

Ephesians 3:14-21

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[0 : 0 0] Now, as we mentioned last Lord's Day evening when we looked at this chapter, chapter 3 here, the first verse we have, For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, then departs off on a tangent.

And everything from verse 2 on to verse 13 is almost like a parenthesis. Paul is almost distracted. He goes off on a handle, not because what he has to say is unimportant, but because he does kind of depart from the thread of what he was meaning to say originally.

But he does return to it then in verse 14, and verse 14 takes up immediately where verse 1 leaves off. For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, and so on.

So this is what he prays for them. And what he says for this cause, we have to look at the previous chapter, the ending of it, where he talks about at the end of chapter 2, the building together of the Lord's people, whether Jew or Gentile or any particular nation under heaven, they are built together into this living temple of the Lord.

Living stones fitted together, every stone with its place. Every stone filling a vital and unique role, and each one as important as the other.

[1 : 3 3] Built upon the foundation, verse 20 of chapter 2, of the apostles and prophets. In other words, the apostles and the prophets have the same message, whether in the Old Testament or in the New, they are proclaiming Christ.

They are pointing to Christ. Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto one holy temple in the Lord.

It's not just the sense of, as the stones are placed, in a sort of static or dead building, as a builder would place it. You see the edifice rising up. It's not just in that sense.

It's a sense of it being an organic living thing, that is growing in and of itself, or in and of the Lord's own building. In whom ye also are building together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

This is the purpose, that God would dwell within his people, and that they themselves, then, would show forth that outwardly. And that is what he's saying here in verse 17 as well, of chapter 3.

[2 : 3 3] That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that he being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, and so on. So for this cross, which is important to him, this unity of the Lord's people, he bows his knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we could take a brief aside here to think, well, okay, he bows his knees in prayer. We read of Paul doing that, of course, in Acts 20, verse 36, where he takes his leave, or who?

Of the Ephesians. Again, this was part of his posture in prayer, which is perfectly spiritual. It's right. It's perfectly good. As we bow our knees before the Lord, we lower ourselves, as it were, in his sight.

The traditional Jewish method of praying was to stand with arms outstretched and the palms upwards, as it were, empty before the Lord to demonstrate or to indicate their helplessness and complete need of the Lord.

And Jesus, of course, makes reference to this in Mark chapter 11, verse 25, where he says, when you stand praying, forgive if you have ought against any.

[3 : 4 3] You know, and likewise, he uses the parable of the Republican and the Pharisee in the temple. They were standing praying in the temple. So, and it is almost certainly from verses like these that our own denomination's traditional posture in prayer derives.

But equally scriptural, which is, again, the posture of some other denominations like the Episcopalians or whatever, traditionally, is to kneel in prayer. And we find that, for example, when Solomon dedicates the temple in 1 Kings 8, verse 54, again, 2 Chronicles, chapter 6 and verse 13, Solomon is kneeling.

Our Lord himself knelt upon his knees in the Garden of Gethsemane before his father. It's comparatively rare, the most popular method of posture and prayer nowadays in public worship tends to be sitting.

And yet that is probably the posture for which is least scriptural authority. David is the only example that we can bring to mind here. 2 Samuel, chapter 7, verse 8, when after Nathan has spoken to David about how he would not be the one to build the temple, he went into the tabernacle of the Lord and sat before the Lord and then prayed.

So we have to say that all of these different postures are perfectly scriptural, but what Paul is doing here is not simply kneeling down in a formal sense. The sense of, I bow my knees unto the Father, the sense is of prostrating himself before the Lord, collapsing, as it were, before the Lord.

[5 : 13] I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is pleading with the Lord for what he is asking now. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fatherhood of God, not just of our Lord himself, but of course of all his children throughout the world, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Now, the word that is translated as named here, and some take it to be, that it means that all the families in heaven and earth, of human fatherhood and so on, is a copy of.

We are, if you like, an imitation of the true fatherhood of God, the true family of the Lord's people.

Now, the family, every family in heaven and earth, obviously takes its origin from the Lord.

He is, in one sense, the Father of all. There's two senses in which the word, which we now have translated as Father, can be taken. One is in the sense of mere paternity.

