

Ephesians 3:14–19

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
<sup>15</sup> from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,  
<sup>16</sup> [in order] that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,  
<sup>17</sup> [in order] that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,  
<sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—  
<sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

## ***"Knowing the Unknowable"*** **Ephesians 3.17b–19**

INTRO:

We will drop into the midst of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians found in **Ephesians 3:17b-19**. Although we are jumping into this context, we need to understand a little bit about what came before. Paul equipped us with an arsenal of spiritual truth in **chapters 1 through 3**. In **chapter 4**, he will tell us how we need to apply these truths to the skinned knee reality of our lives. If we are going to be able to live these realities out in our lives, we must have spiritual strength. He prayed for this strength here in this prayer.

First, he asked that we might be strengthened with might in the inner man. This is ours through a growing and expanding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Our study today picks up his second request in **verses 17b-19**. ***"In love, having been rooted and grounded, in order that you might be extra strong to grasp together with all the saints, what is the breath, and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge."***

***I. The Foundation (v. 17b)***

***II. The Revelation (v. 18, 19)***

***I. The Foundation (v. 17b)***

**Ephesians 3:17b** ***"In love, (we) have been rooted and grounded."***

A. The first words in **verse 18** are key to a proper understanding of Paul's second request. The word translated "*may be able*" means to "*be strong enough*" to do something.

1. To receive or to accomplish the second part of Paul's request for us requires that we have a special kind of spiritual strength or enablement. Grasping the unknowable requires we have a supernatural kind of strength.

2. Where does this strength come from? It comes from the strengthening in the inner man and the foundation Paul prayed for us to have here in **verse 17b**.

B. So, Paul writes in the second part of **verse 17**, "*having been rooted and grounded in love*." These are words describing realities, which should be a permanent part of our lives. The first reality is that we should have been rooted in love. The word is from the verb to take root and suggests the picture of a tree. There are several implications from this picturesque word. First, roots speak of stability. Roots reach out and take hold of the earth so the tree can grow up and reach for the sky. Roots are what gives a tree its tremendous strength. Paul wrote because the Ephesian believers were rooted in love, they should be stable and strong enough to withstand storms of life.

C. Not only are we rooted in His love, we are also "*grounded*" in His love. The word is the word for the foundation of a building. The foundation provides the structural integrity of the superstructure. The foundation of our lives is strong and sure.

## ***II. THE REVELATION (v. 18, 19)***

**Ephesians 3:18, 19** *"[you] may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*

A. We need this rooting and grounding in the Lord's love so that we will be strong enough to receive the knowledge our Lord wants us to possess. What is this tremendous revelation the Lord wants us to see? He wants us to understand the dimensions of the love of Christ. Let us try to explore the unknowable.

B. Keep in mind these are word pictures to try to put into human language what cannot be described. First, let us think about the breadth of His love encompasses the expanse of His love to all the saints. Remember **Revelation 5:9-12**?

*"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.' Then I looked, and I*

*heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!'"*

The breadth of Christ's love is far beyond our ability to comprehend. This is where the Old Testament Israelite failed. They believed God's love only included Jewish people. They did not comprehend the truth that in Christ God loves Gentiles and Jews, bond and free.

C. The length of His love probably refers to the endless character of His love. Consider when Christ's love for us began.

**Ephesians 1:4** *“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”*

Before the world was formed, He loved us. In time He expressed His love by dying for us and saving us.

**Romans 5:8** *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

His love for us will exist throughout all eternity. He will never stop loving us! This is what He meant when He said through Jeremiah,

**Jeremiah 31:3** *“The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’”*

D. The depth of His love is seen in the depths to which He was willing to go to save us. This brings us to that tremendous statement of divine condescension in **Philippians 2:5-8**.

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ was willing to give up everything which was rightfully His in order to die for us and to save us from our sin.

E. Finally we come to the height of His love. I think that height is summed up in John's divine editorial comment in **John 13:1**.

*“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the (completion).”*

To what heights will His love bring us? It will bring us all the way to heaven and eternity with Him.

This is just a partial understanding of the vastness of our Lord's love for us. Do you know this is Christ's love for you?  
Do you know this love?  
Do you want to know? The way to know is found in a hymn written by a 12th century monk named Bernard of Clairvaux. He wrote:

Jesus the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills my breast  
But sweeter far Thy face to see  
And in Thy presence rest

But what to those who find? Ah this  
Nor tongue or pen can show  
The love of Jesus what it is  
None but His loved ones know.

**Hymn #79 *Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee***