果我們和這個能力的來源中斷了，我們便無法活出討神喜悅的生活。當冬天停電時我們會感到不方便。有些人在上個月遇到了新的問題。電動汽車的車主注意到他們車子的一些缺點。我們教會有幾個家庭也擁有電動車。任何科技都總是有利有弊。有些人在居住的城市找充電站，但是到處都大排長龍。他們也發現，車子行駛的距離也縮短了，因為部分電力用來產生暖氣。在芝加哥，新聞記者說，當氣溫降至零度以下時，街上出現了一大堆沒電的機器人。一部利害的機器如果斷電就無法運作。我們也是如此。你可能是一位成功的科學家、老板或工程師。然而，唯有當你充滿屬靈的能力時，你才能成為一個有效的基督徒。沒有任何的捷徑。你必須一直與天上的電源連接。你必須每天花時間讀經和禱告，與神交流。你也應該參加小組聚會來互相鼓勵。如果個別成員的屬靈電池充滿能量，那麼整個教會就會變得強大。