

John May 27/91

"STRENGTH FOR TROUBLED TIMES"

Eph. 3:19-21

In successive sermons we considered there is nothing above or beyond this wonderful petition.

These are troubled times internationally, nationally, and personally.

That is why Paul wrote the Book of Ephesians.

President Reagan said -- Soviets understand only strength. They are going to take the world.

Trouble in South America, Central America, Middle East, Afghanistan, Poland.

We talk about strength for troubled times.

we make trouble for ourselves -

We talk about power for troubled times.

*Not for Women's Hate No 2 alike
Reason - They don't want to make the
same mistake twice!!*

WE LOOK FOR HELP:

V. 16 - "Strengthened in the inner man" -- inside. Power that works in us. Athlete, training, exercising, making himself strong, before he ever plays the game.

Not set on pew rest of my life - but exercise of prayer, exercise of faith, exercise of reading The Word, worship, etc.

V. 17 - "Rooted grounded" in love. Shallow rooted tree is destroyed in wind storm.

V. 19 - "The fulness of God" - expressed the whole sum of divine nature.

We drink at the puddles of earth and left thirsty. He touches the very throne of God = fulness of God. He can give us more than we think, more than we ask.

A measure of power we can trust.

All Niagara may roar past a man's door, but only as much as he diverts through his own mill will quench his thirst.

Fulness - apply to the whole church.

- (B. H. Carroll) -- "I have seen the Old Waco Church in the fulness of God. I went one day to a great meeting, I could feel sensations running all over me, the presence of God was so sensibly felt.

I asked the church to pray for a certain one that was dear to me. They got down on their knees and prayed a very short, sweet prayer, and that very moment while the words were still coming from the lips of the one offering the petition, God converted that man from infidelity, and on the next train he was at the church to tell them how he was saved at the very hour of the prayer."

you say you don't believe in prayer meetings! church leaders need to give " support in.

V. 20 - That brings us to the benediction - an offering of Glory. God can help us in troubled times as we take hold of the ableness of God. He can do great things for us, able to answer petitions no matter how great.

There are (many things) we ask him for in our troubles --

I. WE ASK HIM FOR FORGIVENESS OF SIN

He can bestow any gift -- forgiveness of sin.

How can we who are vile and evil come into the presence of God?

How can we dare to call on him to cover our transgressions.

By nature we have fallen - emotions - desires - thoughts - creatures of dust.

How can we appear before God laden with sin?

Psalm 24:3-4 - Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord -- stand in his Holy place? He that hath clean hands and pure heart.

But whose hands are clean -- whose heart is pure?

All of us weighted with carnal sin like the prodigal son, with spiritual sin, inner sin.

"And there shall in no wise enter into Heaven anything that defileth". Rev. 21:27.
Pure and perfect.

Sometimes people say, "I'm looking for a perfect church." The advice is don't join it, if you find one. The very moment you join it, it will not be perfect any more.

How can we walk those golden streets and walk through pearly gates?

Strange thing about human nature:

Further we get away from God -- the finer we seem to be to ourselves -- higher esteem for self.

(Nearer) we get to God the more unworthy, self-conscious of unrighteousness, sin, and guilt. Closer I get the more sinful I feel. Isaiah, in vision, saw Lord high and lifted up. His first reaction - "Woe is me! For I am undone, because mine eyes have seen the King, Lord of hosts.

Peter was like that -- several years on the sea fishing with no burden of sin on his soul. In the presence of the Lord, he fell at his feet. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The nearer we get to God the more laden with sin we become. We are sensitive to it.

Lord, is it too much to ask that I might be forgiven my sins, that I might be washed clean and pure? I John 1:7. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Here we are every page of life stained with sin, wrong thoughts, imaginations and deeds.

Here is an illustration of how we can have our sins forgiven and go to Heaven. An English pastor told this story: A little boy in London was with his father watching through a window. British soldiers pass by in parade. Dressed brilliant - red coats. The little boy exclaimed -- what beautiful white uniforms they have! Father, "Son, they are not white, they are red, brilliant red." "Oh, no said the little boy, they are white, white as snow."

