

Rooted and Grounded in Love

by Bill McLeod

Being rooted and grounded in love is essential for a fulfilling life, and it requires faith, prayer, and a deep understanding of God's power and love.

Duration: 37:33

Scripture: Ephesians 2:19-20, Ephesians 2:22, Ephesians 3:14, Ephesians 3:20-21, 1 Peter 1:13, Revelation 21:22

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful story about a man named B. Earl who had a life-changing encounter with God. B. Earl was a preacher who often cried while preaching, but one day he realized that his tears were not enough. He cried out to God and was convicted of his own shortcomings. Through his surrender and seeking of God's love, B. Earl experienced a transformation and went on to lead 150,000 people to Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing and feeling the love of Christ towards everyone and encourages listeners to wait on the Lord and be involved in His work.

Transcript

In 1 Peter chapter 1, I think, verse 13, and then looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. We're going to look at something in Ephesians chapter 3, since you have a Bible with you. The chapter begins with three words, for this cause, and then he digresses for 13 verses and comes back to it again in verse 14, for this cause.

For what cause? It projects you back into chapter 2, where he is reminding Gentile believers that we are no longer strangers and foreigners. We are fellow citizens with the Saints and of the household of God, as in verse 20 or in verse 19. We're built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the buildings fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are builded together for habitation of God through the Spirit.

In Revelation 21 we're told in the city of God, well I'll be there someday, in the city of God there is no temple. The Lamb of God and the God the Father, they are the temple. But here we see that we are being built together as a temple for the habitation of God.

Now I can't quite figure this out. He is the temple, we are the temple. He's a temple for us, we're a temple for him.

For this cause, because we are being built together for a temple, a habitation of God, for this cause Paul says in verse 14, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's stop there for a moment. Do we always have to kneel when we pray? Well Christ said when you stand praying, so it's okay to stand praying, right? David went into the temple of God and sat before the Lord and prayed, so it's okay to pray when you're sitting.

Jehoshaphat prayed when he was driving his chariot, so it's okay to pray when you're driving your car. And I presume that Jonah was horizontal when he prayed in the fish's belly, so it's okay to pray when you're in bed. However, somebody put it this way, no matter what the physical, not talking to the big boy upstairs, you know.

I remember once in the church I pastored years ago, we had some people giving their testimony on a Sunday morning, they were going to be baptized and join the church, and we had asked them just to tell us in simple terms how they found Christ as their Savior. Everything went well until one of the men got up and he walked up to the pulpit and here's exactly what he said, the big boy and I upstairs are just like that. And he walked down to his seat.

Well, the congregation voted no to him, and he got so angry he left the church. He isn't the big boy upstairs, dear people. I'm overwhelmed when I think of the greatness of God.

You know, our local solar system is part of the Milky Way constellation. If you travel at the speed of light, and I'm not sure how fast that is, it's in the millions of miles an hour. I read something, I think it said 36 million miles an hour, but traveling at the speed of light, it'll take you a hundred thousand years to cross the Milky Way.

That's only one of millions of constellations like that, some smaller, some larger. This is the God we're dealing with, and we have to shrink down to a proper size, you know. When we come before God, we can't really be frivolous.

We have to be kneeling in our heart to think that this God died for me in the person of Jesus Christ. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not intuiting their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us, the ministry, the word of reconciliation. How he could do this, I do not know, but God so loved the world, so loved the world.

It's a staggering thought. I can't get my mind around it. I'm just humbly thankful that he included me.

Love found a way to redeem my soul. Love found a way to make me whole. So Paul says, to this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To whom should we pray? God the Father, Christ the Son, or the Holy Spirit? What has been pointed out, of course, is that there's no jealousy that God had, but here's something Jesus said that I think is being overlooked by evangelicals generally. He said, speaking of his resurrection, and in that day you shall ask me nothing. Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Hitherto, which means up until now, you've asked nothing in my name, asking you shall receive that your joy may be full. I don't think it's wrong to pray to Christ, of course. If it is, we have to take a lot of hymns out of our books.

If we can't pray to the Spirit, then we'll have to get rid of other hymns in our books. I don't think there's a problem here, but I do think the emphasis should be on praying to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just a thought.

You don't have to agree with me. That he, or wait, in verse 15, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Now please keep this in mind.

