

Paul's prayer

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Date: 19 August 2018

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[0:00] From the outset, we're confronted with some of the most exalted, some of the most sublime, and some of the most spiritual prayer I think that we could possibly find in the whole of Scripture.

This section in Ephesians is truly, as one writer comments, a mountain peak of a Scripture. I think we're going to have to scale some spiritual heights this evening to get a sense of what Paul's saying and really get that deep, deep into our hearts.

As I was preparing this, I couldn't help feeling a real sense of inadequacy and almost inferiority as I compared my own prayer life to that of Paul's.

You can't help to feel some inadequacy. It's just so soaring. It's so majestic. Yet the Bible's full of examples of godly men and women praying.

And I don't think those examples are there to discourage us. And as I meditated on this word, as I chewed over it, as I prepared this sermon, actually it really spurred me on in my prayer life.

[1:07] And I found it a great encouragement. And my hope is that this evening, that we would see Christ afresh this evening, and this would be an encouragement to us. Just by way of context, just to remind ourselves, the church in Ephesus was in the midst of a godless city.

They were surrounded by idolatry. They had emperor worship. They had the worship of the cult of Diana and Artemis. They were most likely facing quite significant persecution for their faith.

They weren't having an easy life in the church. They probably would have experienced hostility.

There is likely to have been material hardship. And they knew what it was like to suffer for Christ.

So this isn't a church that was in the midst of a nice Christian culture. Things were difficult for the church in Ephesus. Yet in this prayer, we're able to see how Paul prays for a beleaguered and persecuted church.

And we're able to get a sense of what his priorities are for them. Now, there are likely to have been many practical and physical needs for the church in Ephesus. But do you notice that Paul's dominating concern, his primary concern, is for their spiritual well-being?

[2:25] Now, I don't think Paul doesn't care about their practical and material needs. Of course, we know he does. But it's interesting that in those conditions, primarily, Paul is always concerned for the spiritual well-being of his people.

And when you read this, you can't help thinking, well, Paul's prayer is so deeply pastoral. It's like his heart's brimming over with love for his people and for God.

There's something very affectionate in Paul's prayers. Paul's not an ivory tower or armchair theologian. You can't imagine him in some seminary in a kind of leather-dimpled chair with his library behind him so much.

He's not peddling cold, arid theology. He's in prison. This is a man that's suffering. He's in prison for the sake of Christ.

And we get a sense of this intimate and passionate and love for God and this church. And it's so palpable. And I think these passages, perhaps they're telling us how we can pray.

[3:27] And getting us to think a little bit about what our concern should be for one another and for ourselves. So what I'd like to do is really, if you would just rivet your eyes on the text, it lends itself very nicely to a sermon in a sense because you've got the points as you go through them.

And I'm going to work through all the points there. I'm going to start with verses 14 to 15. I've just simply headed this Paul's praying. Paul's praying.

He starts with, for this reason. Now, it's possible that Paul is picking up the train of thought that was interrupted. If you go to the beginning of chapter 3, verse 1, you notice he said, for this reason, then.

And he seems to go off on a tangent and returns in verse 14. So if that's the case, the reason he's referring to is the astounding work of God in uniting the Jews and Gentiles in Christ through the cross.

He's creating one new man and reconciling them both to God, killing the hostility. And through Christ, they now have access in one spirit to the Father.

[4:35] They are members of the household of God. And they're being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Now, it's also possible that he's referring to the more immediate context.

If you look at 3 and then you look at verses 7 to 13, he's reflecting on his calling as an apostle. He's been set apart as an apostle for the Gentiles.

And he's proclaiming these unsearchable riches of Christ. He speaks of this eternal and cosmic scope of God's redemptive purposes in Christ, in whom they now have boldness, they have access, and they have confidence through faith.

And he's saying to them, therefore, you're not to lose heart because I'm suffering in prison as an apostle. Now, it's possible that he's saying because of this responsibility, because of this privilege, this weightiness of my apostleship, I'm praying.

Now, I actually don't think, I looked at the commentaries and there's differing views, but I actually don't think we have to necessarily choose. I think it's possible that both these reasons unite in Paul's thinking.

[5:44] And they're the grounds propelling him to pray. And I think there's a lesson for us here. Whatever reason you choose to take, we see how God's revelation is of such great importance when we come to pray.

It's of such great motivation. And isn't it true, in a way, that we have our for this reason? Don't we? We know the unsearchable riches of Christ, don't we?

