ROOTED & GROUNDED IN LOVE

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

I. APOSTOLIC PRAYERS

A. Eph. 3: 14-21 is an Apostolic prayer, a prayer in the New Testament. As with other prayers that the apostles prayed, they are positive in focus, God-centered, and in line with God’s will.

B. Eph. 3: 14-21 is a prayer to be strengthened through the Spirit’s power so that Jesus’ presence would be manifest in us, so that we experience the full dimensions of God’s love.

1. It has 3 main petitions with several explanatory phrases

   I bow my knee...
   That...strengthened through His Spirit
   That...comprehend, to know the love of Christ
   That... filled with all the fullness of God

C. These Apostolic prayers are valuable and precious to us as they are almost a roadmap of how the Spirit of God leads us into the deeper things of God. To grow in our faith and to go where we have never been, we might have to ask for things we’ve never asked for before. We don’t know what we’re going to need at the next stage of our lives. These prayers show us what to ask for, and what truly matters.

II. FAITH IS THE STARTING POINT

A. The first petition is unto Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith.

   *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)*

B. Faith is the starting point of our new, true, and eternal life.


2. Faith results in works in our lives.

3. Faith involves: Knowledge, assent, and trust (You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and tremble! (Eph. 2:19)

   a. Faith expresses itself in love. Hope is what makes it go on.

III. LOVE IS THE CULMINATION
And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, (1 Thes. 1:3)

A. Out of faith flow works. (NIV: faith expressing itself through works)

   For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. (Gal. 5:6)

B. Q: Is it possible to have faith and not have love?

   Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

C. It’s possible to operate in the gifts of the spirit, to move with great faith, and have it count for absolutely nothing.

22 “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 ‘And then I will declare to them, ’I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

D. At the end of the day, what matters is that Jesus knows us. It’s about knowing God. It’s not the works that we do to try to help the Kingdom of God along, or to make our contribution.

   We love Him because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

1. Hence, this prayer about being rooted and grounded in love

IV. ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE

A. The full dimensions of God’s love. The second petition is for us to comprehend the full dimensions of God’s love and that we would experience the love of Christ.

B. To comprehend (seize take hold and make it your own)

1. The love of God is not a general theological concept or a theory, but it’s something that becomes uniquely personal. It’s the love of God towards me, a child of God, the bride of Christ.

C. To know (experience) the love of Christ.

1. Eph 3:19 the experience of this love exceeds knowledge. Knowledge is good. Love of Christ exceeds it.
2. That means you don’t get the experience of it by understanding the theory or the theology, which is needed, but it’s a step beyond to experience it.

D. Only God can reveal God to the human heart

1. In our me-centered life, we cannot understand the One who created us, loved us, and redeemed us. It takes God answering this prayer for the concrete that surrounds our hard hearts to begin to crack and love, pure and strong, begins to touch and melt our hearts.

2. Hence this prayer...

V. UNROOTED

A. Q: What happens when we live without roots and without a strong grounding and foundation in love?

1. Otherwise, endless searching, groping for whatever satisfies the emptiness we feel inside.

2. If not rooted, not stay long enough to go deep. Unstable, uncommitted, always searching.

3. Often, we end up going back to the same polluted waters when the pain & frustration comes back

4. Unsettled, always searching, excited for a moment, but no roots, look to find in other things than God.

   a. If this happens, bitter roots, blown here and there. This type of love is experienced “Together with all the saints.”

   Hebrews 12:15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

   b. It can only happen together. It’s not just Jesus and you and you’re happy. That’s fantasy. God does not take us out of the world. God takes the world out of us, but leaves us in the world.

VI. THE FULLNESS OF GOD

20 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, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21)
A. To the point of being filled with the fullness of God. Filled with the fullness of God is not a knowledge based event. It’s a new-birth, transformative, life-changing initiated, paid for, and finished by God.

1. Is this even possible? What does it look like when someone is walking in the fullness of God? This is what God wants us to pray!

B. It begins with faith and then progresses into being rooted and grounded in love.

1. That means our identity (how we see and feel about ourselves – do we see ourselves from God’s perspective) and then others.

2. How we are secure in that love.

3. That His love compels us and becomes our motivation in our labor.

4. When we experience the strength and stability that comes from having the love of Christ as our foundation, our base of operations.

5. Motivation, more than fear, duty, loyalty. The First commandment!

6. Confidence – immovable

C. When rooted in God, fullness of God is available to our life.

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Pray to be strengthened through the Spirit’s power so that Jesus’ presence would be manifest in us, so that we experience the full dimensions of God’s love.

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

14 For this reason
I BOW MY KNEES to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 THAT He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory,
to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;

THAT you, being ROOTED and GROUNDED in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—
to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;

THAT you may be filled 19 with all the fullness of God.

20 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, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.