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THE LOVE OF CHRIST Ephesians 3:17-19

Ephesians 3:17... And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Saturday, it will be Valentine's Day.

Dearest Jimmy,

It's almost Valentine's Day and I miss you. No words could ever express the great unhappiness I've felt since breaking our engagement. Please say you'll take me back. No one could ever take your place in my heart, so please forgive me. I love you, I love you, I love you! Yours forever, Marie.

P.S., And congratulations on winning the lottery.

To the world out there, that is what love is all about. Just as long as they can get something out of you they will love you.

Today, by God's grace, we will learn what Christ's love is all about. Why is this important?

Background:

Now in order to understand what we just read, the previous verses in Chapters 1 to verse 13 of Chapter 3, Paul was explaining to the church of Ephesus that as Christians, GOD has given us everything that we need in order to live A RICH, AND POWERFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE.

In short, a life to the full.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

What is life to the full?

1. A life full of joy (even in the midst of trials)
2. A life full of courage (even in the midst of trouble)
3. A life full of peace (even in the midst of uncertainty)
4. A life full of triumph (even in the midst of temptation)
5. A life full of love (even in the midst of bitterness)

And the only way we can have life to the full is to know truly THE LOVE OF CHRIST.
—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

It's because the abundant life, a life to the full is having that intimate relationship with God.

Loving Reminder that the Christian life is not a list of do's and don'ts – that's religion! The Christian life is not religion... it's all about having that LOVING relationship with Christ.

So the question is, do we have that LOVING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

For example :

Why do we go to church?

Why do we read the Bible? Is it because we want to know Him?

Why do we pray? Is it because we want to talk to Him?

We have to remember, a person in love wants to spend time with the people they love.

Illustration: One time, I was still a teenager, we were renting an apartment and we had a telephone for the first time. There was no Facebook, Facetime, messenger yet. That night before going to my room, I knew my eldest brother was talking to his girlfriend. So I went to the bedroom, the boys shared a room and went to sleep. At midnight, I woke up because I got thirsty so I had to go downstairs and I saw my brother still on the phone but this time, I heard him snoring. He fell asleep with the phone in his ear but the funnier part is that when I went closer to him, I can also hear his girlfriend, snoring on the other side of the line.

It's because we want to spend time with the one we love.

And the Word of God says, that we can only have an intimate loving relationship with Christ if we truly know how much He loves us.

And that is the prayer of Paul for us.

*Ephesians 3:17... **And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,***

The Love of Christ

- Know that we are ESTABLISHED in Christ's love
- Know The EXTRAVAGANCE of Christ's Love
- Need to EXPERIENCE Christ's Love

I. We are ESTABLISHED in Christ's love.

being rooted and established in love,

And this is the problem of numerous Christians. Let me explain.

- **First, we live in a merit-based world.**

If we study well, we get an A. If we work hard and establish networks, we get a promotion.

- **Or we live in a demerit-based world**

We break the speeding limit, we get caught, we get a demerit. We don't study, we get an F.

And that's how the world works. We were even brought up in that kind of religion.

We do not break the rules or any laws, then we can go to heaven. We are good people, then somehow we get points and we go to heaven.

In short, this kind of relationship is what you call “performative”.

It depends on our performance if we will be accepted or not. Nothing wrong with this per se.

But unfortunately, this spills over in our families and even in our relationship with God.

What do I mean by this? It means, it depends on our performance if we will be accepted and loved by our parents or if we will be accepted and loved by God.

In short, our idea of love becomes “transactional” instead of “unconditional”.

Right from the very start of Ephesians, Paul was establishing that our relationship with God is not based on our “performance”.

*Ephesians 1: 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every **spiritual blessing in Christ**. 4 **For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.***

In short, Paul is saying GOD HAS ACCEPTED US AND HAS APPROVED OF US, CHOSE US, MADE US HIS CHILDREN NOT BECAUSE OF OUR PERFORMANCE, NOT BECAUSE WE ARE GOOD PEOPLE, NOT BECAUSE OF OUR BEHAVIOUR **BUT BECAUSE OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST! PRAISE THE LORD!**

IT'S ALL BY GRACE.

That's why Paul prays that we understand this that we are *rooted and established in love*

Etymology :

“rooted” “hrid-za-o” from “hrid-za” which means root, but it's a verb, which means it's fixed....it's permanent.

“established” KJV “grounded” – foundation...the thing that makes something stable.

In short, IF WE TRUST IN WHAT JESUS CHRIST DID ON THE CROSS AS THE PUNISHMENT OF OUR SINS AND ACCEPT HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOUR. what the Bible is saying that “OUR ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP” with God is secure, permanent and stable NOT because of our performance or behaviour BUT BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE for us!

