

Breadth and Length and Depth and Height

by F.W. Grant

The sermon explores the dimensions of God's ways, revealing the breadth of His love, the length of His eternal purpose, the depth of Christ's descent, and the height of His ascension.

Scripture: Psalm 8:4, Isaiah 55:8, Ephesians 3:18-19, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Gods Love", "Divine Sovereignty"

Description

F.W. Grant preaches on the profound dimensions of God's love as described in Ephesians 3:18, emphasizing how these dimensions are interconnected and reveal the unfathomable depth of God's love that surpasses human understanding. The breadth of God's love is seen in His wondrous plan to elevate humanity to a place of power and dignity, showcasing His glory and grace. The length of God's love is highlighted as an eternal purpose that predates creation, demonstrating His sovereignty and control over all circumstances. The depth of God's love is exemplified in the sacrificial journey of Jesus from the form of God to the humility of the cross, showcasing unparalleled obedience and love. The height of God's love is revealed in Christ's exaltation above all heavens, signifying the ultimate victory and blessings bestowed upon believers.

Transcript

"BREADTH AND LENGTH AND DEPTH AND HEIGHT." (Ephesians iii. 18.)

HIS expression does not refer to the dimensions of the love of Christ, which the apostle immediately after represents as "passing knowledge," whereas he prays that they may be "able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height." Yet these things surely have a connection with one another. God's counsels and His ways are what give us the thoughts and actions of Divine love, and we are continually having the lesson of it enforced upon us, while yet the fullness of it none can fathom.

And it is our joy that we cannot fathom it. For while unfathomable holiness might seem to put us at a distance, and infinite wisdom and power alone shut us up in folly or in nothingness, love that passes knowledge only holds us by that fact with a closer embrace. Blessed to learn it as it is, it is wonderful blessing indeed to learn it as passing knowledge. What then are these dimensions of God's ways, which are to give us points from which we may look off into infinity, to find everywhere beyond us still this love everywhere displayed?

Let us try very briefly to think of these just now. First, the BREADTH. An infidel measures the earth, contrasts its puny measurement with the grandeur of the heavens, and argues that God could never have given His Son to save the puny inhabitants of an orb like this. Scripture only argues from this the wondrous love of Him who could do this. The Psalmist too beholds the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which He has ordained, and he too asks, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

But for him Christ is not a stumbling-block, but the sufficient answer. "Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour; Thou hast set Him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet." "In that He put all in subjection under Him," argues the apostle, "He left nothing that is not put under Him." Thus he sees man in Jesus elevated to the throne of the universe - of those very heavens which had made him ask the question, - and he has nothing but adoration for Him who has done this.

But in truth we cannot follow this out as we should do until we see why God has taken up feeble man to put him in such a place of power and dignity. The Psalmist sees this connected not only with the excellency of His name declared in all the earth, but also with His glory being set above the heavens. God in setting man so high is indeed setting His own glory there, whence it may shine upon the whole universe. In that condescending grace of His at which man scoffs, He is actually putting a candle upon a candlestick, that all His creatures may be gladdened with the light.

Because Christ taketh not hold of angels but of the seed of Abraham, - because His blood was shed for men alone, - we must not imagine that there is no significance for angels in the wondrous union of manhood with Deity in Him. There is a deep significance - the very deepest. The love that reaches down to the lowest link of creation, and fastens it irrevocably to the eternal throne, has thereby linked indissolubly all creaturehood to God. He, gone up on high, is Himself "the beginning of the creation of God" - all that is to abide in relation to God as His.

Thus all has taken a new start with Him, and in Him the angels themselves have a new and abiding link with God. If man is brought near, they surely are not more distant thus, but nearer; indeed, how much nearer for that wondrous Presence in a creature form, of the God of all creatures - the Creator-God! But this is not all. Not merely are they in a new place with God, but they have a revelation of God also in Christ, which the apostle Peter tells us they "desire ('crave,' we may better say) to look into."

Nor is this meant at all as ineffectual craving: we are told expressly that "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." And again "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. ii. 5, 7, ; iii. x.)

