

The Well-Governed Soul
Ephesians 3:14-21
July 26, 2015

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we celebrated our nation's 239th birthday. We thank God for the liberty he has given to us. We also thank him for the leadership our nation has been able to give to the world.

We need a well-governed nation if our country is to survive. In the same way, we need a well-governed soul if we are to survive. Of course, on our own, we have a problem with achieving a well-governed soul, don't we? We are sinful beings living in a sinful world. We don't have the ability to make the decisions and the changes that must come about. We need outside help to bring our souls the governing they require.

Thankfully, the outside help we need is readily available. The prophet Isaiah tells us whom we can rely on to govern our souls. When the prophet describes the Savior to come, he says: *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders ... Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end* (Is 9:6-7 NIV).

Among the responsibilities of Jesus is the role of governing. The author of Hebrews tells us: *Putting everything under [Jesus], God left nothing that is not subject to him ... We see Jesus ... now crowned with glory and honor* (Heb 2:8-9 NIV).

Jesus is above all kings, presidents, powers, and authorities. He is even above the United States Supreme Court. Everything is subject to him. Yet, the thing that Jesus wants to govern, more than anything else, is your soul. Given that, let's take a look at what a well-governed soul looks like.

The primary need of a well-governed soul is a commander-in-chief. In the opening verses of our text, Paul says: *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named* (Eph 3:14-15 ESV). The Father in heaven is the head of his family just as an earthly father is meant to be the head of his family. God is the commander-in-chief.

Furthermore, Paul calls him: *The Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth ...* Those are important words. He is the father of those who are here on earth and

those who have gone to be with Jesus. God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Quoting Exodus, Jesus said” *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob* (Mt 22:32 NIV). He didn’t say “I was,” he said “I am.”

Since everything is under Jesus’ control, he is in the position to make all of his resources available to us. Sticking with our comparison of God’s government with an earthly government, we will look at the resources of Jesus coming to us from various departments.

Verse 16 begins: *I pray that out of his glorious riches.* God’s **Department of the Treasury** brings all good things into our lives. God provides us with house, home, spouse, children, food, clothing, and all that is necessary to support this body and life. One verse of an old hymn says:

My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holds the wealth of the world in his hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, he has riches untold.

But more than this, God provides us with riches the world cannot give. Psalm 119 says God gives us the riches of this Word. Proverbs says God gives us the riches of his wisdom. Paul’s letter to the Colossians tells us that God has given us the riches of knowing Christ as his Son and our Savior. These are just a few. As you read Scripture, you will see that God pours out unlimited riches of spiritual blessings on his children.

The middle of verse 16 says: *he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit.* That brings up the **Department of Energy**. Out of God’s limitless resources, he wants to provide you with the strength you need to make it from one day to the next.

When do you need strength? What are the things in your life that make it seem like you just can’t go on? Is it when all the normal little things pile up? The daily routine of your job, the traffic on the expressway, those people in your life who are just little black holes of need, the utility bills, the house payment or rent payment. When the little things pile up and become big things, we can use some of God’s strength.

Maybe your strength fails when big things happen. When the flood comes, when the house burns down, when the loved one dies, when the doctor says the word cancer. Maybe your weakness grows when the days are dreary and the nights are weary – when depression is your constant companion. Whatever the problem, God’s Department of Energy has all the strength you need to meet today and tomorrow.

The last words of verse 16 are: *in your inner being.* Your inner being is the concern of God’s **Department of the Interior**. Old-time Christians used to speak about one’s “inner life” meaning the life of one’s soul.

We spend untold billions of dollars each year on our “outer life.” We buy cosmetics, clothes, houses, cars, and all the externals of life. We can never seem to have enough or get enough. Madison Avenue produces thousands of advertisements aimed at convincing us that all we need is one more thing to make our lives complete. In the rush to have the latest and best toys, most people neglect to care for their inner life. The things of this world will pass away. Whatever you think you own is only yours until it breaks, gets lost, wears out, is stolen, or you die. When you leave this world, you take nothing with you.

God is not interested in the things of this world. His desire is to strengthen your interior, to pump his strength into your heart and soul. Jesus told his disciples: *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever* (Jn 14:16 NIV). That promise holds good for us, too.

God sends us his Holy Spirit to build us up from the inside out. One of the primary tools the Holy Spirit uses is God’s Word. The more we immerse ourselves in studying God’s Word, the more we will feel God’s Spirit in our lives.

The **Department of Housing** is found in verse 17 of our text: *That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*. The Greek word we translate as dwell is *katoikew*. It literally means “to settle down and be at home.”

Too many Christians treat Jesus like a guest. They want Jesus to come and visit. But visiting isn’t what Jesus has in mind. Our Lord wants to be a permanent resident in our hearts, not a once-in-a-while visitor, not even a once-a-week visitor. When our hearts are in the proper state, Christ makes himself at home in us and we always feel comfortable in his presence.

Our last department of God’s government is his **Department of Education**. The education we receive from this text is a great comfort to the believer. Paul writes: *that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge* (Eph 3:17-19 ESV).

Paul treats the love of God as though it were a cube. He says it has breadth and length, height and depth. The reasoning behind this is that, in the Bible, a cube is used to express perfection. Every side is a perfect square. No matter what angle you view a cube from, it looks exactly the same. You can turn it over and over, but it’s still the same cube – still the same breadth, length, height, and depth.

How wonderful it is to know that God’s love is always the same. Today, tomorrow, and forever God’s love for us never changes. No matter what the circumstances, God loves us. He loves us when we’re good. When we sin, he loves us enough to forgive us. In fact, God loves us enough to die for us.

When Christ is in charge of your well-governed soul, he will satisfy all your needs. He

will give you the strength to carry on. He will build you up from the inside out. He will be your constant companion as he lives in your heart. And, day by day, he will show you that his love for you never changes.