We say when Christ comes back, he will catch up the church to himself. We'll be translated. The Church of God will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

In actual fact, most of the church is already in heaven. And those of us who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. In Zechariah there's a verse that says, the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.

That's Old Testament. And of course we have the same thought in the New Testament. So most of the church will be with Christ when he comes back, and those of us who are left on earth will be caught up to meet them in the air.

And so shall we ever be with the Lord. God doesn't have two families you know. God just has one.

God doesn't have a Jewish family and a Christian family. If you become a Christian you are grafted into the Jewish olive tree. That's what we're told.

God doesn't have two trees. He has one tree. If a Jew becomes a Christian, he's grafted into that tree also, because he was taken out of the tree through unbelief, we're told by Paul.

And so God's family is one family. Old Testament, New Testament believers in Christ are members of that family of God. And what a family to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God someday.

I mean it's going to have to be a big table, right? But then God's behind it so it won't be a problem for God. Wonderful though. All right, that he would grant you.

Someone has said, if God doesn't do it it'll never get done, that he would grant you. And sometimes we try to help God out. We want something to be done that really only God can do.

And if God doesn't do it, then we try and get some people involved that can maybe help us out in this particular instant, instead of waiting on God. Wait on the Lord. Wait, I say, on the Lord.

Over and over we're told to wait. I think in any language, wait means wait. And it takes time.

God wakens me every night of the year to pray for revival. One o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock, whenever. And I find I have to get up.

If I lay in bed and try and pray I'm gone in two minutes or less. But I get up and pray, calling God. Wait on the Lord.

Be of good courage and he will strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord. Whatsoever, it says in Ecclesiastes, whatsoever God does, it shall be forever.

Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it. And God does it that men should fear before him. If God does it, it's done, it's done rightly.

And so, we want to get God involved. And God wants us to be involved so we can do it together as co-workers with the God of heaven, that he would grant you. Now, Christ said, freely you have received, freely give.

He has spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Okay? Freely God gives. And obviously if he didn't spare his own Son, there's nothing else anywhere nearly equal to that that can't be.

So these other things come even more easily to the child of God, that he would grant you according to his riches or according to the riches of his glory. How wealthy is God? I read of a, I forget the, was it, I'm not sure where it was, somewhere in the States, a big city. And there was an area in the city where you could have only if you were a millionaire.

There's another area where you could live only if you were a multimillionaire. And a third area where you could live only if you were a billionaire. And I thought to myself, what nonsense is this? You know what? A million dollars wouldn't buy a hamburger in heaven.

You're going to have 15 degrees after your name. You wouldn't be able to write entrance exams to a kindergarten in heaven. The rich and the poor meet together.

So that means on the same level, the Lord is the maker of them all. If you reproach the poor, you're reproaching his maker, the Bible says in Proverbs. God makes poor people as well as rich people.

He said so. I read something in a magazine a while ago and this lady said, my father is the king of the universe and he's wealthy beyond imagination. And since I'm his child, I absolutely refuse to be poor.

So I wrote her a letter. I said, haven't you read James chapter 2? Here's what it says. Hearken, my beloved brethren.

Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised them that love him? You see, poor people are rich in faith because they have to be in order to survive. It's not bad to be poor, you know. When I first started preaching 62 years ago, the church said they would pay me \$30 a month if it came in.

It didn't always come in. I'll tell you, I found a girl as crazy as I was after six months we got married. Then two of us had to live on \$30 a month.

You can't live on, well back in those days, if you had an ordinary job, you'd be making \$125 a month. So we were considerably short. So what do we do? How do you handle it? You write letters, try and get people to support.

No, I didn't. We just decided God knows all about it. He's in control.

And you know, I don't know, I don't think I coined this phrase, but I use it frequently because it has to, it's this. If God knows the need, who else needs to know? Right? That's what we found. We stood on that and we survived.

We more than survived. God blessed us in so many ways. We saw answer after answer to prayer, which we wouldn't have seen if we'd have been on a different salary.

So God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith. I wrote this letter, you know, I got a sweet letter back and she apologized. She said, I will never ever say that again.

Well, thank God, you know, her heart was tender. God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith. Wonderful.

