

Eph 3:14–20 (ESV) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ⁽¹⁵⁾ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ⁽¹⁶⁾ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ⁽¹⁷⁾ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ⁽¹⁸⁾ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ⁽¹⁹⁾ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ⁽²⁰⁾ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

1. We continue our look at the love of God

- A. Last week we saw the breadth and length
 - 1). The breadth was how wide it reached – into every nation – race and language
 - 2). It reached wide enough to sweep us in!
- B. We also saw the length of God's love – how long we have been loved and will be loved
 - 1). It began back in eternity past – when God chose us
 - 2). It continues now in the present as God sustains us
 - 3). It will continue into eternity future – because God keeps us

2. Today we want to look at the depth and height of God's love

- A. See two more angles of this love that is so great we will never fully understand it
 - 1). Which is exciting because it will always be thrilling us in new ways

I. THE DEPTH OF HIS LOVE

We're going to see how the depth of God's love can be measured in four different ways

These are going to overlap a bit – that's OK

First: The depth of God's love can be measured by what it cost the lover

- A. If somebody just says they love you – that's fine
But if they go out of their way to selflessly help you – that's deeper
If there is a great cost – a great sacrifice – and they still love you - then that love has much depth
- B. I want to show you the depth of Christ's love not just by looking at the cross
 - 1). The cross is part of it – but we need to see what took place before the cross

1. The cost of Christ's love was seen by his sacrifice before the cross

Turn: Php 2:5–8 (ESV) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁽⁶⁾ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁽⁷⁾ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁽⁸⁾ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- A. We have to think here – use our imaginations
 - 1). Christ is eternal – Almighty God enjoyed glory with the Father before the incarnation
Jn 17:5 (ESV) And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.
- B. So Christ who was in the form of God = In other words – He was God
 - 1). Didn't count equality with God to something he should grasp – cling on to
- C. Instead because he loved those he had created – he humbled himself
 - 1). In a sense he stripped off the garments of deity – the beauty of that glorified body
 - 2). He left glory where he was worshipped by the angelic hosts who always did his bidding
 - 3). He came to earth to be born in a human body
 - a). Not born in some exotic getaway – with People magazine slobbering over every picture
 - 1a). He rode into town in his mother who was on a donkey
 - 2a). The inns all full – so they chose a manger

Not the cute ceramic Christmas time – stinky – smelly – dirty

- b). This was costly love on display in a way never seen before seen
- D. He grew to be a man – he worked as a carpenter struggling to get by
 - 1). His birth – his life – his occupation – was so ordinary – he related to the average person
- E. At the age of 30 he entered into ministry
 - 1). Why? Just another occupation – was a carpenter – now I do this
 - 2). No! He came to serve – to tell people about God's love – his gracious offer of forgiveness
 - 3). He came to give people who had no hope – hope
 - 4). He came to open the eyes of those who are spiritually blind
 - To set free those who are captive to sin
 - To deliver those who lived in desperation
- F. Finally at the end of those 3 years – He set his face towards Jerusalem and the cross
 - 1). He allowed himself to be arrested – he didn't have to do that
 - a). At his arrest – Peter draws his sword – cuts off the high priests servants ears
 - “Put the sword away. Couldn't I call a legion of angels to rescue me.”
 - 1a). A legion would do it – one killed 185,000 in one night
 - 2). Think about the angels - I imagined they had to be restrained during trial and crucifixion
 - a). How they must have wondered at what they were seeing
 - 1a). Did they glance over at God the Father – chomping at the bit
 - Waiting for the command to spring into action
 - 2a). As they watched their creator – the one they loved and worshipped
 - Be hit – Watched somebody spit in his face – did they say “Let us go!”
 - b). 1 Peter says 1:12 says the angels long to look into the rescue plan of grace
 - They longed to understand it
 - 1a). They watched the grace and kindness to rebels in amazement
 - 2a). Something they never experienced – One sin and the fallen angels fate was sealed
 - 3a). Here's these rebels who have sinned many times – mocking Christ – spitting on him
 - Yet he still goes to the cross for them!
 - As he's hanging there he says “Father forgive them!” What!

