

## A LOVE I CANNOT FATHOM

Text: Eph 3:18

18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Introduction: I want to talk with you this morning about this verse of scripture. It speaks volumes with very few words. It leaves you thinking and pondering and thanking.

Here is a short story that speaks of an incredible depth of this love of God's

567. Loving Our Enemies

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt 5:44).

A slave in the West Indies, called Caesar by his master, had gained his freedom and also became a Christian. One day his lord took him to the slave market in search for some new slaves. After securing all he wanted the owner was surprised to hear Caesar beg for the purchase of yet one more, an old tired Negro. "Why, Caesar, should I buy him? Of what use can he possibly be?"

"Please, sir," replied Caesar, "you must buy him for me." So the purchase was made and the old man returned to the plantation. Soon after he took sick, very sick, and Caesar cared for him as though he were his father. He washed him, waited on him, nursed him in every spare moment he found. Of course the people all noticed this, and tried to guess why Caesar was so devoted to the old man. Finally his master asked, "What connection do you have with that old man? Is he perhaps your father?"

Caesar simply smiled and answered, "No, master, he is not my father."

"Well, is he some old heathen friend or relative?"

"No, master, he is no relative of mine."

"He must be your friend then."

"No, master, he is not my friend."

"But who in the world is he?" asked the master impatiently.

Caesar's eyes moistened as he said, "He is my enemy.

While yet a child he tore me from my parents and sold me as a slave. But I must love my enemy, master, I must!"

[from Heartwarming Bible Illustrations]

## I. Hemmed In.

### A. God knows me.

Ps 139:1 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.

1. Search is defined as to examine or explore; to examine closely and clearly.
2. God's search of us is thorough.

2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

### 3. David adds.

5 You hem me in — behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

4. Peterson in the Message remarks.

Ps 139:5 I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too — your reassuring presence, coming and going.

6 This is too much, too wonderful — I can't take it all in!  
[from THE MESSAGE]

B. Satan understood this truth about God.

Job 1:9b Satan replied.

10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?

C. A few more verses that speak about God hemming us in.

Gen 15:1 "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield,

Deut 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Ps 5:12 For surely, O LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

Ps 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

D. How wide is God's love? Wide enough to wrap His arms around you at all times.

## II. An Immeasurable Love.

A. But what can the apostle mean by the breadth, length, depth, and height, of the love of God?

1. "It takes in the eternity of God. GOD is LOVE; and in that, an infinity of breadth, length, depth, and height, is included; or rather all breadth, length, depth, and height, are lost in this immensity.

2. It comprehends all that is above, all that is below, all that is past, and all that is to come.
  3. In reference to human beings, the love of God, in its BREADTH, is a girdle that encompasses the globe; its LENGTH reaches from the eternal purpose of the mission of Christ, to the eternity of blessedness which is to be spent in his ineffable glories; its DEPTH reaches to the lowest fallen of the sons of Adam, and to the deepest depravity of the human heart; and its HEIGHT to the infinite dignities of the throne of Christ. [from Adam Clarke's Commentary]
- B. The "breadth" implies Christ's worldwide love, embracing all men; the "length," its extension through all ages (Eph 3:21); the "depth," its profound wisdom, which no creature can fathom (Rom 11:33); the "height," its being beyond the reach of any foe to deprive us of it (Eph 4:8)"
- C. By enumerating these dimensions, the apostle designs to signify the exceeding greatness of the love of Christ.
1. The unsearchable riches of his love, which is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea, Job 11:8-9.

Job 11:7 "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?"

8 They are higher than the heavens — what can you do?  
They are deeper than the depths of the grave-what can you know?

9 Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.

2. These dimensions reflect the building of God's house that can contain all of us.

3. Comments from the Message Bible.

Eph 3:16 I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit — not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength —

17 that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love,

18 you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!

Conclusion: Paul wants you and I to grasp, fathom the fullness of God's love. When His love seems to have reached its limits, you will discover it reaches even further. When the circumstances of your life make you feel that you have gone beyond life's limits, you will find there is more love now for you and yours to receive than ever before.

The next time someone tells you, "God could never love me!" Kindly tell them, "You don't know Him and you certainly don't know His love."

But the main reason that Paul is led by the Holy Spirit to stress that we fathom, grasp this immeasurable love is found in the words of Christ Himself.

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.  
35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."