

Taste and See
Small Group Discussion
Ephesians 3:14-21

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- Have one or more people in your group describe famous places where they have *never* been (examples: the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, vacation spots, etc.).
- Now ask people in your group who *have been* to those places to describe them.
- Discuss: what is the difference in the descriptions of people who have never been, and people who have been?
- Today we're thinking about the difference between knowing *about* God's love, and *knowing* God's love.

Read Eph. 3:1-13.

- We did not spend much time looking at this passage in Sunday's sermon. Take a few minutes now to discuss it, as follows.
 - Paul diverts into a "parenthetical" thought in v. 2. What is he seeking to do for his readers here? (See especially v. 13).
 - What does Paul say is "the mystery of Christ," which has now been revealed?
 - What does Paul mean when he talks about the "administration" of this mystery? (v. 2 and v. 9) *Hint: he is thinking of connecting what Jesus accomplished, with the on-the-ground life of people who are just hearing the gospel.*
- If Paul's major life calling is to see to this "administration" of the mystery of the gospel, the experience he describes in vv. 14-21 is an indispensable part of that calling. Let's look there now.

Read Eph. 3:14-21

- What connection do you see between v. 14 and v. 1?
- In your own words, what is Paul praying to be the experience of the Ephesian believers (and all of us who would later believe as well)?
- On first reading, what resources does Paul mention in his prayer that would help us to have this experience?
- In this week's sermon, Pastor Josh claimed that ***if our lives are going to be changed by the good news, the experience of Jesus' love must become our defining reality.***
 - How would you explain the difference between knowing *about* the love of Jesus, and *knowing* the love of Jesus?
 - Invite people to share about times in their lives when they have experienced the love of Jesus at a heart-level, beyond just cognitive knowledge. Take as much time as you need to allow for this sharing.
 - What difference did it make in your life to have this experience?
 - How can the experience of Jesus' love produce changed lives?

- Let's look into several factors that Paul says are part of this experience.
 - *Christ dwells in our hearts through faith* (v. 17a). Pastor Josh used the image of thinking of our hearts as a house, with various rooms. Have you invited Jesus to inhabit every room in the "house" of your heart? Is there any area you are keeping off-limits to him? Why do you think that is the case?
 - We become *rooted and established* in his love. (v. 17b). How does this happen? What would it look like to pursue this aim in light of your current experience?
 - We must seek this experience *together with all the Lord's holy people* (v. 18a). The fact that you are in this group, indicates that you have already started taken this component seriously. How has this group enabled you to experience or embrace God's love in a greater way? Is there anything that could enhance that experience as a group even more? Is something about this group preventing this experience from happening?
- What does it mean to "know this love that surpasses knowledge?" Isn't this a paradox?
- What assurance does Paul give in vv. 20-21 that this experience can actually become real for us?
- Finally, invite people to share where they are today with regard to experiencing God's love. Are they fresh and vibrant because they're feeling wrapped in God's embrace? Are feeling dry because their spiritual journey has been all cognitive for a long time? Are they doubtful as to whether they could ever experience the love of Jesus at a heart level?

Sharing/Prayer

- In light of the final question above, spend some of your prayer time asking the Holy Spirit to enable each person to know the love of Jesus, which surpasses knowledge.
- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you, so that you can spend time praying for one another.