

Pastor Writes

Greetings to you! Last week we celebrated the feast of Pentecost which was to mark the coming of the Holy Spirit and how it was given freely to all believers. The coming of the Holy Spirit was an activity in which the Triune God - the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit were involved. This morning we will be looking at the functioning of the Trinity. While it may be difficult to understand this important theological truth we could probably use the example of water. Water exists in liquid form as water, or in solid form as ice, or as vapour. Even though the three forms are different they all have the basic component of H₂O.

This morning we will be looking at Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in which we see him appealing to the triune God. First and foremost he addresses the Father. He prays saying, 'for this reason I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.' Paul has been explaining both Christ's peace-making work which resulted in the creation of the new society and his personal involvement in this because of the special revelation and commission he had received. He prays that God would strengthen them out of his glorious riches with power through his Spirit in their inner beings so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. The basis of Paul's prayer was his knowledge of God's purpose. Paul understands that as a family we all belong to God the Father. In Paul's prayer there are four keywords that arise: 'strength', 'love', 'knowledge' and 'fullness'. So Paul prays that they may be strengthened by the indwelling of Christ through his Spirit; Secondly, that they may be rooted and grounded in love; thirdly, that they may know Christ's love in all its dimensions although it is beyond knowledge and fourthly, that they may be filled right up to the very fullness of God.

The first thing that Paul prays about is being strengthened with might. The petitions of being strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man and that Christ may dwell in the hearts through faith refers to the Christian's innermost being. To know Christ dwelling in us and to have the Spirit dwelling in us are the same thing. Paul's prayer is that his readers may know the strength of the Spirit's inner reinforcement. The Spirit works in us in various degrees as we surrender ourselves to him.

We too are challenged to surrender ourselves more and more to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, Paul talks about being rooted and grounded in love. The reason why Paul prays for God's strength in their inner being is that they would be strengthened to love. The new humanity is God's family, whose members are brothers and sisters therefore ought to love God and one another deeply. These Christians are to have deep roots and foundations in order that they would be stable. Love is to be the soil in which their lives are to be rooted. Love is to be the foundation in which their life is built. The challenge for us is also the same. We too are called to be rooted and grounded in love.

Thirdly, Paul prays that they may have the power to comprehend the love of Christ in its full dimensions. The love of God is wide enough to encompass all humanity, long enough to last for eternity, deep enough to reach the most degraded sinner and high enough to exalt him to heaven. We can only understand the whole love of God with all the saints together, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, young and old, black and white with all their varied background and experiences. In spite of all this we will never be able to comprehend his love in all its totality.

Finally, Paul prays that they may be filled up to God's fullness, in other words Paul makes it plain to the Ephesians, there is room for growth. As individuals we are to go on being filled with the Spirit. And the church although already the fullness of Christ, is still to grow up to him, till it reaches his fullness. Growth and fullness is therefore Paul's last petition. This is so true of churches in India, while we may be growing numerically there is no depth in growth and fullness of the Spirit. We all are willing to commit our lives to Christ but we are equally called to grow in the fullness of Christ.

Paul then concludes his prayer by talking about the infinite ability of God who is able to do way beyond what we can ask or think. He is a God who does immeasurable things for us. So we see the Father to whom the prayer is addressed, the Son who died for us because of which we can enter his presence in prayer and the Holy Spirit who strengthens us. God the Holy trinity is at work in our lives. May we truly surrender our lives to the triune God growing to the fullness of Christ.

Shalom

Paul Swarup