

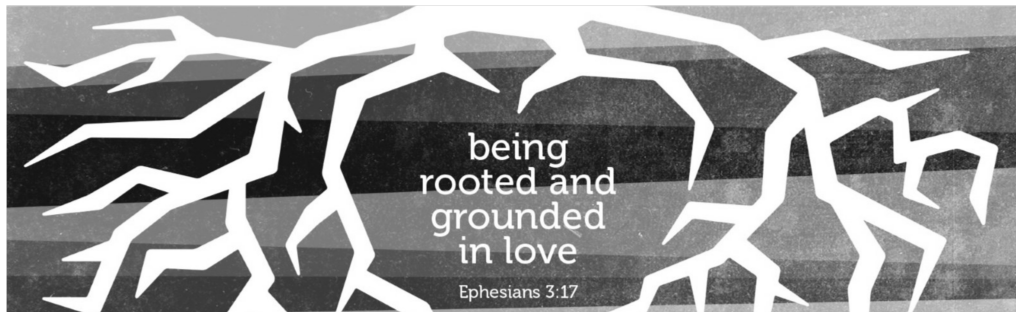
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EPHESIANS

3:14-21

Named, Rooted, an Immeasurable God



It was wonderful to gather together as church on 22nd March, even though we had to meet online rather than in our buildings. About 45 of us appeared on screen to celebrate Mothering Sunday, and to think together about some things that Paul says to us about God in the bible which can really help us at this difficult time. If you have access to the internet, I have put a video of this on Facebook and Youtube, which you can find by searching for “Venta group of churches.” It was filmed in Stoke church shortly before we were asked to lock the building.

I sent people looking for things in their houses, starting with something with their name on it. For most of us our name says something about the family we belong to. Mothering Sunday is a day to celebrate the human family big or small, but we also thought about what it means to be part of God’s big family, who all have the name of Jesus in common. We are adopted into it, born again into it, through faith in Jesus, and it is bigger than any place or event: it is about what the Holy Spirit has done in our hearts.

In terms of God’s family, we belong together because we share the same Father. In Ephesians 3 Paul connects the idea of having God as our Father with prayer. At this time we have to pray, and we *can* pray. God is an amazing Father who loves to hear us pray about anything – and he really does hear.

Then we went looking for plants in our house. Most of us could find one of these. Paul talks about us being rooted and established in love. Lots of you know from your own experience or have seen elsewhere what it is like when a family root each other in love. It is a place where we thrive. A plant needs roots that go down deep to draw in all the good stuff that it needs, and keep it firm and secure. That’s what we can do with God. We can put our roots deep down in him, we can draw on all the goodness he has to offer us, we can trust that he will hold us firm in the storm we find ourselves in. Or for a very different image, picture the cross, firm in the ground, holding Jesus there, its four beams up and down and left and right showing us a love that is wide and long and high and deep. Colossians, which is a kind of parallel to Ephesians in some places, talks about us being rooted *in Christ*. It is something very real and concrete and firm.

Last, we found a measuring device of some kind – a ruler, a tape, a jug, and so on. We remembered Paul’s encouragement to us that God can do *immeasurably more* than all we ask or imagine. We measure and count so many things all the time. You will have heard lots of numbers about coronavirus. Some of them are helpful to us. Others could make us a bit scared. Paul says that there is something we cannot measure – and that is what God can do. No person, however much they might like to, can do the immeasurable amount that God can. I can understand if, at the moment, you feel like God can only do a very little, if at all. Maybe that’s partly because you have prayed for things in the past, really prayed, prayed more for things that didn’t seem possible, and they have been disappointed, and it hurt.

The good news for you is that he can do immeasurably more. Some of you, on the other hand, will be thinking, God can do the most amazing things! The good news for you, is he can do even more. He can do more than any of us can imagine!

And with this in mind, we keep on praying. Keep praying with us through this coronavirus crisis. Join us online. Print out prayer materials from our website. Print out another copy and drop it into someone with no internet. Let’s not stop praying.

Why not do what some people in our churches do, and pray the words of Ephesians 3:14-21 for yourself or someone you know? I could pray for Cathryn, my wife, for example:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen Cathryn with power through his Spirit in her inner being, so that Christ may dwell in her heart through faith. And I pray that she, being rooted and established in love, 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, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that she may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.