



**Unit 2:** The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth  
**Sermon Series Title:** Trust His Word  
**Sermon 4:** Above and Beyond  
**Bible Passage:** Ephesians 3:20-21

### **Background/Context**

I had just moved to a new church. One of my new coworkers who had served that church for many years, gave me some advice. He said, "If you really need something and church funds are running short, go talk to Mr. Wesley. He is the richest man I've ever known. There is virtually no limit to what he can do to help you." I put what my friend told me to good use. I didn't ask Mr. Wesley for help often, but when I did, I didn't hesitate to make a big request.

How rich is God? What limit does He have in what He can do for His children? He has no limits. Then why do so many Christians and churches struggle to survive instead of doing great things for Him? We don't realize the enormity of God's power. We don't understand how He puts His power to work to bring glory to His name.

Ephesians 3:20-21 is a doxology, an expression of praise to God. In remembering how great our God truly is, Paul challenges us to realize what great things believers can do for Him.

### **A. He Is Able (Eph. 3:20a)**

This prayer of praise is directed to "Him who is able." Recognizing the greatness of God's power is the first step toward doing great things for Him. In Jeremiah 32:27, God says, "Look, I am the LORD, the God over every creature. Is anything too difficult for me?" The answer, of course, is "no." Nothing is too difficult for God.

The Bible is a record of great things God has done. He created everything (see Gen. 1:1), called a people to belong to Him (see Gen. 12:1-3). He delivered His people from slavery (see Ex. 12:40-42), gave them His law (see Ex. 20:1-17) and the land of Canaan (see Josh. 11:23). He called them to repentance through the prophets (see Amos 5:24) and brought them home from exile (see Ezra 2:1). He also sent His Son to be the Savior (see John 1:14) and empowered His church by His Spirit (see Acts 4:31).

Your life is another record of great things God has done: Giving you life (see Ps. 139:13-14), providing for your needs (see Phil. 4:19), calling you to repentance (see Acts 3:19), and saving you from your sins (see Acts 16:31). The God who has done such great things in the past is able to do great things today. Remember that He is able.

**Application Point:** Make a list of some of the great things that God has done in your life. Keep the list in your Bible. Add to it every time you see God at work. Return to that list every time you feel powerless to make a difference. Remind yourself, again and again, that God is able.

## **B. His Power Works in You (Eph. 3:20b)**

Most people see God's power at work in the majesty of the heavens. Those who read the Bible see God's power on every page. People celebrate God's power at work in some distant land by Christian missionaries. But the last place many Christians expect to see God's power at work is in them.

The amazing message of this passage is not just that God does greater things that we can ask or imagine. The life-changing truth of these verses is that God does His incredible work through people like you and me. When Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, He told His disciples that when God's power works through God's people, they can accomplish a mission as big as the world (see Acts 1:8).

Verse 20 reveals that God works through each one of us, but He accomplishes even greater things through all of us working together as His body. Like the friends who worked together to carry their lame friend and lower him through the roof to Jesus (see Mark 2:1-12), we can work together to accomplish great things that no one of us could do alone. Through giving and working together, we can fulfill the great challenge of Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

**Application Point:** Do you live each day in the confidence that God's power is at work through you? How can this truth change the way you approach the challenges you face and the needs of others? What is your way of working together with other Christians to accomplish great things for God?

## **C. Going Above and Beyond Brings Glory to God (Eph. 3:21)**

When Christians allow God's power to work in and through them, the light of their lives brightens a dark world. Those whose lives are brightened then give glory to God. Jesus said it Himself, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Why does this miraculous flow of power from God through His people into the world not happen more often? Why does the church so often behave like an unplugged appliance, created to be useful but having no power? Why aren't we more like a bolt of lightning, energy from above in search of a conduit? Our problem is that we don't understand and believe the truth about how God does amazing ministry. Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40) God is able. His power will work through you. When Christians and churches put God's power to work, we bring glory to His name.

**Application Point:** Would you characterize yourself as more of an unplugged appliance or a lightning bolt? Why? Identify at least three ways to make sure you're plugged in to your spiritual power source. Commit to doing great things for God because He deserves your loyalty and because He deserves the glory.