

Sermon Title: Filled Up To All The Fullness Of God
Scripture Text: Eph. 3:17-21 (Ephesians #17)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 9-19-21

Today we come to the high point of the Book of Ephesians; arguably, you could make that case. This is the pinnacle of the mountain of great doctrine and mind-stretching information that has been poured out upon us since Chapter 1. This passage is like our "mountaintop experience," and from here we begin to put into *practice* what we have learned about our *position* in Christ. And remember that the phrase "in Christ" is definitely the theme of Ephesians; it occurs 27 times in these six chapters. So if this is the top of the mountain, it's all downhill from here, right? All of us over 50 years old know that once you're over the hill, you pick up speed— isn't that how it's supposed to go?

Well, last week, we began to look at this prayer that culminates the first half of Ephesians. We looked at Verse 14 through the beginning of Verse 17; and today, we are going to overlap just a little bit so we can see the three requests that are part of this majestic prayer.

Pau's obvious goal for all of his Christian friends—be they in Ephesus or in Boise, Idaho, 20 centuries later—is the glory of God: that we would understand who He is, and we would "ascribe to" Him the "glory" that belongs to Him (Ps. 29:2). And you can be sure that if you implement the things that this prayer asks for, *you will* be giving God glory.

So if you want to think of Ephesians like a car—and I promise, the Apostle Paul did *not* think of it that way—but you could picture the first three chapters as the engine, and then this prayer is like the ignition switch, and then Chapters 4 through 6 is the onboard roadmap to tell us where to go with all that he has taught us. So Chapter 3, Verses 14 through 21 is like a cry from Heaven, like you would hear at the start of the Indy 500: "Ladies and Gentlemen, start your engines!"

This is actually the second of three prayers in Ephesians. Back in Chapter 1, Paul stopped off and prayed for your *enlightenment*; here, he prays for your *enablement*; and then, toward the end of Chapter 6 he's going to pray for your *boldness*. In other words, "This is the whole picture! I want you to understand this, I want you to see this clearly, and now I want you to live it out."

Today we are going to focus mainly on Verses 18 through 21, but as I said, I want to back up and help you see the requests of this prayer, all as a unit.

So the first is a Request For Strengthening in Verses 16 and 17, and we got into that last time; then, there is a Request For Understanding God's Love in Verses 17 and 18; then, a Request For All The Fullness Of God in Verse 19—I mean, "Go big or go home," right? Why not ask for the ultimate?—and then this ends with The Source Of The Answers in Verses 20 and 21.

So, let's look at that Request for Strengthening. We got started in this last time, and we wanted to stop off and major on an application. Verse 16 through the beginning of 17—"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (NASB-1995, and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

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Remember that cool phrase: "strengthened with power"—that's two words for "power" put together; and he wants you to understand that by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life, you actually can live out the power of God, which enables you to serve as you go about your relationships in the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:29); and we saw different places where Scripture describes the source of our strength, and I commend that sermon to you if you haven't already heard it.

The result of this strengthening from the Lord—and this is what we majored on last time—is that Christ settles down to be "at home" in your heart, and we took time to emphasize that (see Jn. 14:23).

So let's move on now to the second request: The Request For Understanding God's Love, starting in the middle of Verse 17—"and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth..."

Now, that's a mouthful. Notice the little word "that," as in "and that you." That really should be translated "in order that." He's stating the purpose of why he is praying this way: A result of the strengthening of God "in the inner man"—the work of the Holy Spirit teaching you, helping you to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18)—a result of that is that you will "be able to comprehend" the love of God in a deeper way.

Now, a key phrase here—I'm going to get slightly technical on you, but then we'll come up for air, and you'll find that it is a breath of fresh air. Notice the phrase "rooted and grounded in love." "Rooted" obviously refers to the metaphor of a tree; the root system is the support system for the tree. "Grounded" uses the metaphor of a building; the foundation is the support system for the building. Both of them have the idea of being firmly placed on a solid footing. As Christ settles down to be at home in your heart, you have a *firm* foundation to build upon.

