

Incomprehensible Love

Text : **Ephesians 3: 1-19**

S#1.

S#2.

A. When did you first love someone ? You weren't born loving.

1. In the KJV we read about people without "natural affection." (**II Tim. 3: 3**)
 - a. NASV = Unloving (*astorgos*) 1 without natural affection, unsociable, inhuman
 - b. As a normal person matures he develops the ability to love someone else.
2. People are born without love for anyone.
 - a. We are born totally selfish and self-centered.
 - b. We're also totally dependent, but don't have the ability to communicate our needs.
 - c. Our first step is to develop different types of cries. *Hungry, need changing, want*
3. Soon we realize our dependence and become insecure when our provider leaves.
4. By and by we develop a preference for our providers or other benefactors.

S#3.

B. The first steps beyond our providers and benefactors are reciprocal.

1. As we have positive interactions with our siblings, a bond develops. (*Survival instinct*)
 - a. Children are not as close to siblings who leave the nest while they are small.
 - b. Not automatic, children can grow up resentful of siblings who are abusive to them.
2. When neighbor children are enjoyable to play with, a feeling of closeness develops.
3. The next step is relationships that are bonds based upon shared experiences.
 - a. Bonds often develops between kids in the neighborhood, long-term classmates, etc.
 - b. Being on the same team draws people together.
 - c. Soldiers who fight together form a lifelong bond.

S#4.

C. Romantic love is an entirely different thing from actual love.

1. Romantic love starts and finishes with chemistry. (**eros**)
 - a. It may be felt the strongest by those least equipped to handle it.
 - b. The young are invaded by a surge of hormones that they don't know how to handle
 - c. They interpret the real & strong feelings created by the drugs (hormones) as love.
2. Hormones are normal and healthy, but they create desires that must be controlled.
 - a. God created mankind with hormones in order to cause the species to perpetuate.
 - b. Pheromones-hormones will pull two together, but they won't keep them together.
3. Love must be developed before the hormones fade or the relationship fails.

- a. The physical attraction brought on by the chemistry of hormones is at its core the seeking of physical gratification from another. (*neutralize hormones*)
- b. **Definition :** Love is the delight in, the commitment to, the taking pleasure in, and the affection for the best interest of another. (*irrespective of chemistry*)
- c. If actual love does not accompany hormones, the marriage ends in divorce.
- * d. That is why the divorce rate hovers around 50% ... infatuation mistaken for love S#5.

D. We don't start off with hormones for God, so how do we come to love Him ?

- 1. We develop love for God as we learn about Him and what He has done for us.
 - a. He is the creator of this world.
 - b. He is the source of our life.
 - c. He is the source of all that is good in our lives.
- 2. Thus, our love for God is a response to His love for us. (*natural to return love*)
 - a. I first began to love God as a child because of the fantastic world He created. As a child I could relate to Esau; I loved to be outside, to hunt and roam free.
 - b. **I John 4: 19 – We love because He first loved us.**
- 3. God loved us before we even knew He existed.

E. If we could ever truly understand and comprehend the love of God, it would deepen our faith and change our perspective on life. S#6.

- 1. This is Paul's thesis in the text this lesson will consider.
- 2. It is Paul's transition from the doctrinal section to the practical section of the book.
- 3. He prays that we will come to more fully comprehend and appreciate God's love.

I. Verses 1-17 lead up to the main thrust of the chapter which is in verses 18-19. S#7.

A. Paul re-establishes his authority to speak as he is. S#8.

- 1. **Eph. 3: 1-2** For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;
- 2. The Jews had him imprisoned because of his ministry to gentiles .. to non-Jews.
- 3. God is the one who assigned Paul to minister to the gentiles.
 - Gal. 2: 7-8** But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised ⁸ (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), S#9.

B. Paul is not preaching his own message, but one given directly by God. S#10.

1. **Eph. 3: 3** – that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.
2. Notice that Paul wrote at least one previous letter to the Ephesians.
3. Mystery “*musterion*” 1 religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals (*This is concept of gentiles*)

C. Paul affirms that the purpose of his correspondence is two fold :

1. **Eph. 3: 4** – By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,
2. Paul wants the readers to read his writings.
 - a. By reading they will receive revelation from God.
 - b. By reading they will gain understanding. (*Meant to be understood*)

S#11.**D. Christians have a special benefit that was not available to people under the Law.**

1. **Eph. 3: 5** – which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;
2. **I Pet. 1: 10-12** As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹ **S#12.** seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven — things into which angels long to look.
3. Just imagine; if you study you can know more than the prophets or even the angels.

E. What was the mystery that was only revealed to those in Christ ?

1. **Eph. 3: 6-7** to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷ of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power **S#13.**
2. Paul's ministry was to proclaim the fulfillment of promise to Abraham,
Gen. 12: 3 – In you all families of the earth will be blessed.

