

Ephesians: Living a Life In Christ

Ephesians 3:14-21 | Rooted in Love in Christ

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

We near the pivotal point in Paul's letter where he shifts from teaching Christian doctrine to Christian duty. The first 3 chapters focus on the work of God, where the second half of the letter focuses on the walk of the Christian. This pivotal point is found in Ephesians 4:1, which reads "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."

Because of who God is and what He's done, it should change who we are, and what we do. Just as Paul asked Jesus "Who are you Lord? And what do you want me to do?" so we too need to ask ourselves those questions in order to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. We will finish chapter 3 tonight anticipating all the practical "to do's" that start in chapter 4, but let us not miss the source of all our good works - it is God's extraordinary love demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

This love is the reason God's family now includes all people, both the Jews and Gentiles. This is part of God's plan "to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ" (1:10).

Remember that Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Ephesus while in prison in Rome. Yet, he saw his imprisonment as part of God's plan to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Despite his suffering, he knew there's a great purpose to his life and encouraged the Ephesians to not be discouraged.

After interrupting his own train of thought with his own testimony (our study last week), Paul continues his thought from Ephesians 3:1, reflecting on the marvelous mystery of Jesus that God's "purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace." (2:15)

3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

Let's pick up where Paul left off as we finish Ephesians 3 together.

Read: Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. What are the first 3 words of verse 14? What question should it make you ask?
2. What does this reason lead Paul to do (v. 14)? What is true about the Father (v. 15)?
3. Let's look at Paul's prayer. In the first sentence, what does he want for the Ephesians (v. 16)?
By what means? For what reason (v. 17)?
4. What else does he pray (v. 17-18)? What imagery is used to describe love in the believer?
What else is true of this love (v. 19)? What results from this love?
5. What is God able to do (v. 20)? By what means? For what purpose (v. 21)? For how long?
6. *Let's read Ephesians 1:15-23.* What similarities stand out to you between these passages?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. What does this passage teach about Christ's love (v. 18-19)? How would you summarize it? What does it mean to be rooted and established in love (v. 17), and why is this essential to the life of a Christian? What does it mean for Christ to dwell in the hearts of a believer (v. 17)?
2. What do you notice about the focus of Paul's prayer compared to how Christians tend to pray? What differences do you see? If you had to summarize it, what does Paul emphasize?
 - Paul kneels before the Father - is that the best prayer posture? Is it clasping our hands and bowing our heads? What is the best posture, and why does this matter?
3. Even though he's in prison, who is Paul praying for? We call this an intercessory prayer. Why should a Christian do this? What does Paul's prayer for the Ephesians teach us about prayer?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. What does it mean that Christ's love surpasses knowledge (v. 19)? In what ways are you hindering love by trying to make sense of it? How would your interactions with others look differently if you loved in the way Christ did? Who specifically can you love better this week?
2. *Take a moment to reflect* - What is your prayer life like? Are you praying for others? How does Paul's prayer help you think about your own prayers? How do you want to grow in prayer?
3. Paul says that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (v. 20). If God said yes to all your prayers, would that change the world or just your personal life? What does this reveal about the priorities in your life, or the ways you have a limited view of God?
 - If you believe that God's love is unlimited, and His transformative power is at work through you, how would that change your prayers? Looking at how Paul prayed for the Ephesians - what would you pray? Keep verse 20 in mind as you *write a prayer on the back of the paper.*