There are interesting and important little nuances in this phrase "rooted and grounded in love." What is significant is that "rooted and grounded" are both perfect passive participles. Now, take that to the bank and milk the interest out of it! That should get you excited—not because you have a clue what that means, but let me tell you.

Three important things to know about "rooted and grounded": Because they are participles, they have a meaning only in connection with a verb, and the verb is "comprehend." Both "rooted and grounded" are actions that come *prior* to the action of the verb; and that means that, in order to "comprehend" the love of God, you have to be "rooted and grounded" in His "love"—it's something He gives to you.

The perfect tense means this is something that is once done, with results remaining—so it has been accomplished for you. And the passive voice means it's not something *you* do, it is done *for you* by an outside agent.

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Now, even if that Greek lesson didn't float your boat, understand the significance of this. Paul is saying: "Since you have been firmly 'rooted and grounded' in God's love, that is part of your salvation! He has done that for you—He loved you so much, He 'gave His only begotten Son' (Jn. 3:16); He died before you were born; while you were His enemy, He died for your sins (Rom. 5:6-10); you are 'rooted and grounded' in His love in such a way that it's power can now flow through your life, so that you 'may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth...' "

Now, that's *also* worded precisely. "May be able" implies that you are going to have *full* strength or ability; it means you are now *eminently* "able to comprehend" the significance of God's love: Because *you* are "rooted and grounded" in it, therefore, you can understand it; therefore, you become a *conduit* for God's power to love to flow through you. "Comprehend" means that you lay hold of it, you appropriate it, you internalize it, you make it your own and it becomes your possession.

This is so that you "may be able to comprehend"—next key phrase—"with all the saints..." This whole thing—it's *not* a private thing. Love *cannot be in evidence* without other people around, upon whom you shower the love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:5b).

So the thought here is pretty clear: You have experienced God's love for yourself—*that's why* you can be standing "complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28). You are "rooted and grounded in love," and therefore Paul prays that you will make that love *your* love, and turn it loose *outward* on all the rest of the saints (cf. Jn. 15:12).

Now, in case you need another reminder, this is one of many dozens of passages in the Scripture that make it clear: You *cannot* practice Christianity *apart from* the local church! (Heb. 10:25; cf. Prov. 18:1) This is something that takes place "with all the saints."

Now, I am *not saying* you have your sins forgiven by uniting with a church. I'm not saying that salvation is by church membership, or even *participation* in the church. Salvation is *very* personal—you must "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31); that's *your personal responsibility*, that's *your personal faith*. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

But the instant you are saved, you become a member of a "body" (1 Cor. 12:13)—just like all the different members, all the different pieces and parts of your body have to work together in harmony, *we belong to each other* (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-25; Eph. 4:25); and so this is something we do "with all the saints"!

So, you who are on livestream today because it's not wise for you to be here in person—just be sure, that's a *temporary situation*—because *we need each other* (e.g., Rom. 12:10-12; 1 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 6:2; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:10). *We belong* to each other, and we need to *practice* this "love" of God that we now "comprehend" because we've been "rooted and grounded" in His "love." Do it "with all the saints."

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Let's consider, for a couple of minutes, *how* this works out. The kind of love that you're being called to here goes *way beyond* feelings, and we have no less than Jesus Himself as a great example: Let's look at John 13:34 and 35. Before He went to the Cross, with His disciples around the table at that Passover meal, Jesus says: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." As they see you "one-anothering," they will understand: There's something behind this—and that will give you an opportunity to share the "reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15, NKJV).

In that context, how had Jesus just "loved" the disciples? Well, they came to that meal; when they got there, they were in the midst of one of their favorite things—they were having a discussion over "which one of them was regarded to be greatest" in the Kingdom of Heaven (Lk. 22:24); and there were no servants around, so Jesus took the towel and washed the dusty feet of the disciples, who were arguing over who was "the greatest."