F. Paul rejoiced to be selected to reveal this mystery to the world. S#14.

1. **Eph. 3: 8-9** To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

2. **unfathomable riches of Christ** ... We cannot even comprehend such a blessing.
3. Like Heaven .. we can't comprehend it so it's described in figures – gold & jewels

G. The church is very special because God used it to reveal to the angels, etc. S#15.

1. **Eph. 3: 10** – **so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.**
2. Why would God have kept His plan secret from those in the spiritual realm ? **Satan.**

H. Saving the gentiles in the church was in the eternal purpose of God.

1. **Eph. 3: 11-12** **This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.**
2. The church was in the eternal purpose of God (predestined) not an afterthought.
3. Gentiles are reconciled by grace through faith, added to the church and given access.

I. No matter what one has to go through to achieve this, it is well worth it. S#16.

1. **Eph. 3: 13** – **Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.**
2. **II Cor. 4: 17-18** **momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (Compare : **Rom. 8: 18**)**

II. Paul's prayer for the brethren in Ephesus.

S#17.

A. He prays that the Holy Spirit will make them stronger within.

S#18.

1. He does not pray for them to receive physical blessings.
 - a. Not prosperity
 - b. Not health
 - c. Not even church growth
2. **Eph. 3: 14-16** **that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,**
3. Notice : The Holy Spirit CAN give us inner strength

B. Paul explains why we need the inner strength for which he is praying.

1. **Eph. 3: 17** – **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,**

2. We need spiritual power to strengthen our faith so Christ can dwell in us.
3. A result of having Christ dwell in us is that we will be rooted and grounded in love.
 - a. “**God is love**” **I John 4: 8**
 - b. THUS, if love does not dwell within us, God does not dwell within us.

C. WHY is it important that we be rooted and grounded in love ?

1. **Eph. 3: 18-19** **so that** ... may be able to comprehend with all the saints what **S#19.**
is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know
the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be
filled up to all the fullness of God.
2. We really do not have the fullness of God until we comprehend His love for us.

III. Is it possible that there be any limits to God’s Love ?

S#20.

A. The most fundamental description of God is that He is infinite in all of His attributes. Anything that is true in part is true in the whole.

S#21.

1. Present ... God is Omni-present ... He is everywhere at the same time.
2. Power ... God is Omni-powerful ... There is no limit to His power.
3. God is Holy ... Thus, there can be absolutely no evil in Him. (“**no variation**”)
4. Notice the principle illustrated in **I John. 1: 5** :
 “ ... **God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.**”
5. THUS, When we read that “**God is love**”, we understand that He is completely love.
 - a. **I John 4: 8** – **The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**
 - b. Realizing this, we see that one must understand love before he can understand God

B. What is the breadth of God’s love ?

S#22.

1. God loves ALL kinds of sinners. **Rom. 3: 23** – **All have sinned and fallen short.**
2. He loves religious sinners. ... ***Saul persecuted Christians in the name of God.***
3. He loves immoral sinners ... **Jn 8** woman caught in adultery
4. He love covetous sinners ... **Mk 10: 21** ... Jesus loved the rich young ruler.

C. What is the length of God’s love.

1. He walked for miles across the desert to talk to an adulterous woman ... **Jn. 4**
2. He sailed through a storm across the sea to preach to a demonic Gerasene ... **Mk 5**
3. He sent Philip out into the wilderness to teach a black man who was seeking .. **Ax 8**
4. He left Heaven to be born into a poor household to sacrifice Himself for you.

D. What is the height of God's love ?**S#23.**

1. The love of God is higher than any other love you will ever experience.
 - a. He loves you more than your mother.
 - b. He loves you more than your spouse.
2. Jesus has proven his love for us to be above all other love.

Rom. 5: 7-8 – 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.

E. What is the depth of God's love ?**S#24.**

1. He loves you in spite of all your many flaws **and** your sins.
 - a. **Eph. 1: 4-5** ... God loved you before the foundation of the world.
 - b. God knew full well that you would sin many times and desire even more sin.

Psa. 139: 16 – Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.

2. He loves us and will forgive us even when we fall into grave wickedness.

I Cor. 6: 9-11 – Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. **S#25.**

** How many marriages have ended because one party lacked enough love to forgive ?*

CONCLUSION :

- A. God's love is so wide you can't get around it, So high you can't get over it, **S#26.**
So deep you can't get under it, So long is cover everyone.

- B. **Rom. 8: 35-39** Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or **S#27.**
distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36** Just as it is written, "For your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." **37** But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **S#28.**

S#29. *Communion Slide*

Lesson Text :**Ephesians 3: 1-19**

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — **2** if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; **3** that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. **4** By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; **6** to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, **7** of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. **8** To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, **9** and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; **10** so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. **13** Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, **16** that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Jude 20-21 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.