

A Resilient Faith

FINDING HOPE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Growth Group Questions November 3, 2024 “Grounded”

Context:

The apostle Paul had a very special relationship with the church in Ephesus. He spent three years of his life ministering in that community, caring for others and sharing in life together. We see the extent of Paul’s love and concern for them in Acts 20 as he gathers the leaders of the church for one last teaching and prayer before he makes his way to Jerusalem.

In this section of Ephesians 3, Paul gets down on his knees to pray for his friends in Ephesus. The basis of Paul’s prayer was his knowledge of God’s purpose. It was because of what God had done in Christ and revealed to Paul that he now turns to God in prayer. It is important to note that when Paul prays for the church at Ephesus, he does not ask God to change or improve their external circumstances. Instead, he asks God to help the believers take what they know to be true of God’s love and apply that to their lives and hearts.

His prayer contains four key words/themes. He prays they may:

1. **Be strengthened** by the indwelling of Christ through his Spirit (verse 16)
2. Be rooted and grounded in **love** (verse 17)
3. **Know** Christ’s love in all of its profound ways (verse 19)
4. Be filled with the very **fullness** of God (verse 19)

Paul brings together both an agricultural and architectural image to get his point across in verse 17. They are to be rooted and grounded in love. Followers of Jesus are not to be superficial in their faith, but rather have a depth that is noticed by others. The Ephesians are to overflow with the fullness of God so that the world can see that having a relationship with Jesus transforms the way you live and interact with others.

Paul ends his prayer with a strong word of encouragement by reminding them that God is able to do more than we could ever ask or imagine. God will work in and through our circumstances to bring glory to His name.



Scripture:

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 4:1-3

⁴As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Matthew 5:3-10

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
⁵Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
⁷Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



Questions:

1. In Ephesians 3:18, the Apostle Paul prays that the Ephesians will “grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.” What Bible verses help us to understand the vastness of God’s love?
2. In Ephesians 3:17, the Apostle Paul prays that the Ephesians may be “rooted and established in love.” What does it mean to be “rooted and established in love”?
3. Pastor Paul pointed out that in his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul does not pray that the Ephesians will be removed from their earthly circumstances, but that they will be faithful in everything that is happening around them. What does this tell us about how we should focus our prayers during times of uncertainty?
4. Pastor Paul said that we, as Christians, must have a sacramental nature. What does that mean to you? What does it look like?
5. Pastor Paul also said that in a relationship built on love, we must: (1) be content when we don’t get what we want, (2) learn to be disappointed well, and (3) see the other person as someone who was created in the image of God. Which of these things do you find to be the most difficult in your interactions with others?
6. What does it mean to be humble? How do you know if you are a humble person?
7. In Ephesians 4:3, the Apostle Paul urged the Ephesians to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” What type of unity do you think he was talking about?
8. In what ways can we become better at seeking unity during times of disinformation and mistrust?
9. Pastor Paul quoted Dale Bruner as saying we should live by 2/3 grace and 1/3 law. What does that mean to you?
10. In their book *Jesus and the Powers*, N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird say that we, as the Church, have a responsibility to be rehumanizing rather than dehumanizing God’s creation. What does that mean and how can we accomplish this?

Sermon Questions:

1. Is there somebody you need to forgive or is there someone you need to ask for forgiveness?
2. How can you “tangibly” help to bring the kingdom of God to your family/community this week?