We know the truths of the gospel. So when we come to pray, we have this sense of for this reason that fills us and should inflame us and overwhelm us. And I think my question to myself, to you people of God, is that the case?

Are our hearts truly inflamed? Are we captured by the great truths of the gospel, leading and propelling us to pray like Paul? I was also considering, if Paul's praying as a result of his apostleship, do we pray fervently before we embark on any kind of ministry, whatever that is?

We dare not pray before we embark on ministry, regardless of what that is. He says, I bow my knee before the father from whom, the ESV says every family, I think the NIV says his family in heaven and on earth is named.

[7:01] Paul goes on to show his reverence and submission to God through his posture of bowing his knee. Now, I don't think this is a specific prescription for us to bow our knee every time I pray, but I think there is something in this about the importance of our posture.

What we do with our bodies isn't inconsequential in the kingdom of God. And I think when we come to pray, there are times, there are appropriate times, where we may feel we need to just get on our knees.

You know, in the quiet of our rooms. And sometimes posture can help. I think this also, on a deeper level, shows Paul's absolute reverence, submission, humility, and his earnestness.

Now, according to the commentators, the Jews would have largely, they would have stood when they were praying. And if you recall, the Pharisee and the tax collector in the temple standing.

And I'm not sure if they exclusively stood, but apparently that was quite normative for the Jews. And to be on one's knees was a show of real, exceptional earnestness and humility.

[8:07] So I think we really get that from this text here. So I'm not saying for one minute, posture is the most important thing. We need to give undue attention to that. But I'm saying it still has some importance.

But obviously, it's the frame of our hearts that's the most significant thing. But when we look at this text, we do think of Philippians too, don't we? And we think that there'll be one day, one day where, before the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Now, he comes before the Father. And we come before the Father.

Our Father. And we have a Father because we're like children, aren't we? We're dependent, aren't we? We're weak. We're needy.

We're so weak and needy. And we desperately need him. Now, Ephesians 2.18 says that for through him, being for through Christ, we have access in one spirit to the Father.

[9:13] So Paul is showing us that we can come to him with confidence. And I think when he says, from whom every family on heaven and earth is named, I would agree with the NIV.

I think that would be my take, that he means the totality of the redeemed, whether they are Jew or Gentile. And I think if you back up and if you look at the ends of chapter two, it does seem to fit, where Paul's been talking of this wonderful union of Jew and Gentile now.

Then he's the father of both the Jew and the Gentile. And they have both been brought together into this one family with one father. Do you see the Trinitarian shape of Paul's prayers?

He often prays to the Father through the Son by the Spirit. Not exclusively, but often. And I was reading Paul's epistles and looking for that kind of Trinitarian flavor and shape.

And you can really pick it out of the scripture. And I think it's really helpful for us because you often think, what's the practicality of the Trinity? Practicality. What does that really mean? Well, I think in our prayer life, there's a practicality to it.

[10:13] We're praying to the Father through the Son by the power and working of the Spirit. So there's something practical there that we see in Paul's praying.

My next point is strengthened with power. Strengthened with power. I want to look actually at the four elements of this prayer in some detail. You'll see if you kind of divide it up, there's kind of four nice elements here that we'll go through.

So Paul is praying that they would be strengthened in their inner being so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. Now we can see from chapter one that these Ephesians, they've been blessed with every spiritual blessing.

These were Christians. They're born again. They're in Christ. Paul often uses the terms in Christ. And what he's saying is that they have that union and communion with Christ.

So he's not praying for their conversion. He's not praying for them to be born again. But here he's concerned with them growing and maturing and reaching their full spiritual potential.

[11:19] Now although they're believers and they have Christ dwelling in them, they already have Christ dwelling in them. But the Christ dwelling in them, it's not a static thing. It's a thing of degrees.

It's an organic thing. It's growing. Christ in them is a growing life in them. He wants them to be more fruitful. He's urging them to hunger for more and not just to rest on what they have.

And interestingly, again, do you notice he doesn't focus on their circumstances? He doesn't focus on their kind of outward needs. But he's concerned with their inner being. In some versions they call it the inner man, I think in the old version.

Now these other things, they're not unimportant and they do warrant our prayers. However, the state of our inner being, our hearts, our relationship with God, what we do in the quiet of our hearts when we're home, no one else is around, no one can see you, what's your thought life, what's going on in your hearts, that's what God's interested in.

And Paul here is saying that he wants that strengthened and it's of primary importance because if that's right, and we know from experience, don't we, if that's right, other things, regardless of what's going on around us, we can manage that.

