DIVING DEEPER *DISCUSSION GUIDE*

TEXT SUMMARY

The main text for the sermon, "The Spirit Sanctifies," is Ephesians 3:14-21.

The prayers of Paul are wonderful! Our text is the second in his letter to Ephesus. What a privilege to listen in on the intercessions of this first century pastor, who loved his people!

INTRODUCTION (observation):

1. Our text opens with the transitional device "For this reason." What is the reason he refers to? (As you scan back, you'll see that "For this reason…" appears earlier in the chapter, followed by a two-paragraph parenthesis. You'll have to go all the way back to the end of chapter 2 to find the reason that lies behind Paul's prayer in 3:14-21.)
2. This text feels like a jumble of phrases and clauses on top of one another. Strip out the modifying phrases to find the core petitions. What exactly does Paul want God to do for the believers in Ephesus?

DISCUSSION (interpretation):

1. Paul refers to God as the "Father from whom His whole family in heaven and earth derives its name" (v. 15). Every earthly father, no matter now noble and self-sacrificing, is a faint and imperfect reflection of our Heavenly Father. How so? What are the qualities of a good father that we find so fully expressed in God?
2. One of the modifying phrases that Paul uses is "rooted and grounded in love." What does it mean to be "rooted and grounded in love"?

<u>SO WHAT</u>? (application): Here we move toward first-person pronouns as we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.

1. **Paul prays that God's Spirit will strengthen His people in their "inner being."**
    - What does it mean to be weak in your inner being?
    - When have you experienced that kind of weakness?
    - Have you ever experienced being strengthened in your inner being?
    - What means did God use to strengthen you then?

2. **Another modifier Paul uses is "together with all the saints" (v. 18).** He uses it in the context of grasping and knowing by experience the unfathomable love of Christ. Why is it essential that we know Christ's love in the context of relationships with our spiritual siblings? Can't we just as easily comprehend Christ's love on our own, by ourselves? Why do we need one another to understand Christ's love?

3. **Have you ever experienced a keen and distinctive sense of the love of God in Christ?** What life circumstances did God use to communicate His love to you? What people played a key role in that moment in your life?