

# Rooted in the Spirit

## Rooted in Love • Message 3

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#### Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray that our church will know and experience the depths of God's love.
- Pray for inner strength through the Holy Spirit.
- Pray with faith that God can do more than you imagine.

#### Scripture Reading:

*When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in Heaven and on Earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

**Ephesians 3: 14-19 (NLT)**

#### A. Introduction:

We continue our series, *Rooted in the Spirit*. (Ephesians 3:14-15)

Today's message is titled *Rooted in Love*, based on Ephesians 3:14-21 (just read for us).

- This letter was written by Paul between 60 and 62 AD from prison in Rome to believers in Asia Minor (Ephesus and other cities in the Roman province of Asia, modern-day Turkey).
- This passage is a prayer for spiritual growth and progress for the people he loved—Gentiles who had come to faith—and it extends to us.
- [He began at] **Ephesians 3:14-15 (NLT)**— *When I think of all this* [the gospel extended to Gentiles, joined with believing Jews in the body of Christ, the church; Ephesians 3:1-13] *I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in Heaven and on Earth.*
- Gentiles had been shunned and rejected by Jews, but Jesus extended the gospel to them and invited them into the church of believers in Jesus along with Jewish converts.
- Paul encouraged these Gentile Christians to understand that they are not inferior.
- He urged them to understand and appropriate God's provision for them through the Spirit.
- APP.: Have you taken hold of all the spiritual blessings that being born again offers you?
- If you want to grow and mature spiritually, Paul's prayer is for you!

#### B. Prayer for spiritual progress includes:

(Ephesians 3:16-21)

##### 1. Inner STRENGTH from the Spirit.

(Ephesians 3:16. C/R: Acts 1:8; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:19)

- **Ephesians 3:16 (NLT)**—*I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.*

- This apostle was not asking God to give power to people who lacked it; as believers, they already possessed it because they are born again and have received the Spirit. (Acts 1:8).
- Paul prayed that these Christians would discover the power they possessed and would live lives that reflected spiritual strength by refusing sin and displaying moral conviction.
- If the Spirit is within me, why do I feel so weak, so afraid, so lacking in moral conviction?
- Here's a hint: **1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NLT)** - *Do not stifle the Holy Spirit.* [Gk. lit., *quench, extinguish, suppress*; NIV: *put out the Spirit's fire*]
- How do we *stifle* the Spirit? By indulging sin, by resisting the Spirit's guidance, by following our own impulses and desires.
- *But doesn't Jesus forgive all of our sins?* Yes, He does, but you can be forgiven and still lack strength.
- Power is produced by purity. Strength comes from holiness.
- **Galatians 5:16 (NLT)**—*So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.*
- Your public power comes from your private life through time spent in God's presence.
- We are strengthened spiritually by talking to God, listening to His voice, reading and studying His Word, seeking and following the Spirit's direction in all decisions - the evidence will be the decreasing frequency of our sin. (One definition of spiritual growth.)
- **Romans 8:12-13 (NLT)**— *...you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.*
- APP.: Are you spiritually strong? How does it show in your life?

## Paul's prayer asked for an...

### 2. Indwelling JESUS.

(Ephesians 3:17. C/R: John 14:23; Galatians 5:25; Colossians 2:7)

- **Ephesians 3:17a (NLT)**—*Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him.*
- After we are born again by the Spirit, we begin to grow as we *trust in* Jesus. [Gk. *pistis*, means *persuasion, conviction of Gospel truth, constancy in the truthfulness of God, continual reliance* upon Christ for salvation, also translated assurance, belief, faith]
- Paul is not referring to Jesus moving in initially at the time of salvation, but to Him *making His home* within (Gk. *katōikēō*; means to *house permanently, to reside, dwell, or inhabit*).
- This is not merely a reference to Jesus being inside our hearts (center of our being, including mind, emotions and will, whole personality), but to Him being *at home* within each of us, settled down comfortably as a family member.
- Jesus cannot be “at home” in our hearts until we trust Him without reservation and submit our lives to the Spirit's guidance.
- **Galatians 5:25 (NLT)** - *Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.*
- Partial, tentative, inconsistent trust in Jesus causes Him to be unsettled in your heart and mind like a tolerated visitor that doesn't quite fit in.
- ILL.: Have you ever been a houseguest of someone you thought you were very compatible with, and you discovered, much to your dismay, that these people you thought you knew differed in many ways: values, morals, faith, words they spoke, shows they watched, amount they drank, subjects they talked about? You were uncomfortable!
- APP.: Are we making Jesus uncomfortable in our hearts by what we think about and read and watch and talk about? Do our attitudes and actions unsettle Jesus within our lives?
- **John 14:23 (NLT)**—*Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.”*
- Jesus will be at home in our hearts when He is given access to the entirety of our lives.

