

Title: Love Abounding
Text: Philippians 1: 9-11
Date: September 16, 2012
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The gardener labors with hope of seeing the plants in his garden bear fruit. The coach labors to teach his players with the hope that come game-time those players bear fruit by exercising what they have been taught. The parent labors to see their child bear fruit by exercising what they have been taught. The preacher's desire is the same.

The Apostle John said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 Jo 1:4) Peter, the apostle, said, "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Pet 3: 17-18) This was the apostle Paul's desire for those Christ entrusted him to teach, "I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Php 4: 7)

Our text is Paul's prayer for the church at Philippi.

Philippians 1: 9: And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10: That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Divisions: 1st we see Paul asked God for this--**v9: this I pray**; 2nd This is what Paul asked for, **V9: that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment** 3^{rdly}. His reason in wanting this for them was judgment for good purposes—**v10: That ye may approve things that are excellent; That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

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I. NOTICE FIRST WE DEPEND UPON GOD FOR THIS GROWTH—V9: THIS I PRAY

We want to see God call his elect. We want to see sinners repent from vanity, believe on Christ and then grow in grace. But we are completely dependent upon God for these things.

So Paul begins where he ends, "***This I pray.***" *Because we grow in grace the same way we begin in grace.* Verse 11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. Abounding love, knowledge and true judgment, sincerity of heart—these are "fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God."

Illustration: A grape is a fruit—how is a grape produced? A grape seed is planted. From that seed the grape vine grows. As the vine grows branches grow out of the vine. As the branch gets its nourishment from the vine the branch produces fruit—a cluster of grapes form.

Paul is writing here to the "saints"—God's saints are made saints by being born of the incorruptible Seed, the Holy Spirit of God, Christ the Seed is formed in us, the Seed of Truth is implanted and spiritual life begins.

John 15: 3: Now ye are CLEAN through THE WORD which I have SPOKEN unto you. 4: Abide in me, and I in you. As THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, EXCEPT IT ABIDE IN THE VINE; no more can ye, EXCEPT YE ABIDE IN ME. 5: I am THE VINE, ye are THE

BRANCHES: He that abideth IN ME, and I IN HIM, the same bringeth forth much FRUIT: FOR WITHOUT ME ye can do nothing.

Believers bring forth fruit the same way we begin in grace--**v11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

1 Corinthians 3: 6: I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

So Paul asks God for this increase—**this I pray.**

II. THIS IS WHAT PAUL PRAYED FOR--V9: that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

While the world is asking for temporal riches, God's saints are asking for the true riches—favor of God, spiritual blessings, heart blessings.

The believer born of God loves. We do so because we are made partakers of God's divine nature and God is love. God gives us his Spirit so those born again, love God and love others born of his Spirit.

1 John 3:14: We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...4: 7: Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8: He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love...5: 1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

This love is not the sentimental, sensual, lusts which the world sings about. This love is in Christ, in spirit and in truth. What was Paul's assurance of their love?

Philippians 1: 5: For your fellowship IN THE GOSPEL from the first day until now...Verse 7: Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have YOU in MY HEART [every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.]; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, [some withdrew from Paul when men stood against him for the gospel's sake but the Philippians remained stedfast. How so?] ye all are partakers of my GRACE.

True, spiritual love is LOVE OF THE TRUTH—our fellowship is in the gospel of Christ.

2 John 1: 1: The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love IN THE TRUTH; and not I only, but also all they that have KNOWN THE TRUTH; 2: For THE TRUTH'S SAKE, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever...9: Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

This love for Christ defends and confirms the gospel of Christ in the face of opposition. And defends and confirms brethren because "as much as you have done it unto one of these, the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Illustration: Does it make you envious when someone does something good for one of your children? No—You rejoice because your child is extension of you. Does it offend you when someone

does something bad toward one of your children? Yes, they are your flesh and blood. So it is with Christ and so it is with our brethren—we are one in Christ.

