

## Love and Faith

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Taylor Houser / Devotional

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Happy Friday everyone, and good morning. This Sunday at church we celebrated the Holy Day of Pentecost. Fifty days (as the Greek name implies) after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, that promised Helper, descended upon the apostles. On that day with witnesses from manifold nations, the Spirit provided miracles that testified to the power and authority of Christ. But of all the miracles and gifts of the Spirit, there's one that stands above the rest: our faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor Steve spoke about how faith is a gift of the Spirit in his sermon, even quoting Luther's Small Catechism on the topic. This point cannot be overstated. Without God first reaching out to us, we could never come to Christ under our own power. Paul says it plainly in [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

And that leads to me to the passage I would like us to think about today. More of Paul's writing, just a chapter later in [Ephesians 3:14-19](#) "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory *he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit* in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

God gives us not just our faith in Him through His Spirit, but our very ability to appreciate and understand the scope of His love. And Paul says here that he prays to God for an increase in this among those at the church in Ephesus. A prayer that should be echoed loudly in our midst, especially in these days of strife and enmity. In the days where the love of many has grown cold, we need to feel and embrace God's love all the more, to lean on His inexhaustible font of love and mercy all the more. And so we should be praying for God's Spirit to empower us personally as individuals, corporately as a church, and universally as fellow image bearers of God to feel that love.

Lord God, Heavenly Father, we pray that you pour out your Holy Spirit on us and soften our hearts to you. Help us to feel the love you have for all your children. Let us go about our day knowing in full confidence that the love of Christ, which He showed for the world on the cross, truly surpasses every ill of the current age. Help us and empower us to live by your love, O God, and to love one another as you have first loved us.