Okay—how do you think Jesus was *feeling* at that moment, about those disciples? Now, He was perfect; He didn't have a *sinful* thought in that...But, oh, *how disappointing* that must have been to Him! But He loved them.

Later that evening, He says—in John 15, Verse 13—"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." And by the way: He loved them *all the way to the Cross* (Eph. 5:2).

Now, we don't love each other by going and getting somebody to crucify us so that their sins can be forgiven—that's the *ultimate* example. But, "lay down" your "life"—well, what is your "life"? Well, it's who you are, the stuff you have, the time you have—you invest that in other people; that's how you demonstrate love.

And our passage is telling you: You have a *resource* for doing that! Romans Chapter 5, Verse 5 puts it this way: "because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts." Would you like to hear that in "Ephesians 3" terminology? You are "rooted and grounded in love." "The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

So, if you want to apply this, you might call it "learning to love by faith." If you equate "love" with "good feelings" toward someone, you're *never* going to get to the point of loving as Jesus loved (e.g., Lk. 23:34; 1 Pet. 2:23). I guarantee, you will *never* have the same *feelings* for everyone. I mean, the ones you don't know, you don't have *any* feelings for; and the ones you *do* know...well, they're as *screwed up* as you are! They will disappoint you, from time to time; rare is the human relationship in which there is *no* negative part—as a matter of fact, that's *impossible*. But Philippians 2:2 says that we are commanded to have "the same love" for everyone—not *feel* the same way about everyone, but have "the same love." "Love" is not "feelings"! Now, feelings can be a delightful *corollary* to loving someone, but feelings themselves are not love. Love songs notwithstanding, it's *not* about the feelings.

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"Love" is using the spiritual resources and the physical resources that God gives you, in order to serve the needs of others (1 Pet. 4:10; Jas. 2:15-16); and it is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. The next time you see a need, you should ask: "Can I play a part in meeting that need?" And if you can, and if you go do it, you have the ironclad promise: *God will enable you* to do that thing, because He is the power who is at work within you, by His Holy Spirit.

First John 3:17 puts it this way: "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? And the implied answer is, "Well, *it doesn't.*"

I said love can *generate* some feelings. Let me illustrate that for you: Go buy a stock, go buy stock in something; suddenly, you will have feelings for what happens in the Stock Market, completely outside of yourself. Why? Because *you have invested in it*, right? You will have feelings for people that you invest in! It will *deepen* your compassion; it will *stretch* your sympathetic bones; it will sometimes frustrate you into greater and greater patience—but you'll *care*. But it starts with *action*.

John wrote, in the next chapter of First John—though he didn't call it a different chapter—Chapter 4, Verses 16 through 20—"We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us." Would you like me to translate that into "Ephesian-ese"? Having been "rooted and grounded in love..." "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." Or, in "Ephesian-ese," He works by the "power" of His "Spirit" within us "in the inner man." John goes on to write: "By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us"—or, having been "rooted and grounded in love..." "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." (cf. 1 Jn. 5:1)

So-called "love" that does not *take action* on behalf of someone else is *not* love! Over in First Corinthians 13, that famous "Love Chapter"—"Love is patient, love is kind" and all those things—if you look at that in the Greek, you'll find that every description of love is not an adjective—it's not *pretty*, it's not *blue*—they're all verbs! Love is *action*; you have to describe it with *action* words (cf. 1 Jn. 3:18; cf. Mk. 12:30; 1 Pet. 1:22). You can't capture love in a still picture—it has to be a movie; it has to have moving parts to it.

Now, back to our text: so that you "may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth..."—great word picture to describe the *vastness* of Christ's love. He probably uses architectural terms because he has been using the metaphor of a building off and on since back in Chapter 2.

The "breadth" describes God's love extending all the way from Jews to *Gentiles*—groups that *hated* each other! Same love, both groups—same Savior (Acts 15:11).

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The "length" he's described in Chapter 1—God's love extends "from eternity to eternity" (Ps. 103:17, HCSB); "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (1:4) so that we can be "seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (2:6).