Okay. That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory. We are heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus, right? Romans chapter eight, joint heirs with Christ.

Well, who cares whether you have money in the bank now or not? That's not really important. Wonderful. Praise God.

He would grant you to be strengthened with might or with power by his spirit in the inner man. And I suppose all of us would like to have that happen. Want to be stronger as a Christian.

This is what Paul is praying. To be strengthened with power by his spirit in the inner man. Only God can do that, but he can't do it if we neglect the Bible.

He can't do it if we neglect prayer. I'm not going to ask anyone to raise their hand, but I wonder sometimes how much time the average Christian spends with the word of God. I've got 3000 books or more in my library, but I spend most of my time with the Bible.

I try to study at least 12 chapters a day. I spend time. Forget about the clock.

I like to do that early in the morning. Henry Blankenby, I heard him in a meeting a while back and he was saying, he started getting up at six in the morning and that didn't do it. So he started getting up at five in the morning and that didn't do it.

So he started getting up at four in the morning and that did it. I'm not saying we should copy him, but for a long while I've been getting up around four in the morning. The telephone never rings at four in the morning.

I've got a couple of hours I can spend with the Bible and I find it just wonderful. Strengthened with power by his spirit. We learn the secrets of God as we study his word.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. You know, when I first read that as a Christian, I couldn't understand it. Because Christ is living in my heart by faith, I knew that.

So one thing I knew, I'd called on Christ, I'd invited him to enter my life and he had done it. And I knew that. So why is Paul praying that Christian people should have an experience whereby Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith? It didn't make any sense.

But I read something Dwight R. Moody, the famous evangelist said. He said, I read the Bible the way I eat fish. If I come across a bone, I don't stop eating fish.

I leave the bone on the side of the plate and keep on eating fish. And so he said, if I find something in the Bible I don't understand, I don't quit reading the Bible. I just lay it on one side and I know down the road God will help me understand.

So I applied that to this. And I read a, I think it was Kenneth Weiss, he was a Greek New Testament scholar. And I just happened to come to Ephesians chapter 3. And here's what he said.

That Christ may settle down and feel at home in your heart by faith. And the life went on. Of course, Christ cannot settle down and feel at home in a heart that's full of fear or unbelief or lust.

How can he? These are the things that sometimes we get thinking about. You know, before there was such a thing as pornographic literature in the days of the flood, Genesis chapter 6, it says, every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts was evil continually. Way back then, in the Ecclesiastes, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil and madness is in their heart while they live.

So there's something in us. There's a strange verse in Ecclesiastes 7, the last verse of the chapter that says, God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. So there's a lot of this word invention in the Hebrew.

I don't know any Hebrew, but I looked it up in some of the books I have, and here's what it said. Mental fabrication. What's a mental fabrication? Well, a fabrication is a lie.

A mental fabrication is things that conjure up in my mind. Perhaps I'm living in a million dollar house. Or perhaps I'm sleeping with somebody else's wife or husband.

And I imagine this in my mind. God made man upright. They sought out these mental fabrications.

And possibly all of us at times are guilty of doing this. And it's a mental lie. And Christ cannot settle down and feel at home in a heart that's full of pride.

A heart that is thinking evil. Love thinks no evil. You know, Moody had a gathering of pastors shortly before he died, 400 pastors.

The burden of his heart was this. He said, Gentlemen, hold the churches to love because this is where we've gone wrong. When people are converted, we immediately think in terms of getting them into doctrine, settled in doctrine.

I think there's something more important than that. That is important. There's something else.

He goes on to talk about us being rooted and grounded in love in the context here. And that's what Moody was thinking about and urging with great passion on those pastors that day. To be rooted and grounded in the love of God.

This is what he's talking about. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may settle down and feel at home in your hearts by faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love. Have you ever thought of it that way? We're afraid, I think, sometimes to be rooted and grounded in love because we're afraid that some people take advantage of us and push us too far or ask too much of us.

Or maybe even God would ask us too much if we were filled with his love. And so we want to have some of the love of God in our hearts. We don't want to be overwhelmed or truly filled with the love of God because of what it might mean in my time, in my talents, with my money, and so on.

