

## Small Group Questions

Ephesians 3:14-21

SERMON TITLE: DEEP ROOTS

Sermon Series: The Believe Series—MindShaping #11

Week of November 26th, 2017

### THEME/ CONCEPT

This message summarizes the past 10 weeks by reminding us that our faith is deeply rooted in God's love (Ephesians 3:17). We are greatly encouraged by Paul's references to the scope of God's love. It is wide enough to embrace every aspect of life. It is long enough to endure to the end of time and into eternity. It is high enough to inspire the purest devotion, faith and hope. It is deep enough to sustain us without any fear of running out or getting routine.

### APPLICATION

We thrive when we not only know about God, but know God in ever-growing, ever-deepening ways.

### CHARGE

Know about God and, most importantly, know God.

### Opening Question

Q: What does it mean to be "deeply rooted?"

### Scripture References: Ephesians 3:14-21

**14** For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. 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. **20** Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

### Understanding the Scripture

1. Verse 14-15: How does Paul describe his physical posture in approaching the Father in prayer? When verse 15 says "...from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.", what does this reveal about the nature of God?
2. Verse 16: What is Paul's prayer for the Spirit to do in the "...inner being[s]..." of the Ephesian church?

3. Verse 17: How is Christ able to dwell in the hearts of the Ephesians? What does Paul identify as that which keeps them rooted and established?
4. Verse 18-19: What does he want them to have/grasp/know? Does he identify any limitations to this love? Why (or why not)?
5. Verse 20: How does Paul address the Father as he finishes this prayer for the Ephesian church? What does he remind us about the power within us?
6. Verse 21: To *Whom* is all the glory owed? For how long?

### **Applying the Scripture**

Small groups are a primary way of *building a community fully alive in Christ*. A small group facilitator can use questions like the following, adapted to the context of the particular small group, to help the group move beyond understanding the passage to allowing *Jesus Christ to fully change our lives* by the passage.

1. Paul's prayer for the church here reminds us that we are not walking alone. We are rooted in the love of God, and we grow together, in community. How does your understanding of faith change when you contemplate what it means to be "rooted and established in love?"
2. These words are written with great pathos. Paul is not holding back on adjectives—the urgency of his message comes through, as if he is addressing his beloved Ephesians with tears in his eyes, reminding them that God's love *will* strengthen them. Describe a time when you felt powerless, and then someone came alongside you and offered you help. How did this make you feel strengthened? Can you see how God worked through that situation to remind you of his power?
3. We learn that the Father is able to strengthen the church "...out of his glorious riches with power through his Spirit in [our] inner being..." We can all understand the concept of wealth and riches, yet here we are reminded that God's riches, bestowed upon his children in the form of power through the Holy Spirit, are for a specific purpose. One understanding of this example is that God's riches are to be multiplied, therefore, the blessings he bestows upon his children are meant to be shared. As we enter the holiday season, how can you find ways to share the blessing of prayer? Possessions? Presence?
4. These words are addressed to the church in Ephesus in plural tense. The "you" and "your" are collective— *you* is the church as a whole, and *your* is also a collective possessive, in this instance. Living in a culture that is so often about "me, myself, and I," how can adopting a collective mindset about our identity and belonging continue to transform our minds and hearts?
5. Is it enough to simply know *about* God? How can we continue to nourish our roots so that we grow deeper/wider/stronger?

## **Missional Strategy: Invite, Connect, Grow and Serve**

Use questions like the following, adapted to the context of your particular small group, to work toward the milestone for the year.

**Milestone:** By this time next year each of us will have taken at least one step to become more like Jesus in our upward connection (connect), inner strength (grow) and outward focus (serve)

- a. Connect: How can we tap into the power of God's riches that we are promised?
- b. Grow: How do you maintain accountability in your striving for holiness and your attempts to resist temptation? How can you continue to take action steps in this area?
- c. Outward focus: The holiday season is often so very jam-packed with activities that we might overlook the orphans and widows, or the lonely neighbor or foreigner. Take a moment right now to pray for the Holy Spirit to bring just one name to mind. What is a concrete way you can serve them? It does not have to be much— a simple chat, a Christmas card, an anonymous gift—be excited about finding a way to bless this person.

### **Closing Prayer**

If your small group prays together, some of the following concepts might be helpful to invite the Holy Spirit to help each member of the group grow in areas that may have come up during the group's discussion.

#### **Pray....**

- to honor God with the reverence he deserves
- to look for ways to share the riches he has bestowed
- for strength as we enter the Advent season and the highs and lows of holidays
- that we would grow deep roots and cling to our identity as beloved children of God
- for comfort as we navigate the tension of celebrating while mourning those we are missing