

Sermon Notes for Feb. 15, 2009

The Purpose Of Christ Covenant Church
“Loving Jesus Christ”
Part II
Ephesians 3:14-19

Introduction

A. We Continue Our Sermon Series On THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST COVENANT.

1. Over the years, we have had a Purpose Statement for our church.
 - a. however, the elders have believed that we could make our Purpose Statement more clear and more simple
 - b. so, over the past year, the elders have “simplified” our Purpose Statement
2. Our current Purpose Statement is: **“We exist to know, love and serve Jesus Christ.”**
 - a. two weeks ago I preached on what it means to **“know”** Jesus Christ
 1. that we want to be a church that helps all people to “come to know who Jesus Christ is”
 2. whether they be seekers or skeptics
 - b. today, we will look at the second aspect of our Purpose Statement to **love** Jesus Christ.

B. We Look Today At WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST.

1. We will achieve this by being a family of believers that **“walks together to build an ever deepening love relationship with Jesus Christ.”**
2. Our overall goal with loving Jesus Christ is to go deeper in our **love relationship** with Jesus Christ.
 - a. all of the ministries that we have at Christ Covenant can help you in your walk with Jesus
 1. worship services
 2. Sunday school
 3. small groups
 4. ministries
 - b. **HOWEVER**, these ministries CANNOT be used as the only method to take you deeper in your personal relationship with Jesus
 1. we want each of you personally to know Jesus in an ever-deepening, relational way
 2. and that will largely be between you and the Lord Jesus Himself
3. Today, we will look at a text that will cause our love for Jesus Christ to expand.
 - a. as we look at just how much Jesus Christ loves us
 - b. **for, as you learn more about how Jesus Christ loves you, you cannot help but love Him more**
 - c. the text that we will look at today reveals Paul’s great desire and prayer that the **Ephesian church** more fully understand Jesus’ love for them
Vs. 14 – “For this reason I kneel before the Father.”

1. in fact, Paul **PHYSICALLY KNEELS** to pray that the Ephesian church will more fully understand Jesus' love for them
2. kneeling was not a typical physical position for a Jew in prayer
 - a. most Jews sat or stood as they prayed
 - b. it was only in unusual circumstances that the Jew fell to his knees to pray
 1. Daniel knelt in prayer in spite of Babylonian's King Darius' requirement that no one pray to any one other than the King
 2. Jesus fell on His knees in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest
 - d. let us see how Paul wanted us to more clearly understand the love of Jesus Christ

I. Understanding The **POWER** Of The Love Of Jesus Christ.

A. The **PLACE** Of Jesus Christ.

Vs. 16 – “I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through his Spirit **in your inner being.**”

1. There seems to be so much confusion in the church about what it means to be a Christian.
 - a. many think that a Christian is a person who believes in God
 - b. another person thinks that a Christian is one who attends church services, goes to Sunday school and serves in the church
 - c. another thinks that a Christian is one who lives an exemplary life
2. **PLEASE NOTICE THIS VERSE!** Paul prays for the Ephesian church that the Holy Spirit may empower them in their **inner being.**
 - a. What does Paul mean by one's inner being?
 1. the word inner
 - a. within
 - b. the internal
 - c. the soul
 2. the word man
 - a. Greek anthropos
 - b. a person
 - b. Paul is **CLEARLY** saying that a true Christian is **ONE IN WHOM JESUS CHRIST RESIDES**
 1. **DID YOU GET THAT?**
 2. a true Christian is a person who has asked Jesus Christ to come **INSIDE OF THEIR HEART AND LIFE!**
 - a. you are not a Christian because of what you do **EXTERNALLY** but because Jesus Christ lives in you **INTERNALLY**
 - b. dealing with men in personal discipleship
I John 5:11-12 – “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who **has** the Son has life; he who **does not have** the Son of God does not **have** life.”

