



Knowing the Unknowable

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.

Ephesians 3:17-19

A *paradox* is a statement that seems to contradict itself, but on deeper reflection proves to be true—for example, “less is more,” or “failure is the key to success.”

We find a paradox in this passage as well: Paul prays that his readers would “know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.” Christ’s love is knowable, but also *unknowable*. The contradiction is only apparent: our grasp of Christ’s love for us can be *real* but never *exhaustive*. There will always be more to know.

How can we grow in our understanding of this fathomless love? Three phrases in our text help us answer the question, and these phrases can be summarized as: *stability*, *strength*, and *society*.

1. Stability - In order to grasp how much Christ loves us, we must understand *that* he loves us.

“That you, being rooted and grounded in love”

The phrase “being rooted and grounded in love” combines two metaphors: an organic metaphor (“rooted”) and an architectural metaphor (“grounded,” or “foundationed”). Taken as a whole, this teaches us that Christ’s love for us should secure us at the deepest level of our being, just as roots secure a tree and a foundation secures a building. We must accept Christ’s love as a *fact* before we comprehend Christ’s love in its fullness.

2. Strength - In order to grasp how much Christ loves us, we need strength.

“May have the strength to comprehend”

This is the second time Paul has expressed his wish God would give his readers strength. Here he connects their need for strength with their need to comprehend, or grasp, Christ’s love. We need this strength because our minds are so puny, our wills are so weak, and our experience is so limited.

3. Society - In order to grasp how much Christ loves us, we need fellowship with other Christians.

“With all the saints”

Comprehending Christ’s love for us is not something we do all by ourselves. Rather, it is done “with all the saints.” There are several ways in which “all the saints” help us grasp the dimensions of Christ’s love. First, we see that Christ loves a wide variety of people: for example, both Jews and Gentiles. Second, within this diverse group, there are many ways people have experienced and written about Christ’s love. Third, as God’s people care for one another in practical ways, we witness various expressions of love, which broaden our understanding of Christ’s love for us.

Discussion

1. How can believing that Christ loves us help us when we have doubts or face tough times? Can you share a time when realizing this made a difference in your life?
2. How does having a strong understanding of Christ's love affect our relationships with others? How can we help each other grow in our faith?
3. Why do you think Paul talks about needing strength to understand Christ's love? What challenges do you think require this strength?
4. What do you think makes Christ's love so great? Are there parts of His love that you find hard to understand?
5. What practices or habits help you grow stronger in understanding Christ's love? How can our church community support each other in this?
6. How does spending time with other believers help you understand Christ's love better? Can you share a moment when a friend's experience helped you see His love?
7. How does knowing that Christ loves all kinds of people (like Jews and Gentiles) deepen our understanding of His love? How can we embrace this diversity in our church?
8. How can we learn from past and present believers to better understand Christ's love? Are there specific examples or lessons that have influenced you?