

Saturated with Love

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[0 : 00] This is God's word. To 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.

And to know this love that surpasses knowledge. That you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now 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. To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Let me pray. Almighty God we do thank you for your word the Bible and as we come to it today. Now we just pray for your blessing upon us.

We pray that you would speak to us. That you'd move our hearts. That you transform us the way that we think. The way that we feel. The way that we live. And so that we in ourselves would glorify you in every moment of our lives.

[1 : 28] And so we just pray for your help now. We ask for this in the name of Christ. Amen. I'm going to start with a strange illustration.

And say people are like sponges. What do I mean by that? Well a sponge when you soak it in water absorbs water doesn't it? And people.

What we soak ourself in. What we spend time in. What we meditate on and think upon. Is what we absorb into our life and the way that we live.

What I say of a sponge. If you. What I've just said. If you dunk it in the water the longer it sits there as well. The more saturated. It becomes a quick in and out. And the centre is still pretty dry.

But you leave it in for half an hour. And the whole sponge will be dripping wet. When you pull it out it will even drip the water wherever you take it. Much to the frustration of when we're having a bath at home.

[2 : 30] And one of them decides to get out with the sponge intact. Nearly every bath time. Even just touching or bumping into the wet sponge will get you wet.

And why that illustration? Well what I want us to see is what Paul wants to see in God's people. And what he prays for here in Ephesians 3.

Is a people that are saturated. He wants the people that are saturated with the love of God. In many ways. This is kind of a.

Climax. Of his entire letter to them. It's kind of the centre piece. Because it's where all the ideas. That have been building. Throughout this series.

Lead up to. Everything else that we look at. Come the autumn time. We'll look back to. It's where all these ideas. Come together. Of how will a mixed up.

[3 : 32] Diverse. Small group of Jesus followers. Grow and witness. To be one in the Lord. To become one. You might remember for a few weeks ago. How will they encourage and know one another.

How will they live and walk with Jesus. In a city that is hostile to the saviour. It will only be if they are saturated with his love. And so what we really see here.

I want to suggest to you. This morning. Is what Paul prays for. Is really. A vision. Of what the church. Is. What it is becoming.

What they already are in him. It is a body of people. Who are rooted in. Who are grasping and knowing. And finally being filled with his love. That's what he's.

Praying for. And so we're going to take it. The whole thing is going to. As you might imagine. Is. Is going to be about thinking. What it means to. To know the love.

[4 : 30] The love of Jesus. And that's kind of. Where we're going to go. Is. Is the foundation first. Is being rooted. And established. In love. If you're a note taker. That's probably the.

First point. Being rooted. And established. In love. It's the first reality. We're going to explore. Comes right in the middle of the prayer. But it's actually the foundation of it. It kind of worked. This prayer kind of works. Where the thing in the middle. Is kind of the main point. The foundation. It's the. And what is that? It. Well. It's the objective reality. Rooted and established. That God's people. The church. That is their beginning point. You look with me. Halfway through. We have it in verse 17. Halfway through verse 17. You see. And I pray. He says. And I pray. That you. Being. Being. You are. Being rooted. And established. In love.

[5 : 24] So you've got two metaphors. Going on in here. We've got one from agriculture. And the other from construction. First he says. We're rooted. Any plant.

Begins. You know. As a. Seed. Doesn't it? That grows root. It grows roots. Down. Before you see. Any of the plant. Grow up. But it.

But the soil. That the seed. Grows in. Also determines. How. The root. Grows down. And how the plant. Will eventually. Flourish. If you put.

If it's the wrong soil. For the plant. To grow. If it's too sandy. Then. The right growth. Won't happen. The plant. Won't get the right nutrients. And it won't grow. As it should.

It will be deficient. In what it needs. To be healthy. Well. What do we see here. Is that. The Christian. Is rooted. In the soil of love. Love. Like a plant.

[6 : 21] That needs the right nutrients. A follower of Jesus. Begins their walk. By being fed. With the love of Christ. Constantly. It's how we began.

Our walk with Jesus. Because we received his love. And so. When we became a believer. That's what happened. That as a little seed. We were rooted. Our roots. Flourished.

As we absorbed. The love of Jesus. As we received it. So that's the first metaphor. That we're rooted. But you see. We also get.