Paternity is something which a child, for example, will have from its biological father, whether or not they've ever known him. A child may be conceived, for example, out of wedlock of a father who's completely absent somewhere else after the event, and may grow up never knowing him, and be adopted by somebody else, or not as the case may be, they may never know their father, but nevertheless, their biological paternity is from him.

[6 : 42] But also there's the sense of fatherhood, which is the involved, present, nurture, rearing, bringing up of the child through the active involvement fatherhood.

This is the sense in which God is a father to his children. You could say that in one sense, in the sense that he is the creator of all, you could say that his paternity, he's the father of all, in that sense you might say, chapter 4, verse 6, one God and father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all.

It doesn't just mean his own children, but he's the creator of all things. His paternity is from him in all things, because he spoke, and it was brought into being. But in the sense of presence, and nurture, and bringing them up in his love, and relationship, his fatherhood is really exclusively for his own family, his own children.

The whole family in heaven and earth is named, while we've talked on other occasions about how important the name is in scripture, it's not just like a luggage label, it's the whole character, and identity, and personality, all bound up there.

We don't want to get too much into that, that just now. The whole family in heaven and earth is named, heaven and earth, does that mean people who are already gone before us into glory?

[8 : 04] Well it can mean that. There's also a sense in which, as some commentators take it, that the family in heaven includes the angels, the holy angels, that they are in one sense, our brethren.

Now obviously the Lord Jesus became human flesh, so he is regarded in scripture, Hebrews for example, as our elder brother, but also he's described in scripture as the angel that went before the Lord's people in the days before he came in the flesh and led them through the wilderness, and so on.

Now some places in scripture the angels are implied, or referred to as, the sons of God, notably in the book of Job, it's rare, but Job is one example.

Chapter 1 verse 6, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. Obviously it means the angels. Chapter 2 verse 1, again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

Chapter 38 verse 7, talks about when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The sense, the context, clearly refers to the angels.

[9 : 18] The job is rare in referring to the angels as sons of God. A stronger case would be made in the book of Revelation, where we read in chapter 19, verse 10, when the angel is revealing things to John, and I fell at his feet to worship him, and he said unto me, see thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God. Now you could say, I'm the servant of your brethren, that might be what he means there, but the sense is really, I am part of your brethren. The angel is part of the Lord, the brethren of the Lord's people, then there's a sense in which they are part of his family too.

Chapter 22 verse 9, then said he unto me, see thou do it not, for I am of thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God.

It could, as we say, just mean, I am your fellow servant, I am the servant of your brethren, but more likely in the context, it means, I am part of the family too. I am part of the Lord's family too.

Every, the whole family in heaven and in earth, the family of the angels, the family of the redeemed. The Lord is the father of them all, and he names them each one.

[10 : 40] The Lord knows each individual by name. You could argue that he gives each individual their name, and if he names the stars, and the stars are sometimes taken in scripture to be sort of metaphorically symbolizing the angels, then we can take it, if every angel has a name, which it probably does, because when people say, tell us what your name is, the angel doesn't say, I don't have a name.

I'm just an angel. He says, why do you ask my name, seeing it is secret? The Lord knows the name of each one of his children. So I don't want to take too much time on that, but just to recognize the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

The Lord has all of his children. They are like his main individual family members. The whole family in heaven and earth is named.

There's something else here that Paul wants to convey as well, and that is that while he's been talking in chapter two about the unity that there is between the Gentile, former pagans, part of the church, and the Jews who were part of the church, of course, as well, those believing Jews who believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel, what is true in that localized context in Ephesus is true also in a worldwide context.

The world itself is a fractured world. It is a world constantly at war with itself. There is constant divisions and fightings and victories and nation against nation and one religion against another and even within families, even within our own hearts.

[12 : 20] There is the conflict of the good and evil that is at war there. And what the Lord has come to do is to bring peace where there was warfare, to bring unity where there was division and fractured conflict, and to bind up that breaking heart of humanity.

Not everyone will agree to it. Not everyone will accept and believe it, but that is why he has come. Because when soon entered into the world, man became separated from God.

And once man becomes separated from God, all other kinds of fractures and divisions set in as well in every possible means of division and subdivision and conflict, and as I say, even within our own hearts.

The individual personality is not one unbroken unity. There is lots of different aspects to it. Sometimes they are in conflict with each other and we have inner turmoil as well.

