

DEVOTION 3

IMMENSE LOVE

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Today we will focus on verses 17b-18, but please read the whole passage again.

I used to go to the office every day, but now I mainly work from home. This has changed my relationship with my home. It used to be the place that I visited mainly to sleep and eat and relax. Now my home is the centre of everything I do. As well as relaxing, I also develop resources at home. I have online meetings at home. I respond to emails at home. I listen to podcasts at home. My home has become the place where I live most of my life. I “dwell” there.

As we saw yesterday, this is what Paul was praying for the Ephesians. He prayed, “That Jesus would dwell in their hearts.” That Jesus would live unrestricted and uninhibited at the centre of their lives – guiding, purifying, empowering, enriching, refreshing, challenging. That through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ would be free to do whatever he wanted in their lives.

In our passage today, Paul moves on to the second part of this powerful prayer. He prays that the Ephesians will grasp the love of Christ.

Most Christians know that Jesus loves them. As Paul points out in this passage, that's the way that Christian faith starts. We have been rooted and founded in love. He uses both a botanical term (“rooted”) and an architectural term (“founded”) to make sure we understand that the roots or foundations of God's love run deep in our lives. Our faith stands firm and strong on the love of Jesus.

Love lies at the heart of the gospel. God loves us so much that he sent Jesus his only Son to this world to show us himself and to set us free. Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to give his life for ours so that we can live in eternal relationship with God. The good news that drew us to Jesus is saturated in love. We are deeply loved by God.

But according to Paul, that is just the start. There is so much more of Christ's love to grasp. Eugene Peterson calls it “the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love.” He paraphrases Paul's prayer in this evocative call: “Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!” As Peterson makes clear, Paul is calling for a deeper appreciation and experience of Jesus' love.

It's hard to describe in words the immensity of Christ's love, but here are a few aspects of his love that you may like to focus on as you seek to grasp it better. *It is eternal*. Nothing can separate us from his love. There are no time limits, no barriers, no conditions that can restrict God's love. *It is intimate*. God is your Dad and Jesus is your brother. You are loved as a close family member. *It is global*. God's love touches everyone and everything. There is not one person or one part of creation that is not drenched in God's love. His love is huge, immense, vast, massive, and immeasurable.

Why is it so difficult for us to grasp the magnificent and profound love of God? Why did Paul have to pray for this? Maybe it's because we live in a broken world in which God's love is not always obvious to us. Maybe it's because we've never experienced such love from the people close to us. Maybe it's because we struggle to love ourselves and therefore can't believe that God could love us so much. Whatever the reasons, our lack of understanding of God's love is a barrier that needs to be broken down if we are to see God do the impossible.

Take some time to meditate on and soak in God's love. Pray that you will grasp the immensity of his love both for you and for all his creation. Let Jesus saturate you with his love. Reading Scriptures like Romans 8:31-39 or Psalm 139 may help.

QB PRAYER POINTS

1. Praise God for his immense love for you and for his world.
2. Pray for your church – that your church family will both deeply grasp God's love for them and show this love in the way they interact and serve each other.
3. Pray for Queensland - that the community will see God's love through our lives and that Queenslanders will become aware that they are deeply loved by God. Pray for your “neighbours” – those you live and work with.