A second metaphor. We're rooted. And established. The word in Greek. For established. It is connected to construction. It means kind of like. To have a foundation.

Of a building. But the. Kind of a similar idea. The foundations of a building. Kind of. Dictate how. Secure. And firm. And solid. The building will stand.

[7 : 15] Is it going to be there. For a hundred years. Or will it fall down? The foundations. Need to be right. Don't they. For the building. To secure. And the foundation. Of a believer. Is the love.

Of Jesus. It's the love of God. You are cemented. Into place. On this. You are rooted. In the. Soil of love. You are cemented.

And founded. Upon the love of God. But. Reading Paul's. Let Paul's prayer here.

We actually see that there is a. There's a problem. It's not a problem per se. It's actually just part of. Our humanity. Because what we see is that the church.

Struggles to grasp this love. The love that they're rooted in. They struggle to grasp. We can see that in verse. 18. You see. He's praying that they. That they're together.

[8 : 14] With all the Lord's people. He wants them. With the power. To grasp. How wide and long. And high and deep it is. Why I say. It's not a problem per se. The reason it is.

Is because. The ability to not. Fully grasp. The love of God. That. That will never go away. That prayer will never be. Fully answered.

You might say. Why is that? Well. Let me explain. Look at what Paul writes. About the love. In verse 19. See what he says about this love. He said. It's to know love. That surpasses knowledge.

In other words. Paul is praying. That they would grasp. A love. That they can't actually. Fully comprehend. Which. It seems. It's perplexing.

Isn't it? But the reality is. That the problem is. That our minds. Our. Are. Limited. We have finite minds. We. Simply have. Too small. An imagination.

[9 : 11] To comprehend. Something. Infinite. It's like. Trying to comprehend. The universe. Isn't it? Can you just. We might hear. All the facts.

And the figures. About the universe. But you go. Can you actually. Comprehend. The universe. If somebody says like. Oh. How big's a light year? When you go like. Well it's. It's. A light year is the distance.

That you can travel. The distance. Is if you travel. At the speed of light. For a year. That's how far that is. And you go. Okay. I kind of get that. But like. I have no idea.

How far that is. Like. I just don't know. I can understand a mile. But I can't actually. Understand a light year. The. Infinite nature. Of the universe. Is too big.

To understand. We can't comprehend it. And we never will be able to. And so. Our limited. Finite minds. Cannot fully understand.

[10:05] Or comprehend. What is infinite. God's love. Surpasses. Knowledge. Now you might think.

Well okay then. What's going on here. Because. He's praying that we grasp it. How. Do we grasp it. How do we even understand.

A little bit. Well look with me. At verse. 16. I pray. That out of his glorious riches. He may strengthen you. With power.

Through his spirit. In your inner being. Earlier in the letter. Paul talked about. The massive power. That raised Jesus. From the grave.

Resurrection power. And here. We see. Why. We need it. We literally need. Resurrection power. To have the capacity.

[11:01] To understand. God's love. Without his spirit. Living in us. Without the. The power. That raised Jesus.

From the dead. It is. Simply too big. For our. Finite. Minds. Even to dress. Just a little bit. Here's. How.

Maybe. Let me put it. This way. We literally. Need the same power. That conquered death. To have the capacity. To comprehend. The enormity. Of his love.

And. And we can never. Plummit. Steps. To the bottom. I've used this. Illustration before. But the amount of love. We can comprehend.

Because of. Resurrection power. It. It's like a teaspoon. Of water. Compared to knowing. Every square inch. Of the oceans. Resurrection power.

[11:58] Allows us. To know the teaspoon. But we have oceans. More of God's love. Still. To explore. To grasp. Without the resurrection power.

You can't even grasp it. You can't even see the ocean. Maybe. It'd be like. Hearing about oceans. Or something. What is this? Ocean. That people talk of. We've heard about it.

You can read about it. You can see a cup of water. And say. It's like loads of this stuff. For miles and miles. Others. You've heard about it. Intellectually. You could get this concept. Maybe somebody who lived. In a landlocked country.

But they'd never touched it. Or walked beside it. But we get to. Not only. See the ocean.

But we get to taste. The love of God. To experience it. It is deeply humbling. And I think actually. It can. It can feel a little bit. Out of our comfort zone.

