

3:20-21 Praise God for His Love

“in order that you [being rooted and grounded in love] might be able to comprehend with all the saints.” When Paul says that we might be able to comprehend Christ’s love, he uses a word that means “to have strength enough, be able,” as the ability to restrain our human nature, our sin nature, and allow the Holy Spirit to influence us to act like Christ. Growth in the individual believer doesn’t primarily occur in isolation, because we’re all pretty good at convincing ourselves that we’re doing fine, and so don’t grow as much. That’s one of the reasons why we’re told over and over not to quit going to church—we need to be challenged by each other in order to grow. Hebrews 10:25 **not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.** Paul prays that it might be accomplished in association with all the saints. ALL believers means not just the ones that we prefer, or like, or think are most like us, but all who have put their faith in Jesus for salvation!

what is the breadth and length and height and depth. We’re abiding with Christ who dwells deeply in our hearts (v. 17) and we know the love of Christ surpasses and exceeds all pre-conceptions and expectations (v. 19). The love in which we’re rooted and grounded, and upon which we build our lives is boundless, and immeasurable.

The word for the knowledge, or comprehension here is ginosko, or knowledge gained through experience. It’s only when they are saved, and have the Holy Spirit’s witness about the active Love of Christ in our lives, and what He is doing to change us into who we’re supposed to be, that we really understand it.

the love ... of Christ. The word here is agape, which is a free choice toward someone to show them affection and love, whether they deserve it or not, concerning ourselves with the most good for the person loved, regardless of their worthiness, a desire to set them free of the obligation to earn our love by their behavior, and just giving it to them anyway. A love given despite the lack of merit in the person loved, but just because of the Goodness of the God who is loving. It is therefore a self-sacrificial kind of love. this kind of love means seeking the highest good in the one loved, trying to bring out good in them. And this love of God is “surpassing, extraordinary, exceeding.” To fully comprehend the love of Christ is beyond the capability of any human being. The very fact that Christ’s love expressed itself in his willingness to die on behalf of sinners is in itself beyond one’s comprehension

in order that you might be filled up to all the fullness of God.” Paul is telling us that as we meditate on the Love of Christ, and get to know Him, and how much He loves us, and abide with Him, live our lives in Him, we in turn are made more complete in Christ; we are filled up in Him. We become more of who we were made to be In Christ. The fullness of the Godhead is only in Christ, and only through him is a believer made complete Col 2:9–10 **9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over every ruler and authority.** Paul is encouraging the process that experiencing God’s moral excellence, perfection, and power through the Holy Spirit results in love between all believers, and Paul specifically points to the wall of separation that has been removed between Jewish and Gentile believers of his day. Of course, the Holy Spirit continues this work today, removing walls and hatreds and bigotry between people, and in particular between believers today. **I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.”** Rom 12:10 **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.** Jesus’ statement that “all people will know that we are his disciples if we love one another” (John 13:35) will ring true among the unbelieving, when we show this love toward one another in our community.

Paul ends his second prayer in Ephesians with a doxology. The term doxology comes from Greek words meaning “glory” and “saying,” so in a sense, one is saying glorious things to God. In other words, a doxology is a short hymn of praises to God. It’s usually a verse or small group of verses often coming at

the end of a passage, when Paul stops to give grand and glorious worship verses or two. The early church employed the practice of offering a doxology at the end of a service as a benediction, to leave things on a “high note”. The tradition of doxology offerings was also practiced in some ancient synagogues—which is probably where they picked up the practice. Certainly, Paul would have been familiar with it, as a Pharisee.

Now to him who is able to do infinitely beyond all we ask or think. God has the divine power to do beyond anything that we ask or think, and Paul wants us to continually meditate on this fact. God is the One who has the power, and God is the One who is to be praised! God is Able in the “the sense of excelling, surpassing over and above, beyond, more than” we can imagine, and the word literally means “beyond everything.”

according to the power that works in us.

Remember that God’s power, His dynamis means “power, ability, capability of acting”, so God is capable of acting on our behalf according to His power. He has the energos from which we get our English word “energy in active power on our behalf. Paul’s reminding us that it is appropriate and right that God should be praised not only for past activity but also for his powerful work in our hearts as believers, that is ongoing within us.

to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus.” The term doxa, or glory means the excellence of character due God, because of Who He is. The reflection of wonderfulness due to who He is, and how He acts in holiness and righteousness. It specifically refers to God’ splendor, power, and radiance.

in the church and in Christ Jesus

If anyone should appreciate the worthiness of God to be glorified and magnified, for Him to be praised for his display of power and love for us, it is the Church who most experiences His power on our behalf. Therefore, God is to be glorified in the church because his power and splendor are displayed there and he is glorified in Christ Jesus because Christ’s work, which pleased the Father, made the church possible.

to all generations, for ever and ever The generations mean the many lifetimes that God has been blessing us, and dealing with us as His Children. Throughout all generations. We see this happening in Revelation 5:9-10 **And they *sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”** He will be glorified by all generations forever and ever. Therefore, God is to be glorified “forever and ever” beginning in this age and continuing into eternity.