

June 12/22 - Ephesians 3:14-21 “Worship: Living into the life of the Trinity”

In the sermon Tim described the Jewish temple. Everywhere you looked signs and symbols cried out – no access, no entry, trespassers will be prosecuted. Divisions were cemented and given spiritual significance, divisions between priest / commoner, Jew / Gentile, man / woman. In the first three chapters of Ephesians Paul, with this picture in the background has been reveling in what Jesus has done. For in Jesus we have access to the living God. In Jesus all the dividing walls are torn down so that all equally have access to the living God. Not only do we have access, but we are the temple of the living God. In light of this reality Paul drops to his knees in prayer...

Read Ephesians 3:14-21; John 17:1-5, 22-26

1. Paul is praying that we would experience what is true of us in Jesus. His prayer is trinitarian at its heart. How do these verses and the John 17 passage help us to understand the nature and work of the trinity?
2. (vs. 16-17) Paul prays that Christ would dwell in our hearts, that we would know the love of God in our inner being. For Paul heart and inner being are synonymous. We often think of heart as the seed of our emotions, but for Paul heart is the very center of our personality, a combination of feelings, thoughts, and will. What would it look like to know the love of God in our hearts?
3. This is the turning point of the letter to the Ephesians, where Paul turns from theology to praxis. He is praying in some ways that we would know the love of God to the deepest recesses of our being, for it will be that love that will form us to live in keeping with the new creation that Jesus is bringing. He uses two images to describe this – rooted and grounded. One image is agricultural, the other is architectural. What does each image communicate to us about how God’s love changes and shapes us?
4. (vs. 18) When Paul uses the word grasp or comprehend his love, he is using a word that means wrestle. Paul is saying the Spirit empowers us to wrestle down God’s love into the deep currents and movements of our hearts. In the sermon Tim spoke of how love could be wrestled down into guilt, bitterness and anger, anxiety and despair. Reflect together on these and other movements of your hearts that could be shaped by wrestling God’s love down into those places.
5. Paul invites us to grasp God’s love “with all the saints” - that is together as community. What are some of the ways community helps us to understand the love of God more and more?
6. One of the ways we come to understand God’s love is by hearing how others have come to understand it better. So this is a time, if you are comfortable, to share. How have you come to taste and experience more and more of God’s love for you?