[12:54] To sit with. But the love of God. Is beyond us. What it means is. It's not something we can control. It's not something we can put on a box. And label. It is immeasurable.

We are rooted. And established in love. We can grasp. His love. Because of his resurrection. Power. Third thing I want to. Move on to is. That we can actually.

Know his love. At the heart of Paul's prayer. Is the gospel of good news. It's always the heartbeat. Before anyone comes to know Jesus. They might. Kind of intellectually.

Understand. Love. God's love. The cross. Just like you might intellectually know. About the universe. But it isn't known. At that kind of intimate knowing level.

The word know here. It's more than just. Acquiring new information. It's kind of like when the Bible says. That Adam knew his wife. Eve. It's the deep knowing.

[13:54] Of a profound. Intimate. Relationship. Paul is praying. That they wouldn't just know. Intellectually. God's love.

But that they would have a deep. Intimate experience. Of it. And you see. This is. This is what happens. You see. At the cross of Christ. Jesus is moved with an infinite love.

For his bride. The church. He goes to Calvary for her. And he does that. So that. He could have a deep commune. And a deep relationship. With his people. That he would die for. In dying.

He proves his love for us. You know. That's really the perfect love. That. That surpasses knowledge. Because on the cross. It's Jesus. That. Is the sponge.

That's wrung out. And emptied. In fact. He becomes dry spiritually. Not experiencing the love of his father. But also. To represent that. He becomes dry physically.

[14:50] His mouth like sandpaper. So that you and I. Could be permanently saturated. Drenched. And overflowing. With the love of God. In Christ Jesus. Jesus himself.

Never stopped being filled. Has never. Himself. Stopped being filled. With love. It's just that he himself. Became the object of hate. He has always. And will always.

Be the human sponge. Saturated. And soaked. In God's love. In himself. Every moment of his life. And his death.

Every encounter with him. Is an encounter with love itself. So that being near him. You are drenched. Like you're a bit. Like touching. The sponge that is soaked. You get wet. Being near to Jesus.

You are drenched with his love. And so being rooted in him. Being established. By him. Is to be saturated. With the love of Jesus. Because he unites us to himself.

[15:44] Through the cross. His love. Pays for it all. And his love. Never dims. It never runs out. Or fails. But flows from infinite reserves. To us. Like a waterfall.

That constantly flows. It's like you're. Stood under it. The love of Jesus. Will forever flow on us. Drench us. And then flow out of us. It's where I want to move.

To the final point. Having been established. And rooted. Having been able to grasp. Having to know that. On an intimate level. Well our response to.

The love of Christ. Through the cross. Is that we become filled. With his love. We might think that we know. What the church. Needs to be about. But here.

There is only one thing. It is to be filled. To the measure. Of all the fullness of God. You see that in verse 19. He says. You know the love. You get to know the love.

[16:44] That surpasses knowledge. Why? So that you may be filled. To the measure. Of all the fullness of God. And what is that? But to be filled. With his love. That's the whole point.

The church is to be so. Full of love. That we. Become the saturated. Sponge. That we. That we. Could be a church. So full of Jesus.

That to be anywhere. Near the church. Is to encounter Jesus. To encounter his love. Through his people. Through his people. You read that.

And. Is this how we do church? Are his ways. Not higher. Than ours. Can you understand.

When he's. He's gone on. Explaining this. And building this point. And praying. It's the reason. Paul erupts. In verse 20. In praise. Now to him. Who's able to do.

[17:38] Immeasurably more. Than all we ask. Or imagine. According to his power. That is at work. Within us. It's beyond what we could expect. Only.

The living God. Could. Could work in a way. That this is the way. That he would build the people. It's beyond anything. That he could ever. Dream. That the church. Would be full of the love of Jesus. And full of the love.

That they. Even themselves. Can't fully comprehend. It's the most glorifying. To think to God. That his way of building a people. And ministering to the world.

Is this. That he takes a people. As we saw in chapter 2. Dead in their sin. At loggerheads with. One another. Because of our sin. Falling out.

And constantly. Fractuous. But he takes people. Dead in their sin. Who would naturally. Be strangers. And aliens. To one another. And he makes them. One new humanity. And they become a temple.

[18:34] Saturated. In the love of Jesus. They become a temple. You just. You just think about this. You've got this famous verse.

