

“The Overflow”

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Read Ephesians 3:14-21

The prayer Paul prays is a part of his continuing narrative. His intent is to take the enormity of what is addressed in 1:3-14 and place it into the finite containers of earthen vessels and the resultant explosive overflow of that union.

Although we struggle with the problematic reality of our cyclical existence as a community of faith and our hearts often faint by the persistent display of an anemic faith, yet there is still more . . . vastly more.

Paul prays a progressive prayer that begins with a strengthening of the inner life. He fully recognizes that we are spiritual beings with physical containment, but what and who we are is not defined nor confined by our physical existence. It is only as we are strengthened in our inner man that we can begin to live the exchanged life. Christians are the dwelling place of God (1:13, 14; 2:22). The life we now live in the flesh (this body) we live by the faith of the Son of God who loves us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 2:20). The indwelling Christ is not ethereal, thus non-consequential. His indwelling is practical and immediate. We are not only His dwelling place but He is what fills to overflow and animates existence.

It is only as the eyes of our hearts are enlightened (1:18) that we can begin to comprehend and know the magnitude of God’s love for those who are the objects of His deepest affection as played out in 1:3-14 and 2:4-10.

Just how vast is the love of God? It is proportionate to the riches of His glory. I often think of how gigantic our universe is and my complete inability to process its enormity. It is truly staggering. We speak of light years and how objects photographed from the Hummel space craft are 30,000 light years away, when a light year is the distance that light travels in a vacuum in 1 year — 5.88 trillion miles. What creature can comprehend the magnitude of such immensity? Yet God’s love is larger than this. The entire universe is only a shadow cast by the greater substance. The universe is a simple visual God uses to show us just how big He is. And this imagery is our limited usage of language to comprehend and know the love of Christ.

We see His love at Calvary (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10).

⁶ “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:6-10).

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This same love is explained in 1:3-14. Explained? Please, let us not kid ourselves. His love so far surpasses our ability to comprehend that we are playing with mud pies when surrounded by the vast array of God's pastries. We think we know, but who knows the unknowable? Who can measure the immeasurable? Who can comprehend the incomprehensible? Who pray tell, tell me? I feel as if I just walked into the presence of someone who knows all things while attempting to describe His person and work. I feel like Job under the tender and pointed words of God (Job 38:1-13).

¹ "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, ² 'Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? ³ Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me! ⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, ⁵ Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸ Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; ⁹ When I made a cloud its garment And thick darkness its swaddling band, ¹⁰ And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors, ¹¹ And I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop'? ¹² Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, And caused the dawn to know its place, ¹³ That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it?" (Job 38:1-13).

God's love for you and me is so incomprehensible that we must stand muted before Him. God isn't so much concerned that we explain His love, but rather that we live His love. Oh may we, like Paul, prostrate ourselves before God and beg Him to love His people through us. May we, in being the Church, be this explosive and volcanic overflow of an embracing and consuming love in the community, the nation, and the world in which we now live. Father, do for us what only you can. Amen.

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