When the Lord has come and called his people to be one with him, he is seeking to begin to build that process of unity again, of causing his church, his people, his family, his bride, to be a living example of the unity and the peace which he himself has brought between God and man and that they are to have with each other.

[13 : 52] So when Paul talks in Corinthians, for example, about, you know, the foot cannot say to the hand, I don't have any need of you, and the finger can't say to the ear, you know, I've got no need of you. He's not just saying, you know, the body needs to function all together.

He's saying, look, you can no longer be at war with each other. You can no longer be in conflict with each other. It's all right to have sort of, you know, loving and humorous family rivalries or maybe like when you're playing a board game together or playing some other activity.

It's okay to sort of be competitive and have rivalry but at the end of the day, you are family. At the end of the day, you're one in Christ. It's all right to love your nation.

It's all right to be patriotic but it's not okay for us to think our nation is better than anybody else simply because of virtue of who we are. There are plenty of Scottish or British people of whom we would be ashamed because of the nature of their character and what they do and the cruelty of their lives and the evil that they practice.

There is nothing uniquely virtuous in our own nation or in our own country as opposed to any other. The only redeeming characteristic in the human race regardless of where we may be geographically or racially or whatever is Christ.

[15 : 10] And where Christ is present, that humanity is restored and that relationship is healed and it is healed across the races and across the nationalities and across all the former divisions.

Yes, they still exist in the same way as the distinctions of country and family and the different names of children in a family all exist. And just like the different personalities of children in a family or mom and dad and uncle so and so and auntie this and that and so on.

They're all different personalities and they all have different gifts and abilities and characteristics and they're unique but they are one in that family in the same way as the Lord's family are called to be one.

That doesn't mean cobbling together different denominations so that we can all have organizational unity but it means that we are one in the spirit. It means that we recognize that unity that is in Christ. A born again Christian can recognize a born again Christian in another branch of the church just within a five minute conversation just in terms of where their priorities are who they love to talk about who is in their heart they can tell within a short conversation of where their priorities lie and likewise they can tell somebody who may belong to their own denomination and may have belonged to it all their life and they can tell they may be church going or they may have a certain allegiance but Christ is not in their heart and they will know that you can tell that but what the Lord seeks to do is not only to offer but to bring about this unity in his family for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is made this family which again at chapter 2 verse 20 is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets Christ himself being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together grows into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you also are building together for an habitation of God through the Spirit for this reason he bows his knees before the Father that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that he being rooted and grounded in his love now interestingly perhaps you may wonder why verse 17 for example appears to be split into a bit that might seem to fit more easily into verse 18 why isn't it why isn't that he being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend why isn't that all part of verse 18 well the reason is because in the original

[17 : 58] Greek verse 17 in fact fits together the you being rooted and grounded in love applies in the original to Christ dwelling in your heart by faith that's why you're rooted and grounded rooted being a metaphor for a tree and its deep roots grounded being a metaphor for laying the foundation a building metaphor in that sense and that is a reference to Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith that you may be able to comprehend with all saints so that's where it lives that's where it really applies being rooted and grounding in love because Christ dwells in your hearts by faith but what he is being asked is to grant according to the riches of his glory being strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man Christ made one of ours by faith some commentators say the inner man of what is this Greeks may have understood it as three things reason and conscience and will now the reason of course is that by which we understand that well yes this does actually make sense you know the fact that

God created the heavens may have that makes sense it does not make sense that it all kind of emerged from a primordial sludge by aliens coming and zapping a pool of mud that happened to have all the different chemicals and all the necessary bits and pieces and it all just began to build and evolve from that science doesn't work that way knowledge of science proves that it doesn't happen that way that the normal way of the world is decay and breaking down not building up it doesn't happen like that the very very least that actual fact scientific fact that knowledge points to is intelligent design that is the very least that the actual unbiased facts will point to and at the end of the day that intelligent design of course is expressed most perfectly in the creation the creation that the Lord created the heavens and the earth that's the sense that is the reason it makes sense when we fit God into the picture without that it doesn't make sense it's like you know

