

The word "blueprint" is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are overlaid on a white grid pattern consisting of vertical and horizontal dashed lines. The grid is contained within a blue rectangular background.

BUILDING A STRONGER CHURCH

The Church Is a Witness
October 18, 2020

Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

Opener:

- What have been your biggest challenges during the pandemic?
- Church life has changed a good bit since the pandemic began. What have you missed most about pre-COVID church life?

Discussion:

- Paul opens Ephesians 3 as if he's about to pray, interrupts himself with a section about his ministry, and then returns to his prayer in verse fourteen, which forms our text for this lesson.
- Christians sometimes use the phrase "I have Jesus in my heart," or something similar, but we say this without thinking much about what it actually means. As we read Ephesians 3:16-18, we see Paul talking about Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith. In what way does Christ dwell in our hearts? What change does that bring to our lives?
- Paul also writes about God strengthening us with power through his Spirit. What strength does the Spirit give us? Have you ever sensed that strength at work in your life? If so, how?

- Paul wants us to have the power to understand the dimensions of the love of Christ. But he also makes it clear in verse nineteen that the love of Christ is beyond measure. So, how is God's love at work in you? In the church? In the world?

If we want to be the church, we need God at work in us.

- Pastor James came down to one main point in the message: if we want to be the church, we need God at work in us. This can serve as a guiding principle as we walk through an uncertain time for many churches. How can God's love and power be guiding forces for the church during the pandemic? Do they help us in any practical ways? If so, how?
- Part of walking through 2020 as a church has been navigating a steady stream of changes. Pastor James talked through the reality that change has been accelerated in many areas of life during the pandemic. How can we overcome our fear of change and find the opportunities for growth that it gives us?
- Finally, what are the things that should remain unchanged in church because they are part of the basic identity of the church according to Scripture? In other words, what are the things which are timeless in church life?

Spend a few minutes sharing prayer requests from group members. Remember that prayer requests can involve many areas of life, not just health needs. The group leader or a volunteer may lead the group in praying over these needs.