That’s why the Bible says in Romans

Romans 8: 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Quote : There is nothing you can do to make God love you more! There is nothing you can do to make God love you less! His love is Unconditional, Impartial, Everlasting, Infinite, Perfect! - Richard Halverson

And you know what keeps people from rejecting this idea. Pride? It’s saying, “What I did not do anything and I cannot do anything to get this kind of love?”

II. Know The EXTRAVAGANCE of Christ’s Love

*18 **may have power**, together with all the Lord’s holy people, **to grasp** how wide and long and high and deep is **the love of Christ**,*

Quick note : on *together with all the Lord’s holy people*

Why did Paul write this? It’s because brothers and sisters...LOVE IS THE IDENTITY OF GOD’S PEOPLE.

John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Illustration: C.S.Lewis walked into a room of theologians who were discussing what makes the Christian faith different from others. He said, “That’s easy.. grace.”

Etymology :

Power “exischyo” - full strength

To grasp “katalambano” comprehend, mapanghawakan – “kata” in “lambano” grasp – used for fishermen

We have a term for that in Tagalog, I pray na “makuha mo”, (you get it).

Illustration: Fishermen knows this. They cast the line and then they feel the tug and it's heavy and there will be a fight and he's thinking it's a big one... he will use all his power to hold on to it, to pull it in and then pulls it in and then he knows it's a big blue marlin and then finally gets it in the boat and is amazed by his catch.

That's what Paul is saying, that we will be able to be amazed about the extravagance of Christ's love for us.

- **How wide is the love of Christ?**

*how wide and long and high and deep is **the love of Christ,***

Etymology : “platos” – breadth – of great extent – to the corners of the earth.

How wide is the love of Christ? IT IS OFFERED TO EVERYONE.

*John 3:16 **For God so loved the world** that He gave His own Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

In short, Jesus did not die for the good people (there's no good people anyway as the Bible says in **Romans 3**) **or for a certain class of people or for a certain race...** He died for all sinners just like you and me.

That's why the Bible says,

*Romans 5:8 **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

This is the reason we share the Gospel to everyone.

Christ's love is seen in His forgiveness.

*Psalm 103: 12 **as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us***

How wide is the love of Christ?

There is no sin that His blood cannot wash away.

Illustration: John Newton was a slave trader and he got saved during a storm and gave his life to Christ. He was already suffering from memory loss and he famously said these words, *"My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things, that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior".*

He was the one who wrote “Amazing Grace”

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,

That saved a wretch; like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

- **How long is the love of Christ?**

how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Etymology: mekos “length” figuratively and literally

In short, how long has He loved us? When did He love us?

Let me go back again to Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1: 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

In short, even before we were born He loved us, chose us to be with Him for eternity.

That’s why I cannot understand people who teach that they can lose their salvation.

In the first place, God even before time was created, out of His love, made it our destiny to become His children through Jesus Christ. He chose us before the creation of the world and then we can lose our salvation? Does it mean God made a mistake for choosing us in the first place? Perish that thought! God never makes a mistake. He is infallible.

That’s why Jesus Christ said,

John 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. (Do we see a condition here?... like they shall never perish, UNLESS)

Illustration : When Zak was young, he loved this movie “Toy Story”. There were two characters there, Woody who was a cowboy and Buzz Lightyear who was a space ranger. The most famous line in that movie is when Buzz Lightyear will always say when they are going in an adventure, “to infinity and beyond.”

Our Lord’s love for us is from eternity and beyond.

- **How high is the love of Christ?**

how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ

Etymology: high “hypsos” height, it describes heaven also

In short, how high is heaven? So high.

I know we always use the words of Isaiah

Isaiah 55:9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

When we cannot understand things that are happening in our life. And that’s true, that’s why we need to trust in Him.

But do you know the context of this? It pertains to God’s love, God’s forgiveness and salvation.

In short, we can never understand why God loves us so much!

That's why David wrote ins Psalm 8

*Psalm 8: 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
4 what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?*

Illustration : That's why there are three "wow" when we reach heaven.

- Wow! Why is he here? (people you think is far beyond saving)
- Wow! Why isn't this man here? (people you think who are good)
- Wow! Why am I here?

You're amazed that you are in heaven because we know we do not deserve it. Being with the Lord is so tremendously amazing that we will spend eternity in heaven, being grateful and thankful that we get it to spend it with Him.

