

“Rooted and Grounded in Love”  
Ephesians 3:14-19  
(Preached at Trinity, September 28, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, **Chapter 3** contains the content of Paul's prayer for the church of Ephesus. He begins in **Verse 1** but immediately pauses to describe the nature of his calling as the apostle to the Gentiles. Then in **Verse 14** Paul continues with his prayer.
  - A. **Verse 16** begins the content of Paul's prayer.

Paul prays for the Holy Spirit to strengthen the Ephesian Christians in the "inner man."
  - B. In **Verse 17** Paul phrases it another way:

"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"
  - C. As Christians we need the continual working of the Holy Spirit in us working mightily by His power and we need the indwelling presence of Christ within us.
2. Paul says that the fruit of this mighty working of the Holy Spirit in us is love. One of the chief marks of fallen man is self-centeredness. Everything is motivated by a desire to please self. Salvation results in the ability to look outside ourselves. We now deeply care for Christ and are willing to submit our wills to Him. We begin looking beyond ourselves and enter into the lives of others. We become a part of the Body of Christ and begin making decisions with an eye upon how they affect others. It means to deeply care for other people. This is what it means to love.
3. Do you have love? Simply ask yourself, am I most often motivated by a desire to satisfy myself or am I able to look outside myself to glorify Christ in obedience and to look outside myself and enter into the lives of others?
  - I. Love is the heart of the Christian life – it stands preeminent over everything else
    - A. Love is greater than knowledge
      1. As a reformed church this may sound strange
        - a. We take doctrine very seriously – we use such terms as reformed theology, and covenant theology, and the doctrines of grace
        - b. We are confessional meaning we hold to a historic statement of faith that systematically describes essential Biblical doctrines. We work hard to maintain sound doctrine
        - c. Expository preaching is at the heart of our worship services.
      2. But knowledge without love leads to pride  
**1 Corinthians 8:1 NAU** - "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies."
      3. Knowledge without love leads to empty intellectualism.
        - a. It leaves us with harshness and a censorious heart
        - b. It leaves us with religion void of warmth or passion.

4. This does not diminish the importance of knowledge. Love without knowledge leads to mere sentimentalism.
  5. Knowledge serves a solitary purpose – to point us to the person of Christ. Christianity is about a person. It is a relationship built upon love.
- B. Without love your faith is nothing
1. It is love that defines us as Christians. It is the chief distinguishing mark of Christianity.  
Islam has always been characterized by the sword, by conquest, by force. Christianity, on the other hand, has always been characterized by love. The world looks upon us with amazement as we care for one another.  
**Acts 2:44-45 NAU** - "And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."
  2. Love is the truest measure of our faith  
**John 13:35 NAU** - "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
  3. Your faith is worked out through love.  
**Galatians 5:6 NAU** - "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love."
  4. Faith is inseparable from love and is nothing without love.  
**1 Corinthians 13:2 NAU** - "If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."
  5. Faith always produces love. Faith is never void of love  
**Ephesians 1:15 NAU** - " For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints"  
**Colossians 1:3-4 NAU** - " We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints"  
**1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 NAU** - "We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; <sup>3</sup> constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father"  
**2 Thessalonians 1:3 NAU** - "We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever greater*"
  6. Nothing in our Christian life really has value without love  
**1 Corinthians 13:2-3 NAU** - " If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."  
    - a. God sees things as they truly are. How many churches are really nothing because they are void of love?
    - b. How many people go through all the outward appearance of Christianity but are empty of love. Paul says they are nothing?

- c. God looks upon the heart. He measures differently than we often do.  
**Matthew 19:30 NAU** - "But many *who are* first will be last; and *the* last, first."

- II. Paul is saying that as Christians we are rooted and grounded in love
- A. This is a blessing given to every Christian
1. This is the fruit of the Holy Spirit as He strengthens us with power in the inner man.
  2. It is the result of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith.  
We become established in love
- B. Paul uses a dual metaphor of a tree and a building  
**Ephesians 3:17 NAU** - "*and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love"
1. He calls to mind a great tree with deep roots – solid and immovable.
  2. He then calls to mind a well-built building with a solid foundation. The word for “grounded” means “firmly established.” It also can mean, “to lay a foundation.”
  3. Paul is using these metaphors to describe something fixed, immovable, established.
  4. Both of these words in the Greek are perfect passive participles. It could be translated, “Having been rooted and grounded in love . . .”
- C. Paul is describing something that is strong and powerful. Love is the powerful force that provides the bedrock for the Christian life
1. It is only by love that we really find the power to live the Christian life. Love is the only true motive for every Christian action. Love is the essence of the Gospel at work in us.
  2. Paul is saying that when the Holy Spirit strengthens us with His power in the inner man it is ultimately the strength of love
  3. What drives you to obedience? What is it that drives you to serve Christ? Is it not love?
    - a. This was at the heart of the psalmist’s words:  
**Psalms 119:97 KJV** - "O how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day."
    - b. John wrote:  
**1 John 5:3 NAU** - " For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."
    - c. Isn’t it your love for Christ that gives you the passion to please Him?
  4. What is it that drives your worship? Why do you desire to pray? What causes you to return over and over to the Word of God?
  5. What is it that causes you to sacrifice yourself for others in the church? Is it not love?
  6. Isn’t it love that makes your entire life a compulsion?  
**2 Cor 5:14 NAU** - "For the love of Christ controls us"  
**2 Cor 5:14 KJV** - "For the love of Christ constraineth us"  
**2 Cor 5:14 NKJ** - "For the love of Christ compels us"