[12:38] So this inner being, it means our new nature, it's our regenerate person, the divine life of Christ in our hearts. It's the core of our being, the heart of our being.

It's deep, deep within. It's not a surface awareness. It's not a mere outward formalism. It's what Paul speaks of in Romans 7.22 when he says, for I delight in the law of God in my inner being.

He says in 2 Corinthians 4.16 where he says, our inner self is being renewed day by day. You see this kind of progressive sense here. Do you notice that there are two persons of the Trinity involved in this kind of maturing and growing process?

If you look carefully at the text, you can see that it says, well, you can see that it's God the Son and God the Spirit working together. I think Paul is here. He's not speaking of two separate works. But he's using two ways of describing the same thing. So when it says that the Spirit strengthens us, Christ dwells in our hearts. You see that? The Spirit's strengthening.

[13:51] Christ is dwelling. Heart and inner being, they're synonymous terms. They have the same meaning for Paul. I think this, this unity and purpose and mission of the Spirit in Christ is really important actually.

I'd like to just look at this for a little while. Now after Christ's death and resurrection, when he ascended to heaven, he's seated bodily at the right hand of God.

Right hand means the place of prominence, the place of exaltation. Now he's seated in heaven bodily. So he can't be dwelling in us through his body.

We don't believe in the ubiquity of the body here. So he can only dwell in our hearts by the Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit's been operating since eternity past, since in the council of God, way back in eternity, back and back.

And you see the Holy Spirit all through redemptive history. But when Christ ascended, he was inaugurated as king and head of the church. It was like a coronation.

[14:51] And he poured out the Spirit on his church. Christ was talking about that earlier. And he's poured out the Spirit, that same Holy Spirit, but he's now the Spirit of Christ.

If you look at other passages, Romans 8, 9 to 11, Paul says, You are, however, not in the flesh, but you're in the Spirit. In fact the Spirit of God dwells in you, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Do you see this? He's saying the Spirit of God, but he's also saying the Spirit of Christ in you.

We have Christ in us. John 14, 17, Jesus says, The Spirit of truth dwells with you and will be in you. Then in verse 18, he says, I will come to you.

And in verse 20, he says, In that day, I will know that I am in my heart and you in me and I in you. So we have this lovely doctrine of Christ in us.

[16:01] Now, just a bit of a personal example. A couple of years ago when I started coming to Calvary, on my way to church one evening, I bumped into a guy that goes to a very large charismatic church near here who we got chatting and he asked me, Where are you going to church now?

And I said, Calvary. And he said, Oh, but they don't have the Spirit. Now, I know we laugh now, but actually at the time, my heart sank.

My heart sank because one, I think that's really divisive actually, but I don't think he was meaning to be divisive. I think what he meant was that in our assemblies we don't speak in tongues and have prophecies and pictures. That was what he meant.

But secondly, my heart sank because it kind of showed a really impoverished understanding of the Spirit. Very impoverished. Just equating the Spirit with kind of extraordinary manifestations.

But when we grasp that this is the Spirit of Christ who is in us, it just transforms things. See, we need to be careful with the Trinity that we're not just kind of chopping up the persons of the Trinity.

[17:06] Christ and the Holy Spirit, they work in perfect unity. We see that in the Scripture, don't we? I love, this is an example that's so well used, so forgive me, many of you have probably heard this if you've heard a lot of sermons, but I think it's well used because it's good.

It's often the way. J.I. Packett in his book is Keeping in Step with the Spirit. He talks about, he's going to a preaching engagement one evening and he's preaching in a cathedral and he's approaching the cathedral and he sees this beautiful edifice lit up by the floodlights and it looks glorious, it looks gorgeous.

And he thinks to himself, well the cathedral is like Christ and the floodlights are like the Holy Spirit. Their job, their role is to emanate glory and light and to extol the cathedral as the Holy Spirit is to do

the same with Christ.

We see that in Scripture, that's a scriptural point, we see that in John 16. He will glorify me, Christ is speaking of the Spirit, and take what is mine and declare it to you.

So I say this because I think it's relevant to the text, we're seeing this in the text, but I think practically when people say to you, oh you don't have the Spirit because you don't do this or your church doesn't have the Spirit, meditate on this.

[18:22] If you have union and communion with Christ, if Christ is in you, you have the Spirit, we have the Spirit and that's a glorious, glorious truth.

if you are in the business of exalting and glorifying Christ in your life or in this church, then we have the Spirit and I think we need to hold on to that and glory in that. If we just go back to our text, the verb used to dwell in verse 17, to dwell, apparently means to settle down and to make a permanent abode.

