



Ephesians

Part 22

Ephesians 3:14-21
Week of August 8, 2021

Before Connect Group

- Read Ephesians 3:14-21
- Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength 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, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21, ESV

Sermon Notes

In order for us to approach the hope of this knowledge of the love of Christ, we will need to first be sure of the strength at the bottom level of who we are in our faith.

It is an amazing thing to sit back and think about how much we have talked about here in this book of Ephesians. This all so that when you hear the words uttered, *“For God so loved the World that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”* you might not dismiss this as some verse to persuade you to come to faith in Christ, but you would understand it as the very foundation for all hope, love, growth, and sanctification for all who would experience the heavenly blessing of faith in Jesus Christ.

God is doing a work in you. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then there is not a point in which transformation is not working, or is done. Our great concern last week was the nature of this “inner man” which Paul is praying will be strengthened in preparation for the presence of Christ. *2 Corinthians 4 While the outer self is fading away, the inner man is being renewed day by day.* This inner man is formed out of the abundance of God's glory, By the agency of the Holy Spirit, in the presence of God hidden in Christ (Colossians 3). This strengthening work of the Spirit in us is “so that” Christ may dwell in our hearts.

The grace of God in the creation of this inner man... This week it is appropriate for us to turn our attention to the nature of this strengthening in power by the Spirit. Then many approach the concept of the inner man and the theology of the Power of God, there is much that leaves us in the dark. As we orient ourself to our task today, may it suffice to say the power of God is infinite.

- To come in thought of harnessing such power and wielding it at your will is foolishness and an irresponsible approach to the Word of God.
- Also, to rationalize this power is just as foolish. Assuming that your observation and scientific approach may explain the hand of God will cause an atrophy of faith ending in a life that is lived by your own power with an acknowledgement of the existence of God.

To understand the purpose of this strengthening in power by the Spirit is important for us to appropriately navigate the rest of this book.

- As we move into the second half of Ephesians we will begin to find ourselves navigating the rapids of practical obedience in this life defined as a New Creation in Christ.
- However, in the faulty path of so many, we could simply conclude that the strengthening power worked in us is for the express purposes of this obedience. While obedience will become our focus over the next several weeks, to speak of this power as one which simply empowers us to a desired act offered to God is to both, lessen this power and miss the central point of Paul's entire prayer.
- Our obedience and life of “walking worthy” will be an outflow and a result of the purpose of the power poured out upon us. So we need to take some time to think through what is being said in our text this morning.

Paul's Prayer For Power

- Previously, we mentioned that the end hope and purpose of this great prayer from the knees of Paul is found in these overwhelming statements in vs. 17a and vs. 19b.
- *Vs. 17 So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*
- *Vs. 19 That you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

- There are three different categories of people that rise up in this room when this result is realized.
 - Those who have tried to ponder the greatness of this presence of God in them. Concluding that something of divine supernatural work happened, but resolve to go on about life without any ability to wrap yourself around it.
 - Our prayer for you is that of Paul in vs. 18, “that you may have the strength to comprehend with the saints.”
 - Those who have been taught by religion or science of our day that God is merely a distant thought in some form or deistic belief. You may meet him one day in the end, but it is not until then that things will come together.
 - Our prayer for you is that of Paul in vs. 19, that you may know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.
 - Those who have not given thought at all to things of religion. Life simply flows as events unfold from one day to another. The reason you are here this morning is even a mystery to you. You find comfort in not knowing the how or the why because it somehow detaches you from the responsibility of turning within yourself to search meaning and life.
 - Our prayer for you is that of Paul in vs. 17, that you would be rooted and grounded in love this morning.
- Because the key to this being filled with the fulness of God, this strengthening power within our inner being to be filled with the dwelling presence of Christ, comes from “Knowing” Him.

