

The perfect guy is a stock character from lots of stories. He might look different depending on girl and the situation. Here's a few examples. [Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy](#) from Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice* is chivalrous and dignified, considerate and romantic, the perfect guy for the 19th century, the perfect guy for Elizabeth Bennet. [Jim Halpert](#) from the *Office* is cool and funny and relatable, the perfect guy for 2010, the perfect guy for Pam Beesly. [Noah Calhoun](#) from Nicholas Sparks' book and movie *The Notebook* is dedicated, romantic, good looking, the perfect guy, period.

There's a reason we keep writing stories about the perfect guy. When the girl meets him her heart is full in a way that's amazing, but also vaguely familiar. Something deep inside all of us is longing for that feeling.

But all those characters are fictional. In real life, brides and grooms, boyfriends and girlfriends, even friendships have a lot more ups and downs and awkward moments. I know. I just got married. Rachel and I have been married 6 months so we are definitely still in the honeymoon stage. If there's ever a time I can convince her that I'm the perfect guy, it's now! So I tried. [Here's how it went.](#)

No surprise here. Your pastor isn't perfect. Neither are you. But the Bible's claim is that there is a perfect man, who loves perfectly, Jesus. The Bible claims that the longing in our heart is fully satisfied by Jesus. That's why we've been asking, What Child is This? Today we see that he is the heavenly bridegroom. You saw that in our Old Testament reading "**As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you**" (Isaiah 61:5).

The verses for today's sermon don't use the metaphor of Jesus being a groom, but they are all about his perfect love. We're going to use these verse to *Get to Know the Perfect Groom*. Here are the verses:

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, 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. ²⁰ 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, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

This is a prayer that your heart be filled up by Jesus. There's a good reason we need to ask for God's help with this. We need God's help because on our own we'll try to fill up our hearts with anything other than Jesus!

A lot of people try to fill up their hearts with romance. In fact, one side effect of all those perfect movie characters are headlines like this: "Want To become Ryan Gosling from the Notebook? Your girl wants you to, so read this." Many people want to find a real version of these fictional perfect spouses. I have a friend who bounces from boyfriend to boyfriend, always sure that the next one will be her savior! She's consistently disappointed.

But maybe you're more like me, I didn't really look to romance to fill up my heart. True confessions, I had to do some research to find out why these characters were the perfect guy. Maybe you try to fill up your heart with achievements, doing more at work, doing better at the gym, doing better in school, getting more recognition. How's that going for you? Do you feel perfectly fulfilled? If anyone would could feel filled up by accomplishments, it would be Tom Brady. But [here's how it's working out for him](#). Tom Brady wishes he knew why he felt so empty. Ephesians chapter 3 has the answer. We only fill up our hearts by getting to know the perfect groom.

You, however are listening to this sermon. And a lot of church Mount Olive members already know that church fills you up in a way that nothing else can. But we church people have our own danger. We're often looking for ways in church that we can fill up our hearts by our love for Jesus. So we think, if I pray enough my heart will be full. If I read my Bible enough, my heart will be full. If I enroll in enough Bible classes my heart will be full. And in a sense that could be true, but be careful. We church people try to fill up our own hearts by what we do for Jesus. That's not what the Apostle

Paul prayed for in Ephesians 3. He prayed that God would fill up our hearts by showing us more what Jesus is doing for us.

You can picture it this way. Picture your heart as an empty cup that needs to be filled. All the world around you, the people, the experiences, they all hold pitchers to fill up your heart. But their pitchers are filled with water that hasn't been purified. You can fill up your heart with it, and it will help for a little while but instead of leaving you satisfied, it will leave you sick. And in your hand you hold a pitcher of dirty water, but all that you do will leave you sick and unsatisfied. But we have a Savior, who can take pitchers of untreated water and turn them into wine. Jesus has the pitcher that can fill your heart.

So let's get to know the perfect groom. Paul prays for three things so that we might have full hearts today, 1) that Christ would dwell in our hearts, 2) that we would know the dimensions of Christ's love, 3) that his love would fill us up.

First, he prays that "**Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.**" This is that amazing Bible teaching that, of course, God is everywhere so he is with everyone. But those who have faith in him, who trust him, he lives with us in a special way, every day, with no days off.

I was talking to one of our members last week who was married for 64 years. Her husband is in heaven now, but she told me that toward the end of his life he had so many needs. But she still lived with him. She was taking care of his every need every day, no days off and it was exhausting. I asked her what kept her motivated. You know what she said? "He's my husband. That's just what you do." That's what Jesus' love is like. He lives with us every day taking care of our needs, no days off. Why? Because he loves us. That's just what he does.

Paul also prays that we "**may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.**" You imagine Jesus as a husband and his love is so wide you can never escape it. But maybe in this metaphor, you feel like a runaway bride. There is no distance you could travel to outrun your Savior, his love is so long. Maybe you've been focused on yourself and your accomplishments and your

happiness, you can never think so highly of yourself that Jesus doesn't love you, his love is so high. Then there's the flip side. In your dark moments there is no sadness so grave, no depression so deep, no sin so dark that Jesus doesn't love you, so deep is his love.

In fact even if you imagine all that with me, you still can't imagine how much Jesus loves you. Paul prays that you would, "**know this love that surpasses knowledge.**"

Only this incomprehensible love, only the perfect groom can fill your heart. But notice he doesn't just fill you up until you are full. Paul prays that "**You may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**" If the cup in your heart is one size, the pitcher God's pouring from is way bigger! And after your heart is as full as it can get, God keeps on pouring. So you start to get the idea of what the psalmist was talking about when he says, "**my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.**"

Will you dream with me for a minute? What if our prayers looked like Paul's in Ephesians 3? What if we prayed that God would fill our hearts with the love of Jesus? Can you imagine if everyone at Mount Olive was so full of Jesus' love that we were all in the business of giving more than needing? Can you imagine what this place would be like if we all put others ahead of ourselves? Can you imagine how much patience we would show? Can you imagine how much love would grow between us if we knew the perfect love of Jesus better?

Maybe those are just crazy dreams. Maybe that's too much to ask on this side of heaven. Maybe we can't imagine what that kind of love would be like. But then again, we are praying to "**the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.**"

You know, when I interviewed Rachel, she said that I'm not a perfect man, but she loves me just the way I am. Can you believe that? God is too good to me. But I think I know why she loves me. She loves me because God has answered this prayer from Ephesians 3. She loves me because Christ dwells in my heart through faith. He dwells in yours too, you know. He loves you more than you can imagine. Let's keep praying for each other like this. Let's keep getting to know the love of the perfect groom. Amen.