

**“Rooted and Grounded in Love”– Ephesians 3:14-21 – Pastor Jeff Childs**

The writer of this letter to the Ephesians affirms that we have strong roots in love. Roots have a couple basic functions. One is security for the plant - to grab hold of the ground. The other is to draw water and nourishment up into the plant. In many plants there is about as much below the ground as there is above the ground. If the roots are not deep enough when dry weather persists, the plant withers and dies. We all notice this in times of drought. The grass in the yard may turn brown and stop growing but not certain weeds with the long tap root. They are still able to draw nourishment and water from deep in the ground. Jesus told a famous parable about this. He told of a farmer sowing seeds among different types of soil. In some soil the seeds cannot grow deep roots and Jesus explains that this is like some of us who are shallower in our faith and when difficult times come our faith dries up. To prevent that, the writer here encourages the people of the early church to be strongly rooted in Christ's love.

Theologian Paul Tillich wrote of God as “the Ground of Our Being.” Where are you grounded? Jesus told a parable of a house built on the rock. *“Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It didn't fall because it was firmly set on bedrock. But everybody who hears these words of mine and doesn't put them into practice will be like a fool who built a house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It fell and was completely destroyed.”* (Matthew 7:24-27) The church is built on a rock. Jesus named his first disciple Rocky – well actually it was Peter (before that he had been called Simon.) But Jesus called him Peter – Petros in Greek the root of the English word “petrified.” Peter is Rock solid. As Christians we are to be as well. Is your faith rock solid?

The writer goes on to write in verse 19 that we, *know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* I believe the fullness of God is different than the fullness of humans. For many today it seems that the issue is - is your cup half full or half empty? There is an affirmation in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. In the old KJV it said, *my cup runneth over.* Today in the NRSV it reads, *my cup overflows!* Is that your experience of the love of Christ? First, let me clear something up. We do sometimes have the sensation that things overflow and that is a mess! Or we may feel we have too much on our plate and that is overwhelming or hectic. But in this favorite psalm, the cup running over is a good thing! This is not a scarcity mentality of the cup being half full or running on empty. It is not a full cup mentality either, that says I have just what I need. It is a bounteous/generous mentality that says God has given me more than enough, so how can I share this bounteous blessing with others? Do you ever feel that in Christ your cup is overflowing? I am reminded of one of my favorite songs of the 60's. Ed Ames sang it all the way to the top of the charts in 1967 “My Cup Runneth Over with Love.” True it was a romantic love song, but the theology is right for today. Are you filled to overflowing with the love of God? In another letter, Paul wrote to the church in Rome: *Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from*

*God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.* (Romans 8:35, 38-39) Paul was convinced of that fact - are you? Paul's cup runneth over so much he felt the need to runneth all over the areas of modern Turkey and Greece sharing the Good News and the love of Jesus Christ with everyone.

Another way of looking at the fullness in our lives is what you might say at a full-service gas station, or do you go to the half-full-service gas stations? If you can find one anymore, go to one of the full-service ones, and there someone will come to your car window and you might say, "*Fill 'er up.*" Do you come on Sunday like going to that gas station to get spiritually filled up for the rest of the week? "*Pastor, it is going to be a long week, Fill 'er up!*" Let me suggest something to you. How many of you are familiar with the notion that we are to drink 8 glasses of water a day? Who thinks it will work to drink all 56 glasses for the week on Sunday like you are a camel or something? I'd suggest you need to fill up spiritually every day with scripture reading and prayer like you need to rehydrate with your daily fill of water. Have you noticed the list of daily devotions and scripture readings I have been selecting each week and including in the bulletin and on the church's Facebook page? You maybe thought they are printed there to help you top off your spiritual tank daily. No, they are there to overflow your tank daily so that you might share the love of Jesus with someone, somehow each day. If your spiritual cup of love runneth over, allow some of it to flow to someone who maybe runneth on empty. Share God's love with someone today. And come back next week for more. If you can, bring someone with you! Alleluia and Amen.

### **The Precious Love of Jesus**

(tune: Blessed Assurance UMH 369)

Jeffrey B. Childs 7/17/2024

Filled with the precious love of Jesus,  
We know that nothing can separate us.  
Whether we're troubled or we're distressed,  
Always by God's grace we are lovingly blessed.

Refrain:

God is the greatest that ever was.

Let us give thanks for all that God does.

God is the greatest that ever was.

Let us give thanks for all that God does.

Rise in the morning, thank God for rest,

And throughout the day, we're spiritually  
blessed.

By God's provision we are all fed.

God provides us with our daily bread.

Refrain:

We know that God's good, and that God's great.

God's presence with us, let us celebrate.

We have been blessed by God's precious love.

Mercy and grace, our cup is full of.

Refrain: