

# Church Matters

The **Heart** of the Church

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5



2022.8.14

## Questions for Reflection & Discussion

Open your Bible to Ephesians 3:14-21. Let's see what we can learn about the heart of the church...

- Paul begins his prayer by giving us his motive for praying ("For this reason...", repeating what he'd said in Ephesians 3:1). So, we have to go back to Ephesians 2 to find out what motivates this prayer: they had been dead in their sins and under God's wrath (2:1-3), but now God has given them life (2:4-7) and citizenship within the people of God (2:11-13). God has reconciled and united all believers (2:14-22). **Why** do you think that would drive Paul to pray for the Ephesian believers?

- Now that Paul has given the "why" of his prayer, he moves onto the "what", specifically that they would be "\_\_\_\_\_ with power through His Spirit in the \_\_\_\_\_."

Open your Bible to 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. People consist of an "inner man" and an "outer man".

**How** is the "outer man" described? So, **what exactly is** the "outer man"?

**How** is the "inner man" described? So, **what exactly is** the "inner man"?

Paul's "outer man" experienced plenty of difficulties (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-27), but he didn't seem to care much about bodily sufferings—**his own or others!** What does that suggest to you?

- Paul's prayer for inner, spiritual power had an objective, a goal (Ephesians 3:18-19a). What was it?

Paul desired the Ephesians to "comprehend and know" something that "**surpasses** knowledge"! What in the world do you think that means? How do you think that's accomplished?

You love your children—and **they** know it. Your children know something that all of the world's Nobel Laureates put together **don't** know. Relate that truth to v. 19a.

**Every** saint (aka "believer") is to know "the love of Christ in all its breadth, length, height and depth". Do **you** know that you know Christ's "unknowable" love? If so, tell us about it.

- Paul's desire for them to comprehend the unknowable extent of Christ's love had an objective, a goal. According to v. 19b, what was it?

Notice how Paul piles up the superlatives: he wants believers to be "filled up / to all / the fullness / of God" (much like v. 18 where he uses four dimensions to try to describe the indescribable love of Christ)! What does it look like to be "filled up to all the fullness of God"?

Does that describe you? Explain.

# Sermon Summary

Key Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

The church is a gathering of people who are reconciled to God by faith in Christ and reconciled to each other by the Spirit that dwells within us. Paul moves from exhortation of the church to intercession for the church. His prayer will reveal **four realities of our reconciliation**.

## I. **God is our Father.** (14-15)

We approach Him humbly. (14)

We ascribe Him honor. (15)

## II. **God is our Strength.** (16-17a)

His Spirit is our source of inner strength. (16)

His Son settles our soul by faith. (17a)

## III. **God's Love Transforms Us.** (17b-19)

The love of God establishes us as we begin to comprehend Him and His goodness. (17b-18)

*"Love is the soil in which believers are rooted and will grow, the foundation upon which they are built."*  
—John Stott

An intimate relationship with Christ leads to holiness. (19)

*"When the apostle desires that his readers may be strengthened through the Spirit and experience the effects of Christ's indwelling so that they may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, he is praying that they may 'be all that God wants them to be', that is, spiritually mature. Since God himself, Christ himself, is the standard, then this means being perfect as he is perfect, being holy as he is holy."*  
—D.A. Carson

## IV. **God's Glory is Revealed to Us.** (20-21)

The Goodness of God works for us. (20a)

The Greatness of God works in us. (20b)

*"No prayer that has ever been framed has uttered a bolder request. Has the apostle, then, 'gone over the top'? No, for it is impossible to ask for too much since the Father's giving exceeds their capacity for asking or even imagining."*  
—Armitage Robinson

The Glory of God is shown through the church, in Christ, and forevermore! (21)

*"God's glory in the church cannot be separated from his glory in Christ Jesus."* —Peter O'Brien



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The Apostle Paul prayed that the believers in Ephesus would know the love of Christ—even though it *surpasses* knowledge! *How is that possible?!*

When we describe how big something is, we tell its length, height, and width—three dimensions. But when Paul prayed that believers would comprehend the love of Christ, he said that it is *four* dimensional—breadth, length, height, and depth! Clearly Christ's love is something which must be comprehended experientially. A "textbook" description just cannot do it justice!

This week at the dinner table, have one portion of a "mystery item"—either a glass or bowl of an unusual (but pleasant) juice/puree (such as pomegranate). Ask one of your children to taste it and describe it to everyone else. Have the family ask questions, revealing your struggle to comprehend its flavor. Then ask, "What can we DO so that we can understand what you're describing?" Make the connection: Christ's love must be *experienced* to be understood.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**Whose church is it anyway? Who's in charge around here?**  
**"Five Question Bible Study" is a great way to learn more about the love of Christ...**

**Monday**—Study Romans 8:31-32

**Tuesday**—Study Romans 8:33-34

**Wednesday**—Study Romans 8:35-37

**Thursday**—Study Romans 8:38-39

**Friday**—Study Hebrews 12:5-8

**Saturday**—Study Hebrews 12:9-11

Need blank copies for doing more  
"Five Question Bible Study"?  
e-mail: [Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com](mailto:Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com)

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]