



Sermon Notes: September 6, 2015

# Unimaginable Impact

14 of 14 from the teaching series "The Messiah's Community"  
Ephesians 3:20-21 • Pastor Paul Bradford

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## Ephesians 3:20-21

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

### The Tale of the Three Trees

Three little trees dream of what they will be someday - a treasure chest, a fine ship fit for kings, a hilltop beacon pointing to God. All three are cut down and used for purposes far from what they had envisioned for themselves. However, by the end of the story, it is clear that the way they were used is not only exactly what they dreamed of, but better, because they were used in the way that God wanted them to be used. The first tree was made into a manger, at first used to feed animals, but ultimately serving as a bed for baby Jesus - the greatest treasure that could be held. The second tree was made into a fishing boat, useful for only mundane tasks, but it was the boat Jesus stood in to calm the waters - this boat carried the true King. The third tree was cut into planks, tossed into a pile, and was seemingly forgotten, until one day it was made into the cross upon which Jesus died - and now when people think of that third tree, they think of God. (you can view a reading of the story at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjIOViJIM3U>)

### We need to align our expectations with God's Word

- *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us* - Paul turns from talking about God's love to God's power, from limitless love to limitless power, for only God's power can enable God's people to know and express God's love.
- *immeasurably* - this is an amazing word, one Paul coined - it is found no place else in the New Testament or Greek literature. It is a Greek word meaning *exceedingly, beyond measure*, prefaced with 2 prepositions meaning *beyond* and *over*. Trying to capture the meaning of this word, scholars have suggested translations such as *beyond everything we ask or imagine, vastly more than all we ask of imagine, and infinitely more than all we ask or imagine*.
- But, how can God give me more than I could ask or imagine? I can imagine some pretty incredible things!
  - 1st, there is a difference between reality and fantasy - daydreaming is not comprehending. The reality of God's work in the life of a person who walks in faith will be greater than he or she could ever comprehend.
  - 2nd, the unseen things that last forever are more important than the temporary things we can see.
- We need to have Biblical expectations
  - "Perhaps the greatest danger of all for Christian people is the danger of understanding the Scriptures in the light of their own experiences. We should not interpret Scripture in the light of our experiences, but we should examine our experiences in the light of the teaching of the Scripture." (Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jone)

### In all we do, our passion must be to bring glory to God

- *to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.* - We need to know why we seek the Fullness of the Spirit. The reason we seek the fullness of the Spirit is so that we might love and glorify God. (*see 2 Corinthians 4:6-7*)

### Our Response

As you live faithfully by grace, expect God to do great things through you for his glory.