

Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

Meaning: Paul shared the intent of His ministry to the church

Big Idea: What is the aim of my Christian life?

Objective: Know God's targets and shoot for them

Theme: Targets

BIG ROCKS

BIG ROCKS ILLUSTRATION

Stephen Covey, in his book *"First Things First"* describes a story that one of his associates experienced on a seminar. In the middle of the lecture the presenter pulled out a wide-mouth jar and placed it on the table, aside to some fist-sized rocks.

After filling the jar to the top with rocks he asked, "Is the jar full?" People could see that no more rocks would fit, so they replied, "Yes!" "Not so fast," he cautioned. He then got some gravel from under the table and added it to the jar, filling the spaces between the rocks. Again, he asked, "Is the jar full?"

This time the students replied "Probably not."

The presenter then reached a bucket of sand below the table, and dumped it on the jar, filling the spaces between the rocks and the gravel. Once again he asked "Is the jar full?"

"No!", the students shouted.

Finally, he grabbed a pitcher of water and filled the jar completely, and then asked the crowd what they could learn from that illustration.

One of the participants answered, "If you work at it, you can always fit more into your life."

"No," said the presenter. "The point is, if you don't put the big rocks in first. . . you never will be able to get them in."

WHAT ARE THE BIG ROCKS THAT HAVE TO GO IN THE JAR?

In Ephesians 3 Paul talks about the BIG ROCKS of his life and his ministry to the church. These are his priorities, his targets, if you will.

He lays them out in a prayer that He prays for the church. Whatever we pray for is what we work for. In this prayer we see the BIG ROCKS of the Christian life.

READ Ephesians 3:14-21

HOW TO PRAY: (ALL ON ONE SLIDE)

Posture – I bow my knees

Person – Father

Path – through the Son in the Spirit

Petitions – spiritual strength and depth in Christ's love

Power – He is able to do more than we can ask or think

Point – the glory of God

Right before this at the beginning of chapter 3 Paul talks about his ministry to the Gentiles, the stewardship of the gospel he had concerning them. Then he talks about what He was asking the Lord to do in their life. So, what we see here is more than just a prayer. These are also the targets, the aims, of his ministry, because what you pray for is what you long to see happen. So, these should be the targets also of our walk with the Lord.

1. THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

Paul prays specifically that the Ephesian believers would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit internally.

There are two major prayers of Paul for the church in Ephesians. We looked at the first one in chapter 1 and this is the second one. It is worth noting that both prayers deal with their spiritual condition and not the material needs of the body. Certainly, it is not wrong to pray for physical and material needs, but the emphasis in these prayers is on the spiritual. The point is that if the inner man is right, the outer man will be taken care of. Church, if we are honest, way too many of our prayers focus only on physical and material needs and fail to lay hold of the spiritual needs of the heart.

What we need more than perfect health, wealth, and prosperity
– IS TO BE FILLED WITH, LED BY, AND
STRENGTHENED SPIRITUALLY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Integrity

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control

The focus here is on enablement. We cannot exhibit Christ-like character apart from the Holy Spirit.

How do you?:

LOVE THE UNLOVABLE
FORGIVE THE UNFORGIVEABLE
BEAR WITH THE UNBEARABLE
WORK WITH THE DISAGREEABLE

ONLY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD!

Ministry

1 Cor. 12:7

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Boldness to share
Burden to serve
Blessing to give

Prophetic Word to share. Prayer of faith to pray.

2. THE STEADFAST LOVE OF GOD

The question is not as much what do you KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE?
The real question is what are you DOING WITH WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE?

1 Cor. 8:1

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

3. THE SURPASSING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

Paul didn't want the believers he disciplined to have only a surface understanding of the Word of God and the Person of Jesus. He wanted them all to be able to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth of God.

Keep in mind – the original Apostles were the ones who DIDN'T MAKE THE CUT FOR RABBINICAL SCHOOL. This is why they were working a trade already, and some of them with their fathers.

By the way – TEENAGERS, there is sufficient evidence to believe that the disciples were mostly TEENAGERS. Peter was the only one who was married, so maybe this is why he was the ring leader, because he was the oldest and most experienced in life.

THE POINT IS, YOU ARE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO GET STARTED SEEKING CHRIST AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WORD, AND WHETHER YOU MADE THE DEAN'S LIST OR THE DISCIPLINARY LIST YOU CAN GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST!

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

4. THE SUPREME GLORY OF GOD

Omnipotence – GOD IS ABLE TO DO MORE THAN WE CAN IMAGINE

Omniscience – More than we ASK OR THINK

He knows our needs before we ask. He knows what is best for us. He perfectly knows the future. His will should be our desire.

Omnipresence – the Divine immanence

His power is at work IN US THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Transcendence – He deserves all the glory in the church and in Christ forever!