

BE ROOTED, SO YOU DON'T GET ROBBED

Text: Ephesians 3:14-19

This is the second of two prayers that Paul writes that he is praying for the Ephesians. He prays for them to be strengthened spiritually and that they would have ongoing fellowship with Christ internally. Then his prayer turns to the love of God and of Christ. That they would be rooted and grounded in it. That they would come to the comprehension of it and know it (experience it). That this relationship with Jesus Christ, rooted in love, and experiencing his love and knowing his love...would fill them with all the fullness of God. When people are filled with something, that will be the natural out-pouring of their actions. **1 John 4:7-8** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

The word rooted means to be anchored down into something. Roots of plants and trees have two functions, they anchor them into the soil of the earth so that they are stationary and the roots absorb what is needed from the soil so that they can thrive in growth.

Every saint's relationship with Jesus Christ should be anchored in the reality that He(Christ) loves them and that the Father loves them because they are in Christ. Two major truths concerning God's love is that it is unconditional and it's everlasting - **1 John 4:9-10** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. God loved you before you ever thought about loving Him. God loved you before you were ever born. The cross of Jesus Christ is the proof of that - **Romans 5:6-8** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. *Not only did Christ die and resurrect to save you, but He searched for you and called you to Himself.*

God saved us to have a loving relationship with us. When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, God accepted you into His family and you don't have to earn God's acceptance or His love...it has been given to you freely by His grace! Many people struggle with this because they feel unworthy so they turn their relationship into performance. They don't believe God accepts them or loves them unless they do things to be accepted. Even though there is love around a person, doesn't mean they receive it. People with low self esteem or many insecurities don't feel worthy of love so no matter how much is around them, they don't receive it. We're not working for acceptance, we're working from acceptance! **Ephesians 1:6-7** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Experiencing and knowing God's love through Jesus Christ is transformational. This is what changes people. When we enter into a relationship with another person, we're very careful about what we show them or share with them about ourselves. Why? Because we know that human love is conditional and we don't want them to see the things about us that make us (in our minds unlovable). But God isn't that way at all. He already knows all your imperfections, faults, sins, and bad habits and still loves you more than you can comprehend. So because God loves us like that, we don't have to "front" with him. We can be totally honest and open with Him because His love never changes. Only when you are completely honest with and transparent with God can He go to work on conforming you into the image of Jesus Christ - **Psalm 51:6** Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. *The day that Jesus Christ called Simon Peter to follow him and become a fisher of men, he already knew the mistakes he would make and about his three denials. After his failure, Jesus restored him through love.*

Our obedience to God is to be motivated by love - John 14:23-24 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. *Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection. She was the first person that he revealed himself to on that day. She was a great worshiper and follower because the Lord had cast seven devils out of her and her worship and service was in appreciation to Him for setting her free!*

God's correction of us is done out of his love for us - Hebrews 12:5-6 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. **Revelation 3:19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

When our relationship is rooted in love, and we grow in love, and we're filled with the love of God, then we can love one another as He has loved us - John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Read Colossians 2:6-23 The Colossian church had problems because of false teachers and Jewish legalizers who derailed their relationship with Jesus Christ through Greek philosophy and Jewish legalism. Paul said to beware (take heed) lest any man spoil you (rob you) through philosophy, traditions of men, rituals and religion. Everything we need is in the Lord Jesus Christ so be rooted and grounded in him. Whatever you are rooted in, you will become. It's easy to think you're rooted in love with Christ but actually be rooted in something else.

- **Religion** – All religion is works. The Bible speaks well of religion in the book of **James 1:27** Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world. This is good for saved people to do in love as a response to God's love. What is wrong is for our relationship with Christ to fall into a "to do" checklist and by thinking that

checklist is what makes us acceptable or loved by God. Justification is by faith alone by grace alone in Christ alone. Our devotional time, church time, prayer time can all turn into a rut when it is not relational to the person of Jesus Christ. People who are rooted in religion get angry at people who receive grace. The elder brother of the prodigal was very angry with his father for forgiving and restoring his younger brother. **Luke 15:29-31** *And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. *Cain was angry with Abel for God accepting him and his offering.**

- **Rules** – Paul said let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days. This was the result of Jews teaching Gentiles that they can't be saved or right with God unless they kept the Old Testament ritual laws. But again we're right with God and in the sight of God because Jesus Christ completely satisfied God with the sacrifice of himself and nailed everything that was against us to His cross. We don't have that problem today, but what we do have is preachers and teachers teaching that people are justified by rules that they keep that are traditions of men and not the word of God. I've heard it all – You're not right with God if you mow your yard on Sunday, you're not right with God if you let your daughter be a cheerleader, you're not right with God if you wear open-toed shoes (obviously for women), you're not right with God if you wear shorts. I have recently seen a video of a man condemning other men for having beards saying it was compromise and worldly. **ALL OF THIS IS FOOLISHNESS!** We have the New Testament epistles that teach us how to live acceptably for God, and we have the Holy Spirit to teach us the things that are not recorded in scripture. Some people's relationship with Christ is all about the rules that they keep. As long as they keep their list of rules everything is okay, whether they have a prayer life or not...or spend time in the word of God or not..or whether they obey the voice of Christ or not. Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer through the word of God. People who are rooted in rules are self righteous and judgmental. The rules they observe makes them proud of themselves and judge everyone else who doesn't keep them. **Matthew 15:8-9** *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

When people are rooted in religion or rules it robs them of their freedom in Christ and the joy of the Lord. Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. *Religion and rules rob you of enjoying the grace and love of God because you are constantly looking at yourself to be justified instead of looking to Jesus Christ.*