I've used the illustration in the past it's like somebody trying to keep their car back together again if there's something wrong with it a professional mechanic comes along and says oh the engine's engine's working on it it doesn't sound quite right and what are all these bits here oh these are all the bits that when I fitted the engine back together again I didn't have any place to put this I don't know where they are meant to go but still it's working okay you know obviously it's not okay if all these significant bits of the engine and pieces of machinery have been left out you may get it to run for a little while but it's going to break down pretty soon and we leave God out of the equation and what happens it all breaks down which is what is happening in our world and has been happening ever since man rebelled against God there is the reason there is the conscience which is also part of the inner man that by which you know even if we are heathens even if we are completely godless we have a sense of yeah well I shouldn't actually have done that and that was a wrong thing to do we don't know why we think something is right or wrong we don't necessarily have a reason to ground our opinions or thoughts of what's okay and what's not okay it may change with the passing years but we have conscience planted within us that's part of the inner man and the will so the reason the conscience and the will and we may think well I know what I want to do and I'd like to be a better person

I just haven't got the will to be able to overcome these urges or the temptation to sin or whatever the will sometimes the you know that desire Paul says in Romans 7 to will is present with me but how to perform that which I desire I find not the will the reason the conscience of the will as I say some commentators regard that as part of the inner man it is that which we cannot express outwardly you know in Joshua in chapter 2 at verse 9 where Rahab is talking to the spies and she said I know that the Lord hath given you the land and that your terror is fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you now there was no logical reason why a bunch of runaway slaves albeit a very large number should cause the inhabitants of Jericho safe behind their walls to faint and to have their hearts melt like wax why because the Lord had put that fear into their inner man and even the strength of their walls and even their military power caused them to be afraid of the Israelites why is it that Saul after all these victories throughout 40 years of his reign suddenly when it came to his last battle he was afraid and his strength failed and fainted within him and he became you know almost like a coward I don't mean to miscall him in that sense but at the end his strength failed the inner man he was still as strong and powerful as he'd ever been but the inner man failed now this is the sense of it he might with might by his spirit in the inner man our inner man whether we are male or female the inner person has not got power in and of itself we don't have strength to effect our salvation to change our hearts but by the spirit of Christ our hearts can be changed we strengthen with might by his spirit in the inner man and we are changed by what his spirit does that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that ye being rooted and grounded in love you see if Christ dwells there that's what he's talking about it's not just a passing fleeting visit it's not like oh yeah well of course I believe in Jesus and that's fine and I believe this bit that I read in the Bible okay that's that done and dusted move on to the next thing it's not like he is a visitor in your home it's like he dwells there and when he dwells there it is much harder then to depart from him just to give you a worldly example supposing you were I'd say afflicted with the sin of gossip and you wanted to gossip about somebody you went to somebody's house and you thought let's have a good old blether about this person sit down with a cut of key and just chat about them and just have a good gossip and three or four people were there and then when you come into the kitchen there's the very person standing there with your neighbor or whatever and hey oh hello nice to see you and are you going to then able to chat about them are you going to then engage in this sin of gossip because they're right there no you can't you're not going to be able to do it because they're right there if somebody has a an adulterous thought or an adulterous desire but his wife is right there he can't do it because she's right there and when Christ is right there dwelling in your heart by faith then it's not that we never sin of course we do but it is that much harder to do when he dwells there he's not just a passing visitor it's not just a an opportune visitor happens to have coincided with when you're there he dwells there he lives there that's his address and he dwells there Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith because you believe in him and therefore he dwells there and when he dwells there of course you will still fall of course you will still have occasions of sin but it is that much harder to do and the strength of your will in the inner man or woman is that much greater because

[25 : 57] Christ is right there now of course when people sin in the New Testament sometimes they sin in the very presence of Jesus sometimes the fallacies or scribes plotted against him when

he was right there but it is that much harder to do you have to be that much more brazen you have to be a real enemy of the Lord to want to do that Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith means that you are then able to be rooted downwards and grounded in your foundation to build upwards rooted and grounded in love what love the love of Christ when the love of Christ constrains us that is the reason why we are motivated to keep his commandments instead of violate them why we are motivated to forgive our enemies and those who have wronged us why we are motivated to do the thing that is hard to do by nature but we are able to do by grace because the love of Christ constrains us and if we want to turn our back and say oh I want to do the thing that I want to do I want to just forget that and it just disappear and I want to not forgive I want to hold the grudge it's harder to do when Christ is right there dwelling there in your presence because that's where he lives he dwells in your hearts by faith that ye being rooted and grounded in love so when a storm comes along a tree with deep roots it may sway and bend this way and that way but it won't be blown over because its roots are deep and strong and a house that is grounded on the foundation of

