

“Unsurpassable” Sermon for July 29, 2018
Ephesians 3:14-21, John 6:5-13

And I pray that you, being ***rooted and established in love***, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and ***to know this love that surpasses knowledge***—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19).

+++++

There are two prayers recorded by the Apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians for the Ephesian Church. They are found in Ephesians 1:15-23 & Ephesians 3:14-21. Danish existentialist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard used to tell a parable—

There was a community of ducks; Each Sunday they walked to “duck church” in a straight line to hear the duck preacher. The duck preacher informed them that God had given the ducks wings with which to fly. With these wings there was nowhere the ducks could not go. There was no God-given task the

ducks could not accomplish. With those wings they could soar into the presence of God himself. Many quacks of affirmation were heard throughout the duck congregation. At the conclusion of the service, all the ducks commented on what a wonderful message they had heard and lined up to waddle back home with no thought of flying!

Kierkegaard's point was that it is not just our celebration of truth that matters; but our becoming that truth. When that truth becomes a part of us and we become a part of it, then we experience what God has for us: unsurpassable riches in Christ.

Jesus was motivated by love. A great crowd had followed him, attracted by his compassion, attracted by his power to free them from old hurts, old ideas, conflict, tension, sickness, sadness and pain. They were attracted by his sense of hope in the midst of a politically hopeless situation. They were attracted by his passel-full of positives in the midst of life's negatives. Now it was late in the evening, dinner

time. It was time for the people to go, but he was *responsive* rather than *dismissive*. He turned to Philip, “Where can we buy food for these people?” Philip in consternation answered, “We don’t have enough.” This is ours. This is mine. So often our response is “We don’t have enough.” Dismiss them to someplace or someone else, because we have just enough for ourselves. “No,” said Jesus, you feed them.” Andrew responded, “There is a boy here with a small lunch of five barley loaves and two fish.” Jesus had the disciples find seats (places) for the people. That’s all we have been asked to do. Give the people an invitation to join us. Make space for other people. If we can learn to make space for the multitude, God will feed them. With that Jesus gave thanks for the five small barley loaves and distributed them. Then he gave thanks for the two fish and distributed them. Five thousand were seated. Five thousand were fed. Twelve baskets

were filled—pressed down and overflowing with the remaining fragments. The disciples had enough. The people had enough. Jesus was not overstepping reality, he was teaching us that love is about hospitality—God’s storehouse for us is overflowing. We are to called to make space for others. There is more than enough because what God—Love dressed in our anthropomorphic reality—offers the world is unsurpassable. In fact, what we have, like the thousands of ducks waddling with untested have, is much more than we can ask or think. We have much more than we can imagine, and certainly much more that we need. Deep and wide—*there’s a fountain flowing deep and wide.*

What God has for us and for others is more than enough. We just need to make space, even according to our faith. Amen.