How about the "depth" of His love? His love extends to the *depths* of the pollution of our sin! Chapter 2—We "were dead" in our "trespasses and sins" (vs. 1), but He "made us alive" (vs. 5).

And the "height" of God's love—well, it extends to "the heavenly places" where we are "seated" with Christ (vs. 6).

So now, look at the next phrase, in the beginning of Verse 19—"and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge..." Don't you love that? That is an inspired oxymoron. An "oxymoron" is a word picture that uses opposites or incompatible things to make a point—like "the deafening silence." We know *exactly* what that means, but "deafening" and "silent" are opposites; but them together, and you can say something.

Bruce Smith gave me a gift book a while back that I'm going to take with me when I have a little bit of time away; I just want to savor this a bite at a time. The book is called "Oxymoronica," and it's a study of oxymoronic statements. It actually stretches your brain—and especially for a twisted little one like mine, it's a good fit. "That guy's ignorance is encyclopedic"—I picked that one out of the book there.

Here Paul says: I want you to "comprehend"—what does that mean? "Know, understand, appropriate, make it your own, put it in your heart"—I want you to "comprehend...the love of Christ which *surpasses knowledge*." Really? How can *that* be? Well, you can only experientially *know* it by *doing* it. Yeah, you understand it—you're "rooted and grounded in love"—but when you *do it*, you begin to see "the breadth and length and height and depth" of the love. How can you "comprehend" that which is *beyond* understanding? In human words, you can never exhaust the description of the love of God.

I remember a Sunday night service when I was a young Christian. I would go to church; and I could sing along with *any* song on *any* of the pop music stations from my teenage years; I think I know Simon and Garfunkel's songs better than *they* do, and I can just *in an instant* have them playing in my head. And I would go to church, and I would be with these people who would *sing these songs* that I had *never heard!* And they sang with something *so special—there was joy in it!* And even though I didn't understand it, even though it wasn't my style, *I knew:* *This* is part of this new life that I have found in Christ, and *this* is part of how you *show it!*

And oh, our generation has taken this and gone just—I think the Greek word for it is "stupid"! They've said, "Young people don't understand the music of the church, so we're going to make the music of the church worldly, like what the people know." That's *exactly the opposite!* (Jas. 4:4) It's, make *this* glorify God, so that someone who walks in realizes: *There is something going on here!* (cf. 1 Cor. 14:25) And I see these people loving each other in ways that I have never seen anywhere else! It's ours to learn.

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Well, one of those Sunday night services—I remember *vividly* which row I was sitting in as I was looking at the hymnal—and we sang this, and it *stuck with me*; I *remembered this* on my first hearing of it. The song, which is cleverly titled "The Love of God," includes this: "Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky." ("The Love of God," 1917 by Frederick M. Lehman; Verse 3, Anonymous/Unknown).

How could we *ever* "comprehend" the love of God? It is by "being rooted and grounded" in it so that we stand "in Christ" so that we can let His love flow through us, and He could use *us* to love somebody else. It's not how you feel about people, it's who you *sacrifice* for them that shows your love.

Sometimes, that means you have to lovingly *rebuke* a brother or sister (see Lev. 19:17; Ps. 141:5; Lk. 17:3; 2 Thess. 3:15)—just like you would yell to stop a child running toward the curb when there's a car coming. Sometimes that's the loving thing to do (Prov. 19:18)—and sometimes, somebody won't like it (Jn. 7:7; Gal. 4:16). But it's the loving thing to do.

Sometimes, you love a person by telling them that they need Christ, and it's great joy when they respond and turn to Him; but sometimes you have this great sorrow, that they are ambivalent or even hostile toward you.

Sometimes, love is as simple as meeting a physical need, even if it is inconvenient for you—like *today*: Because of the Covid silliness going on, we're short of some manpower for our food pantry. So, people who need some food are going to come here; and after this service, *you* could help out, if you could stay for an hour. Now, there *is* some special technical training involved: If you know how to operate a shopping cart, you're *qualified* to help get the food from inside to outside. Oh, and by the way: There are going to be some people that will go and share the Gospel with the guests who come. Do you want to practice this passage? Boy, do I have an opportunity for you! See me after the service, and we'll get you lined up.