Rooted and grounded in love so that no matter what happens, we don't get angry, we don't blame God, we don't give up, we just wait on God for a larger portion if we need more. Because you get into some situations where the love you have is not quite enough, perhaps, and we have to call on God for more. But you know, when you stop to think of it, that Christ lives within me, and Christ is love.

And it's basically a matter of letting him have his way in my life. So that he can speak to others through me. A little while ago, a neat thing happened.

My daughter, Lois, she's with the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and they were visiting us in Winnipeg, and she was flying back to Calgary. And so we decided to go down early, members of our family, with Lois, and have something to eat in a restaurant at the air terminal. Before I left home, I was praying, and I prayed to this person, Dear God, Dear God, please give me an opportunity in the air terminal to talk to somebody about you.

So we got down to the terminal, we had something to eat, and we're sitting there. And then I saw a fellow, he was sitting about as far away as that wall, just sitting there, and our eyes met, and God said, that's him. So I get up and walked over and introduced myself.

He was an Indian chief, attending an Indian chief conference in Winnipeg. He was from Calgary. I'd heard of him because he had his own bus line in Calgary.

I'd heard of him before. We had a long talk. He didn't accept Christ, he was attending an Anglican church.

He told me he was getting a lot of guff from Indian people because they said he was going to a white man's church. But he said, I like it there. But he wasn't born again, but this was a great experience.

So I listened carefully to explain the way of salvation. It was such a neat experience, you know, God does these things if we ask him to. You know, I got on a plane one time, and there were five couples sitting around on the plane wearing red suits.

Just their faces sticking out of their hands, their feet were covered, and everything else. Red suits. And I got a seat beside one of these guys, and I said, And as soon as we got moving, I just said, Hey John, what's with the red suit? He says, we are salesmen, and we were told we have to go to a sales deal in our company, and they said if we would wear these stupid red suits, we could compete for prizes.

So my wife and I, we paid \$27 for the red suits, and we won \$1400 worth of prizes. Wasn't that a good deal? I said, man, that was a great deal, yeah. Then I knew we weren't going to be flying together long, so the next thing I said was, Would you mind if I told you how I became a Christian? Now, I don't normally approach people this way, but I did that.

I just felt a love for the guy, you know. He was a great big guy. His wife was so small, he couldn't see her sitting next to him.

He didn't look at me, he said, Okay, just look straight ahead. Okay. So I told him.

And then the plane landed, and I got up to go. He was going further, and I gave him a track, and he took it, put it away, wouldn't look at me, and I put up my hand, and he grabbed my hand, and he wouldn't let go. The tears were streaming down his face, and he said, You'll never know what you did for me today.

You'll never know what you did for me today. He kept on repeating it four or five times, you know. Finally, I got my hand loose, and got down on the aisle, and I turned around to wave to him, and he jumped to his feet, and he just hollered, You'll never know what you did for me today.

I've never seen him since, you know. I could have been, sometimes we sit there like a frozen frog or something in a plane. There's people on both sides that don't do anything or say anything or even think anything, you know.

People need to be alert and asking God to guide us, and some strange things happen. You know, one time, in Winnipeg, back in the days when they had no smoking in the planes, and they had smoking in the planes, rather, and of course, the girl says to me, Smoking or non-smoking? So I said, Non-smoking, please. And she said, Oh, smoking, that's easy.

We have lots of room in smoking. Oh, I said, You didn't hear me. I said, Non-smoking.

She looked at me, she got a little agitated, and she said, You told me twice now you wanted smoking. What's the big deal? Well, I said, The big deal is that you're not hearing me. I want non-smoking.

Then she really got agitated. She got red in the face. And she said, I don't know what you're up to, she said.

Three times in a row you told me you wanted smoking. What's on your mind? Then it dawned on me, that God was doing something different. So I said, Listen, hook me anywhere you want.

So she stuck me in smoking. I'm sitting next to a guy, I got witnessing to him, and he says, Oh, no. Oh, no.

What's the trouble, Joe? He said, My best friend in Halifax just got born again the other day, and you're telling me the same thing. So it got me, and so sometimes we've had a first-class boarding pass when we had a second-class ticket. That's happened several times.

And every time it happens, God had me to talk to some guy, you know, in first class. This doesn't happen if you don't expect it to happen, if you're not looking to God to guide you. And people, if you love others, you have to do it.

