



# Ephesians

## Part 23

Ephesians 2:11-23  
Week of August 15, 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

*Our pursuit to know the love of Christ and to be filled with the fulness of God does not bypass our mind.*

What can you truly know? As school is about to begin for our children, we all have on our minds what they might learn this year. We look at our young kids and we see potential. What potential do we see? Well it is the expanding of their minds. From history, to science, to math, to literature, as well as social expression. Our children are in the portion of life that seems to grow and expand so rapidly. Though within our students, there seems to be an exaggerated form, this is true of all of us. We are ever learning, ever expanding. Even as we get older, it seems that information is new and changing at a faster rate. It is hard to keep up.

- Though this endeavor of learning and growing in this world seems to be of some value, it does not naturally lead to ultimate Truth.
- Rather, it is a learning and growing while our eyes are closed. It is an illumination of a concept, not the real experience of truth.
- *Romans 1:18-22 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*
- What good is it if all of my growth and learning takes me away from Truth?
- I want to make sure I am clear. I do not put the devil in math, science, or any of these disciplines, but rather, in the comfort and "wisdom" of our own darkness.
- What can we truly know? This question may be misleading. We can know much, but it is the value of it that is of most importance. Maybe we should ask, "How can we know real truth?"
- Well, this is where Paul's prayer seems to be concerned.
- *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,*
- *Ephesians 3:17-19 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.*
- Three things that seem to push us toward this goal.
  - Preparation
  - Capacity
  - Availability

## Capacity

- The infinite nature of God.
- It is important that we understand that the Truth we are seeking is in the revelation of the Infinite God.
- The key here is revelation. All knowledge that we can know is based on what can be factually observed or imagined. Science and Philosophy find their natural limitation within this rule. Where one may fall short of explanation, it will claim that it has simply not been observed yet.
- Since darkness has overwhelmed the heart of man God is no longer the end of this observation within the matter and makeup of this world. God is not able to be approached within the imagination of the fallen mind.
- Therefore, it is only by God's grace and mercy in the act of revelation. We can only know what He has chosen to reveal. Any bit is beyond what we can attain on our own.
- We spent some time in Ex. 33 to highlight how this "glory" of God was too much for Moses to gaze upon. God allowed him to see just his back and Moses was filled.
- In vs. 20 of our text today, we see that God functions well beyond our thought and imagination. So capacity becomes not a small concern when we are pressing toward being "filled with the fulness of God."
- *"May have strength to Comprehend"*
- The idea of strength in this text connects us back to the opening of this prayer. That you would be "strengthened". Drawing attention to the work of the Spirit to do a work of strengthening.
- At first to strengthen your inner man that Christ may dwell in your heart in faith.
- Then also to strengthen your comprehension.
- *1 Corinthians 2:11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*
- To Comprehend
- The word used here is most often translated as "obtain", or "attain" to make something your own.
- There are a few things I think we should consider around the use of this language here.
- Our pursuit to know the love of Christ and to be filled with the fulness of God does not bypass our mind.
- Though we are very aware of the dangers that come with reducing God to an intellectual subject, we should not make the opposing mistake of concluding he does not engage this faculty.
- Too many who come to faith in Christ will fall for the lie that the primary way in which the Lord will engage you is through your emotions or feelings.
- This has to do in a large part with our reduction of the concept of love as an unquantifiable emotion. One of the most dangerous concepts in our culture is this one. It causes people to ignore the rationality of love and simply pursue it as a passion that cannot be embraced within our minds.
- *2 Corinthians 5:11-15 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

- This word indicates intense pursuit rooted and grounded in love.
- There is an active tone to this structure.
- The prayer in this text is for strength to comprehend... The comprehending is an assumed labor on your end.
- That you may attain (in your pursuit). If we detach our faith from our intellectual pursuit, we will find our lives functioning in a hypocritical duality. We will pursue religion for the way it makes us feel, and the secular world for what we can know in our mind and skill.
- How do we as Christians pursue the Love of Christ intellectually?
- Ephesians 3:18 breadth, length, height, and depth.
- But the endless pursuit is in mind.
- Please do not walk away because it seems so far! The very give out of the riches of His glory is for you to be consumed in the pursuit.
- How are you studying? How are you teaching? What skills do you need to develop to go further?
- Most of our objections to the intellectual pursuit of the Lord is due to some perception of lack of time "leave that to the professionals" you say. The death in that statement is over your heart.
- Please do not relegate the height of glorious study to the ivory towers. To the seminaries. These are the most dangerous places for this study to reside! It is in the heart that is rooted and grounded in love that has true access.

### **Availability:**

- Ephesians 3:18 "with all the saints"
- This is not "some." This is not the "gifted." Rather, this is "all" the saints.
- I don't care who you are or where you come from today. You have the access rooted and grounded in love to pursue the divine ends of comprehension.
- The intimate movement from Comprehension to Knowing what is unknowable.
- This is the height of availability.
- Paul's prayer uses these two words together on purpose. That you may comprehend and that you might know the love of Christ - which surpasses all knowledge.
- May your pursuit to attain become an overwhelming filling of all affection to "know" the love of Christ!
- That you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

# Connect Group Discussion Questions

- Who is doing the strengthening in you? What is the difference between strength that comes from God and strength that we muster up in ourselves?
- Are we ever tempted to rely upon our own strength rather than trusting in the strength of God? What tempted us to trust in our own strength rather than God's?
- What is the difference between knowledge and comprehension? How do both of these lead to our availability?
- How does Jesus Christ drawing us closer to Himself to know us and by known by Him empower and strengthen us
- Where are you needing to grow in your ability to know, grow, and show the word of God in your life? What are some of the next steps you can take to grow in and express the word of God in your life?

## Challenge For The Week

God draws us deeper into relationship with Him to increase our capacity and our availability to the work of Christ in us and through us.

- Taking our next steps means growing in capacity. Ask God this week to reveal in you where you need to rely on Him more for strength, direction, and guidance. Ask Him to show you what needs to be removed from your life and which sins you need to continue to lay at the foot of the cross.
- Share your story with someone you know who needs to hear the Gospel. Pray for them all week and pray for opportunities to share your faith with them.

