

Sermon: Ephesians 3:14-21
By Brian Fletcher

For the sake of His Church...

1. God wants us to be rooted and established in His Love
2. God wants us to grasp (together with all the saints) His Love
3. God wants us to glorify His Love

Paul uses two prayers and a doxology to communicate this to the Ephesians but really also to us as well.

1. God wants us to be rooted and established in His Love

PRAYER #1: Out of His glorious riches (which Paul spent the first 2 chapters discussing) we are to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in our inner being.

So that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith and that we will be rooted and established in His Love.

What will root and establish us? The Holy Spirit using His glorious riches and His strengthening power.

The riches are from chapter 1-2; chosen by God, made holy and blameless, predestined, adopted as God's children, we've been redeemed, forgiven, God has made his will known to us, we were chosen and included in Christ, we were given the Holy Spirit as a deposit, we have been made alive with Christ, we have been saved by grace, we are God's workmanship, we have been brought near to God through the blood of Christ, we have been given access to the Father, we are members of God's household, we are a holy temple where God dwells.

When Paul talks about us being rooted and established he has two things in mind.

Rooted is a way to say that the believer needs to be firmly planted in the love of God. A tree with no roots will not get nourished and it will not bear fruit. But a tree with deep roots, goes deep into the earth to soak in the nutrients of the soil so it can grow and bear fruit.

Established is a way to say the believer is like a building established on the love of God as a foundation. A foundation of a building keeps it strong and able to withstand weather, it keeps the building in place. God's love is the foundation that we have to build our lives on if it is going to face the weather of life & the temptations of Satan.

But what difference will being rooted and established in God's love in the "inner being" actually do for me?

Listen to these words from the diary of David Brainerd. Brainerd was missionary to the Indians in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the 1740's. His life was plagued by illness and he died at the age of 29 from tuberculosis.

My heart rejoiced in my particular work as a missionary; rejoiced in my necessity of self-denial in many respects; and still continued to give up myself to God and implore mercy of him; praying incessantly, every moment, with sweet fervency. My nature being very weak of late, and much spent, was now considerably overcome: My fingers grew very feeble and somewhat numb; so that I could scarcely stretch them out straight: And when I lighted from my horse, could hardly walk: My joints seemed all to be loosed. But I felt abundant "strength in the inner man".

Brainerd finds his strength to live through his sufferings by the power of the Holy Spirit applying His spiritual blessings in Brainerd's inner being.

You may be facing fierce temptation...then believe Christ is giving you His spiritual blessings to withstand it.

You may be facing extreme difficult financial problems...then believe Christ is giving you His spiritual blessings to trust in Him and not in money.

You may be having tense relational issues at home...then believe Christ is giving you His spiritual blessings to love others unconditionally.

You may find yourself depressed for reasons you can't figure out...then believe Christ is giving you His spiritual blessings to restore your soul and lift it out of the pit.

I believe the truths of Scripture are applicable to every situation or circumstance that we face, every day.

But, fortunately God has even more spiritual blessings for us through His Saints that surround us.

For the sake of His Church God wants us to grasp TOGETHER WITH ALL THE SAINTS His love. God, who is rich in wisdom, created us to live in community. He has graciously given us one another to help us comprehend and grasp His love.

God didn't leave Adam alone in the garden with the animals, He sent Adam woman, who was "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". Eve came as a helper to Adam and together they were to worship and enjoy their relationship with God.

Look around you, God has not left you alone to experience His love, but He has placed you in community with others so that together we can worship and glorify God from now on and forever. And we get to heaven the party only gets bigger. God wants us to "bond together" to grasp His love and live it out and to advance His gospel to the ends of the earth.

How does this happen?

- It starts with your own family. Together as husband and wife, as parents and children we teach each other God's love, we model it, we tell it to one another, we encourage each other with it.

- Here at Spring Run we strongly encourage each of you to be in a Community Group. A Community Group is made up of 4-6 families that meet together regularly to live life together. They learn about the Christian faith, pray for one another, and share in each other's joys and burdens. It is a place where deep friendships are fostered and people are cared for and encouraged to intentionally and passionately follow Christ. In them the gospel is applied to daily life, where we work live and play. I really believe that every person here should be in a Community Group, you really don't know what you are missing if you are not in one. Talk to Andrew or myself if you are not in one but want to be.
- Some of the Saints have gone on to be with the Lord face to face. However, that does not mean we cannot grasp with them the love of Christ. I challenge you to read saints like C.S. Lewis, Francis Schafer, Jonathan Edwards, any of the Puritans, read what these men wrote, read their biographies. Read Bible saturated authors like John Piper, RC Sproul, Tim Keller, Paul Tripp. These are saints that can encourage our hearts and give us a better understanding of how deep and wide and long and high God's love is.

Be an encourager to those around you. Look for ways to encourage one another. The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Together with all the saints we grasp and understand and wrestle with God's love. I know that I have experienced firsthand the encouragement of others, whether it is my wife holding me up when I feel like I am toppling over or a friend that gives me a call at just the right time or I always love to hear what God is teaching you in your life, that is spiritually encouraging to me and helps me see the depths of God's love.

Finally, this passage ends in a doxology. Paul's third prayer is a praise and worship prayer back to God.

The glory of God in His church is for all generations and for all eternity. But look at how Paul describes it...

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine...”

God is doing thing beyond measure, they are so great and awesome that we cannot measure them

I have an uncanny sense when it comes to contests to guess how many things are in a jar. I don't know how or why, but I have won a few of these contests. But I could not begin to try and measure this jar of sand and how many granules there are in it.

Show a handful of sand...this is all God can do for us, for His glory, so much we cannot even measure it.

God is going to do immeasurably more than we ask or “imagine”. You cannot even imagine, in your wildest dreams what God is going to do in and through you. Now listen, I am not talking about you winning the lottery or being able to drive a new Lexus and live in a huge house. I am talking about spiritual blessings that are way better than any material thing you could think of. God is going to do things that we don’t even think of. Like God is going to use you in someone’s life to encourage them when you didn’t think that was possible, or God is going to let you experience His peace in the most trying and difficult circumstance imaginable, or God is going to reveal Himself to you in ways you just were not thinking of. God will surprise you.

Conclusion

Story of doing my dad’s funeral, going into the bathroom to regroup, coming out and seeing Bob Ranson, I was surprised and it was a direct answer to prayer.

We can’t lose sight that God is about the business of building His Church for His Glory, we get to be blessed by it, we get to be a part of it and experience it for eternity.