

Rooted and Grounded in Love (Eph 3:17)

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 17th Jan 2010

Intro-

- What shoes worn to church today? What are the grips like? I have seen a pattern in the 3 years we have been building Church here. The pattern is that we make progress and start to break through. Shortly later relationships are tested and people fall out with each other, get offended, and ground is lost that had been gained. It is like Rugby- the aim is to take ground and hold on to it, to also get the ball and hold on to it, but if we lose our focus or grip on the ball or lose our footing the opponent is not slow to step in. Recent snow- so many cars struggling to move, but no grip on the ground. Paul prayed that every Christian became 'rooted and grounded in love'- Eph 3:17. Love is the studs on our boots- it stops us from slipping over (by being offended). We may gain great ground in God, but if we are easily offended and hold on to grudges the ground can be lost in a second- we become divided and ineffectual. This is the week of prayer for Christian unity let's think about our own relationships with others and see if they are any areas we need to address.

Read Eph 2:1-6, 11-18

Through the cross God broke the dividing walls

- The curtain. We were God's enemies (2:2 'sons of disobedience') but reconciled to God through the cross (Rom 5:10-'.when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son'). The curtain in temple was a dividing wall- a physical representation of the division our sin caused between us and God (Is 59:2). Only the high priest could go in once a year (Ex 30:10, Heb 9:7). When Jesus died God tore the curtain in two from top to bottom (Mt 27:50-51). The curtain is thought, from measurements given by the Jewish historian Josephus to have been about 60 feet high and 30 feet wide about the thickness of a man's palm (about 4 inches) and that horses tied to each side could not pull the veil apart.
- The dividing wall. Segregation Jew and Gentile. Enmity in mankind was destroyed by the cross. Temple had 2 Courts- the outer one for the Gentiles (the Nations) and an inner court for the Jews only. These two courts were separated by a low wall, 4 ½ feet high (Josephus), with 13 openings. Along the top of this dividing wall, at regular intervals, were placed pillars saying in Greek "No stranger is to enter within the partition wall and enclosure around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will be responsible to himself for his death, which will ensue." (one was discovered by M. Ganneau in 1871). Paul was accused of breaking this rule when they thought he had brought a Gentile into the temple, and they tried to kill him as a result (Acts 21:26-31). Paul says in 2:14 that Jesus has broken down this wall.
- In Eph 2:5-6 it says 'made us alive together' and 'raised us up together with Christ' and 'made us sit together in the heavenly places'- Paul here is meaning not only us and Christ, but also Jews and Gentiles together ('you' is Gentiles- see 2:2,2:11-13; 'we' is Jews 2:3, 'us'=Gentiles and Jews together). It is like making 2 enemies sit at the same table in class and they become best friends. Lincoln was asked why he was pardoning Southerners at the end of the Civil War: "Mr. President, don't you want to destroy your enemies?" Lincoln: "Is that not what I do when I make them my friends?" Martin Luther King- 'Love is the most durable power in the world. Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend'.
- Jesus demolished the walls but do we rebuild them?

- Walls keep our friends in and those we don't like out.
- Walls stop us being hurt. Christian author C.S. Lewis fell in love late in life. Not long after his marriage to Joy Gresham, she contracted cancer- they only shared a few short years together. When C.S. Lewis speaks of the pain of love, we know he is speaking from experience. He writes, concerning the risk of love: 'To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one- not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully around with hobbies and little luxuries.. lock it up safely in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in the casket- safe, dark, motionless, airless- it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable- the only place outside heaven you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love is hell!'
- Zech 2:1-5 Jerusalem to be a city without walls and God will be the wall of fire around it. Choose to take down any walls you have built up to others.