Christ's love will not just be swept away when the floods come and the winds blow it is not built upon shifting sands of local opinion or on a passing flavor of the month it is rooted and grounded upon Christ grounded in his love God is love and when we are grounded in him we have that strong foundation and those deep roots but being grounded in Christ dwelling with him dwelling your hearts by faith you may be able to comprehend with all sense what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that you might be filled with all the fullness of God now obviously Paul is not saying well if you just love enough you understand all the extent and the depth and so on of the love of Christ it's rather like saying taking somebody to a great state of the world and saying look at this library isn't it amazing isn't it fantastic all these volumes of books so much learning so much amazing stuff here and the person who is showing them all these books they might be a great reader themselves they might have studied many of these volumes and they might have written books themselves but if the person were to say that's amazing have you read all these books and they're almost certainly the answer is going to be no they haven't read them all but that's their library this is their possession they have the opportunity to do if they had time and energy and if they had the ability to study and read all these books potentially they could because this is their library and they own every book in the place now here we have the love of Christ which is beyond our comprehension love which you know it's the song of Solomon in chapter 8 verse 6 tells us you know set me as a seal upon thy heart as a seal upon thine arm for love is strong as death jealousy as cruel as the grave the coals are of a coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame many waters cannot quench love neither can the floods drown it if a man would give all the substance of his hands for love it would utterly be condemned love in other words is stronger than death it's more powerful than the floods it is a burning coal so intense so hot is it it is that which cannot in a sense be contained or overcome because love essentially is of God and that is a love which desires its own God desires his own children to be holy his no jealousy as cruel as the grave the Lord is jealous over his children he desires then to love him in return that's what we're looking at this morning with Psalm 116 in verses 1 and 2 I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and it is a desire that we may be able to comprehend with all the sense what is the breadth and length and depth and height and know the love of Christ which passeth the knowledge that's not a contradiction in terms it's not that somehow oh well if we know it we understand every last detail we have read every book in the library no but you get a sense of the vastness of it one commentator has used the illustration of the cross how its upward arm points up to the heavens how high is the love of God the fact that it is rooted in the earth goes way down deep beyond what we can see in its cross arms point to the horizon on either side how broad and wide is the love of God ready to encompass sinners everywhere that's maybe a helpful illustration of course but it can only ever be a metaphor if we think of the love of

Christ breadth and length and depth and height we've looked at this you know in the past to extent but we can see what the scripture says about it we have in the love of Christ breadth Paul has been writing about how Jews and Gentiles together are both part of the body of Christ if they're believing in him all races all nations it is broad enough as in the broad shoulders of Christ who carries us for all the hurts and troubles of the world and encompassing sinners complete with their sins he invites us as we are to come before ever they turn and repent Christ loves them already he doesn't want them to stay as they are we looked at that this morning as well but he invites them he calls them he

loves them as they are Romans chapter 5 verse 8 but God commendeth his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us for whom then is this love shed abroad well it is to the poor or the brokenhearted the captives the no-hopers people like you and me in Luke chapter 4 remember what Jesus reads in the synagogue in Nazareth verses 18 and 19 the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he had anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind he has set at liberty them that are bruised to preach the acceptable year of the Lord the fractured broken conflicting nature of this world where the prince of this world delights in destruction in every direction Christ has come to put it back together and all who will have them and all who will receive them their hearts are broken into pieces he will bind them up and heal them if they are blind that they can't see he will open their eyes if they are defiled with the leprosy of sin he will cleanse them if they are poor and hopeless he will give them hope and make them rich this is a gospel this is a love which in its breadth extends to everyone sinners everywhere people like you and me and its length what is the length of the love of Christ from its length is from all eternity and to all eternity we think of what we saw in chapter 1 election, predestination