Point: This is depth of love that is beyond our understanding

- A. To think of how he was – what he experienced for all of eternity in glory
- B. To stand up from his throne – strip off his deity and put on human form
 - 1). To come to earth to rescue those he knew would reject him
 - Those who would mock him – strike him and spit on him
- C. Then take on their sin – every vile perverted thing – to pay the debt they owed
 - 1). Willingly – allowing God the Father to crush him in a firestorm of wrath
- D. No wonder Paul said this love of Christ is beyond understanding

Thought: Right now it's amazing – but think of what you will think when you are in glory

- A. When you see what he left to come to earth – the beauty – majesty – the worship of angels
 - 1). To come to this earth and all its ugliness in comparison
 - To serve men who didn't want him bothering them
 - 2). Who could blame him if he wiped us all out – said “I'll start all over”
- B. We can tell how deep love is by the cost it's willing to pay – this was the greatest cost ever

Second: We can tell how deep love is by how little somebody deserves it

1. If this love was a response to people who had worshipped him all their life

- A. People who had tried their hardest to obey him – always tried their hardest to please him
- B. THEN TO DO what he did would certainly be loving
 - 1). But it would be diminished to some degree by us kind of deserving it
 - I mean we did live for him every day of our life – we did sacrifice for him
 - We did give up everything for him – so I kind of get why he loves me

2. But that wasn't the case was it?

- A. This was love expressed to those who did nothing to deserve it
 - Nothing to draw out a positive response from God at all
- B. Here is who we were – who you were when he rescued you – who I was

Ro 3:10–18 (ESV) as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ⁽¹¹⁾ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ⁽¹²⁾ All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” ⁽¹³⁾ “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” ⁽¹⁴⁾ “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” ⁽¹⁵⁾ “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ⁽¹⁶⁾ in their paths are ruin and misery, ⁽¹⁷⁾ and the way of peace they have not known.” ⁽¹⁸⁾ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

 - 1). Yet here is why the Father sent His son – why the son came – they were victims of love

Jn 3:16 (ESV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

 - a). Aren't you glad – God so loved – God so Agaped the world
 - 1a). Unconditional love acting in unmerited grace – reaching down into our ugliness
 - Not being hurt because we shunned him – he pursued us – loved us
 - 2). Isaiah said this about us

Is 53:6 (ESV) (Our resistance) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; (**Now the love**) and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Point: We couldn't be more unworthy of divine love

- A. But his love was deep enough to reach down and draw us to himself

Transition: So what have we seen

- A. We see the depth of his love through what it cost our Lord
 - 1). This was Almighty God who left glory – the worship of angels to come serve us
 - Nobody has given up so much because they loved another
- B. We see the depth of his love through the unworthiness of those he loved
 - 1). This was not a group of people who lived to please him – sacrifice for him
 - We didn't care about him – didn't care about what he wanted
 - 2). This was a group had no desire for him “No one seeks God. No one does good”
 - a). He pursued us when we had no desire to pursue him

Third: We can tell how deep love by the greatness of the benefits

1. I can tell you I love you and appreciate you and buy you lunch

- A. That's great – praise God
 - I can go a little deeper and pay your electricity bill – Praise God more!
 - If I had the money I could pay your rent – Praise God even more! Deeper love!
- B. But what if I died for you – and paid the wrath of God you owed
 - By going to the cross to experience the hell you deserved
 - 1). Then chose to adopt you into my family

And planned a future for you that was beyond your wildest imagination

- a). Part of that planning was to make you an inheritor – co heir!
Co-heir with Christ – not just forgiven – not just heaven – a co-heir!
 - 1a). I don't know exactly what that means – I get everything Christ gets!
- 2). Then gave you promise after promise that I would make sure you'd get there
 - a). I'm going to hold on to you so you get there
 - 1a). Even when you walk away I'm going to pursue you like that good shepherd
Who leaves the 99 to find the one
 - b). That plan I started when I adopted you – I will complete – I will finish
- C. This for people who ran from him – didn't want him intervening in their life
 - 1). Wanted to be Lord of their own life
People who shook their fist and said "You will not rule over us"

Transition: One more

Fourth: We can tell how deep love is by the freedom with which they love us

1. We see the people in N. Korea – people fawning over Kim Jung Un

- A. We know it's forced – they know lack of enthusiasm won't end well
- B. We force our kids to share – told them that is how we love one another
 - 1). Did they hand that toy over with joy – with exceeding abundant love?

