

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. May 28th 2006

Live a new Life! – 'Rooted in Love'

Ephesians 3: 1 - 21



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Ephesians is a letter which lifts our spiritual horizon to heaven itself. Chapter 3 divides itself into 2 parts. The first 13 verses are entitled '**The mystery of God's family**' and the second part is '**Paul's prayer for the Ephesians**

Verses 2 to 13 are a digression to reveal to us the amazing mystery of Christ and an insight into Paul's view of God's purpose for the church. *This mystery is that through the gospel (the good news of Jesus Christ) the Gentiles (those outside of the Jewish faith) are heirs..., members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.* Paul has been given the task of bringing the gospel to the whole world by divine revelation.

Paul's preaching and teaching ministry is that the Church, which is the people of God, is to be built up to become '*the manifold wisdom of God*' and that this '*should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, (Eph 3:10)*

Our worship, our praise and adoration are a declaration of his eternal kingdom to the whole host of heaven, which is not only his holy angels but to evil powers as well. They are the assembled witnesses before whom God vindicates his wisdom. He does this through a church which brings his wisdom to expression.

No wonder that Paul prays with such passion and authority for the Ephesian Christians. Paul's prayer in verses 14 to 21 is for power to understand and to know in reality the fullness of the love of Christ. The themes of power and love are inextricably linked throughout history. The love of power has laid waste whole continents, but the power of love has driven the weak and foolish of this world to do powerful things. That is why Paul prays that we might grasp how wide and deep is the love of Christ. It is this power and this alone which cause strongholds to tumble.

Within Paul's prayer there are 5 petitions; the first is that **he may strengthen you with power**. This is not earthly power or authority; it is the power of the HS to comprehend the depth of riches that we have in Christ Jesus, to be able to walk in the Spirit understanding the Spirit's ways.

The second petition is that **you will be rooted in love**. If we are to live lives at rest in Jesus' victory and be able to walk in his power then we need to sink our roots deep into Jesus Christ.

The third petition is that **you be established** or as it is put in the RSV, **grounded in the love of God**. The Greek word for grounded that Paul uses here means to build your home on a firm foundation. That foundation is the love of our Lord Jesus and the power and authority of his word.

The fourth petition is, that **you be surrounded by the love of Christ**. Paul writing to the Christians at Ephesus knew that they were surrounded by wonderful buildings and temples. But in Christ we have something much greater and higher and wider and deeper, because the love of Christ that surrounds us now and always can never be measured in its wonder and depth. Paul's final petition is **that you be filled with this precious love of God**. If we let him fill us and go on filling us, then we will have found the centre of true Christian experience. By letting him fill and refill us it will enable us to keep falling in love with him again and again.

Witness: Questions to discuss - Here are some options for you to choose from:



1. What was the mystery that had been hidden in times past that Paul was revealing?
2. Are we ready as a church, small group or individually to explore the riches of Christ? Or are we content to stay on the outer edges?
3. Are our churches, in the sort of life they lead, posing the kind of challenge to the powers of evil, which provokes a reaction?
4. Paul starts verse 14 saying "for this reason I pray" For what reason?
5. Paul seems to be asking God to give them 4 things which seem to be related to each other progressively. What word or words could you use to characterize these 4 progressions?
6. Or specifically, what does it mean "to be strengthened with might in the inner man"?
7. What does it mean "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"?
8. Why is it important to be rooted and established ..."?
9. What does it mean "that you may be filled with all the fullness of God"?