

## The Heart of Mission

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What's something difficult that you've accomplished in the past year that you're proud of?
2. Can you think of some example of where you've had a change of heart/mind/opinion? (eg. a food you discovered that you like, or a sports team that you now support.)

**Read the following passage:** Ephesians 3:14-20.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesian church we see a description (in the context of a prayer) of what he longed for others in the church to experience in their lives. We also see a reflection of the values and experiences that were central to his own life of mission. Through this we see that Gospel mission is fueled by prayer, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and grounded in love. These elements were instrumental in Paul's personal transformation from hostile opponent of Christ into a devoted disciple of Jesus who boldly and joyfully traveled proclaiming the Gospel despite severe difficulty throughout his life. Paul's example and his exhortation to the Ephesian church are a model for all of us who seek to join Christ in his mission to bring hope and healing to a broken world.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What stands out most to you about this passage? Why?
2. Prayer is mentioned in the book of Acts 30 times and 279 times in the New Testament writings. Why do you think prayer was such a big emphasis in the early church? How is your own practice of prayer at this time in your life?
3. In Ephesians 3:16-21, we see multiple references to the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a clear sense that he is dependent upon not his own strength or intellect, but on the Spirit of God. For some of us this is exciting, for others of us this may make us nervous. What are your thoughts/feelings on what Paul says here? On a scale of 1-10 would you describe yourself as more open or closed to the working of the Holy Spirit. Why?
4. This prayer has repeated mentions of the love of Christ and speaks of "knowing" this love and "being rooted and established in love." There was an experiential element to it that went beyond simple agreement that it existed. Have you experienced the love of God in your life?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. As we receive God's love, it should not merely flow into us but also through us. In what ways do you need the grace of God and the love of God to continue to shape your heart, attitude, and actions?
6. At Freedom Church we have a practice of discipleship of called "Pray for Three" in which we commit to pray daily for three friends who don't yet know Jesus. This is a simple first step towards sharing your faith with them and, by praying, you are inviting the Holy Spirit into the process. We've had some amazing stories come out of this! Share the names of your three people with the group and pray for them together.

## **Pray**