2. When Christ came to earth there was nothing forced about it

- A. It was a willing – voluntary act that he didn't have to do

Jn 10:18 (ESV) No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again."

Summary: The depth of the love of Christ is seen in four ways

- A. By what it cost – the costliest love ever
- B. By how undeserving the recipients were – the most ungrateful recipients ever
- C. By how great the benefits are for those who are loved – the greatest benefits every
- D. By the freedom with which the love was expressed – Jesus came freely

II. THE HEIGHT OF HIS LOVE

Eph 3:18 (ESV) may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

1. This describes God's final purpose for us

- A. The height to which God has purposed to raise us
 - 1). It's so important to push through a shallow understanding of God's love to see this
 - a). We can constrain God's love to forgiveness alone
While that is vital – to stop there robs this love of much of its grandeur
- B. To stop at forgiveness would be like telling a 5 year old we're going to Disneyland – then stop there
 - 1). He may not know anything about Disneyland – so – Sounds good - thanks
 - 2). But if I get out photos and videos – that is where Mickey Mouse lives – check out these rides
 - a). Kid will get so excited you have to give him some Dimatapp to calm him down
 - b). He'll be chomping at the bit – "Only 60 more days dad – only 59 more days"
Leave me alone – I should have never told you this early!
- C. The Bible is kind of like that – it tells us we've been forgiven
 - 1). Then paints a glorious picture of all that means

- a). It is meant to excite us – to thrill us and fill us with gratitude
God did that for me! For me! The one who never wanted anything to do with him
- b). While I was proud of my hatred of God and Christians
He was busy planning my blessings – my incredible eternity
- D. Again – here is the solution for life's problems – contemplating the love of God
 - 1). Have you noticed that life can be a jerk – promising things then ripping them away
 - a). Princess Bride – Westley said words so true “Get used to disappointment”
 - b). That is why we need to set our hope on something other than this life
Why our joy has to be in Christ and his love for us – unchanging and stable
 - 1a). This is worthy of our thoughts – of the time to go deep here

Transition: Let's think of the heights Christ love has lifted us too

- A. That love that goes beyond forgiveness as great as that is

2. He died not only to forgive us but so we might be given new birth

- A. That we may actually become children of God

1 Jn 3:1 (ESV) See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

- 1). Does that thrill you? Child of God!

3. He died not only to save us from wrath but to make us heirs with Christ

- A. To tell us the incredible future that is waiting – how rich we really are

- 1). He has glory waiting for us – new bodies – new health – new minds

Php 3:20–21 (ESV) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁽²¹⁾ *who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body*, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

- a). There is the what? The upgrade! Bill 2.0 now even faster with more energy!
- b). Now exactly sure what that is going to be like but I can't wait

- B. No more sickness – fatigue – boredom

- 1). We will dwell in an atmosphere of love and constant joy – no fight with sin

- C. God living in our presence – heaven our capital - AMAZING

4. He didn't just save us from our old ways – reformation

It was an amazing transformation - he gave us a new nature

- A. A new nature wired to live for God – to desire holy ways

- B. And then put his Spirit into us – to live that new life out – the risen life!

- 1). The same Spirit Jesus walked in the power of is dwelling in us

- C. Now listen! We walk around acting like Eyore – When God himself is living in us!

- 1). We should not be able to yawn at truth like this

Thought: Those are all speaking of the height of God's love for us – but wait there's more

5. His love is so great he has actually joined us to himself – United with Christ

- A. There is a fusion that has taken place – an inseparable bond

- 1). That is how much Christ loves us – glue them to me – fuse them to me
Why? Because I want them to be with me where ever I go!