How plain the ulterior purpose! How blessed to know that the joy that fills the Father's house when prodigals are brought home, - the joy of the Father's household is not only in their finding afresh their place with Him, but joy also in Himself, the Father, who could thus receive in God, whose plan and purpose salvation is! We are "made," too, "the righteousness of God in Christ." Thus wisdom, righteousness, grace, shine forth as what in God was never so revealed before. And all this becomes, as it were, the pulse of a new life in "every family in heaven and earth," which "is named of, (or from,) the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 14, 15).

This is the "breadth" then of God's purpose and plan, as Scripture reveals it. Let us now look at Secondly, its LENGTH. This requires little development. The purpose is an "eternal purpose," from eternity, embracing an eternity to come. God does not shape His thoughts according as circumstances arise, but the circumstances are controlled by His thoughts and plans. How blessed to know that He is absolutely Master of all things; that even "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He restrains."

It is the only thing that can give the smallest comfort in the midst of such a scene of confusion as that around us is. Thus He goes on with His own thoughts. In another sense than Job meant, "He is of one mind, and who can change Him?" Redemption was not with Him an impulse, (impulse comes from without,) but the fruit of a purpose which was His before the world was. Eternity will be the seal of His approbation of what is the fulfilled purpose of His own mind. I need not dwell upon this; it is all plain and obvious, but not on that account the less noteworthy or blessed.

Thirdly, the DEPTH. And here how can we do better than follow the apostle's track in Phil. ii.? Here from a height which we cannot measure, a series of wonderful steps lead down to a depth again immeasurable. But one blessed Person has travelled the whole way. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation" - or, literally, "emptied Himself" - "and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Each step here, how much is involved in it! First, in the form of God, and equal, without robbery, to God, He emptied Himself - abandoned the form, (He could not give up the reality), and took another form, the form of a servant! Who can measure this descent? Still He might have served as an angel. He would not: He had no mind to tarry there. He was made in the likeness of men. Still there He might have paused. The descent was already immeasurable; was it not enough? As man, death at least had yet no title over Him; but "being found in fashion as a man," still "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death."

You and I do not humble ourselves to become obedient unto death: He did; but more; and how much more! - even the death of the cross." For that was how different from other or ordinary death! Here again we cannot follow or fathom. We can only discern amid the darkness One in whom even there darkness had no part; glorifying God in the place of unequalled trial; bearing up singly and alone, in depths that had no bottom, the honour of God, the cause of ruined man, the full weight of those eternal purposes which are to fill heaven and earth with unceasing joy.

This is a "depth" we cannot plumb. It is easy to speak of the death of the cross. We may say, the cross measures this death. After all, what do we mean? Our lives alone can tell how far we know it. Paul's life such as we know it was the expression of his knowledge: "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me!" But the passage in Philipians does not end here. From the depth it takes us up into - Fourthly, the HEIGHT: and "He who descended is the same also who ascended up, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

For "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This introduces

us to all our blessings. It is as Man He suffered and died; it is as Man He is ascended; as Man He has entered upon the possession of what for men He has earned. Thus our place before God is measured by the place which He has as Man, and as the fruit of His accomplished work.

We stand already in the value of what He is, and of what He has done, for God. Here the whole heart of God comes out. Restrained, pent in, until the accomplishment of that which set divine righteousness upon the side of the sinner, and justified God in justifying the ungodly, He was then free to declare fully what had been from the beginning in His heart. Eternal love found at this lowest depth its spring and outflow, and from thence could bear up the happy objects of it up to Him from whose heart it came.

Think, oh think, of the rapturous joy of being thus upborne divine love satisfying itself in not only delivering us from the burdens under which we lay, but enriching us with the fulness that is in Christ for us! Shall we not give its way to love like this? Is it not faith's part to enter into its meaning, and receive with simplicity and adoring thankfulness the assurance of what, passing all human thought, approves itself only thus to be indeed divine? The link in all this - "breadth, length, depth, height," - is apparent with what precedes and follows "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in 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 dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fw-grant/breadth-and-length-and-depth-and-height/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net