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## God Plants Us in Christ's Love

**Ephesians 3:14-21 NKJ** <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> 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> 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. <sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

I've read somewhere that Europeans tourists to the United States often make the same mistake. They often make the mistake of thinking they can come over here and see all of America in a couple weeks or a month. They fail to really comprehend how vast America is. They are used to nations that are smaller than many of our states. Even we who have grown up and lived here our whole lives might not really appreciate how large America is.

Paul is talking about a similar situation here in our text but on a much greater scale. His prayer is that we might know the richness that is ours in Christ Jesus. Not that we just know it to be true but that we actually experience it in our lives.

**Ephesians 3:18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height

That is to say that you might grasp, that you might take hold of it for yourself.

In verse 17 he uses this phrase "rooted and grounded in love."

You all know how plants often begin life in these little black containers. Those containers are very limited and therefore the plants are limited then also. At some point you take them out of the little container and plant them in your garden. What then is the limit? Where is the limit of where their roots can grow once they are planted in the ground? Where is the depth of that earth?

Paul says “rooted” that is to be planted in the love of Christ rather than those little containers. Of course, a plant newly planted is very vulnerable until the roots are firmly established in that new soil. Paul says “rooted and grounded” that is planted but then also firmly established in that love of Christ, so that our roots take hold in that new soil. The comparison here is between the smallness of our own love and our own lives, and the vastness of Christ’s love

The fullness of Christ’s love, Paul says is beyond our ability to understand. How can a plant understand the vastness of the earth it is not planted in? How can we understand the vastness of the riches that are ours in Christ? It surpasses our ability to understand it;” yet even though we cannot comprehend it Paul wants us to understand it, that is to say experience it in our lives. “that you might know the love of Christ that is beyond understanding.” How can we know that which is beyond understanding? We can not comprehend it, but we can experience it.

What are some of the things that limit or stop us from experiencing the vastness of Christ’s love?

In verse 14 Paul says:

**Ephesians 3:14** For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

To bow the knee is a position of request. He is praying to God, but it is also a position of submission. He is praying making his request know but submitting to God’s will.

In verse 20 Paul reminds us that God “is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

One of the things that stops us from experiencing the fullness of God’s riches in Christ is when we demand our way instead of accepting his will.

My senior year in high school we did a car wash to raise money for our senior class trip. Our faculty advisor told us to ask for donations not to put a price on the sign. If people see a sign saying \$10 they might well drive past thinking that is too expensive. If you ask for donations they will often give 10 or 15 or 20.

When we demand our own way from God, he will often give us exactly what we ask for. When we submit to his will he often gives us far more, far better. God is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask.”

Another thing that stops us from experiencing the fullness of Christ’s love is when we are stuck in our own selfishness little world instead of exploring the fullness of Christ’s love for the whole family.

In verse 15 Paul says:

**Ephesians 3:15** <sup>15</sup> from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

This is a reminder of our unity in Christ. Earlier in this chapter he is speaking about how there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The Jew thought themselves better because Abraham was their father, because they had received the name of Israel from Jacob. Paul reminds them of a higher truth. All believers have God as their father. All the church receives the name not from Jacob but from God the father.

**Galatians 3:26** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Instead of rejoicing in the fullness of God's grace and love to the gentiles, many of the Jews were only concerned with their own people and nations. When we puff ourselves up above others, or care only about what is happening in our little lives we miss out on experiencing the fullness of God's riches.

When take an interest in the lives of others, considering them as precious to God, praying for one another, we experience far more the riches of God

The other day Vanessa put Kaylee inside this large cardboard box. Kaylee didn't want to leave. She wanted to stay in the box. People often talk about not putting God in a box. It's far more common to stick ourselves in a box, instead of experiencing the vastness of God's love for us in Christ.

All of this is contrary to our natural inclinations. How often prefer to be inside our own little box instead of experiencing all the vastness of Christ's love. This is why Paul reminds us:

**Ephesians 3:16** strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man

We need to be strengthened by the Spirit to grow and experience Christ's love.

However, the important thing is that we are planted by God in the love of Christ. God wants us to grow and flourish in this new vast garden but even if we do not grow as well as we ought. We are still planted in his love. We are still God's children through faith. We have received his grace and forgiveness. Jesus has died for our sins. Its great to grow and experience more and more of God's grace, but no matter we are still planted in his love.

Amen