Christ has loved not simply since when we were conceived and born from the womb of our mothers not even since the fall but from all eternity truly he is the Alpha and the Omega he is the beginning and the end we read in Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 3 the Lord hath appeared of old unto me saying yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee and what if we read in John 15 verses 9 and 10 as the Father hath loved me so have I loved you now stop and think about that for a minute how has the Father loved Christ that is the greatest love that exists anywhere in heaven and earth between the Father and the Son and that's how the Lord loves us continue ye in my love if ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love and again at chapter 13 and verse 1 now of John now before the feast of Passover when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end now unto the end in the original again doesn't just mean until the end of the episode or the end of time it means to the utter extremity of love all that was possible the absolute outer extremity of love he loves them to that extent he loves them to the very end the absolute borders of love itself which of course have no borders if God is love that's how long that's how great is the love of Christ the length from all eternity to all eternity and the depth as well that we have here likewise in verse 18 what is the depth?

that is deeper than the deepest human sin we sometimes may think well the Lord can't love me if he knew what I had done if he knew the thoughts that I have what a filthy sinner I am he'd want nothing to do with me well he does know he knows how far you have fallen he knows how deep died is your sin we read in Deuteronomy 33 verse 27 the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say destroy them the enemy that would seek to drag you down to hell he will destroy because however low you have gone Christ has gone down lower he descended into hell that is the depth of the love of Christ greater than we can possibly comprehend Christ is himself prepared to undergo the experience of separation from his father for sinners in Job 11 we read verses 17 and I canst thou by searching find out God canst thou find out the almighty unto perfection it is as high as heaven what canst thou do deeper than hell what canst thou know the measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea and the height of Christ's love it is to glory itself it is higher than all your mountains of iniquity or doubt our love is inadequate to worship and it often waxes cold you know

[37 : 38] Matthew 24 verse 12 you read because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold that implies they had love at one time but it just grew up sometimes our love for Christ may do that but Christ's love to us never cools it never grows cold it reaches to the heights of glory itself to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God in other words it is greater than all we could ever comprehend the heights of heaven the vastness of the universe that the depths of hell itself is deeper than that it encompasses sinners of every nation and tribe and doubt none can say oh I'm beyond the reach of God who do you think you are really that you're somehow beyond the reach of the God who reaches into all eternity who reaches and fills the vastness of the universe you and I don't we're here we're time bound we are flesh in blood our supposed sins that are so deep and so dark

God can't possibly forgive him he can flick them away with a movement of his finger he knows you he knows the depth of your sin he knows the extent of your love or lack of it and still he loves you as you are but he doesn't want to leave you as you are he wants to invite you to be his and to be part of this fullness that fills the heavens and the earth that you might be filled with all the fullness of God now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think we might even insert there or even can think according to the power that worketh in us unto him be glorying the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without him there's that sense of vastness of eternity whatever it is that you want to ask of God but you're afraid to do so remember that his love is greater than all that we can ask or think exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think according to the power that worketh in us you should never be afraid to articulate your requests to God because he knows them already he's way ahead of you already he knows what's in your mind he knows what you want to say so you might as well say it to him because he knows what you want to say even if you can't put it into words he knows what's in your heart that question is whether or not we're prepared to give ourselves to him or not his love is already there for us broader and higher and deeper and wider and longer than anything you can imagine it's like if we were talking about knowledge it's saying yes I've read every book in this library not only have I read every book in this library

I can remember every page and I can tell you every word it's as though you could somehow digest the entirety of the internet and all the all the worldwide web that's there and every one of the millions of web pages that's there you know every word you know every page you can recite it all because your knowledge fills it we can't comprehend that God is greater than all of that and his love is vaster than anything you can imagine so this is what Paul is praying for that the Lord's people would be one in Christ and united in heart and spirit and soul and in body as one spiritual body together whether they're Jew or Gentile or Scottish or English or black or white or male or female you know like Galatians 3 28 says you know these divisions are not important in the eyes of God yes they distinguish us and we each have our different place where the stone fits in the temple the living temple and you can't put maybe this stone here round the corner in the other place we've each got our place we've each got our unique position but the Lord loves sinners like us exactly as we are but doesn't desire to leave us where we are that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that you might be filled with the fullness of God as nothing can take God's love away from you if you will have it yes he gives us the opportunity and the right to say no he gives us the chance to turn our back and to walk away if that's what we choose then remember what you're turning your back on and if your desire is for him there is nothing can keep you away remember what he says to the Romans where I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord let us pray we thank you we thank you we thank you we thank you we thank you for that verse let us pray we will we thank you we thank you for that we thank you let us pray as we thank you for that a sanctuary this God in Christ we are unruppin' we thank you