Application: Brethren, I rejoice over you. For your fellowship IN THE GOSPEL from the first day until now...in your defense and confirmation of the gospel. And I pray for you that your love may abound more and more.

Notice he prays this love grow in knowledge--v9:**...that your love may abound yet more and more IN KNOWLEDGE.**

True spiritual love for Christ and our brethren abounds in proportion as we are taught the knowledge of God's love for us in Christ Jesus his Son.

Just as faith and hope are given and grown by the knowledge of Christ Jesus through the gospel so does love.

Colossians 3: 10: the new man is renewed IN KNOWLEDGE after the image OF HIM that created him.

The promise of the everlasting covenant of grace is in the knowledge of God in Christ.

Jeremiah 31: 34: They shall all KNOW ME, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.

Eternal life is wrapped up in knowledge of God in Christ.

John 17: 3: This is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent?

So it is that growth in grace is in the knowledge of God in Christ.

Philippians 3: 10: That I may KNOW HIM, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Knowing him is supernatural—it is a union, an unction from the Holy One. Knowing him is to know that God's love is particularly set upon his elect—"his GREAT LOVE wherewith he loved us." The more we know of our ruined condition and the evils of our heart the more we see how sovereign and everlasting Christ's love for us really is. There is no cause of God's love outside of God, nothing in God's elect for God to love us. All men by nature are more worthy to be loathed than loved and so are God's elect. God's love is free and sovereign love, unchangeable and everlasting love, matchless and unparalleled love. The knowledge of God's love is manifest in that he gave his Son to make satisfaction for the sins of us who did not love him—but only hated him.

1 John 4: 9: 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. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

God's love entrusted us to Christ and Christ's love is why he became our Surety. His love is why Christ assumed our nature; his love is why Christ was willing to be made sin for us who knew no sin; his love is why Christ laid down his life in place of his elect, even when we were enemies; his love is why Christ bore the wrath of God's justice for us making us the righteousness of God in him.

John 15: 12: This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Even now, Christ love for us is why our Risen High Priest and Advocate everlives to make intercession for us. The love of Christ is why God constantly supplies all our need. His love for his children is why God keeps us from turning from him and shall keep us—this was Paul’s confidence in verse 6:...he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

This knowledge of his love for us exceeds all other knowledge—it is called **love that passes knowledge**—it fills the born again child with **the fullness of God**.

- Fullness of our completeness in Christ
- Fullness of our righteousness in Christ
- Fullness of our adoption in Christ
- Fullness of his gifts and graces: spiritual peace, joy, comfort and so on--Being FILLED with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Ephesians 3: 14: For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH; that ye, being ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

It is possible for men to acquire a natural knowledge of Christ, even to acquire what appear as true spiritual gifts, (but it is mere carnal knowledge, natural gifts, natural faith.) This love in true knowledge is being born of his Spirit, rooted, grounded, created in the love of God. But carnal knowledge and imitation gifts only puff a man up.

1 Corinthians 13: 1: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2: And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3: And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

You can be sure of this: a man will exalt the one wherein his knowledge lies. If a man is merely self-taught, he will exalt-self.

When knowledge is only carnal, self-taught knowledge the sinner does not relish the necessity of assembling with saints to hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Carnal knowledge—opposite to this love and knowledge which is the very root of the new man—can easily walk away from the gospel of Christ, abandon true believers like the child cast out into the field, because the root is the flesh, rather than the root of love and knowledge of Christ. Carnal knowledge sides with natural fleshly relations whose doctrine is contrary to Christ, because natural fleshly love is the root and ground of natural men

Hebrews speaks of “the root of bitterness springing up” like Esau who traded the birthright for a bowl of beans. That comes from Deuteronomy 29: 18-19 which speaks of those “whose heart turneth away...from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of the nations;...a root that beareth gall and wormwood; [instead of fruits of righteousness]

Gall is opium, wormwood is absinthe--both cause drunken delirium—this drunken delirium is that carnal, self-taught knowledge which is not the root of Christ, not the root of love and true knowledge, not the unction—but it is this—when he hears God’s curse pronounced those who turn to the gods of men’s imagination: works, free-will, god’s of men’s hands, instead of begging God for mercy, Deut 29: 19:...he blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart; to add drunkenness to thirst.

