

The Geometry of God's Love

Ephesians 3:14-19

Our text is one of the prayers of Paul (- v. 14). He is praying while in prison. He is not praying for himself. His prayer for the whole “the family of God” (v. 15).

Paul prayed for...

1. Our spiritual STRENGTHENING (v. 16).

- Impossible to live the Christian life in your own strength (6:10).
- Paul prays for our to be strengthened. God's emphasis is upon the (see 2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:4).

2. Our spiritual STABILITY (v. 17).

- Stability comes from knowing Christ dwells in you BY FAITH.
- , like a living tree which lays hold upon the soil, twists roots round the rocks, and cannot be upturned. Roots provide nourishment to a tree. Nothing will make you more stable than having your spiritual roots deep in the love of God.
- , like a building which set on a firm foundation—Having your heart settled on the foundation of Christ's love.

3. Our spiritual SENSES to realize the immensity of God's love (vs. 18-19).

If Christians could just get a grasp of God's great love for them, it would make a big difference in the way they lived.

Preachers can admonish and exhort people... dangle them over hell... threaten them with God's chastening... tear their hides off... but I've come to the conclusion that if I can just get you here at Bible Baptist Church to realize how much God loves you, there would be no stopping what we could accomplish for God's glory.

When a person realizes how much God loves them, they will love Him in return (1 John 4:19). **They will not have to begged** to read their Bible... pray... witness... tithe... or come to church!

So, Paul prays that we may *C M EHEND*

, , , ; *KN HE L E F*

CH I , (vs. 18-19). C means “to grasp; to understand; to take possession; to appropriate.”

Paradox: How can you KN C ,” when it [exceeds] . If it passes knowledge, how can you comprehend it?

We know it BY FAITH. Faith is to the soul what our eyes are to our bodies. As light passes through our eye, things are seen and known. So it is when the light of God’s Word passes through our eye of faith. As Hebrews 11:3 says, what is incomprehensible humanly speaking.

Faith helps us to how great God’s love is for us. Faith makes Christ’s love real in our hearts. It is more than just an assumed doctrine we hold in our mind. Faith realizes God’s love has breadth... length... depth... and height (vs. 18-19). The love of Christ becomes as firm and “solid” as anything we see with our natural eye!

➡ **The four DIMENSIONS of God’s love.** There are four human love stories in the Bible that pictures a small way something about the breadth, length, depth, and height of God’s love:

I. The BREADTH of God’s love. Measurement from side to side.

➡ **Speaks of the RELINQUISHING of God’s love.**

➡ God’s love is willing to make any sacrifice for the object of His love. The love of Jacob for Rachel gives us a small glimpse of what the love of God cost Him.

Jacob loved Rachel so much, he agreed to serve Laban seven years to marry Rachel. Jacob testified that the seven years he served seemed like only a few days for his love for Rachel.

But Laban deceived Jacob and gave him his daughter Leah instead of Rachel. Jacob then agreed to serve Laban another seven years for Rachel—Jacob gave total of 14 years of his life for this woman he loved. Jacob’s love for Rachel was indeed a very board love in what he was willing to give to have her.

➡ But Christ didn’t give us just a few years of His life to obtain us for Himself... not seven years... not fourteen years. He gave His entire

life, which was eternal! Jesus gave eternity for us that we might be His forever.

I can understand how Jacob would love someone as beautiful as Rachel to give up 14 years of his life to have her. But why God would love depraved, corrupt, self-centered sinners that He would give the life of His only begotten Son for the likes of me?

Truly, it is a love that *“passeth knowledge!”* (v. 19).

II. **The LENGTH of God’s love.** The distance from end to end.

➡ **Speaks of the RESOLVE of God’s love.** To what lengths would God’s love go?

➡ The story of Isaac and Rebekah gives us a clue of the “lengths” God’s love would go to save us.

Abraham sent his servant to secure a bride for his son Isaac. Abraham made his servant promise he would not get a bride from among the Canaanites nearby. The servant would have to travel a great distance to Mesopotamia.

Abraham gave many costly gifts to help persuade the right woman to leave her family and travel to Canaan to marry his son Isaac.

Abraham’s servant prayed and God lead him to Rebekah. When he described Isaac to Rebekah and gave her the costly gifts, he won her heart. Rebekah agreed to go to Canaan and marry a man she never even seen. Finally, after a long journey, Isaac and Rebekah met and it was love at first sight.