So Paul is praying that Christ would settle down and be at home in the hearts of his people. He wants their whole being to be filled and to be flooded with an awareness of Christ in them.

Again, going back to John 14, it says, if anyone loves me, Christ says, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him.

That's 14.23 if you're looking. And we will come to him and we will make our home with him. You know, the sense of dwelling and home. It's a lovely picture, isn't it?

[19:37] So, just ponder that. Christ is making his home in you. Notice that the means that are used through this maturing process, it's with power through his Spirit and through faith that these Christians, that they'll be strengthened and they'll be able to mature.

Don't we need this spiritual power? We need it to reach deep into our hearts and transform us. And as we are more dependent and trusting in him, you know, we think of faith resting our weight on him.

We will grow stronger. Faith, faith's an interesting grace in one sense. There's something passive about faith, isn't there? It's the open hand that just receives. But yes, as Chris was preaching this morning, there's an active kind of reflex of faith where we do.

Now, I don't know about you, but I really struggle to pray and have communion with God. I think that can be a battle in my Christian life. I desperately need the Spirit, his power to invigorate me, to change me, to enable me.

I think a takeaway from this section, this whole sense of being maturing and built up in the Spirit, are we praying for one another's spiritual growth and maturity as well as the physical and practical needs?

[21:02] And we absolutely must be praying for physical and practical needs. Don't misunderstand me. But we mustn't stop there. I think Paul would have us to go beyond that and to be very, very interested in our growth spiritually.

Now what's the evidence of us being strengthened through power? We see it in the next verses. It's rooted and in the ESV it says grounded. So I've headed this next section, rooted and grounded. Now here we see the preeminence of love is before us. I think this is love to God but I also think it's love for neighbour as well. Paul uses mixed metaphors.

He uses the metaphor rooted. It's an agricultural or botanical metaphor and grounded is an architectural metaphor. Rooted brings to mind the image of a Christian being like a vine or a tree where the roots sink deep, deep down into the fertile and rich soil of Christ's love.

He's a redeeming, transforming love and this produces growth and productivity and as we're rooted in his love we bear fruit for his love.

[22:11] being grounded in love brings to mind the image of a Christian being like a strong you kind of think of a strong tower or kind of cathedral where there's deep and enduring foundations.

The picture here is of stability and permanence. Think of strength. So here it's not so much love being the soil but it's the solid and stable foundation that keeps us steady, keeps us able to persevere.

This being rooted and grounded enables us to be strengthened as our lives take ever deepening roots in him being securely established. I think in the NIV it says established rather than grounded but same principle and growing in love.

And again I mean I was challenged to really think to myself am I growing in love? Am I growing in my love for you as a fellowship individually and corporately?

Am I growing in love for God? Do we truly love one another? It's not always easy is it? There's people in the fellowship that we might naturally gravitate towards and love more easily but that's not always the case.

[23:19] Do we love our enemies? As Christ called us to love our enemies. Thinking about that and deeply challenged by that. What about those outside the church that despise our faith and hate everything we stand for?

We're called to love them. One writer says the presence of love in our lives evidences the reality of our Christian profession.

So no love there's no such thing as a loveless Christian it's just an oxymoron meaning it doesn't make sense. Do you notice as well he says and you can easily skip over this he says with all the saints.

Paul has a very very high exalted view of the church. He's not so interested in an individualistic kind of isolated me in my corner you in your corner kind of Christianity he's concerned about us as a body.

Well my next heading is breadth length height and depth. Paul is now reaching new heights and we're faced here with almost the kind of indescribable so sublime and exalted it's really we're nearing a kind of climax in this prayer.

[24:42] This prayer feels quite climactic you know aiming towards the fullness but here we really get to that. Paul's desire for the Ephesians is to experience the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge and he's praying that the church would comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love.

Now apparently when Paul says surpassing knowledge he doesn't mean it doesn't start with knowledge. Now if you read this you might think oh let's jettison knowledge we're not interested in knowledge it surpasses knowledge but to know the love of Christ starts with knowledge now Paul himself he had knowledge didn't he?

If you read the beginning of Ephesians there's rich deep knowledge of the things of the gospel and the mystery of the gospel but knowledge of this love goes way beyond what we can fathom.

It's not a kind of knowledge a kind of human wisdom or a knowledge that we can kind of deduce or kind of work out. It leads to a deep experiential love and knowledge. Now we can only know this love in its fullest sense through the working of the spirit in us.