Knowing Christ and His Love

- If the conclusion of Paul’s prayer as a whole is that we would be indwelt by Christ and filled with the fullness of God, then we should see that the central key to this end is “knowledge”.
- *Ephesians 1:15-18 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.*
- This prayer continues to move to the unfolding knowledge of the overwhelming power displayed in Christ as a mystery revealed and the same power at work in those who believe.
- *Ephesians 3:19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*
- Knowledge, in the way employed by Paul, is not that of simply rational thought, but of your whole affection, emotion, spirit, and rational thought directed toward and resulting in worship of the Glory of God.
- To “know” in the biblical sense is to connect and experience at a level far beyond what can be observed from a distance.
- Here in Chapter 3 we are presented with a concerning contradiction which establishes the purpose of this prayer.
- To “know” the love of Christ that surpasses “knowledge”...
- This is only further amplified by the closing statement to this section vs. 20, no him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, beyond what we can think!
- In its end, this is why Paul prays “according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

- I see three main points we should consider here in Paul's prayer...
 - Preparation
 - Capacity
 - Availability

The Preparation, or Prerequisite

- Ephesians 3:17
- Rooted and Grounded in love
- The way that this is structured is pointing to the fact that you being rooted and grounded in love is absolutely necessary for you to navigate to the intended end.
- This language has been used of God's work of establishing his us before.
- *1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.*
- It is clear that God is the one who is doing the work of rooting and grounding, and here in our context it is by the work of the Spirit.
- But then this begs the question, what does it mean to be rooted and grounded in love.
- First, we need to discuss "love"
- Some contend that this is the love of God in Christ... which seems supported by the following statement in verse 19 to know the love of Christ.
- Some contend that this is actually speaking of the love of the believer toward God. This is not a radical thought as Paul has already stated in his prayer in ch. 1 that he thanks God for the love the Ephesians have for the saints.
- I would caution us from claiming either side of this argument with certainty. I would follow this with a caution not to separate the two very sharply. For what does a Christian know of love and the expression of it that does not come from Christ?
- *1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.*
- The thing for us to consider is the strength and stability that is in the similarities of these two pictures. The first of a great tree that cannot be toppled over for its roots are healthy and deep in the earth. The second being of a strong and thick foundation upon which a building is being built.
- In order for us to approach the hope of this knowledge of the love of Christ, we will need to first be sure of the strength at the bottom level of who we are in our faith.
- In this we hear the words of Christ supporting this prayer of Paul.
- *Luke 6:48-49 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."*
- But there is value in the nuances of the two.

Rooted

- The roots of a tree provide the nourishment that is needed for the tree to grow strong and accomplish its purpose.
- So it is with the believer. But what is it that we feed upon? It is love.
- We must consider what it is that we have set in this place rather than love. Any other thing is deficient.
- *! Corinthians 13:1-3 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up*

my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

- First and foremost, it is the love of Christ of which we must sustain central in our daily meditation. The passionate longing to know God never dies... We have been given the gift of access which Paul elevates here.
- Consider the Psalmist who does not reduce knowledge of the Lord to a simple rational concept.
- *Psalm 119:12-16 Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. In Christ we have all hope, all fulfillment, all love. Is this what feeds your Christian hope and life.*
- *John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

Grounded:

- This deploys the imagery of a strong foundation upon which a structure which is conceived by God alone is to be built.
- A foundation is purposefully laid. It is a strong base to what is surely a glorious structure.
- Have you ever driven through a neighborhood and looked at the footprints of random foundations that have been laid and try to imagine the house that is going to be built upon it.
- Even more, have you ever pondered the type of family who will live in it.
- With this foundation comes the guarantee that a house will be built. It will be filled.
- The greater the foundation, the greater the house.
 - Upon the foundation of our ability, will be a house built in proportionate size.
 - Upon the foundation of our morality, will be a house built in proportionate size.
 - Upon the foundation of our success, will be a house built in proportionate size.
- These are foundations which cannot stand against the wear and tear of this world.
- But upon the foundation of Christ's love can be built the very temple of God.
- *Ephesians 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

We must meditate and consider in the depth of our hearts the overwhelming work of God to begin us in a work of pure power and strength working in us through the power of His Spirit.

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- How is it we are able to know the love of God? How does God reveal His love to us as His loved people?
- What happens when we try and work through our faith without love? How does love root us in the presence, power, and glory of Jesus Christ?
- Why will it not work to build our foundation on our ability? our morality? or our success? Why do these things ultimately fail to ground us?
- What does it mean that we are being built into a dwelling place of God? How does God indwell His people? What is the relationship between knowing God and experiencing God?
- What happens when things take the place of our connection to God?

Challenge For The Week

Being rooted and grounded in faith comes by the grace of Jesus Christ who desires to know us intimately.

- Growing in faith takes an honest look at our lives to determine where we are. Where are you rooted and grounded in your faith and where do you need to be rooted and grounded in faith?
- Who has God placed in your life who needs to be rooted and grounded in Him? How can you show the love of God to them?

