

# Holy Trinity Church Lent 2020 Expect More

## SMALL GROUP NOTES Week 2 – ‘Immeasurably More’

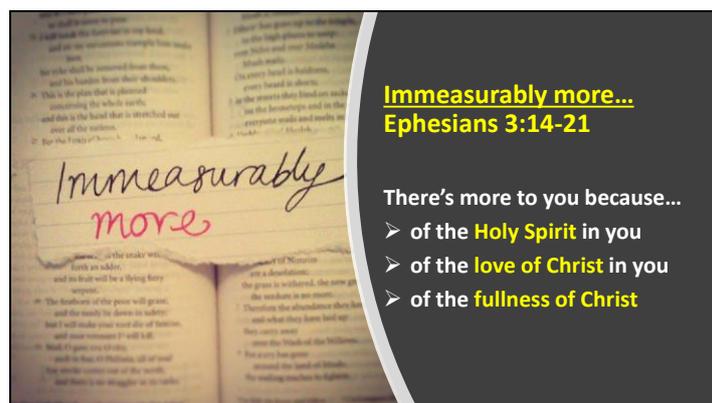
### Ice breaker (5 minutes)

- How do we measure the value of something in our modern world? (e.g. in workplaces, schools, economy, politics, health care etc.)
- Often the use of statistics and numerical data is used to qualify and validate the significance of the facts in front of us. To what extent is this true for aspects of the Christian faith? To what extent can we quantify the impact of HT in numbers?
- Some may use the expression of ‘giving 110%’. When did 100% no longer become acceptable? Why is there sometimes a desire in society to see the extra 10%?



### Recap (2 minutes)

Paul doesn't focus on data or numbers to quantify the significance and value of what we have in the Christian faith. This passage is a helpful reminder of the core components that Paul believes that we should keep in our spiritual stockpile.



## Context

### Read - Ephesians 3:14-21

- Paul is writing to a group of Christians, a church, that he knows is losing heart and/or about to face difficult times.
- Paul prayed that believers in Jesus Christ would be spiritually strengthened and that they would recognize how valuable God's love is. He wants them to know it is enough.
- Paul wanted each Christian to maximize their spiritual riches that they have in Christ.
- He wanted their inner being to be strong.
- Whilst their own dilemma didn't involve outbreaks of a virus, Paul offers them and us a few handy items for our spiritual stockpile box.
- There were three strands to the sermon on Sunday, but this is not exhaustive:
  - There's more to the Holy Spirit in you
  - There's more to the love of Christ in you
  - There's more to the fullness of Christ in you

## Idea

- ✓ The group could branch into three smaller groups and each take **one of the strands** above for 5-10 minutes before then sharing reflections with the wider group.
- ✓ Or, you may wish to take each strand or just one of the areas of focus together as a group

## Area of Focus 1: Holy Spirit



There's more to you because of God's Holy Spirit in you....

### Re-read - Ephesians 3:14-16 (NIV)

*14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family 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.*

### Discuss

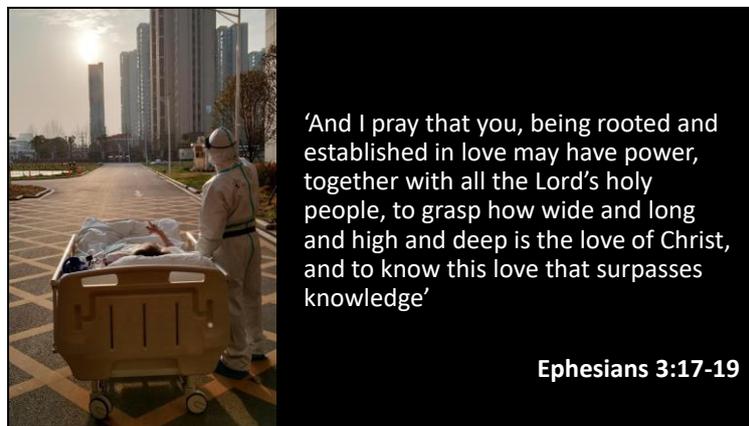
- Paul opens by discussing 'kneeling before the father'. Why do we think he uses this imagery with the Ephesians? Why does he feel the need to add this?
- Paul could simply give thanks for the Holy Spirit; but instead he prays that Christians would be strengthened through the power of the spirit. What does this mean in practice?

