

Continuing in the Word, "Rooted and Grounded in Love"
Ephesians 3:17b-19

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Paul prays for Christians to be rooted and grounded in love. For this to occur we must be rooted and grounded in Christ, for He is love, and He is love revealed to us. We can only be rooted and grounded in Christ as we come to Him as sinners in need of salvation, aware of our sin and the great offense it is to God. The knowledge of our own depravity is essential. Who will seek a savior if they do not believe they need salvation? Apart from the working of God through His Spirit no one would come to this understanding, but when we do by His grace we find love rooted and grounded in us as we are forgiven of sin and given new life in Christ. Our understanding of our need and how Christ has met that need opens up the floodgates of love.

To see this clearly, compare two people from Jesus' day. Simon is a Pharisee. He knows the law of God and the traditions of his people and he faithfully keeps these things. As he evaluates his life he sees that he is righteous due to his meticulous keeping of the law. He does not see the sin in his heart and his great need of salvation. He meets Jesus one day and has Him over to his house for a meal. He is curious about this character that has come on the scene of Jewish life, but he doesn't realize that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God. Could it be he didn't see the Savior for who He was because he didn't see his need for salvation?

The second person we need to consider is a commoner, a woman who lives in the city whom Simon the Pharisee considers a sinner, and indeed she is, and she knows it. She comes to Jesus who is at Simon's house and humbly and adoringly anoints Jesus' feet with fragrant oil that mixes with her tears as she weeps at His feet. She is aware of her sin and is therefore aware of her need of the Savior, and she loves Him and clings to His feet.

Simon is quite incensed by this display, but Jesus is not. In fact He observes that she loves much because she is forgiven of much. Jesus then goes on to show that Simon had not demonstrated any love toward Him. In fact, Simon had not even shown Jesus the slightest bit of respect. Why? Simon did not love Him because Simon didn't see his need of Him.

This is what Jesus says in Luke 7:47,48: *"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."* This does not mean that there are some who only need a little bit of forgiveness. We all have sinned enough to deserve eternity in hell. Jesus offers forgiveness. He can forgive each one of us just as He did this sinful woman. And we can love Him much as we see the great salvation bought for us and brought to us by Him. But if we do not see our need, as was the case with Simon the Pharisee, we will find something other than love rooted and grounded in us. Instead of love we will find pride; pride that will keep

us from seeing and admitting our need of forgiveness; pride that will keep us from a humble and adoring love of Jesus.

Have you been forgiven of much? Have you seen your need to be forgiven of much? If so, you will find a capacity to love Jesus that is deep and ever deepening that will overflow into love for those around you.

Pastor Jim