



God's Word for Today

Sonjia Hunt Ministries

Teaching Letter 15

Be Rooted and Established

“. . . And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge” (Ephesians 3:17-19, NIV).

Do you believe God loves you? I mean, all the way down to the bottom of your heart—you believe He loves you. If so, you are rooted and established in love. Maybe you are like a lot of God’s children who are not there yet. You *are* a child of God (if you have believed Jesus is the Son of God, that He died to redeem you back to God, that His blood washes away all your sin, and if you have received Him as your Savior), and you’ve been taught that He loves you. Difficult circumstances, however, and life’s hard knocks have made space for some doubt. I, like Paul, who wrote to the Ephesians (our verse for this letter), pray that you will become rooted and established in God’s love.

Having assurance of God’s love for you brings stability and strength to your life. Knowing it deep in your heart brings confidence, even courage. I think of David in the Old Testament. Somehow early in his life David gained an understanding of God and His love for him. When he was a teenager, he faced the giant Goliath, having no military experience whatever. That was an awesome feat.

A side scene, however, depicts the ridicule David received from his brothers before his face-off with Goliath. David was not crushed by his brother’s harsh words and put downs. Neither was he stopped. In the face of not only Goliath but also his brothers, David showed remarkable confidence. His strength came from his knowledge of God and His love for him. For years thereafter, David suffered many difficult times. He demonstrated such resilience that I have to conclude he was rooted and established in God’s love.

Another relatively young man whom Jesus taught about was the prodigal son. Like David, the prodigal made some poor decisions along the way. Being rooted and established in love does not translate into having all wisdom all the time. That’s another matter. If you know the story of the prodigal, you know he asked his father for his inheritance before it was time for him to receive it. What brashness! His father, however, granted his request. After squandering all his money and suffering for a time in a foreign country without friends or help, he “came to himself” and returned home to his father. The prodigal son did humble himself; however, he demonstrated great confidence that his father would receive him even after he had made such monumental mistakes. He was confident in his father’s love for him.

Interestingly, the older brother of the prodigal did not demonstrate such great confidence in his father’s love. He seems to have thought his father’s love must be earned.

God’s love is unconditional and everlasting. He knows we will make mistakes and even sin occasionally; however, His love for us is strong. It is indestructible. He demonstrated the depth, the height, the width and the length of His love through the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus. That was the ultimate demonstration of love. As God’s children, nothing can separate us from His love. He forgives our sins when we repent and He never forsakes us. And He wants us to be rooted and established in His love. His love is a very secure place. He accepts us always, no matter what we have done. Other people may love us well or poorly. We thank God for those who demonstrate God’s love to us. In either case, however, it will be God’s love that matters most.

In the natural realm it is the plant's root system that supports and nourishes it. The strongest and most resilient plants and trees are ones with the best root system extended deep into the best possible soil or terrain. Our passage for today speaks of the "soil" of God's love—and what better soil in which to be planted?

It is clear throughout Scripture we were not made to be self-sufficient. Anyone who falls into the trap of self-sufficiency is, in essence, not planted or rooted. Self-sufficiency means "needing no outside help." Confidence is in self. Scripture does not teach a doctrine of self-confidence or self-sufficiency. Psalm 121:2 states: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." This is one example out of many.

Anyone can unknowingly practice self-sufficiency. Our culture promotes this concept and often looks negatively on depending on any source outside ourselves. The idea of independence is built into our thinking. Our nation would like to think of itself as self-sufficient in most ways, or at least have that goal. For example, our nation would like to be independent of foreign oil. Nothing wrong with that; independence often seems a good idea politically speaking. Spiritually speaking, "needing no outside help" is a problem. That's not what God intends.

Scripture speaks also of some other good and necessary substances in which God has willed we be planted spiritually. In Colossians 2:7-8 Paul speaks about being rooted and built up in Christ and established in the faith. He also warns that the world will teach a different philosophy from this. He says that to follow the principles of the world and human tradition will prove destructive to us. He also states in verse 9 that we "have been given fullness [completeness] in Christ." This means Christ is our sufficiency. Being rooted in Christ secures the completeness we all seek but will not find through self-sufficiency nor in any other source.

Psalm 1 describes the blessed man (or woman) as being "like a tree planted by streams of water" because he has chosen to delight "in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and

night." We plant ourselves in a very good place when we also do this. It is the soil of God's Word and the water of the Holy Spirit. This soil has the best nutrients and the water is pure. Our soul and spirit will be well nourished when rooted and grounded there.

It takes a good root system to be firmly established. That's why newly transplanted plants often struggle at first—especially if planted in hot weather. Extra care is needed until they extend their roots further into the soil. Some plants such as annuals never develop deep roots. We are never compared to annuals in Scripture. Annuals die when winter comes. New ones are planted in the spring. We are like a tree that survives winter and storms and floods. If something does strike us and we are cut down, new growth can come up from our roots.

The Word of God I will be speaking over myself this week will be: I will be "like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither" (Psalm 1:3, NIV).

And my blessing to you: "May you be rooted and established in God's love." **SH**

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