

DEVOTION 5

BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Today we will focus on verses 20-21, but please read the whole passage again.

Paul has finished his prayer for the Ephesians. He has prayed that they would be strengthened by the Spirit so that Jesus could be at home at the centre of their lives. He has prayed that they would grasp and experience the immense love of Jesus. As God answered these prayers, Paul knew that the Ephesians would be filled completely full of God. That's some prayer! That's some expectation!

As they heard this prayer of Paul, I can imagine the Ephesians saying, "Tell Paul he's dreaming." Maybe you feel the same way. This kind of incredible prayer will never really be answered. We're just too weak, too broken, too flawed, and too worldly. Oh God in his grace continues to work in us and through us, but it doesn't seem possible that Jesus could be in complete charge of our whole life or that we could grasp and experience God's immense love. Even if we imagine this could happen to some special Christians, we can't see it happening to us. This kind of answer to prayer is beyond our wildest dreams. It seems that it is a bold but totally unrealistic prayer. It's in the same category as praying for world peace – highly desirable but realistically unachievable in a broken world.

Paul knew that this could be the response to his prayer, so he added a final statement. This is one of the most quoted statements in the New Testament. "God can do immeasurably more than you could ever ask for or could even try to imagine" (3:20-21). In other words, he is saying that what God can do is beyond your wildest dreams. When we hear this verse, we often think of the really big stuff God does like bringing a Christian revival to China. Well God is doing these things, but it's not what Paul is talking about here. The mind-blowing actions of God that Paul is referring to are actually in us and through us (3:20) – they are "according to his power that is at work within us."

Can God transform our lives to produce a deeper desire for Jesus and a fresh appreciation and experience of his love so that we are filled full of God? Paul's response is, "Of course he can." God can do way more than that. What God can do in you and through you is beyond your wildest dreams. So stop doubting and making excuses, and start dreaming and praying and believing.

At this stage of his life, Paul had been in ministry and leadership for a long time. He was disappointed by things that were happening in many of the churches he had planted. He had seen followers of Jesus fall away

from their faith. He had suffered the frustrations of prison for years. But Paul was expectant. He had not lost his faith in what God could do, and he was ramming this home. Don't let your circumstances, frustrations and disappointments cloud your vision of what God can do in and through you. God does do miracles. God does transform lives.

I've seen this in our family. When we found out during my wife's pregnancy that our third child was to be a third boy, Deb was initially disappointed. She is a girly girl. She longed for a little daughter who would wear frilly dresses and bows in her hair, and who would become her friend. But God encouraged her with a word of prophecy that our baby boy would be a powerful spiritual blessing to many. Well as our boy grew up, this seemed highly unlikely. He was a good kid, but he just didn't seem to have a spiritual bone in his body. He particularly disliked church and worship. His life revolved around sport. We prayed that he would follow Jesus but had given up on the "powerful spiritual blessing" prophecy. Then in early high school, he went to a Christian camp and came back transformed by Jesus. The change was immediate and incredible. The sports jock became a passionate worshipper with a huge heart for God and a powerful spiritual impact on others. 20 years later, he is still the same and God is greatly using him. God in his grace did more than we could imagine.

Transformation can happen to you. May God do the impossible in you by filling you with his presence. The good thing is that you don't have to make this happen. Such miracles are not a product of your discipline and willpower. The supernatural is God's work. All you can do is ask for a work of God in and through you that will be beyond your wildest dreams.

Pray Paul's prayer once again believing that God can do immeasurably more than anything you are asking for. Pray it for your church as well.

QB PRAYER POINTS

1. Praise God for powerful things that you have seen him do. These could be recent or in the distant past. It doesn't matter. Take time to celebrate his power.
2. Pray for your church – that God will do miracles in the lives of your church family. That there will be a growing prayer, passion and expectation for the supernatural work of God.
3. Pray for Queensland – that God will do the impossible and work in revival power, renewing hearts and transforming lives. Pray for anyone that you would love to see come alive spiritually.