



CAN DO!

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“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power 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, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:14-21

This is one of my favorite prayers in the Bible. The prayer itself is beautiful, inspiring, and encouraging, but more than that, it is a prayer for Paul’s *readers*. While that originally meant those Christians who lived in the region around the city of Ephesus, it has expanded to include us Christians today. I have often prayed it over sessions and other church leaders. Today I pray it for all our elders, deacons, pastors, and those who serve Jesus Christ within our presbytery.

Each time I return to the prayer, a different phrase speaks to me. This time it is the words of the Ascription of Praise at the end. What a potent reminder of God’s great power while rightly giving God glory! God can do so much more than I can imagine or think to ask. Considering I can ask for quite a lot from God, that’s impressive! Yet, what I’m reminded of most is that God accomplishes this abundance through us! We humans made in God’s image, yet fallible and imperfect in our actions, are how God enacts God’s plans. God at work within us enables us to do whatever God wants or needs, sometimes even in spite of us. We *can do*!

All too often these days we look at our diminishing memberships, bank balances, and other resources and think about what we can’t do or can no longer do. What if we can’t do those things, because God doesn’t need those particular tasks anymore? What if God has new things in store for us and has already empowered us to do them, if we’d just let ourselves believe in God’s possibilities? We need to stop telling ourselves— and each other — what we can’t do and start giving ourselves permission to believe in what we can do.

Elsewhere Paul says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Be strengthened, my friends, and take heart. Look for the positive, let go of the negative, and trust that we have the means necessary to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.

Grace and Peace.

Lisa