Illustration: One time in the Philippines, I decided to treat a couple in our church for lunch. I decided to bring them to McDonald's. Nothing fancy. But when they entered, McDonald's, I noticed that they were a little intimidated but they were also amazed. So we sat and I ordered but while we were eating, the husband was a little teary-eyed and they were always saying "thank you pastor...thank you." They were always saying it. But it's only McDonalds until they said in Tagalog, it's the first time they entered and ate at McDonald's and that's why they were so amazed.

That's what heaven is all about, it's something what the Bible says,

1 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him—

- **How deep is the love of Christ?**

how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ

Etymology : deep "depth" bathos... it means deep sea, or it's also used to describe deep poverty.

So what does it mean how deep is the love of Christ?

We have to remember that He is GOD HIMSELF THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE and YET HE BECAME MAN and not only man but became nothing.

*Philippians 2: 6 **Who, being in very nature God,**
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, **he made himself nothing**
by taking the very nature of a servant,*

being made in human likeness.

What? God became a servant? Aren't we supposed to be the one serving Him? And yet, He came to serve us. That was the sermon last week "Love in Action". That serving is love in action and that's what our Lord did! That's why our Lord said, *"I came to serve and not to be served."* (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:17)

***8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!***

We will never know how much of a change is that.

But let's try to take a glimpse.

Illustration : Let me ask rhetorical question:

Are you willing to give up the warmth of your house, the close fellowship with your wife and kids, your car to live like a homeless person for 33 years?

Are you willing to give up your nice bed, your flushing toilet, your cabinet full of clothes to and exchange your life with a person inside this jail live with people like them in a place like this?

Of course, if we are going to be honest to ourselves, we'll say "no". You would say, "wala naman akong ginawang kasalanan." This people deserve it.

But isn't that what our Lord did for us? He didn't do anything wrong. He is perfect and we deserve hell and yet in His love for us He took the punishment for our sin so that we will be with Him in heaven.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

That's why that Bridge in the song "Here I am to worship", this song always hits me :

So, here I am to worship, Here I am to bow down Here I am to say that You're my God You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy Altogether wonderful to me!

Bridge *I'll never know how much it cost To see my sin upon that cross! I'll never know how much it cost To see my sin upon that cross!*

And why did He do this? IT'S BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE... EXTRAVAGANT LOVE!

That's why Paul prays that we *18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,*

That we understand the EXTRAVAGANCE OF GOD'S LOVE.

Which brings us to the last piece of Paul's Prayer

III. That we EXPERIENCE the LOVE OF CHRIST

19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge

Etymology : know "ginosko" it describes the intimacy between husband and wife. It's only your spouse who will really know who you are. "knowledge" -gnosis – general intelligence, head knowledge,

What Paul is saying, I pray that you will really, really, really know the love of Christ not only here in our head but truly here in your heart.

How do we really know something? BY EXPERIENCING IT!

Let me illustrate this for you by God's grace.

Illustration : How can you describe the color red to a person who was born blind?

You can get a dictionary and read this to him.

Dictionary : *(red) primary color at one extreme end of the visible spectrum, an effect of light with a wavelength between 610 and 780 nm.*

You can even ask him to memorize it BUT would he really know the COLOR RED? Of course not.

Describing the color red to a blind man surpasses knowledge... HE NEEDS TO SEE IT FOR HIMSELF TO EXPERIENCE IT FOR HIMSELF.

And how can a blind man see? IT'S ONLY BY A MIRACLE – AN ACT OF GOD...AN ACT OF THE SPIRIT!

(show red) It's because when a blind man can see, we do not have to describe the color "red" to him, we show it to him....this is red.

That's why Paul prays that we will be able to see the love of Christ. It's because when we truly know the love of Christ, IT IS LIFE CHANGING!

(Show many colors of shade) It's because like the color red, God's love comes in many other shades and we know there are many colors.

Illustration: Do you know heaven is not blue and white? HEAVEN AS DESCRIBED in the Bible as a place full of color!!! Read the book of Revelation 4; Ezekiel 1

Trivia : In its full capacity, the average human eye can distinguish 1 million to 10 million different colors!!! That's the reason why heaven is going to be amazing.

And when we experience God's love...it's not just one side of it...there's a million sides onto it. We will never ever get bored with God's love!!!

And how can we get a glimpse of the love of Christ...IF WE LOVE OTHERS IF WE SERVE THEM. That's why again, the Lord said :

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

People will somehow experience God's love through us.

We will truly know what it means to live life to the full
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

And what is life to the full? And that is the essence of the Christian life.
IT'S ALL ABOUT HAVING AN INTIMATE LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

AND I PRAY THAT THIS CHURCH WILL HAVE THAT IN OUR LIVES. I PRAY THAT WE WILL ALL EXPERIENCE THIS LOVE THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE.

S.G.D.