1. to have
 - a. to hold
 - b. to possess
 - c. to be closely joined to a person
2. so, let me ask you a question: **DO YOU HAVE THE SON?**
 - a. I didn't ask you if you went to church or gave money to the church
 - b. I asked if you **HAD**, or **POSSESSED** the Son
 - c. if you answered yes, then you are a Christian
 - d. **IN FACT**, look further what the Apostle John says in **Verse 13** – “I write these things to you who believe in the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have eternal life.”

B. The POWER Of Jesus Christ.

Vs. 16 – “I pray that out of His glorious riches **He may strengthen you with power** through His Spirit in your inner being.”

1. Not only is a person a Christian who has or possesses the Son, a Christian is one who is **INTERNALLY EMPOWERED** by the Son.
 - a. **INASMUCH** as you cannot save yourself, you cannot “empower” yourself
 1. a person does not have the ability or power to “live” the Christian life on his own
 2. that may be why you have failed to be “spiritual”
 - b. Paul prays that the Holy Spirit would “empower” the Ephesian church
 1. to be made strong; to increase in strength
 2. in the Passive Voice
 - a. not done “by” you
 - b. but done “to” you by another
2. **Vs. 16** – “I pray that **out of His glorious riches** He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being” . . . the Son has an **ABUNDANT POWER** to strengthen us.
 - a. **NOTICE THE POWER THAT IS AVAILABLE TO US, AS BELIEVERS!**
 - b. Paul prays that the Ephesians be empowered **ACCORDING** to His glorious riches
 1. the Greek word **kata**
 2. translations:
 - a. **NIV** – “I pray that **out of His glorious riches** He may strengthen you.”
 - b. **KJV** – “that He would grant you **according to the riches of His glory**”

3. notice the difference between giving “according to” and “out of”
 - a. if Donald Trump gave you “out of” his wealth, he might give you \$100.00
 - b. however, if he gave you “according to” his wealth, you would get millions
4. this verse reveals how “generous” God truly is
 - a. God didn’t make just a single drop of water – He made oceans of water
 - b. God didn’t create just a star – He made galaxies
 - c. God didn’t just make a single kind of bird – He created thousands of kinds of birds
 - d. God didn’t just make a hill – He made the Rocky Mountains

II. Understanding The PRESENCE Of The Love Of Jesus Christ.

A. The MEANING Of A Relationship With Jesus Christ.

Vs. 17 – “So that Christ may **dwell** in your hearts through faith.”

1. NOTICE that Paul does not stop at Jesus Christ simply being “in” their lives, but that Jesus would DWELL in their lives.

- a. the word dwell is actually two Greek words

1. **down and to dwell**

2. in a sense, Paul is praying that Christ would “**settle down**” in the hearts of the Ephesians

- b. thus, the word “to dwell” suggests:

1. that not only does Jesus Christ enter INTO a person’s life
2. but that He desires to dwell, to inhabit, to “settle in” to that person’s inner life

3. my own home

- a. a place of refuge

- b. a place of rest

- c. a place of recovery

2. THIS, in my opinion, is one of the greatest needs of the individual Christian.

- a. yes, Jesus Christ may be “in” your life

- b. but does Jesus “dwell” in your life?

1. not only should Jesus be “welcomed” in our home

2. Christ should “dwell,” abide, remain and stay in our lives

- a. “**My Heart, Christ’s Home**” – by Robert Munger

1. all of the rooms

2. the living room

He said, “The trouble is that you have been thinking of the quiet time, of Bible study and prayer, **as a means for your own spiritual growth**. This is true, but you have forgotten that this time means something to me also.

Remember, I love you. At a great cost I have redeemed you. I value your fellowship. Just to have you look up into my face warms my heart. Don’t neglect this hour if only for my sake.

Whether or not you want to be with me, remember I want to be with you. I really love you!"

