

Ephesians 3:14-21

Author: Paul

Recipients: Church in Ephesus

Location: Western shore of modern day Turkey; Aegean Sea

Key Theme: "The Body of Christ is Blessed"

v. 14-15

For this reason...

- Paul doubles down on his prayer to the Lord on behalf of the Ephesians.
- The mystery of the Gospel would be for their edification and encouragement.
- Paul was writing the letter to the Ephesians from house arrest in Rome.
- This would have undoubtedly caused the Ephesian church, and every other church he had planted, much consternation.
- He prays to God on their behalf and he is quite specific about what he is asking God to do.

v. 16-19

Specific Prayer of Paul

- 1) For them to be strengthened
 - This strength was to come from the riches of God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - The strength was specifically to be applied to their inner being.
 - Not just a surface level spiritual strength but one that permeated their very core.
- 2) That Christ would dwell in their hearts
- 3) Rooted and grounded in love
 - Whose love?
 - The love that Christ has for the Church.

- 4) The ability to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ
- 5) Filled with all the fullness of God

Rooted and Grounded

- When we think of the word *rooted* what sort of object do we think of?
- Usually we think of trees.
- Trees have massive root systems and the healthier the tree is the better the roots will be.
- When we see the word *grounded* we may think of something different.
- We don't think of an organic object but rather something that is built into the ground.
- Take a house for example.
- It is built onto a foundation that is built into the ground.

Trees

- When we see a tree we see a trunk, leaves, branches, etc.
- It is assumed that the roots are there and we can see them if we dig down into the earth.
- Paul is asking God to grant the Ephesians the ability to understand the height and depth of the love of God.
- Think of the tree again.
- The only way to fully experience the love of Christ is to be rooted in Him.
- If we are rooted in Him then the rest of our lives will reach up, just as branches do, in praise to Him.

Houses

- When we see a house we see a place in which someone lives.
- The house is not built straight onto the ground lest it settle, flood, or get damage from ground contact.
- They are built onto a foundation but they don't necessarily stretch up high or down low.
- We see the concept of breadth and length in the construction of the house.
- The breadth refers to the width and the length of the structure that is completed.
- Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that God would grant them the ability to understand and comprehend the vastness of His love.

Comprehension

- In order to properly comprehend something we must experience it firsthand.
- Comprehension and intellectual understanding are not exactly the same thing.
- I understand how to throw a football but I do not know what it's like to throw a pass in the Super Bowl.
- I know what it is like to drive a car but I have no idea what it is like to drive in the Dayton 500.
- I can intellectually grasp what those guys do but I have no real world comprehension of it.
- We cannot truly grasp and comprehend the love of Christ until we have experienced it firsthand.
- Paul is asking God to help them comprehend the love of Christ.
- This is quite a tall order and Paul acknowledges that in verse 19.

Surpassing Human Knowledge

- He says that the love of Christ surpasses all knowledge.
- It is utterly impossible for humans to comprehend the love of Christ without divine intervention.
- When we attempt to understand the love of Christ for His people we find ourselves outside of our depth.

1 Corinthians 2:11-16

- The mind of God is so much higher than anything we can possibly understand.
- The Scriptures tell us that only the Spirit of God can comprehend the ways of God.
- It also tells us that in Christ we have been given the Spirit of God.
- No, we will still not perfectly understand the love of Christ, but only with the Spirit's help will we even get a taste of the height, depth, breadth, and length of the love of Christ.

How do we experience the love of Christ?

- In order to experience the love of Christ we must be rooted in Him.
- We do that by immersing ourselves in His Word.
- We do that by spending time in prayer with Him.
- We do that by being committed to the local church.
- We do that by obedience to His commands.

Practical Application

- Just as the tree reaches up to the sky due to its healthy root system, if we are healthily rooted in Christ, we will bear a certain type of fruit that is in keeping with Him.
- We will reflect the love of our Master.
- This is not something artificial that we can produce on our own but it stems from being properly rooted and grounded in Christ and His love for us will overflow from us.

v. 20-21

Doxology

- Doxology means to praise
- Paul attributes all power to God and declares that all glory belongs to Him

Small Group Questions

- 1) Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians from house arrest. Why would this cause the people to be afraid or anxious?
 - They could be fearful that they were next. Ephesus was within the Roman Empirical border so maybe they feared that they too would be persecuted. How does that relate to what we are going through today?
- 2) What is Paul specifically praying on their behalf?
 - Go over the 5 points of Paul's prayer and discuss them individually.
- 3) How do we experience the love of Christ?
 - We experience it by being rooted and grounded in Him. Immersing ourselves in His Word. Being committed to a local church. Spending time with Him in prayer. That's how our roots dig deeper in Him.