Now when he says to comprehend he means to have a firm mental grasp it's not just an emotional response. So do we read the word?

[26:04] Do we meditate on the word? Are we thinking and reflecting upon God's word between Sunday and Sunday? There's something here about us needing to be steeped in his word.

You see here both the importance of the life of the mind on one hand. Paul's very interested in the life of the mind. But then on the other hand Paul he's also very interested in the life of experience and emotion.

Now if we have one if we just have the life of the mind we have a kind of cold arid dry orthodoxy we can tick all the boxes in terms of our orthodoxy but there's no real power there.

There's no real power there. It's not really reaching the heart. Then if we have another one if it's just all feeling and emotion we have a blind emotionalism it's kind of tossed on the waves of every kind of novel doctrine that comes in.

So it's important as Christians that we're really holding in both, holding in mind both, the life of the mind. But the life of the mind should inflame the emotions. There should be a sense of what's going in here should reach down there.

[27:13] And I know that's not always the case. I know from my own experience. But we should at least be desiring that. I think we should desire that. He talks about this three-dimensional measurement of

Christ's love and it's so stupendous and overwhelming.

It's such a wonderful, wonderful picture. He starts with the breadth, the broadness of his love which encompasses all nations. It goes beyond Palestine.

It crosses countries, borders, cultures, ethnicities. international. But as well, do you know what I thought about as well? I thought there's something lovely about the gospel.

It's not just nations and international. We miss this sometimes but it goes across social class. What I love about the church, you can come into church and there can be someone who's from a very working class background, uneducated, hasn't been to university and you could be with someone who's a doctor or you could be the queen but they all need the gospel.

That's how broad it is. Length, it begins in eternity past with election and predestination. The triune God setting his love upon us.

[28:24] Chris was saying earlier and Ben a few weeks ago about being chosen in Christ. We were in Christ in eternity past. Get your head around that. It then goes all the way to an eternal future.

Every point in history is the world was formed and made. God's never ending everlasting love for us. Our feeble minds we just can't comprehend it.

We think of the height. Those believers in Ephesus they were in Ephesus but they were in heavenly places. And we're in brighter most of us our postcode will be BN2 or BN3 but we have two postcodes don't we?

The other one's union with Christ. Union with Christ. Depth. It begins with Christ's condescension being born in a stable being poor hunted refugee a man of sorrows emptying himself being despised and reviled in agony at Gethsemane being abandoned and being obedient to the point of death on a cruel cross reckoned a sinner cursed forsaken his love reaches the depths of loving us while we were dead in our sins and trespasses as John was saying the other week his love reaches down to the depths of your think of your well no don't think of it now but your vilest most shameful despicable secret sin that if any of us were to find out you'd be absolutely devastated that's how deep deep deep down

Christ's love goes that's remarkable when I was preparing I came across this this must be a well liked and I think it's a very nice illustration it came up no one knows the source but in some of the commentaries it was after the Spanish Inquisition Napoleon invaded Spain and one of his soldiers came across a prisoner chained to the wall came across a skeleton basically of a skeletal figure that had been emaciated and obviously been starved and had been persecuted for his faith on the wall there was a cross etched out by stone and on the top it said height on the arms it said breadth length and depth at the bottom when he was starving when he was dying what what do you think sustained him on his way to heaven it was the comprehension of the love of

[31:09] Christ I think that's as practical as you can get in terms of illustrations next point is filled with the fullness of God we now reached a concluding clause in this prayer which if you like is the climax of the prayer now I'm I'm not entirely sure what Paul means here if I'm honest and actually a lot of the people I read weren't entirely sure so I can't be dogmatic but there are a couple of things that we can say about this and I think it's important to look at this because he's speaking to ordinary Christians in Ephesus so it's for us he wants this for us it's not some high class of Christian I don't think he's!

