

## **Ephesians 3:14-21**

### Introduction

#### I. What is at your core/inner being/heart?

- A. Joy, hope, peace, fear, restlessness, loneliness, shame, anger?
- B. If you're life is a house, what's going on inside the house?

#### II. Paul's prayer is that God would do something at our core/in our interior

### The Passage

#### I. Paul's perspective as he prays

- A. The church's big role
  - 1. God's temple on earth meant to display his wisdom to the watching world (See Ephesians 2:21-22 and 3:10)
  - 2. The church can't fulfill this role on its own; it needs God's help
- B. A very big prayer
  - 1. A prayer for abundance (power, love, fullness). A prayer for more of God (the Spirit, Christ, God the Father)
  - 2. A prayer for abundance at the core/inner being (not external/circumstantial abundance)
- C. A prayer to a very big God
  - 1. v. 14-15: A Sovereign Father who is rich in resources
  - 2. v. 20: a God who can do more than we ask or imagine!

#### II. The prayer itself

##### A. A prayer for power so that Christ would dwell in hearts through faith (v. 16-17b)

- 1. "Inner being/heart"
  - The Core, control center, root of our thoughts, emotions, decision
- 2. "through his Holy Spirit"
  - The Spirit already dwells in believers but this is a prayer for a fresh work of his power
- 3. So that Christ would "dwell" in your hearts through faith
  - 1. dwell = really make his home, to really settle down
    - a. Difference between moving into new house and just staying in a condo for vacation
    - b. Paul's asking Christ to really make his home in their hearts, rearrange the furniture, take up a deep personal residence.  
= intimate friendship with Christ, guided by him, he's at the center of their lives
  - 2. An example of Christ not being at the center (Rev 3:14-22)
    - In their self-sufficiency the Laodicean church had slowly pushed Christ off to the side so that now he was on the outside of the house knocking and asking to be let back into the center.
  - 3. An example of Christ being at the center (Galatians 2:19-20)

Paul's self-righteous ego had to be crucified so that he would depend solely on Christ and Christ would live through him in a relationship of dependent faith

B. A prayer for power to grasp the limitless dimensions of Christ's love (v. 17b-19)

1. "Rooted and established"
  - a. like a tree with roots in soil of Christ's love or like a house built on the foundation of Christ's love
  - b. They were already rooted/grounded in Christ's love when they came to faith. Now Paul is asking God strengthen them so that they come to understand/appreciate/experience Christ's love more fully
2. "power to grasp/take hold of" that which is not fully graspable (wide, long, high, deep)
3. to "know" something that is not fully knowable ("surpasses knowledge")
4. Christ's love for us
  - a. Unconditional love
  - b. Sacrificial love
5. Maturing as a Christian involves coming to understand, appreciate, internalize and experience Christ's love for us more and more.
6. "To be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"
  - a. this phrase may mean that we are full of God's love, power, presence
  - b. or it may simply be referring to growing into full maturity  
see 4:13 where it is used in that sense

Conclusion

I. Imagine if God answered this prayer in our community!

II. This takes place in the context of community

v. 18: "Together with all the saints"

We come to experience Christ and his love in community with each other

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. What is at your core? If you had 2 hours alone in silence to stop long enough and take a look at what's going on in your "inner being", what would be the most dominant emotions/realities you'd find there?
3. Paul's first prayer is a prayer for Christ to really dwell (make his home) in the hearts of the Ephesians. At this point in your life do you feel like Christ is at the center of your life, or is he off to the side? What is the biggest barrier keeping Christ from dwelling more fully and deeply in your own life at this time?
4. Thinking of Paul's phrase, "rooted and grounded in love," what have been the key experiences that have rooted you in Christ's love or that have helped you really come to terms with his love for you?
5. What do you think Paul means when he prays that the Ephesians would be "filled with all the fullness of God?" What might that look like practically? Is that prayer something we can expect to be fulfilled in our own lives?