In verse 18. It describes the. The lovers that we. To grasp as wide and long. And high and deep. Why the. Why is love here. Described in dimensions.

Dimensions are used. Aren't they? When you. Normally. In everyday life. Talking about measuring something. Well. We have to ask the question. Where else are measurements used. In the Bible.

Well. They're used whenever the temple. In the Old Testament. Is described. Kind of the. You know. The building blueprints. If you like. Exact instructions. Regarding. How it will be.

How it will be built. What materials. It will be used. What colour it will be. The exact measurements. Of what. God's temple. Will look like. Paul's language here. Is intentional.

[19:32] Jesus. Is the temple. Whose love. Is infinite. The measurements. Are immeasurable. His love. Cannot be measured. And his people.

Connected to him. Become the temple. In him. That's where Jesus. Is described. As the cornerstone. And where. The bricks. We are a temple. Of love. Where the love. Cannot be measured. Connected to Jesus.

United to him. With the people of God. Filled with a love. So wide. Long. High and deep. It cannot be measured. That we ourselves. Cannot fully understand. Even what we grasp. Like a teaspoon of the ocean.

Saturated. Saturated love. Why? So that when anyone. Comes near. Through the church. They encounter Jesus Christ. Because they encounter his love. Because we're filled to the measure. Of his fullness. We don't have to strive. To build a church. We get to be a saturated sponge. And so as we come in for landing.

[20 : 35] This is what I want you to take away. That we are. We ourselves. Are the saturated sponge. Of God's love. I just want to. Remind you of something.

Last week. One of the things. That I talked about. Was how. The ends. Should never justify the means. You might remember.

Me saying that. And we might think. What's the end goal. Of Winchborough Community Church. What do we. Want. For us. Is it a church. Of a hundred people. Is it something else. Well the ends. Just never justifies. The means. Still holds. But here. In this passage. Through Paul's prayer. What we realise is. He tells us. What both the means. And the ends.

Are. The end goal. Of following Jesus. Or planting a church. Is not reaching a hundred people. Or hitting some metric. You might have in your head. The means. And the end.

[21 : 30] Is to have this prayer. Answered in your life. And in the life. Of the church. To be a people. Who are filled. With the love of Jesus. That is the means.

And it's also the end goal. To become a church. And people. More filled. With the love of Jesus. Every single day. If we become like that. Then verse 21. Rings so true.

Isn't it? That is. This is what God is doing. To him be the glory. In the church. And in Christ Jesus. It's the reason. It's the glory. In the church. Because he's the one. Who's filled us. So that. To him be glory.

In the church. And in Christ Jesus. Throughout all generations. Forever and ever. This is what Jesus wants for you. It's why he paid for you. With his love. So that you can become the person. That you were meant to be.

[22 : 23] Changed to love. Like him. And so. I just wonder. Could this prayer. Be the heartbeat.

Of our prayer life. For one another. For our church. If his love is this big. If it surpasses knowledge. There are no limits. To what he can do. Beyond what we could ever imagine. When we see him. Answer it. Let's pray.

Almighty God. We just come to you. We want to. Repeat this. What you've shown to us.

Today. And taught us. About ourselves. And about your love. And. We want to pray this. For our church. We want to pray this. For one another. We want to pray this.

[23 : 40] For the church. For the church. In Scotland. For the individual congregations. Maybe that we're connected with. Or that. That we know. We want to pray. For the church.

Altogether Lord. That. We want to pray. And ask. That out of your glorious riches. That you'd strengthen the church. With power. Through your spirit.

So that in our inner being. So that. That Christ may dwell. In our hearts. Through faith. We're praying this morning. That being rooted. And established in love. That. We may 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. And that we might know. The love that surpasses. Knowledge. That we may be filled. To the measure of the fullness of God.

We ask that. And we pray. And we expect it. And we know Lord. We believe that. If you do that. Here. And you are doing it.

[24 : 37] But if you do that. In each single one of us. If you do it. Within all the churches. That we. Even that we know. If you do it. In the church global. Lord. We know that you.

You. You. You have been. Doing. And you will continue to do. A measure of the more than ever. We could all. Ask or imagine. According to your great power. That is at work within us.

For to you be glory. In the church. And in Christ Jesus. Throughout all generations. Forever and ever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.