

Prayer for Enablement – Part 3
Knowing the Unknowable

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AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text:

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Introduction

One of the great blessings and benefits of being part of a local church is that you will have fellow believers praying for you. Now, praying for other believers is **not only a blessing but also our responsibility**. Praying for others is a pattern seen throughout Scripture—we see this in the example of Moses, of Samuel, of David, of Solomon, of Jeremiah, and of Daniel. Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples throughout His earthly ministry and now sitting at the right of the Father we read in ...

Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession for us**.

Our Lord sitting at the right hand of the Father intercedes for us.

Hebrews 7:25 ... he ever liveth **to make intercession for them**.

Our Lord lives forever to intercede, to speak to God for us always. Christ lives forever to plead with God for us.

Then we also see the apostle Paul's example in praying for others. In **Philippians 1:1-4**, Paul assures them that he is praying for them. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, **Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.**"

Seeing that it is not only **a blessing** to pray for one another but also **our responsibility**, what are we to pray for one another as believers? Paul helps us in this area, by looking at the prayers he prays for his fellow believers recorded in the Scripture.

We looked at Ephesians chapter 1, where he prays for them the following:

1. That they might have a **greater revelation and knowledge of who God is.**
2. That they may know **the hope of God's calling.**
3. That they may know **the riches of God's inheritance.**
4. That they may know **the exceeding greatness of God's power.**

In other words, that they might know who God is and who they are and what they have in Christ as believers in Christ.

This morning, we continue to look at the prayers Paul prays in Ephesians chapter 3. There are four requests here, namely,

1. **Strength** - that they might be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.
2. **Depth** - that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith.
3. **Apprehension** - that they might be rooted and grounded in love, and comprehend the love of Christ.
4. **Fullness** - that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.

We already have covered the first two, today I want us to focus on the third request, which is ...

[Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.](#)

His prayer here is that the believers at Ephesus might **comprehend the greatness of Christ's love for them.** Oh, how important this prayer is. Remember that **these four prayers are connected to one another, they are not isolated requests.** In other words, in the words of Warren Wiersbe, *“One request leads into the next one, and so on. He prays that the inner man might have spiritual strength, which will, in turn, lead to a deeper experience with Christ. This deeper experience will enable them to “apprehend” (get hold of) God's great love, which will result in their being “filled unto all the fullness of God.”*

The result of Christ dwelling in our hearts, being at home in our hearts, is that we are rooted and grounded in love. The word **“love”** here is the *agape* love. This is why we want Christ to settle down and be at home in our hearts, because the more He feels at home in our hearts, the more you and I will be rooted and grounded in *agape* love of Christ. The more Christ becomes comfortable in our hearts the greater our comprehension and experience of *agape* love of Christ.

Paul's prayer and desire for the Ephesian believers is that they might be rooted in, grounded in, and comprehend the love of Christ. As Christ settles down and feels at home in their hearts, they will be **Rooted** in Christ's Love, **Grounded** in Christ's Love, and **Comprehend** Christ's Love. That's what I invite you to consider with me this morning.

And Paul describes this experience of *agape* love using two word-pictures - “that ye, being **rooted** and **grounded** in love.”

I - Rooted in Christ's Love

The first word picture Paul uses is that we would be **rooted in love**. The word “**rooted**” is an **agricultural term**. Webster defines the word “root” as “*the usually underground part of a seed plant body ... functions as an organ of absorption, aeration, and food storage or as a means of anchorage and support . . .*” Roots are the first part of a plant to grow. **Though they are hidden, they are the most important part of a tree**. They are the source of life. They provide nutrients, sustenance, and stability. The root system **must go down deep into the soil** in order to feed on its nutrients and minerals and the moisture it needed to be strong and produce fruit. The root system must go down deep into the soil not only for **sustenance**, but also for **stability**. The roots must go down deep into the ground. Deep roots bring strong and stable trees. **Trees with shallow root system will not stand heavy rain and strong wind**. They can be uprooted very easily because they don't have a substantial root system. Furthermore, **the tree is completely dependent upon the soil for its food**. If there is no soil or no nutrients in the soil the tree will grow weak, wither, and will eventually die.

So, **what is the point of this word picture “rooted in love?”** We are the tree, and the soil is the love of Christ. The Lord wants to settle more and more down in our hearts and lives and that we will become deeply rooted in His love. Just as the roots of a tree are to sink down deep into the soil which does sustain and stabilize the tree, so **the love of Christ does sustain and stabilize the believer**.

A tree with deep root system will be healthy and fruitful. It will also stand heavy rain and strong wind. Likewise, the Christian who is rooted in the love of Christ, will be spiritually healthy and fruitful. As David describes a godly man in [Psalm 1:3](#), “[he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.](#)”

The prophet Jeremiah has similar take on this in [Jeremiah 17:7](#) [Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8: For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.](#)

The Christian who is rooted in the love of Christ, will not only be spiritually healthy and fruitful, but will also be strong and be able endure both drought and storms of life. The love of Christ is an abundant source of sustenance and great source of stability. **When we truly know the love of Christ, that love changes us and strengthens us.**

2. Grounded in Christ's Love

The second word picture Paul uses is that we would be grounded in love. The word “**grounded**” is an **architectural or construction term**. It gives us the picture of a building with a strong foundation. If you are building **a tent or a gazebo**, it doesn't really matter what kind of

foundation you have. But if you are building a **100-story building** you must have a **deep solid bedrock** foundation on which to build. **The most important part of a building is the foundation.** A **weak foundation** means a **weak building**. On the other hand, a **strong foundation** means a **strong building**. For a building to withstand strong storm it must be deeply grounded on a solid foundation.

