

# EPHESIANS

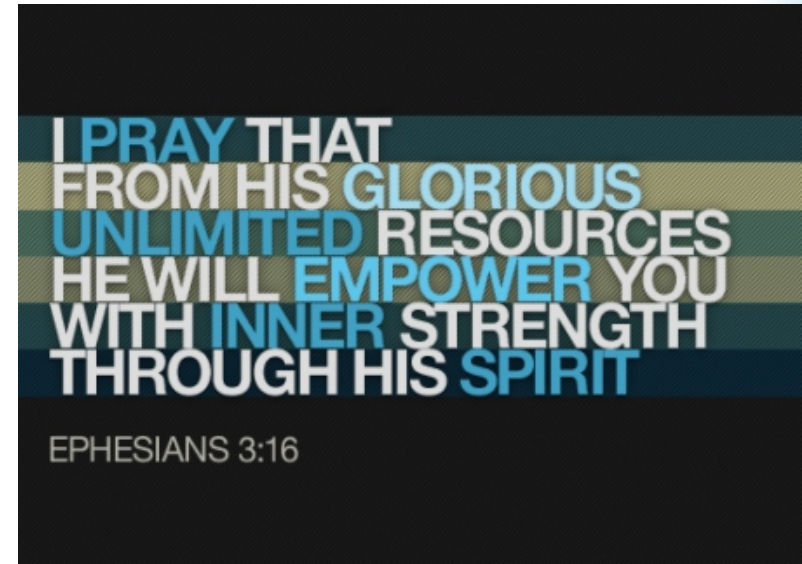
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## Chapter 3

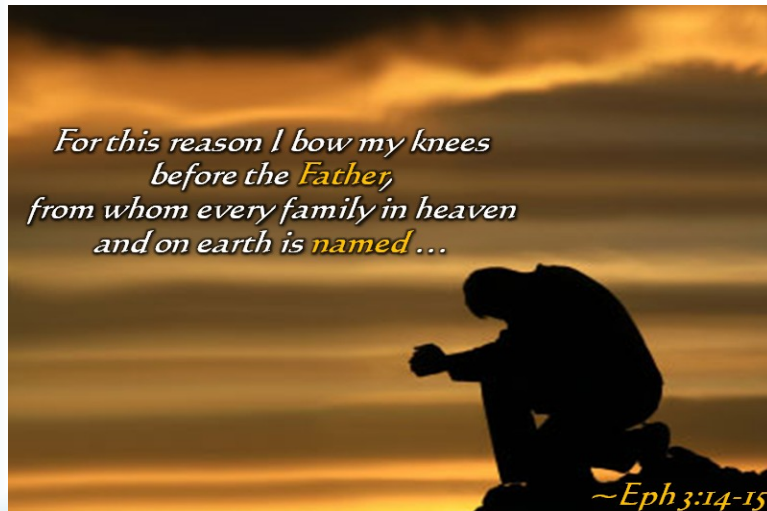
The chapter begins with St Paul expressing how privileged he feels that God has revealed the 'mystery' to him. St Paul speaks of how unworthy he is to be chosen to spread the word of Christ. The 'mystery' spoken about by St Paul is that the Gentiles will become fellow heirs and have the opportunity to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. St Paul was going to preach to the Gentiles the message of salvation so that they may inherit eternal life. He also speaks of the importance of being bold in one's service for Christ and the need to fear neither tribulation nor persecution. Thus he also warns the Gentiles of the possibility that he will suffer persecution in the spreading of the Gospel message to them. At the same time he urges them to stay strong and not lose heart if they see him suffer.

He concludes the chapter with a prayer on behalf of the Gentiles that Christ may strengthen them by His Spirit and dwell in their hearts through faith. He prays that they may gain an understanding of the love of Christ and thus be filled with his love. He concludes his prayer by giving glory to God who is all powerful, Almighty and capable of all things.



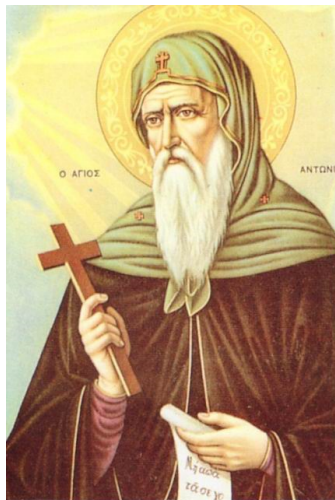
## Chapter 4

St Paul begins this chapter by beseeching the Gentiles (and us!) to conduct themselves in a manner which is Christ-like. For as he explains, this was Christ's ultimate purpose for them. This means being humble, gentle, longsuffering and dwelling together in love and unity. This is all with the final aim of attaining a perfection that resembles Christ's perfection. He urges them to testify of the Lord, to walk in the light and to leave behind the dark and evil ways of the devil. This means to leave behind all greediness, uncleanness, corruption, deceit, lust, bitterness, wrath and anger. This is all for the purpose of putting on the new man of righteousness and holiness. In order for this transformation to take effect, a transformation of the senses is necessary. The hand that steals must be turned into a hand that does what is good. The mouth that speaks corruption to one that imparts grace to the hearer. In this way they will not grieve the Holy Spirit but rather, they will be perfect just as Christ is perfect.



## Short story from the life of Abba Anthony.....

*That you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts {Ephesians 4:22}*



St Pauls speaks of the need to flee lusts, corruption and uncleanness. Often it is the case that boredom and lack of work bring about many of these temptations. St Anthony is a great example of one who fled from these earthly temptations in order to chase the heavenly things and please God. The following short story is from the life of St Anthony the Great and teaches us how we ought to do likewise, may the prayers of this blessed Saint be with us...

When the holy Abba Anthony lived in the desert he was attacked by many sinful thoughts. He said to God, 'Lord, I want to be saved but these thoughts do not leave me alone; what shall I do in my affliction? How can I be saved?' A short while afterwards, when he got up to go out, Anthony saw a man like himself sitting at his work, getting up from his work to pray, then sitting down and plaiting a rope, then getting up again to pray. It was an angel of the Lord sent to correct and reassure him. He heard the angel saying to him, 'Do this and you will be saved.' At these words, Anthony was filled with joy and courage. He did this, and he was saved.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace

Ephesians 4:1-3

**“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind ”**

What is meant by “the futility of their minds?” It is being preoccupied with futile things. This is what the Preacher in Ecclesiastes referred to when he said: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” But someone might say, “if these things are all vain and vanity, why have they come into being? If they are God’s works, how are they vain?” And there is great debate about this. But listen, beloved: he did not say that the works of God are vain, far from it! ... “Vanity of vanities” refers to splendid houses, enormous and inflated wealth, herds of slaves strutting about the market, conceit, vainglory, arrogance and boastfulness. All these things are vain. Such things are not created by God but are of our own creating. Why are they vain? They lead to nothing good. – St John CHRYSOSTOM

**[Ephesians 4:17]**