You have to think this way. Who will God speak to through me today? Okay. That Christ may settle down his healing home in your heart by faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height.

I get a little inkling on this in Job chapter 11. Can you, by searching, find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection? It says, As high as heaven, what can you do? Deeper than hell, what can you know? Measure off as longer than the earth and broader than the sea. He's talking about the immensity of our God.

He's present everywhere. Everywhere. Day and night.

Never sleeps. Never too busy. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

He's watching over us when he knows that. And to know, he says, the love of Christ, which passes knowledge that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. A lady one time, she dragged her husband down the aisle.

I was counseling some people and she dragged her husband down and stood over to one side and when I was finished, she dragged her husband over and she says to me, he's a backslider. Talk to him. Well, it wasn't exactly the way you do it.

So I spoke gently to him. I said, Do you know what it means to be born again? He said, I'm not ready for this, but if I didn't come, she'd make my life hell on earth at home, you know. She gives me a hard time all the time.

Always after me. So I turned to her and I said, Sister, are you a Christian? Oh, absolutely. I said, Do you know what it means to be filled with the Spirit of God? Of course, she said.

I speak in tongues 30 minutes every day. I said, I didn't ask you if you spoke in tongues 30 minutes. I asked you if you knew what it meant to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Well, she says, I have a few little problems. I said, Tell me about your little problems. He's standing there listening.

Well, she says, I'm insanely jealous of my husband. He was going like this. And then she said, You know, sometimes I have a terrible temper and I get so angry I sometimes curse God.

And I said, Sister, let me tell you something. You're not filled with the Spirit of God. You're full of self.

You need to die to yourself. And she found it amazing that she just wept her way to God, you know. God really touched her life.

Nothing happened to him at that moment, but I imagine down the road something would if she followed through on it and began to love her husband the way that she should, you know. For people to be rooted and grounded in love and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. J.B. Earle was a famous American evangelist, but we would never have heard of him had he not had a meeting with God one night.

Earle had been, he was an evangelist, getting nowhere, spinning his wheels. He would go here. He said he preached.

Nobody would respond. Nothing would happen. And finally, one night, well, he went to a church.

He prepared 12 sermons. He said, I put in those sermons. I put in cactus and barbed wire and saltpeter and everything I could think of.

I was going to really slay those people and make a move. He preached 11 sermons and nothing happened. He had one sermon left.

He put some more junk in the sermon and gave them a very hard time and nobody stirred. And that night, J.B. Earle got on his face before God and he said, God, what's wrong with these people? And the Lord said, There's a lot wrong with you. He said, Wait a minute, God.

You know that I often cry when I preach. Yes, the Lord said it's water off an iceberg. And he stayed on his knees for hours and sought the face of God and he said at 3 o'clock in the morning, he was filled with the fullness of the love of Christ.

And before he died, 150,000 people found Christ as their Savior through his ministry. So something dramatic, dynamic happened by the grace of God. But to know the love of Christ, that should be, dear people, for all of us.

It's the thing, the one thing I strive for more than anything is to be filled with the love of God and to feel that love towards everybody, not just to a few, to my own family, but to everybody I meet. And that's what God wants, for this cause. We've been building together for a habitation of God in eternity.

But even now, God speaks to us and lives in us through us and speaks to others through us. And sometimes it's hard for him to do that because we're not really filled with the love of God. And that's a problem.

Well, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. And can I say something? You probably already know. It is impossible to be filled with the Spirit of God and not be filled with the love of God.

It's impossible. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. They go together.

And just in case there are some, you know, unbelievers, he goes on to say, Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, he can do exceeding abundantly above anything we can ask or think. That takes care of my unbelief. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

Amen. You remember Paul told us in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, You are not your own. You are bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. That's on the personal level. Then on the church level, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, in us and through us.

I know I spend much time talking to God, asking him to change me, to empty me of self and fill me with his spirit. And every morning I try to start the day that way. I'm not perfect.

I'm in his... I have a perfect righteousness in Christ. But God wants that to work out on the practical level, of course. Imputed righteousness and then imparted righteousness leads them both to the glory of God.

For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may settle down and feel at home in your heart by faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. What a thought. Faith works by love.

We'll get to that in another session, but not today.

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