More Than We Asked

Four Wednesdays in Ephesians 3

"What is in you is the measure of what He will do through you."

SESSION TWO

Deep Before Tall

EPHESIANS 3:17–19 · ESV

Foundation · Fathom · Fullness

MONTHLY THEME · EXCELLENCE

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us."

Ephesians 3:20, ESV

WHERE WE ARE STANDING

Where we are. Paul is still on his knees. The prayer has not ended and the sentence has not stopped.

What he asked last. Strength in the inner being. Now he tells us what that strength is for.

The two pictures. Rooted is a farm word. Grounded is a construction word. Paul stacks them in one breath, and both of them happen underground.

The order. Depth before dimension. You cannot take hold of what you are not planted in.

THE TEXT

EPHESIANS 3:17–19, ESV

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

EPHESIANS 3:17–19, NLT

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.

themelioō *‹theh-meh-lee-OH-oh›* θεμελιόω — GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

To lay a foundation. To found, to establish, to settle something so it holds weight. The noun under it, themelios, is the stone course a building sits on. Paul uses the passive. You do not ground yourself. You are grounded.

1. Foundation *rooted and grounded. verse 17.*

The indwelling. Christ makes His home in your heart. Katoikeō, to settle down and live somewhere, not to visit it.

Two metaphors. Rooted, errizōmenoi, from farming. Grounded, tethemeliōmenoi, from building. Paul stacks a field and a foundation in the same clause.

What they share. Both happen underground. Nobody applauds a root system. Nobody photographs a foundation.

The timeline. A root takes years. A foundation is poured and then covered. Both are finished long before anyone can see them, and both are the only reason anything stands later.

What has God been building in you that nobody can see yet?

Where are you asking God for height when He is still working on depth?

What in your life is tall but not rooted?

> ***"Roots grow where nobody is watching."***
> Dr. Brandon McCrae

2. Fathom *strength to comprehend. verse 18.*

The ask. Strength to comprehend. Katalambanō, to seize, to lay hold of, to take something down. Paul says it takes power to understand this.

The company. With all the saints. He does not think you can measure this by yourself, and he does not apologize for that.

The dimensions. Breadth, length, height and depth. Four directions and no object named. He never tells you what is being measured.

The point. The sentence has no ceiling because the love has no edges.

What have you understood about God's love only because somebody else helped you see it?

Which dimension is hardest for you to believe, how wide it reaches or how deep it goes?

Who is measuring this with you?

> ***"Some things about God you will never learn by yourself."***
> Dr. Brandon McCrae

3. Fullness *filled with all the fullness. verse 19.*

The paradox. Know the love that surpasses knowledge. Paul asks them to know what cannot be fully known and does not seem troubled by it.

The kind of knowing. Ginōskō. Knowledge by encounter, not knowledge by study. You can pass the test and still not know Him.

The destination. Filled with all the fullness of God. Plērōma, the whole measure, not a portion of it.

The honesty. You will not finish this. Fullness is a direction before it is ever an arrival.

What do you know about God's love that you could not defend in an argument?

Where has God filled a place in you that used to be empty?

What are you still asking Him to fill?

> ***"You will run out of words before God runs out of love."***
> Dr. Brandon McCrae

BEFORE WE GO

> ***"God goes deep before He goes tall, and the depth is the part you do not get to watch."***
> Dr. Brandon McCrae

Hymn of the month. We've Come This Far by Faith. The stanza on trouble in your life. The steadfast week.

Carry it home. Name one thing you have been rooted in longer than five years, and thank God for it out loud.

Next Wednesday. November 18. The Measure. Ephesians 3:20.

Who's Who in Ephesians

THE PEOPLE

Paul *(PAWL)* An apostle. Unlike Rome, he started this church and stayed three years. He is writing to people whose faces he knows, and he is writing from a prison cell.

Tychicus *(TIK-ih-kus)* The man who carried this letter from Paul's prison to Ephesus. Ephesians 6:21.

Timothy *(TIM-uh-thee)* Paul's son in the faith, later left in Ephesus to lead this same church. 1 Timothy 1:3.

Demetrius *(dih-MEE-tree-us)* A silversmith who made shrines of Artemis. He started a riot because the gospel was hurting business. Acts 19:24.

THE PLACES AND THE SPACES

Ephesus *(EF-uh-sus)* A port city in Asia Minor, roughly a quarter million people. Wealthy, religious, and the hub of the whole region.

The Temple of Artemis *(AR-tuh-miss)* One of the seven wonders of the ancient world and the economic engine of the city. Four times the size of the Parthenon.

The theater Where the riot against Paul happened. It seated twenty-four thousand. Acts 19:29.

The prison Paul is in confinement when he writes this, most likely Rome, around 60 to 62 A.D. The man praying for power is in chains.

THE TWO PICTURES

The root and the foundation *(Ephesians 3:17)* Rooted is a farm word. Grounded is a construction word. Paul stacks them in one breath, and both of them happen underground.

The four dimensions *(Ephesians 3:18)* Breadth, length, height and depth. Four directions, and he never says what is being measured, because the love has no edges.

WORDS WORTH KNOWING

Doxology *(dok-SOL-uh-jee)* A burst of praise. Ephesians 3:20–21 is one of the most quoted in Scripture.

Benediction *(ben-uh-DIK-shun)* A good word spoken over people as they leave. Verse 21 is how the church has closed services for two thousand years.

Intercession *(in-ter-SESH-un)* Praying on behalf of somebody else. This whole passage is Paul interceding, not teaching.

THE GREEK, ONE WORD A WEEK

patria *‹pah-tree-AH›* Family, lineage. Named out of the Father. 3:15.

themelioō *‹theh-meh-lee-OH-oh›* To lay a foundation, to ground something so it holds. 3:17.

hyperekperissou *‹hoop-er-ek-per-is-SOO›* Far more abundantly. Three words stacked because one would not carry it. 3:20.

genea *‹gen-eh-AH›* Generation. The people of one age, handing to the next. 3:21.

"What is in you is the measure of what He will do through you."

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