- b. wives, let me ask you, How much **time** does it take to make a house a home?
 - 1. it takes all of your time
 - 2. it will take all of your time to make your house a home that Christ can dwell in
 - a. personal devotions
 - b. a life of repentance

B. The MEANS Of A Relationship With Jesus Christ.

Vs. 17 – “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts **through faith**. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love.”

- 1. NOTICE HOW a Christian develops this intimate relationship of dwelling - **IT IS BY FAITH!**

- a. IT DOES NOT SAY BY WORKS!

- 1. yes, it is a blessing to give your money to the cause of Christ
- 2. yes, it is a blessing to serve the Lord in His church

- b. but our relationship with Jesus Christ is built BY FAITH

- 1. your personal faith; your personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- 2. BUT **HOW DO WE BUILD OUR FAITH?**

Romans 10:17 (KJV) – “So then, **faith** cometh by hearing, and **hearing by the Word of God.**”

- a. IF you desire for Jesus Christ TO DWELL in your heart by faith . . .
- b. **THE METHOD** that Christ will dwell in your hearts will be through His Word
- c. **PLEASE KNOW THIS . . .** if you spend no time within the Word of God, you can rest assured that while Jesus Christ is within you, He is not “dwelling” there as He wants to – if He were, why would Paul pray for this dwelling?

- 2. This is HOW we are to have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

III. The PERMANENCE Of The Love Of Jesus Christ.

Vs. 17b – “And I pray that you, being **rooted** and **established** in love.”

A. Paul Uses An “AGRICULTURAL” Illustration To Represent The Love Of Jesus Christ.

- 1. Paul wanted to use a “physical” way to illustrate the love of Jesus Christ.
- 2. For, Paul talks about the roots of a tree, going deep, deep into the soil.
 - a. is kind of tree would not be the California redwood with shallow roots or even the one single tap root of a pine tree
 - b. but this kind of tree would be the deep, wide and secure root system of an oak tree
 - c. a Live Oak Tree in Charleston, SC (slide)
 - 1. 65 feet tall
 - 2. 1,500 years old
- 3. Paul wants us to know just how “secure” we are in His love.

B. Paul Uses An “ARCHITECTURAL” Illustration To Represent The Love Of Jesus Christ.

1. In addition to using an “agricultural” illustration to encourage us about our security in Jesus Christ, Paul also uses an architectural illustration of a building.
2. It is as if Paul were talking about the foundation of a building.
 - a. a foundation that has to be secure in order to build the building
 - b. Jesus’ parable of the house built on the sand
 1. in the Middle East, one would be tempted to build a house on the sand, because it “appears” that the sand would be secure
 2. however, often in the Middle East, rains come and bring floods that wash away the house
 3. the smart builder digs down into the sand until he finds the rock floor and then builds his house on the rock
 - c. Capitol (slide)

IV. The PERVASIVENESS Of The Love Of Jesus Christ.

A. The Further EXPRESSION Of The Love Of Jesus Christ.

1. It is as if Paul is not satisfied with what he has prayed so far.
2. So, Paul “expresses” himself:
 - a. He goes on further to make His point EVEN MORE CLEARLY, in yet “another” way
 1. we see this method of writing so often in the writings of Paul **I Corinthians 13:1-3** - If I **speak in the tongues** of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the **gift of prophecy** and can fathom all **mysteries** and all **knowledge**, and if I have a **faith** that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I **give all I possess to the poor** and **surrender my body to the flames**, but have not love, I gain nothing.”
 - b. here, Paul uses several more words to represent the “extreme” love of Jesus Christ for us

B. The Further EXPLANATION Of The Love Jesus Christ.

Vs. 17b-18 – “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how **wide** and **long** and **high** and **deep** is the love of Christ.”