Father with surprise looked down closer. Around the window was a band of red glass and the boy had been looking through the red glass on the scarlet coat - saw it pure white.

Thus does God look at our sins through the blood of the crucified. One and we look pure and white.

Helps us know how God forgives sins. God forgives sins as a man redeemed a slave who had been sold to slavery. Sets him free.

I Peter 1:18-19 - We were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold - but the precious blood of Christ.

He paid it all - all to him I owe.

He heals us as Naoman was cleansed.

God says he buries our sins in the depths of the sea. He remembers them against us no more - blots them out.

That evil I did back there, do you remember Lord? The Lord says I don't know what you are talking about. I blotted it out, its gone forever.

II. WE ASK HIM FOR COMFORT

Bestow upon us above all that we could ask or think. In my trouble, I ask for comfort.

A banker in Muskogee, Okla. had a 15 year old son. He went swimming in the Illinois River and drowned. Broke his heart, brooded over it, one day the father took his own life.

✓ Dallas - two neighbors lived side by side -- one day the little girl of one home played in the driveway. The third, not knowing, backout out over the little girl, killed her. After several weeks the man who accidentally killed the little girl was in a restaurant when the broken-hearted father whose child had been run over took a long butcher knife and plunged it into the back of his neighbor.

Sorrow has repercussions in human life.

✓ (Sir Harry Lander), great Scot singer and entertainer -- son killed World War I.

I had three choices:

- (1) I could drown my sorrow in drink.
- (2) I could drown my sorrow in the grave, take my own life.
- (3) I could find comfort in God.

He said - I turned to the Lord. Sorrow can warp like nothing else in the world. Yoursoul - mind - life - it can blind you.

III. WE ASK HIM FOR SWEETNESS

Age of bitterness - cynical - I can ask that I might grow sweeter and finer - learn how to smile more - love more - and be more of what God would have me to be.

In days of trouble it is easy to grow bitter.

✓ Preacher went to visit a woman who lived in a dilapidated house. She looked

like wretchedness. He introduced himself and she replied there is no need for
anybody like you. She asked him what do you preach? Then she said, I do not
believe in God and cursed God.

Tragic story - she and her husband moved West. Husband died, children had
left her, her eye sight almost gone.

Said he wrote poetry -- repeated a poem.

"I hate Oklahoma!

Not the land of my native birth

But a land by all the gods that be

A scourge on the face of the earth.

I hate Oklahoma!

I hate Oklahoma!

Where the centipede crawls in your bed at night,

And the rattlesnake lifts its fangs to bite,

Where the lizard and the scorpion play on the sky,

And the lonesome vultures sail high in the sky.

Where water and food are an eternal lack,

And a man's best friend sticks a dagger in your back.

I hate Oklahoma!

She had bitterness -- the preacher prayed for her. She said it would not do
any good. He went back and encouraged her again.

She soon died and he buried her. They found a note: "There is nothing of value

in the house but the rug on the living room floor. I give it to the pastor for his church. He put it in Primary Department of children.

One person attended, a daughter-in-law.

Some grow cynical and bitter with life. If you ask he will do exceedingly abundantly above all you ask or think in filling you with sweetness.

IV. WE ASK HIM FOR TRIUMPH IN DEATH

Is there no purpose or future.

Is life just decay and death with no goal?

He can help us see that to be born is to live.

Body planted in corruption.

Body raised in incorruption.

Body planted in dishonor - raised glory.

Body planted in weakness - raised in strength.

Body planted in natural body - raised in spiritual.

Only in death can we enter life -

I Cor. 15:50-54.

V. 55 - There is victory, | My latest sun is sinking fast,
| My race is nearly run,
| My strongest trials now are past,
| My triumph is begun.

Oh, come angel band
 Come and around me stand.
 O bear me away on your snowy wings,
 To my immortal home.
 O bear me away on your snowy wings
 To my immortal home.

V. 20 - Now unto Him.

V. 21 - Unto Him be Glory in the church.

Power - beauty - very nature of God.

we know
 1. Forgiveness of sin -
 2. for comfort
 3. sweetness
 4. Triumph in Death