Rd Eph 3:14-15

The result is we share the same Dad

- Because God has adopted each one of us we are equally His children and hence brothers and sisters. Take a good look around!
- Greek word for family here sound similar to the Greek word for Father- concept of family comes from God's Father heart. We are all part of Dad's clan! You are each chosen to be part of the same team- so get on! Jesus modelled family dynamics to us- chose a Zealot and a Tax collector as part of the same team! 'I will only go to a certain meeting if a certain person is not there'- even more pronounced in homegroup- but the 12 were like a homegroup! They fell out with each other-'which is the greatest?' & James & John offended everyone when their mum asked if they could sit at the right and left of Christ in glory.
- God loves those you don't get on with in Church- they are His kids- be careful what you say behind their back- their Dad (your Dad) is always listening!
- Sibling rivalry is normal, but is destroyed by realisation of just how much Daddy loves you (perfect love casts out fear- 1 John 4:18). Choose to start seeing reflections of the Father's image in those you struggle with- for all their bad points they will have some things to give thanks for- give thanks for them. Think of 2 good points for each bad and give thanks.
- Most young children want to be like their parents (until they come to their senses! (joke!)) God is our Dad so immitate Him (Eph 4:32)- While browsing around in the attic, Terry came across an old report card which had been his father's. He brought it downstairs and compared it with the one he had just received at school and which he intended to show when his dad was in a good mood. When Dad was seated in his easy chair, Terry approached. "Hey Dad, just look at this old report card of yours and then look at the one I just got. Why, your grades aren't any better than mine." "You're right, son," he said. "I guess the only fair thing to do now is give you what my Dad gave me." While we were enemies God reconciled us to himself and forgave our sins so be likewise forgiving to others 'tenderhearted'- meat is pummeled with the rolling pin to 'tenderise' it. Sometimes we need to make a choice to love someone despite our feelings- it may feel initially like bashing our heart, but the result will be a tender heart and agenuine love accompanied by feelings. The difference between infatuation and love- Infatuation- you think your husband is as handsome as Tom Cruise, as amusing as Ricky Gervais, as intellectual as Albert Einstein, as devout as Billy Graham and as athletic as Hulk Hogan. Love is when you realise that your husband is as handsome as Albert Einstein, as intellectual as Hulk Hogan, as devout as Tom Cruise, as athletic as Ricky Gervais and as amusing as Billy Graham, but you love him anyway.

Rd Eph 3:16-21

Because of the reconciliation Paul prays we would be rooted and grounded in love

- 3:14 'for this reason' i.e. The reconciliation to God and each other by the cross (3:2-13=parenthesis). What is true spiritually must now become true experientially- like justification resulting in sanctification- 'I've been made holy so now I am going to live holy'.
- When we experientially understand the greatness of our reconciliation to God and

each other we become 'rooted and grounded in love' we are not easily knocked off our feet- we are stable, able to forgive, because we know how much we have been forgiven. Our garden fence posts were initially too thin and not in deep enough- cost us to have replaced, but they have stood in strong winds whilst other fences have been blown down- there is a cost to comprehending the love of God- the cost is we have to change and really love others- but the cost is WORTH IT- we become rooted, grounded.

- The Great Storm of 1987 occurred on the night of 15/16 October 1987, when an unusually strong weather system caused winds to hit much of Southern England. The storm caused substantial damage over much of England, downing some 15 million trees. One couple walking in London noticed something about many of the trees they saw blown over. While the trees themselves were huge and very tall, their roots were unbelievably shallow. They marveled at this seemingly inexplicable disproportion. The reason was that the water level below the soil in some places in England is so close to the surface that the roots do not have to penetrate very deep to find their nourishment. As a result, the roots stay shallow, and even though the trees are massive and sturdy on the outside, the first major storm uproots them with very little resistance offered. God wants to grow us as quality and this too will yield quantity, but quality takes dedication.
- Another cost to being rooted in love is dealing with the spirit of independence- we choose to do things together rather than apart- we look at what we can give to others rather than what we can get out. Consumerism mentality affecting Church- needs to change from 'what am I getting out?' to 'what am I putting in?'- usually there is a connection between the two- we get out what we put in.
- Being rooted in love means we choose not to give in to paranoia. We choose to believe the best and clarify things with love rather than fear
- God wants to wreck us with His love so that we will never be the same again. As we put His love sincerely into practise in our loves we will start to comprehend the incomprehensible – the length and depth of His love for us. The World longs to see such a demonstration of true love. All of us know how much the world fawned over Marilyn Monroe but few know how rejected she felt throughout life. A reporter from the New York Times was interviewing her and he was aware of her troubled background, so he posed a question. He asked her, “Did you ever feel loved by any of the foster families with whom you lived?” “Once,” Marilyn replied, “when I was about seven or eight. The woman I was living with was putting on makeup, and I was watching her. She was in a happy mood, so she reached over and patted my cheeks with her rouge puff.... For that moment, I felt loved by her.”
- The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him. — Deuteronomy 33:12. There is no music in the rarest sounds compared with these three syllables, which drop from the Redeemer’s lips like sweet-smelling myrrh, “Beloved!” If He had addressed but that one word to us, it might have created a heaven within our souls which neither sickness nor death could mar. Let us sound the note again — Beloved! Oh, the inexpressible, the heaped-up blessedness which belongs to the man who feels in his soul that Christ has called him beloved! Oh, I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved’s mine! He brings a poor vile sinner into His “house of wine”!

Summary

- Broken dividing walls. Same Dad. Rooted & grounded in love.

Song: *There is a place of commanded blessing*