But the root of love in knowledge is the unction of the Spirit whereby Christ is made All unto us. By rooting us and grounding us in love through the knowledge of Christ’s love for us, God draws us to cling to Christ and to love our brethren. And knowing these fruits are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God, we must abide in Christ.

III. WITH THIS GROWTH IN LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE COMES A GROWTH IN JUDGMENT FOR GOOD PURPOSES--v9: And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more...in all judgment 10: That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

Spiritual senses. The Holy Spirit of God gives us spiritual senses, brings us into various trials to exercise those senses and grows those senses. So we try things that differ and approve things that are excellent—approved of God.

Hebrews 5: 14: But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their SENSES exercised to DISERN both good and evil.

- Between moral good and evil
- Between law and Gospel
- Between the doctrines of Christ and the doctrines of men

Application: One reason being in a church family is so necessary is that as we hear the gospel we also suffer various trials together. Christ our Head strengthens and teaches a weaker member of his body through the love and patience of a stronger member. Perhaps you think one brother is too taken up with this world. It causes you a great trial. But by that trail you see what is in yourself before God the Father. And you learn by experience how God is patient and longsuffering toward you. So the love of God is shed abroad in your heart and you learn to be more patient and longsuffering with your brother. Trust God to make him stand and try to be an encouragement, remind him of the precious blood: more precious than gold and silver that perishes. Perhaps you admire how one sister always has a kind word, a Christ-honoring word and she always cheers your heart when you are cast down. Christ uses her to teach you to be a helper of one another’s joy. We learn how to love by being loved.

We learn to try things that differ. Try our own faith, hope, and love; try our own motives; try our own words; try our own thoughts; try our own spirit; try our own ways. To walk in the fear of the Lord is to walk circumspectly—to be continually approving things that are really of value and letting go of things that are not. This trying of things is not by carnal reason, not carnal affection. We try all things: by the word of God led of the Spirit of God.

We learn to approve things that are excellent. The love of God in Christ is most excellent. Psalm 36: 7: How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God. Salvation by grace is excellent. Hebrews speaks Christ the Mediator of a “more excellent ministry, a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” Paul said, “I show unto you a more excellent way”—faith which works by love. The grace of love in the heart is excellent.

Our hearts are made sincere. This sincerity means: one's heart is pure, truly converted because he has not assumed Christianity as a mask; one's motives are not for selfish gain; one's conduct is free from double-dealing, trick, and cunning; one's words express the real sentiments of the heart; one is true to his word, and faithful to his promises; one is always what he professes to be. The meaning is "it will stand the test of the light of the sun" The literal meaning is "without wax."

Illustration: Jim's Honey in the Sunlight—no wax—pure honey.

John 3: 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Believers come to the Light of the scriptures, to the Light of Divine Revelation, to the Light of Christ the Sun of Righteousness that our deeds may be open in the Light of Christ, they are wrought in God.

That you may be without offense means inoffensive to others; not injuring their property, or feelings, or reputation. And not causing others to stumble.

Romans 14: 19: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20: For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21: *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Illustration: The brother who waited to offer the wine

Romans 15: 2: Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. 3: For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

1 Corinthians 10:32: Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

2 Corinthians 6:3: Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

The gospel is offensive to the flesh but it should never be made offensive because of our flesh. The Lord warned us that we should be hated of all men for his name's sake but let's not cause any man to further hate our Lord because of our name's sake.

We do this "till the day of Christ" return.

1 Corinthians 1:8: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All these fruits are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

Amen!