- C. “Rooted and grounded” also describes permanence – like a grand oak tree that withstands every storm or a building on a solid foundation
1. Genuine love is rock solid. It withstands every external influence.
  2. It reflects God’s love. God’s love does not depend on anything outside Himself. He loved us in spite of what we were  
**Romans 5:8 NAU** - " But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
  3. The carnal love that characterizes the natural man is fickle. It rises and falls quickly. A couple falls in love and gets married and divorces two years later.
  4. Christian love is rooted and grounded. Our love must be rock solid so that nothing is able to affect it. It is not based upon what we see in others or upon what others do to us.  
**1 Corinthians 13:7-8 NAU** - "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails . . ."
  5. Paul demonstrated this love  
**2 Corinthians 12:15 NAU** - "I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?"

III. Paul is writing to Christians – He is describing something common to Christianity

- A. He is writing to those filled with the Holy Spirit
1. Paul wrote in Chapter 1  
**Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU** - " In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."
  2. He acknowledges the mighty power of the Holy Spirit at work in them. The Holy Spirit creates love within our hearts  
**Romans 5:5 NAU** - "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
  3. The Christian has been rooted and grounded in love  
Paul is saying that the Christian has been energized by love  
He has been captivated by the person of Christ. The Christian life is not about performing duties. Every action is motivated by love towards the person of Christ. The Christian is energized by love for Christ.
- B. But he is praying that they might be further strengthened  
**Ephesians 3:16 NAU** - " that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,"
1. Paul is saying that the highest plane of Christian life is to know and comprehend the love of God. But you cannot understand the love of God unless you have a relationship with Him.
  2. You cannot know His love unless you know love; unless your life is one of love.

## Conclusion:

1. Paul's prayer continues to climb to ever increasing heights. He is praying that they might know that which is beyond knowing and to be filled with the fullness of the God who cannot be contained.
2. Paul is saying that the foundation of this is being rooted and grounded in love. He is talking about OUR love. We have to be strengthened in our love before we can understand God's love.  
"that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend"
3. Paul is reminding us that love is at the heart of everything. Everything in the Christian life is about growing in our love for Christ.  
My heart yearns to be filled with greater measures of love. How can this happen?
4. First of all, remember this is for Christians alone. Paul isn't praying that they would *become* rooted and grounded in love. He says,  
"that you, being rooted and grounded in love"
5. But the implication in this passage is that Paul is praying for them to strengthened in love. How is this to occur?  
Paul gives us the clear answer:  
**Ephesians 3:16 NAU** - " that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man"
6. Paul makes it clear this is a work of the Holy Spirit in us. Over and over we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are commanded to seek and pursue the things of the Spirit.
  - a. In **Ephesians 5** Paul tells us to be filled with the Spirit  
**Ephesians 5:18 NAU** - "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"
  - b. In **Galatians 5** Paul tells us to walk by the Spirit  
**Galatians 5:25 NAU** - "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."
  - c. Paul says in **Romans 8**  
**Romans 8:5 NAU** - "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."
7. The Christian is to no longer live according to this world. We now live above this world  
Matthew Henry – "Regenerating grace creates a new world in the soul; all things are new."
  - a. The Christian has the duty of being filled with the Holy Spirit—to be under His absolute influence and control.  
**Ephesians 5:18 NAS** - "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"  
 The word is a present passive imperative  
 It is present telling us that it is an ongoing work  
 It is passive telling us that it is a work taking place outside ourselves—we are being filled.  
 But it is also an imperative making it a command – "be filled"
  - b. This is a command to submit to the Holy desires of the Holy Spirit. When we submit to Him He manifests the fruit of His powerful presence upon our lives. We are then filled with love, joy, peace, etc.

8. But Paul adds the dimension of our relationship with Christ  
**Ephesians 3:17 NAU** - "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love"  
Is He at the core of your life? Are you in a love relationship? Do you delight in pleasing Him? Are you striving to obey His commands?  
**John 14:15 NAU** - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."  
**John 15:13-14 NAU** - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> "You are My friends if you do what I command you."
9. You will never comprehend the love of Christ unless your relationship with Him is founded on love. Do you love Him?
10. These are glorious things to consider. To be rooted and grounded in love is the greatest of blessings. And to comprehend the love of God is to enter into the realm of the unknown. It is nothing short than being filled with the fullness of God.