For me, I actually think about you; all the hours that I spend poring over God's Word, trying to put together a legitimate spiritual meal for you on the Lord's Day—*that's love*. You know, some days, I don't *feel* like it; so, I start praying about some of you, and I say, "Oh, yeah, get back at it!"

Love is *servicing*, however it is that you serve. And when you love God enough to let Him love others through you, you're going to find: You are His instrument.

So, the first Request in this prayer is for you to be "strengthened." The second Request is For Understanding God's Love. The third Request is For All The Fullness Of God. I mean, "Go big or go home," right? Let's not just go for a little progress here—let's go for "all the fullness of God"!

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Verse 19—"and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." "Filled up" translates a word related to "abundance," and it's a matter of "filling something up to the brim"—totally full. When it's used with regard to *people* and we talk about someone being "filled up," it means that they are filled with something to the point that it *controls* them, it dominates them.

You can be "filled" with wisdom—somebody bumps into you, and a little wisdom might get spilled on him. You can be "filled" with joy, with peace, with goodness, with knowledge, with comfort, with obedience to the Holy Spirit. You can also be "filled" with rage, anger—bump into some people and you're going to get some acid spilled on you, through the words that come out of them.

A working synonym for being "filled up" would be "being controlled by"—"that you may be *controlled by* all the fullness of God."

Now, "filled up *to* all the fullness of God"—the little preposition translated "to" there means "to the measure of"; that's what we want for each other, that's what we want for Heritage Bible Church, that's what we want for ourselves: to be "filled up to all the fullness of God," caused to abound with all that God is (cf. Col. 1:28).

By the way, that idea—it wasn't invented by Paul in Ephesians Chapter 5 when he wrote, "Be filled with the Spirit" (vs. 18); we are going to see it in Chapter 4, and here it is in Chapter 3; it actually started way back in the Old Testament, in the Book of Exodus. When God gave the instructions for how to build the Tabernacle, it says that He sent His Holy Spirit to "fill" certain people with the knowledge and the ability and the skill to do certain tasks (e.g., Ex. 31:3, 6). Now, there's a bigger, better, broader, more permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we have, but that's the idea: that you are under the control of who God is.

So we are to be "filled up to all the fullness of God." And in Chapter 4, we're going to start to see about being filled with "the fullness of Christ" (vs. 13). In Chapter 5, it will be "filled with the [Holy] Spirit" (vs. 18). We'll explore those passages when we get to them.

So you have three requests in this prayer, which starts in Verse 14. The first request is in Verse 16 and 17—a Request For Strengthening; then, a Request For Understanding God's Love (vss. 17-18); and then, a Request For All The Fullness Of God (vs. 19); and then, this ends with The Source Of The Answers (vs. 20-21). This majestic prayer wraps up with a declaration of the source of all the answers to all that Paul asked for all Christians. The strengthening of the Spirit, the love of Christ, and the fullness of God all come from the same source.

If I have ever sent you a letter or an e-mail, you might have noticed—I don't do it *every* single time, but for decades now, starting with something that a seminary professor did for me, rather than including "sincerely" or "best regards" or "have a good day" or whatever, I like to write a Scripture verse. And I have about a dozen different ones that are in my repertoire of favorites, and some of them are slanted for different kinds of

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situations, but my all-time favorite is the two verses I'm about to read to you. I'm liable to close an e-mail to you by saying: "Ephesians 3:20-21"—why? Because, look what it says: "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Let me pick out a couple of words there, and then we'll look at this again: "Far more abundantly" is a translation of one *spectacular* Greek word: *huperekperissōs*. The root means "more than necessary"; then there's the prefix *ek* on the beginning of it, that intensifies the word so it means something like "really a lot more than necessary"; and then, we put the Greek prefix *huper* in front of it—which comes into English as "hyper"—which means "above"; and so, it means: "hyper-intensified abundance." *That's big!*

"Power" is that word *dunamis*; we've seen it several times already in Ephesians; we saw it last time. It's the power necessary to accomplish whatever needs to be done (Phil. 3:21).