- B. Why the Bible says we are crucified with him – united to his death

- 1). And risen with him to newness of life

Eph 2:6 (ESV) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Question: What does it mean to be raised into the heavenlies right now?

- A. It means that we have incredible security – God already sees us as risen
Listen to the past tense: Ro 8:30 (ESV) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, *and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
- B. But I'm not really raised Yet – I still live on earth
 NOT yet raised into heaven – but raised into heavenly places
Charles Hodges: Being in this heavenly realm is the equivalent of being in the kingdom of God. "It is that state of purity, exaltation and favour with God, into which his children are even in this world introduced... Though we occupy the lowest place of this kingdom, the mere suburbs of the heavenly city, still we are in it."
- 1). Participation in glory in the future is sure – I'm fused to Christ – I go where he goes
 - 2). But now I have this incredible foretaste of heaven – the suburbs
 - a). I experience some of the presence of God
 - 1a). He comes to me – fills my heart with joy throughout the day
 One day it will be maxed out – but here it is still wonderful - comforting
 - b). I experience a foretaste of heaven's peace
 That stills my soul when it is troubled
 - 1a). I can go to heaven's king to talk anything over with him! Hand it off
 - c). I experience a foretaste of heaven's joy that is just overwhelming at times
- Thought:** It is an amazing thing to be a child of God – to be fused to Christ
- A. To be raised to walk in a newness of life – that has the fragrance of heaven in it
 1). I'm not in heaven yet – but its getting closer – I sense it at times – it's peace and joy

6. His love is so great he won't be satisfied until we are in glory with him

Jn 17:24 (ESV) Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory...

- A. Have you ever experienced something you wished your loved one was with you
 1). I wish Carri was here to see this!
 a). I'm going to plan to come here again and take her
- B. That is Jesus with us – I want them to be here – I won't feel complete until they are
 1). He is not satisfied with just purchasing our forgiveness
 He longs for us to be experience his glory with him

Transition: This is so powerful – so life changing

- A. Grip this and you look at everything in the world differently
 1). Your peace and joy soar – I am loved by him – why should I worry
 2). Because I am so loved I can rest in whatever he chooses to bring into my life
 a). This width – length – height – depth of love would never do what is not best for me

III. THE REMEDY FOR SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE

1. It is so easy to let life get us down – it all becomes so mundane

- A. It's easy to become spiritually apathetic
 1). We start going through the motions – prayer is such a burden – worship the same
 We may read our Bible but there is no delight there
- B. The antidote is to meditate upon this love of Christ.
 1). To spend time in contemplation – driving what has happened to us deep
 2). I am one who is loved by God himself – Jesus has set his affections upon me
- C. I dare not move through this world without letting that thrill me. Change me.

- 1). I dare not focus only on the temporal when my life has been so touched by the eternal

Thought: I think this is one of the causes of why the church is in such terrible shape today

- A. We talk about everything else but this – We skip lightly over these great truths

- 1). We content ourselves in the shallows of Christianity when God is calling us out into the deep

2. **May God stir us – draw us**

- A. May he put a deep discontent into us that drives us to him – blessed dissatisfaction

- B. Let me close with one of my favorite quotes from C.S. Lewis in “Weight of glory”

Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

Maurice Roberts: There is no higher priority in the believer's life than to delight himself in the love of Christ.

CONCLUSION

1. **So the breadth, width, depth and height of Christ's love**

- A. I've done my best to define it but I know it falls short

- 1). This is truth we are to spend time meditating upon – time dwelling on

This is truth we want to drive deep into our hearts

Our total welfare is the constant concern of God's loving heart.

W. J. C. White

We must see our circumstances through God's love instead of, as we are prone to do, seeing God's love through our circumstances.

Jerry Bridges

Though our feelings for (God) come and go, his love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to him.

C. S. Lewis

Nothing binds me to my Lord like a strong belief in his changeless love.

C. H. Spurgeon

Everyday we may see some new thing in Christ. His love has neither brim nor bottom.

Samuel Rutherford

There is no higher priority in the believer's life than to delight himself in the love of Christ.

Maurice Roberts