Jesus told the story about the two builders, one of whom did not go deep enough for his foundation.

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which **built his house upon a rock**: 25: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: **for it was founded upon a rock.**

It is important to have a solid and firm foundation. Not only are we to be deeply rooted but we are to be firmly grounded in Christ's love. There must be a solid firm deep foundation. Paul prays that the believers might have a deeper experience with Christ, because only a deep experience could sustain them during the severe trials of life. The believer, grounded in this love, is made stable for every season of life.

There is another passage that uses this same pair of images in the book of Colossians.

Colossians 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7: **Rooted and built up in him**, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Here it doesn't specify that we will be rooted and grounded in love, but in Christ. But it's the same thing, because Christ is the love of God manifested to our lives.

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*His oath, his covenant, his blood,
support me in the whelming flood;
when all around my soul gives way,
he then is all my hope and stay.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

-Edward Mote-

III - Comprehending Christ's Love

Ephesians 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Paul prays for the believers at Ephesus that they “may be able to comprehend ... and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” The word “**comprehend**” means **to grasp** or **to lay hold of**. Paul’s prayer is that they may lay hold of the greatness of the love of Christ. Being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to apprehend the love of Christ. Note that Paul is not praying that they might love Christ more, but instead, he is praying that they might better comprehend and know the Christ’s great love for them. Comprehending the love of Christ.

Look at Paul’s prayer again with regards to Christ’s love—that the believers at Ephesus that they “may be able to comprehend ... and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” Essentially, Paul is praying to know the unknowable. I know that sounds a self-contradiction. **How can you know something that is unknowable?** Paul here acknowledges that the love of Christ surpasses knowledge. That is, it is beyond comprehension. The love of Christ is **too great, too vast, too immense to be fully grasped**. But then Paul prays that they might be able to comprehend it. He prays that they may know something that is beyond comprehension; something that is unknowable. How can you know the unknowable? We cannot fully comprehend it, but we can know a fraction of it, in some capacity. We can know something of His great love, though we can never know it completely. Knowing Christ’s love is **an ongoing and never-ending process**. Throughout eternity we will never come to the place of saying that we know all that there is to know of Christ’s great love for us.

This should be our prayer for ourselves and for one another. We should make this our goal; to try to begin to know this incompressible love. But if we start to pray that we may know more of the love of Christ, **how is that prayer going to be answered?** How else but by our **studying, examining, meditating** on, and **enjoying** what the Scriptures say about the love of Christ.

What is the love of Christ?

Paul uses four words to describe the love of Christ for us—**breadth, length, depth, and height**. This description speaks of the vastness and completeness of Christ’s love for us.

1. Breadth (Width)

How broad or wide is the love of God? God's love is broad enough to reach and embrace the whole world.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Christ's love covers a great multitude that is beyond number, consisting of people from every nation and tribe and people and tongue.

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

2. Length

How long or how enduring is the love of God? God's love is long enough to endure through all eternity. The love of God is unchanging. A love which is long enough to last forever. In 1 Corinthians 13:8, Paul said, "Charity never faileth." In other words, love never ends.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is no end for the love of Christ. It is an eternal love that will not let us go!

3. Depth

How deep is the love of God? How deep is the love of Christ? How far has He reached down? God's love is deep enough to reach down to the worst sinner.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

All the way down into the grave, where sinners are. That is where He found us. We were dead. We were foul, rotten, corrupting, stinking dead corpses. We had no life. We did not have a single heartbeat toward God.

4. Height

How high is the love of God? It is high enough to raise both Gentiles and Jews to heavenly places in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

There is no higher place and honor than to be seated together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We will be exalted together with Christ.

God's love is wide enough to reach every person. God's love is long enough to last through all eternity. God's love is deep enough to reach the worst sinner. God's love is high enough to take us to highest place.

The love of Christ, how wonderful, how marvelous, how great, how incomprehensible! It is high I cannot attain unto it!

Love so amazing so divine!

Closing Exhortations

Every child of God knows the love of Christ in some way. We know ...

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Coming to know the great love of God in Christ is at the heart of responding to the gospel. Yet, while every true Christian knows something of Christ's great love as shown at the cross, we all need to grow in our laying hold of His love for us. You grow deeper in Christ's love as you and I realize how much He loves us. This is so important because love begets love.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20: If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21: And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

The result of apprehending the great love of Christ for us is a love for Him and for others.

2 Corinthians 5:14a For the love of Christ constraineth us ...

May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.

Now, let me speak to those who are still outside looking in. In other words, those who are still lost and unsaved; those who are strangers to the love of God. I want you to know that **God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)**. God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us (1 John 3:16).

God's love moved Him to send His only begotten Son, who bore the penalty and punishment that we sinners justly deserved. There can be no doubt that God loved us, and He demonstrated it by sending His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to bear our sins on the cross of Calvary. He endured the judgment and penalty that we deserved as He hung on the cross. And now He commands you and me to believe in Him. I pray you will experience this great love of God. His love is offered freely to all, that includes you, but you must receive it. Do you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Have you experienced the love of God in salvation? If not, I encourage you to respond in faith calling on the name of the Lord to save you.

AMEN!