Then there's the verb "works"—this "power...works within us"; the word for "works" is what we get our word "energize" from.

So, here is a description of what *should* characterize your life, right here in Ephesians 3:20-21. Let this *astounding* collection of words summarize how *marvelous* it is to be able to pray for ourselves and for every other Christian, and for our church, in exactly the way this passage describes.

It starts out: "Now to Him..." It is *to God* that we bring out requests. And don't you love what we studied back in Matthew Chapter 6—He "knows what [we] need before [we] ask Him" (vs. 8). But He is able to *do it*, so He is the One to talk to about it, right?

"Now to *Him*"—we start there—the "Him" is God. And I want you to just let these words wash over you: It is God who "is able" (cf. Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27; Matt. 19:26); He has what it takes to get the job done.

God "is able *to do*"—He doesn't just sit up in Heaven with all of His ability; He *does things!* He does things on Earth, He does things through people, He does things through His children (Dan. 4:35; cf. Prov. 16:9; 20:24).

God "is able to do," and you know, God is able to do what "we ask"! Now, *I* ask God for a *lot* of things, and I trust you do, too. And as I said, He "knows what we need," even "before we ask."

Well, you know what? There are some things that I don't even get around to asking God; I just "think" them. God "is able to do" what we "think"; as a matter of fact, God "is able to do" what "we ask *or* think"! He's not limited by the words that we say. There is that *horrible lie* of the "Word-Faith Movement" that you speak things into reality by your words, and God's hands are tied until you speak the words of affirmation—*total idiocy!* *That's not the God of the Bible!* *That's fantasyland!*

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God "is able to do" what "we ask or think"—as a matter of fact, God is able to do "*all* that we ask or think." *I can think of a lot*, can't you? And together, we can think of more than we can individually. God "is able to do...*all* that we ask or think."

But, you know what? God "is able to do...*beyond* all that we ask or think." And as a matter of fact, God "is able to do" not just what we "ask," not just what we "think," not just "beyond all that we ask or think"—God "is able to do...*abundantly* beyond all that we ask or think." And as a matter of fact, God "is able to do *far more* abundantly beyond all that we ask or think"! As a matter of fact, God "works" His "power...within us" to "do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think."

How glorious is this God! "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Do you want God to be glorified here at Heritage Bible Church, in your life, in the lives of the people you love? Well then, "be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man"—give Him access to make *you* into a conduit of His power to love, to meet needs in whatever way that He chooses to do.

Remember, we do this "with all the saints." Now, with Covid-19 raging, there are a *whole lot more* empty chairs than usual here. I'll give you a challenge: See if you can think of a person who is usually in one of these empty chairs. You don't get to see them today. You who are watching by livestream—we're saving your seat for you! But I want to challenge you both ways: If there's somebody you can't see today that you would normally greet, do you love God enough to love your brother or sister enough to maybe make a phone call, send an e-mail or a text, just so say, "I miss you. Can I help you? What can I do for you today?"

You see, *this stuff works!* And it gives God the glory, when He works "with all the saints" to do all that we ask, all that we think, *beyond* all that we ask or think, *abundantly* beyond—*far more* abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to *His* power that works within us. *That*, my friends, is to "be filled up to all the fullness of God."

So let's pray:

Father, that is our desire—that we would each be "filled" with all the "fullness" of what You have for us, that we would be controlled by who You are and what You bless and what You honor, and that You would get Yourself glory through Your Church. Have Your way with us to that end, whatever that means; perhaps there is something from which we need to repent; perhaps there is even the need to come to the Savior for the first time; perhaps it is simply that we need to say "Yes" to an opportunity that You have put in front of us. Have Your way with us for all of those things, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.