

THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S LOVE

Ephesians 3:17-19

The biblical message of Christmas is about God's divine love in Christ for sinful people. Christmas is about God loving unworthy sinners such as you and me who are absolutely undeserving of the grace, mercy and affection of Christ. Christmas is a testimony to the glory of the saving love of God for us in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:15; 1 John 4:9-10). This matchless love of Christ is the focus and theme of Paul's second petition in his pastoral prayer recorded in Ephesians 3:17-19. As we reflect on the petition of Paul for believers to have the strength to comprehend this love of Christ, let's consider two essential features of this prayer.

1. The _____ of Christ's Love

Borrowing from agricultural and architectural imageries, Paul begins his second petition by characterizing believers as those who are rooted and grounded in love (Eph. 3:17). Then he gets more specific as he describes this love of God in terms of the measures of the love of Christ. He rightly reminds us that we could only comprehend and personally experience along with all the saints these limitless dimensions of Christ's love through God's empowering grace (Eph. 3:18). Gleaning from Paul's inspired depiction of Christ's love in his epistle to the Ephesians and from other portions of God's Word, we could derive helpful insights into the greatness of the love of Christ for us. In terms of its breadth, the love of Christ is so wide that it saves and brings together both Jews and Gentiles into one beloved family of God (Eph. 2:4-5, 13-16). Christ's love is so broad that it saves and embraces all categories of believing people from every nation, tribe and language (Gal. 3:28; Rev. 7:9-10). In terms of its length, the love of Christ extends from eternity past to eternity future (Eph. 1:4-5). God's eternal love for us in Christ will never ever be changed, nor would it be diminished and broken for it knows no end (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:38).

In terms of its height, the love of Christ is high enough that God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6-7). Christ's love is high enough to enthrone us in the heaven of heavens where God will overwhelm us with His eternal kindness. In terms of its depth, the love of Christ compelled our Lord Jesus to leave the glories of heaven and be born into this sinful world in the likeness of men, to bear upon Himself the wrath of God and the punishment for our sins so that we may be redeemed by His death on the Cross and be reconciled to God (Eph. 1:7; Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 5:10-11).

2. The _____ of Knowing Christ's Love

The goal of knowing and experiencing this love of Christ is "so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19). To be filled with all the fullness of God means to enjoy the presence of the Triune God in which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit take control of our lives to strengthen us, bless us and enrich us with His love. It also means to be like our Lord Jesus in character and be conformed to His glorious image (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 5:27). Ultimately, to be filled with the fullness of God is to fully enjoy the supreme delight of unending and unbroken communion and fellowship with our Triune God in His eternal Kingdom where there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11; Rev. 5:12).