➡ Abraham went to great lengths to secure a bride for his son— Traveling a long distance, giving expensive gifts, persuading a stranger to marry someone she never saw. But it doesn’t come close to the lengths God went to win us to His Son.

- Jesus traveled down FROM the glories heaven in the likeness of sinful flesh to die on a cross for our sins at Mt. Calvary.
- Then Jesus also DESCENDED further still into the depths of the earth to deposit our sins in hell (Eph. 4:9)!

- Then He sent His Holy Spirit with spiritual gifts to persuade us to accept His invitation to receive Jesus as our Savior—a Man we never even seen.

III. **The DEPTH of God's love.** Measure from surface to bottom.

➡ Speaks of the REACH of God's love.

- ➡ The love story of Hosea and Gomer illustrate how deep God's love goes.

The prophet Hosea was commanded by God to marry a prostitute. They had three children, but the children Gomer bore were children of an adulterous affair.

It wasn't long and Gomer decided to return to her former lovers. But Hosea continued to love her. He pursued her. Eventually, even her former lovers cast her out. She was forced to sell herself as a slave.

Hosea went to the slave auction and bought his own wife back again for 15 pieces of silvers, and a homer and a half of barley. Hosea's love for Gomer was a love that went very deep.

- ➡ But God's love reaches much deeper. The love of God is bottomless.

How low did Jesus have to reach to lift you out of the horrible pit and miry clay? I was lower than the bottom of the barrel. I was under the bottom of the barrel!

➡ SONG: **When My Savior Reached Down For Me**

Once my soul was astray from the heavenly way,
And was wretched and vile as could be;
But my Savior in love gave me peace from above,
When He reached down His hand for me.

When my Savior reached down for me
When my Savior reached down for me
I was lost and undone, without God or His Son
When He reached down for me.

You are never so low that His love cannot reach you:

As the songwriter Frederick Lehman wrote,

The love of God is greater far, Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell!

- It reaches as deep as your **deepest discouragement**.
- It reaches as deep as your **lowest despair**.
- It reaches as deep as your **uttermost defeat**.
- It reaches as deep as your **darkest depression**.
- It reaches as deep as **death itself**.

IV. The HEIGHT of God's love. The elevation from a surface to the peak.

➡ **Speaks of the RAISING of God's love.** God's love lifts the lowest to the highest.

➡ It is pictured in the love story of Boaz and Ruth.

Ruth was a Moabite woman who was married to an Israelite son of Naomi.

The Israelites were commanded to have nothing to do with the children of Moab (Dt. 23:3-6 cf. 1 Kings 11:1-2). During Israel's sojourn from Egypt the Moabites **attacked and opposed Israel**, seeking to destroy them (Num. 23-25). They worshipped the pagan god **Chemosh** (Jer. 48:46; 1 Kings 11:6-8). Chemosh was worshipped by sacrificing children as burnt offerings (2 Kings 3:26-27).

God called Moab *my washpot* (Ps. 60:8). A washpot was a vessel of dishonor that contained dirty water from washing people's feet.

You couldn't get much lower than a Moabite woman. When Naomi's husband died and Ruth's husband also died, Naomi decided to return from Moab to Bethlehem. Ruth went with her.

In Bethlehem, Ruth went to work gleaning in the field of Boaz. Boaz was attracted to her and eventually married her. The love of Boaz lifted her from a "washpot" to royalty. Ruth became the great, great, grandmother of King David, and part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

As Hannah said, *H* , -
 ,
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 (1 Sam. 2:8).

➡ SONG: *Love Lifted Me* ("I was sinking...")

SUMMATION: The four dimensions of God's love are all part of John 3:16: *F* *G* ... [the BREADTH] ...

[the LENGTH] ... *H*

[the DEPTH] ... [the HEIGHT].

- Oh, the BREADTH of God's love that would RELINQUISH heaven's greatest treasure for me...
- Oh, the LENGTH of God's love that RESOLVES go so far as sending Jesus to die for me...
- Oh, the DEPTH of God's love that REACHES down so low to rescue me from going to hell.
- Oh, the HEIGHT of God's love that RAISES me from a miry pit and allow me to reign with Him forever!

➡ No wonder John W. Peterson wrote, *I* *L* *J*
 ?

Do you know that love?

"Such Love!"