



Summer Sermon Reflections

A Love that Surpasses Knowledge

In the power of the Holy Spirit we “grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.” Faith is always a gift of the Spirit. Without the third person of the Trinity, we’d wander throughout life never knowing or understanding the *Love of Christ*.

Ephesians 3:14-21 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

For Personal Study

Something brought each of us here to worship today. Some reasons are obvious: *I have many wonderful friends at St. John and I enjoy being with them; the power of the music and worship; the fine sermons and sermon notes; my parents made me come to worship. Yet Paul's letter to the Ephesians helps us really understand what brings us to worship, what brings us to celebrate Jesus Christ's love in our lives, what allows the power of the love of God through Jesus Christ to guide us, care for us and encourage us.*

In Christ we are shown the truth: God loves us. Through the Holy Spirit, that love of God strengthens us, feeds us, and defines us. Paul is showing the greatness of God through the love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says in Eph. 3:16 that he prays that we may be strengthened ‘with power through his Spirit’. The Holy Spirit is always with us, what can you do to always be available to the Holy Spirit's power?

Is life getting in the way of the power of the Holy Spirit for you? How are

concerns about what people think of you and how school or work are going getting in the way of letting Christ dwell in your heart? More importantly, what happens when you try to compartmentalize your life so that Jesus is in some parts of your life, but not all?

Think about the daily challenges in your life. How would viewing them through Christ's love for you make them bearable? What will your approach be to life's challenges as you let the Holy Spirit fill you with the power of Christ's love? In what ways will grasping how wide and long and high and deep Christ's love increase the hope in your day-to-day life?

The prayer Paul prays in today's lesson is so beautiful and filled with love. Christians have learned that the realization of Paul's prayer for us requires the Holy Spirit to guide us. Our worship, prayer and seeking the Lord feed us with the power to live in His love. What brought you to worship this morning? How would looking at worship and prayer as part of a spiritual feeding process give this morning (and each day) more meaning?

Readings & Questions

for Individuals or Groups

Monday, July 31

Ephesians 3: 16. In what ways can you feel the power of God's love strengthening you?

Tuesday, August 1

Acts 4:31. Sometimes the walls of the sanctuary shake as we celebrate with our music. How can your walls shake daily and keep you filled with the Holy Spirit?

Wednesday, August 2

Philippians 4: 12-13 Paul speaks of the power of God through the Love of Jesus Christ. How can this power help you face all of your challenges? How will your life's worries become a thing of the past because of His love?

Thursday, August 3

Ephesians 3: 19. In a world where ‘power’ is measured in how many people are protesting, how much is spent to arm a nation and other ‘big’ ways, how is the ‘power’ of God's love in your heart giving you the strength to meet your challenges and live in Christ's love?

Friday, August 4

Ephesians 3: 14-21. Paul prays for our souls and hearts to be filled with the power of Christ's love. In what ways does the capturing of our hearts and souls by the Holy Spirit make Christians empowered to be agents of change in our society? How are you called?