- [When Jesus dwells within...] **Ephesians 3:17b (NLT)**—*Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.* (Colossians 2:7)
- Being rooted in God’s unconditional, constant love makes us secure, so we develop spiritual strength, demonstrated in courage and conviction to face cultural opposition.
- Bryan pointed out that radical means “arising from or going to a root or source.”
- When we are rooted in God’s love, we can live strong lives of faith (which is radical).
- APP.: Do you know that God loves you? Are you firmly rooted in His love?

### Paul prayed for people to experience...

#### 3. Intimacy with God’s LOVE. (Ephesians 3:18-19a. C/R: Romans 5:5b; 1 John 4:19-21)

- **Ephesians 3:18 (NLT)**—*And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should [including Gentiles], how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.*
- The *width* of God’s love includes the whole world, Jews and Gentiles (which shocked the people to whom Paul wrote), people from every race, ethnic, and religious background.
- The *length* of God’s love extends from before the foundation of the world when He chose us and continuing into and throughout eternity. (From eternity past to eternity future.)
- The *depth* of God’s love is displayed by loving people who have committed the worst of sins, even snatching us from the grip of Satan himself in the very midst of immorality.
- The *height* of God’s love lifts us from the depths of our sin into His very presence.
- **Ephesians 3:19a (NLT)**—*May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.* [God’s love must be *felt* intimately, emotionally, not just cognitively.]
- Christ’s love is difficult to fully comprehend because it is not human, not worldly.
- Human, worldly love is based on attraction and benefit (what we can get), so it lasts only as long as the attraction continues and the benefit occurs. (Romantic love is often lust.)
- Jesus’ love is based on His own nature and what He can give, so it is unlimited and eternal.
- Worldly love lasts until it is disappointed or offended, but Jesus’ love isn’t based on our behavior; it’s based on our needs. He *chooses* to love us because we need to be loved.
- **Romans 5:5b (NLT)**—*...For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.* [Love for Blake with her dazzling smile.]
- Being loved, truly loved, with no chance of abandonment, will transform your life.
- Many of us from broken or neglectful homes don’t know how to accept or feel love, so God loves us intimately, in a way we can feel, by giving us His Spirit to express love.
- When we experience unconditional love, when we grow roots into God’s love, we will be enabled to express it to others. (“When you grow roots, you will bear fruit.”)
- **1 John 4:19–21 (NLT)**—*We love each other because he loved us first.*
- APP.: Have you experienced (felt) God’s love for you? You can! (TPM)

### Paul prayed for...

#### 4. Internal COMPLETENESS. (Ephesians 3:19b-21. C/R: Ephesians 1:23, 4:11-13; Colossians 2:9-10)

- **Ephesians 3:19b (NLT)**—*Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*
- *Complete* (Gk. *plērōō*, play-rō’-o) means to make full or fill to the full; it refers to total dominance. (Ex.: A person filled with happiness is totally dominated by joy.)

- To be filled up with God means to be totally dominated and controlled by Him, with nothing left of self or any part of the old man or woman who existed before you were born again.
- To be filled with God is to be emptied of self; selfishness is abolished.
- **Colossians 2:9–10a (NLT)**—*For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ...* [Stop looking at yourself!]
- God's goal and the gospel's purpose is not merely to save us from judgment for our sins; it is to bring us to Himself and make us like Himself by filling us with Himself.
- When he finished this prayer reflecting on God's provision - the privileges of faith provided to every believer - he broke out in praise (a doxology)!
- **Ephesians 3:20-21 (NLT)**—*Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.*
- Paul asked God to provide blessings from the Trinity: the strength of the Spirit (v.16), the indwelling of Jesus Christ (v.17), and the love and fullness of God (v.19).
- By faith, when you have received, and are receiving in greater measure, all of these gifts, you will be able to *accomplish infinitely more than [you] might ask or think!*

Memory verse: **Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)**—*Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*