1. His love is **wide**.
 - a. the arms of Christ reach wide – all around the world
 - b. Paul’s use of the width of Christ’s love suggests that Jesus loves all kinds of people all over the world
 - c. **THIS IS NOT AN AMERICAN GOSPEL!**
 1. Jesus did not die on the cross for just AMERICANS
 2. Jesus died for all kinds of people!
 - d. I have traveled to a lot of different countries, and I find Christians wherever I go
 1. in Beius, Romania
 2. Prague, Czech Republic
 3. Lima, Peru
 4. Berlin, Germany

- e. don't forget "the eventual scene in heaven"
Revelation 5:8-9 – "And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, **and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.**"

2. His love is **long**.

- a. the suggestion of length probably refers to the "time" of Christ's love, i.e. HOW LONG WILL JESUS CHRIST LOVE US?
- b. let me get a little "deep" here – look at **Ephesians 1:4-5** – "**For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in His sight. **In love** He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will."
 - 1. **THESE VERSES IN EPHESIANS 1 TEACH US THAT JESUS CHRIST LOVED US BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD!**
 - 2. **IN OTHER WORDS, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A TIME THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS NOT LOVED US**
 - a. BEFORE we were even born, He loved us
 - b. BEFORE we became a sinner, He loved us
 - c. BEFORE He called us to Himself, He loved us
 - d. AFTER He called us, He loved us
 - 3. Jesus Christ:
 - a. loved us in the past
 - b. loves us in the present
 - c. and will love us in the future
 - 4. What does Paul say in **Romans 8:38-39?** – "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 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.**"
- c. **Charles Spurgeon** – "(Jesus' love) is **so long** that your old age cannot wear it out, **so long** your continual tribulation cannot exhaust it, and **so long** your successive temptations shall not drain it dry."

3. His love is **high**.

- a. look at **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."
 - 1. this verse gives us a glimpse of what Paul may mean here
 - 2. the sense here is that the love of Jesus Christ for His children extends "all the way up" to heaven, to eternity itself
- b. as one has asked, "Will Jesus Christ forget us, now that He is seated on His throne?"
 - 1. God's Word clearly says that Christ's love will take us "all the way to heaven"

2. and, there is no place “higher” than heaven itself
4. His love is **deep**.
 - a. How “deep” is Christ’s love?
 - b. Christ’s love is “so deep” that He “**came down**” to this earth from an eternal heaven of glory
 - c. that He “came down”:
 1. to be born in a stable
 2. to live on this earth for 30 years
 3. to allow Himself to be beaten and crucified
 4. and to be placed in a tomb for dead
 - d. He “came down” to this earth and loved the likes of:
 1. a Pharisee named Nicodemus
 2. a tax collector named Zaccheus
 3. an arrogant fisherman named Peter
 4. a sinner like you and me

Conclusion:

1. Our purpose here at Christ Covenant is to help you **to build an ever-deepening love relationship with Jesus Christ**.
 - a. the **first step** to build this relationship is to **invite Him into your “inner man”**
 - b. the **second step** is to spend time with Him through His Word, so that He may “**dwel**l” with you
 - c. the **third step** to read all of the Scriptures that tell us of Jesus’ great love for us
2. but, if you want yet another “physical” illustration of how much Jesus Christ loves you, simply focus on the “dimensions” of the cross.
 - a. wide
 - b. long
 - c. high
 - d. deep

1. Paul prays that a Christian be “strengthened in your inner being.” What does this teach us about “where” God changes the believer spiritually?
2. What does Paul mean by the word “dwell” in verse 17? How does a person “dwell” with Jesus? Does Jesus “dwell” in every believer’s life? (If He does, why does Paul pray for this “dwelling” for the Ephesians?)
3. Paul talks about the “dimensions” of Christ’s love for His children. What do the various words, - wide, long, high and deep suggest? (see sermon notes for descriptions)
4. Why do you think that Paul prayed for the Ephesian church to understand better the love of Jesus for them? Does this prayer “assume” that many Christians don’t truly understand how much Jesus loves them? If so, how does focusing on the love of Christ cause us to love Him more?