- To what extent do you pray for other members of HT... that they would be 'strengthened' by the Holy Spirit?
- Describe or reflect on a time that you have felt strengthened by God's Holy Spirit or by the work of the spirit in other members of the church. What did this look like? How did it feel? To what extent did it enable you to be stronger or optimistic in the face of difficult setback?
- You may find yourself washing your hands a little more often than usual at the moment. What does it take for you to commit to praying for 20-seconds for another member of the church, that they might be strengthened.
- Activity – pray for each member of the group for 20-seconds (you could simulate washing hands too!). Is this a habit you could practice for a week as a group?

### Key takeaways

- ✓ Paul prayed that Christians be strengthened through the power of the Holy Spirit within them.
- ✓ He didn't pray that they got enough power to make it through each day. He prayed "that their strength come out of God's glorious riches". That's more than just surviving.

## Area of focus 2: the love of Christ in you



'And I pray that you, 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'

**Ephesians 3:17-19**

### Re-read: Ephesians 3:17-19a (NIV)

*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.*

**Reflection:** Examine the picture together.

Notes: A picture of a doctor standing beside the bed of an 87-year-old, seriously ill patient who had been wheeled out to enjoy the waning light of the day has become popular on social media. The idea of pausing to enjoy the sunset popped into Liu's mind, and the patient gave a quick nod of approval. The elderly man had been stuck in the isolation ward for nearly a month, which made him a bit depressed. I thought the rays of the sun might cheer him up," said his doctor, Liu Kai. "The idea lit up my imagination when I saw the sunlight. Since coming to Wuhan, we have been working shifts around the clock. I also wanted to enjoy it awhile," he said. "Even though we only spent five minutes outside, the patient's mood improved and he soon fell asleep after returning."

## Discuss

- Think about or share a time when you have felt love or compassion for others based on the love of Christ in you. What happened? How did you respond?
- To what extent would you say that the love of Christ is rooted or established in you? When do you find this tested or difficult? (Be honest but sensitive to the group)
- Paul seems to suggest that this love should be rooted. What does this mean on a daily basis as members of HT? How do we ensure that we are using it?
- Paul goes on to state that God can do immeasurably more through us. What sometimes gets in the way of us remembering this or fully committing to this idea?
- **Activity:** consider praying as a group of a situation / person where you know it needs immeasurably more love from you. God can take the amount of love that we bring to this situation and maximise it further.

## Key takeaways

- ✓ It's one thing to know the love of Christ, but we are called to practically use it too.
- ✓ As a child of God, His love should be rooted and established in you.
- ✓ Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

## Area of focus 3: the fullness of Christ in you



**Re-read:** You are more because of the fullness of Christ in you

*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.*

## Discuss

- **Activity:** re-read the whole of the passage. What are some of the main attributes of God that Paul lists as part of his stockpile beliefs in God? Even in verses 20-21 we get some specific facts about God given – what are these?
- Describe or consider a time when you have wanted to rely on God to act in a situation but you have found it difficult to fully rely on him because of the complexity or difficulty of the issue. How did you find praying about this issue?

- **If you were describing to a new Christian the general rules of good prayer and how to go about praying. What would you say? How would you introduce them to prayer?**

#### **Note**

- While there are no limits to God's power, He will say NO when... we lack faith (Matthew 21:21-22), ask with selfish motives (James 4:3) or want something that is not in accordance to His will (1 John 5:14).
- Yet, requests made with faith and of a servant's, obedient heart can be given boldly (Hebrews 4:16) and even when we don't know the words to say to our holy, sovereign God the Holy Spirit through wordless groans will make our petitions (Romans 8:26-27) sound far better than the voice of any angel!

#### **Discuss**

- **What does it take to pray with a view of God being able to do immeasurably more?**
- **Activity: consider praying as a group of a situation / person where you know it needs immeasurably more from God. Commit as a group to praying for this for the next couple of weeks or more.**
- **Think of the Amen that Paul adds to his letter. Replace the words of the passage with HT and pray it as a group.**
- **Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine may all God's people say, "Yes indeed, Lord (Amen)."**