



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, July 24-30 (B) – Ephesians 3:14-21

Focus: *Rooted and Grounded in Love*

word of life

“I pray that ... Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.” Ephesians 3:16-17 (NRSV)

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

This passage is a prayer which begins in Ephesians 3:13. “I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.” (Ephesians 3:13-14 NRSV)

1. *When have you bowed your knees in prayer?*
2. *What does it feel like to bow your head and knees in prayer?*

In the Bible, names are important. It is significant to have the power to name and re-name. A change of name signifies something is now different. Consider how Abram’s name is changed to Abraham, Saul to Paul, and Simon to Peter.

3. *What are the implications of this prayer that God names every family in heaven and on earth?*
4. *How would you describe the relationship of God with every family in heaven and on earth?*

There is a dramatic shift from an all-inclusive prayer to specific petitions. This prayer is offered by someone who has suffered and has experienced being strengthened by God. The focus is on the inner being, rather than the outer physical being. Strength given by the Holy Spirit is not about expanding muscle mass, but increasing spiritual stamina and resiliency.

The prayer “... that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:17 NRSV) is powerful. Love grows when Christ is allowed to dwell in our hearts – even be rooted, planted, and grounded. Imagine the fruits which might grow with Christ.

5. *What does it feel like to have Christ dwell in your heart through faith?*
6. *How does love get rooted and grounded in our life?*

The prayer continues beyond a request for inner strength to a petition asking for the power to comprehend. It is a bold and audacious prayer for the believers in Ephesus. “I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth. . .” (Ephesians 3:18 NRSV) This is the only occurrence in Ephesians where the Greek word translated *comprehend* is used. It means to make one’s own, to lay hold of with the mind, to grasp fully. The writer is not praying for the church in Ephesus to intellectually understand the immensity of God’s love in Jesus Christ. The prayer is that they claim it for themselves and fully live in Christ’s love.

7. *What does it mean to make faith your own?*
8. *Is comprehension, making faith your own, limited to a certain chronologic age? Explain.*

There is a reason to obtain comprehension like the saints. It would allow us “to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19 NRSV) Imagine all of the faithful of every time and place claiming God’s love fully as their own. Breadth, length, height, depth – God’s love is all-encompassing.

The prayer concludes with a doxological praise. Amen. Let it be so. Amen.

word *among us*

When anyone thought of Genny, flowers came to mind. Genny took such delight in the flowers growing in her front yard. It didn't matter the kind of flowers or color, she loved all of her flowers. Even if a flowering weed popped up in her garden, she would let it bloom. She simply smiled and asked, "Why destroy such a beauty?"

In reality, there was one thing Genny loved more than her flowers. It was the conversations she had with people as they paused to look at her flowers. She knew her ministry was to grow things, but not just stunning flowers from seeds. She was growing a garden of love in her neighborhood.

For example, she would plan her day to be in the garden as children walked to and from school. That way she could offer encouraging words to them. She knew the walking schedule of her elderly neighbors and others. Genny was intentional about greeting everyone and listening to their stories. And so, her garden of love grew.

1. *Do you know anyone like Genny?*
2. *What does it mean for you to have Christ dwell in your heart?*
3. *How are you rooted and grounded in love?*

Take a moment to re-read the prayer found in Ephesians 3:14-21. The prayer includes an array of gifts: strengthening, inner power, indwelling of Christ, rooted and grounded in love, comprehension, as well as fullness of God.

4. *Which of these gifts do you hope to receive at this time of your life?*
5. *Who in your life would you like to receive these gifts?*

faith practice in daily life

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper

As we consider hearing the word of God, this beautiful prayer is one to hear again and again. This prayer is worth pondering and savoring. Imagine if this prayer came to fruition in your life. Imagine being strengthened by the Holy Spirit, given inner power to deal with your daily concerns, and the indwelling of Christ. Imagine being rooted and grounded in the love of Christ as well as being given the comprehension to understand like the saints. Imagine being filled with the fullness of God.

6. *What is your favorite part of this prayer?*
7. *What prevents you from receiving the fulfillment of this prayer in your life?*
8. *Describe your life if this prayer was fulfilled in your life.*

Prayer

Gracious God, we bow our knees and ask that you might strengthen us through the Holy Spirit, allow Christ to dwell in our hearts, root us in love, help us to comprehend and know the love of Christ, so we might be filled with all the fullness of you. Amen

last word

Read this prayer every day this week.