praying We would somehow become immersed or absorbed in God or God would become part of us like pantheistic or some religions we become deified that we become gods I don't think he means that I don't think he means those qualities that God has God has certain qualities the theologians call them the incommunicable attributes of God meaning they're things that cannot be communicated to us because we're finite creatures things like his infinity he's eternal he's unchangeable he's all powerful he's all seeing all knowing we will always be creatures even in heaven in eternity we will be creatures there will always be the creator creature distinction I think the closest thing he's getting to here and I think this is as near as I can see attributes of God so those qualities that God can communicate to us in some measure something analogous that we have for example wisdom love faithfulness compassion mercy they're all things that God has in the fullest sense but we have something of that something analogous to that and I think what Paul's praying here is for this this would govern and control our entire life that we would just be

spilling over these graces or these attributes in our life these virtues for us to be as holy as we possibly can as saved sinners that's a hugely ambitious thing that he's asking here isn't it it's everything that Christ has for us and again like I said earlier and I think this comes out well in the NIV and not so well in the SV it's not a one off event it's not a static reality he fills us so in one sense we're filled but then he increasingly fills us so there's this sense of progression in the NIV I think it says it filled to the measure of all the fullness of God so giving him that sense of progression later in Ephesians there's something of this in

Ephesians 4 13 he says we are called to grow and to mature to attain to the measure of the stature of Christ and then he says in Ephesians 4 15 and we are to grow up every way into him who is the head so I think that sense is there now we come to my last point my last heading and I have titled this just doxology it's the Greek for praise God is able Phil prayed this morning as we close our service as he comes to the conclusion of his prayer Paul cannot contain himself he's almost bursting forth in praise and adoration and it's interesting when you read Paul's letters you see this occasionally I think it's in one or two Timothy suddenly there's this doxology and it leaps off the page it's almost so palpable it gives us a glimpse of the passion and the wonder that Paul has in the gospel now

Paul when he's not exactly sure what the dates and the times are but I don't believe he's a new convert he's not gushing with the fresh zeal of a new convert and that's not a bad thing but I think it's after 20 years or something but he's still on fire after 20 years and he's in prison after a week of work for me now Paul knows that he's been asking for the impossible humanly hasn't he so he's seeking the resources and helping God himself as the one who is able I think this is the most encouraging way to end his prayer because all the emphasis is on the ability of God it's not on the Ephesians ability and it's not on our ability thankfully thankfully!

[35:59] It makes you think doesn't it's not about the size of our requests! or the complexity of our requests it's about the great God who answers those requests and you know I confess sometimes my thoughts of God are too limited too small how big is your God?

how big is your God? how able is your God? God Paul often focuses on God's attributes and earlier in Ephesians he spoke of God's manifold!

wisdom here Paul focuses on three attributes of God he's thinking about his ability so you think about his power and I think as well his abundant provision speaks much of God's goodness our God's a good God and then he speaks of God's glory Paul stretching and heaping up superlative language to impress upon us God's inexpressible power he's praising God who is able to answer any prayer that his people bring to him Paul's prayer speaks much of the love of Christ doesn't it and we should glory in the doctrine of the love of God 1 John says God is love however we need to be careful because God is not just love God is also power and all the other attributes so it's a powerful love if that makes sense it's not you see if you had love with no power it'd be impotent God is able to do what we ask he's not idle he's not passive he's not inactive he delights to answer his children's prayers beyond all they're asking he's able to do abundantly more than we ask or think do you sometimes think it could be in a prayer meeting or even in your quiet time with

God you think of something and then you suppress it that's not realistic that's not going to happen there's something that comes up you don't vocalise it in the meeting because you think people are going to think I'm bonkers I'm too unrealistic here I don't think Paul's like that obviously there are unrealistic prayers and silly prayers obviously but you know what I mean I think Paul wants us to know that God can answer our most extravagant prayers as long as they are in keeping and this is important that they are in keeping with his will his purposes and his promises that's important so extravagant within the confines of his will his promises his purposes power and we see so much of the work of power in redemptive history don't we in the creation creating the world out of nothing the parting of the Red Sea all these extraordinary works of power the resurrection and there's so many more but

Paul refers to this limitless power that works in us so we have this power working in us so then Paul gives all praise honor worship and adoration to God as he works in the church and in Christ Jesus glory here glory in the Old Testament the word it means weightiness significance it means heavy the word in the New Testament doxer it's more of a sense of significance and worthiness but I think here you've kind of got the both there's a weightiness there's a heaviness to God he's not trivial he's not lightweight so where do we find this glory of God primarily we should find it here in the church

as one writer says it is when God is most glorified that his people are most satisfied satisfied we live in a culture that's so interested in satisfaction aren't we and fulfillment it's when [40:10] God is most glorified that his people are most satisfied I've come to an end now but I wonder if the person who wrote the first question of the shorter Westminster shorter catechism some of you will know the answer to this I'm looking at Mark was meditating on this passage it's a lovely question and answer what is the chief end of man what's our chief end what's our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy him forever what a great thing to teach your children that Amen Amen