

Tonight I want to slow things down a bit and return to our study last week in **10:26-36** which directly addressed a very sensitive issue and that is the present real time—in our life—judgment, or as the passage says “punishment,” which God sometimes brings upon His own. This judgment, we are told, is visited upon the man or woman who has spurned the Son of God, has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace by, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, choosing to deliberately live in wrong belief and unbelief. Living as if the cross in effect is powerless and the blood of Jesus was spilled for no reason.

However, what we found out was that even though the language used in this passage is very scary (a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries), it is only scary when we look at the circumstances of our lives through the eyes of our *Old Sinful Nature* who desperately wants to have control over our lives. But when you see this whole interaction from God’s perspective, His judgment is one of the most incredibly gracious, merciful, and kind acts of love that He could ever bring about in our lives. He brings it in order to remove once and for all our sin and rebellion which prevents us from trusting ourselves completely to Jesus.

In actuality, what Jesus is doing by unleashing correction into our lives is attempting to bring us into our **true life** as a spiritual man or woman of God. We are like a diamond that is being molded and formed by the heat and pressure of the earth. He is teaching us why living according to the direction and control of our *Old Sinful Nature* is the worse idea possible and is totally destructive to our well being.

Jesus birthed us new and gave us a ***new nature*** that is in His image righteous, holy and true, in order that we may live according to the direction and control of this ***new nature*** and thereby experience Jesus living in and through us. But for most of us, despite the fact that we have received knowledge of the truth, we choose to deliberately not trust ourselves to God or His love for us. In fact, a lot of us are not even convinced, because of how He has dealt with our lives, that God is even all that good. So, we trust ourselves. Big mistake; huge!

And it is this self-trust (which then is also placed in other people, things, religion, and so on) that operates as a huge barrier between us and God—between our true self (which is found in our ***new nature***) and our *old self* to whom, according to ***Romans 6-8***, we should consider ourselves to be dead.

Our wrong belief and unbelief is like a cancer that kills us. Thus, God uses correction or judgment as a sort of Chemo therapy; as a way to put down our *Old Sinful Nature* and get us in touch with who we really are. He knows our weakness and our propensity stay in those places that are known and familiar (no matter how destructive they may be). Thus, the Lord uses judgment to 1) sour our appetite for our *Old Sinful Nature*; 2) crumble the lethargy (or laziness) of our will; and 3) completely exterminate this adversary of God.

I know that some of you have looked at this passage (as well as the passages in ***2:1-4*** and ***6:4-8***) and automatically assumed that God is mad and angry and determined that He lashes out like some out of control and abusive Father and essentially rages on you. ***But that is not at all what is happening.***

First of all, we have to remember that Jesus was punished by the Father for all our sin. God poured out His wrath on His very own Son and He was punished

completely; which is why He said, “It is finished.” By God’s grace, Jesus suffered death for everyone in all the world (**2:9**) and His sacrifice took away the sins of humanity (**2:17**). In this way, God qualified Jesus to be our perfect High Priest, and He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who follow Him (**5:9**).

Thus, for believers—those who have been washed clean by the blood of Jesus—there is nothing left for which God can be angry. Sin is no longer an issue between God and His children; it was dealt with completely on the cross. **Romans 3:25** addresses this issue quite specifically. It says, “God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God’s anger against us.” Some of your Bibles may say He was put forward as a “propitiation,” which means He was the satisfaction or the appeasement for our sins. This is why **Romans 5:1** tells us that we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Therefore, His actions toward us are not out of anger or rage, but are an expression of His love.

Our distorted and twisted view of God and His actions towards us is really just our projecting on to God our own experiences with people in authority over our lives who have unjustifiably hurt us—specifically males (Father’s, Grandfather’s, uncles, brothers, and so on).

I understand why we do this. For many of us those experiences have been horrific; thus, they operate as a hard filter through which we pass everything in our lives—including God. I guess it also does not help that the Bible uses words like punishment, judgment, discipline, and so on. We don’t like those words and for each of us they carry a whole lot of personal baggage that distorts our ability to understand the heart and the meaning behind the words. But that is our issue

and not God's; projecting our baggage on to God is not right or just and it will keep us confused, angry, distant and reluctant to let God love us.

I believe God uses those words because, from the perspective of our *Old Sinful Nature*, it is without question punishment and judgment; however, from the perspective of our ***new nature*** it is mercy, compassion, and love. So it just depends on whether or not you perceive what is happening to you through the wisdom and understanding of your *Old Sinful Nature* who hates God and is an enemy or adversary of God or through your ***new nature*** that is filled with the Spirit of God and desires to live as a son of God for the glory of God.

So you need to ask yourself this very serious question. Who lives behind your eyes? Whose view of your circumstances do you see? If you choose to see things through the filter of your *Old Sinful Nature*, I guarantee that you will be hard, bitter, angry, and even hostile to the God who is only trying to free you from your sin and rebellion. You will think He is mean and cruel and as a result you **will not** trust yourself completely to Him.

However, if you choose to see things and understand things through the wisdom of your ***new nature***, you will understand why it is necessary that God intervenes in your life in such a seemingly "harsh" way in order to free you from your *old self* so you can begin to live in your **true self** that has been created in the image of God.

I want to take us a bit deeper into this whole issue and even broaden our look at things because I know that many of you have really struggled with this issue of God's judgment and all that God has allowed in your lives. You don't understand it and why such a big part of your life has been difficulty, hardship, and for some

of you downright terror and dysfunction. You don't think it is right, fair, loving or kind and you believe that there should be another way.

This brings us back to the passage in **5:7** where we talked about Jesus' time in the Garden of Gethsemane and how He offered up prayers and pleadings with a loud cry and tears to the one who could deliver Him out of death. We are told that in that moment He was acting as our great High Priest and I believe it was on our behalf that He asked the Father if there was another way. Of course He probably asked on His own behalf as well, but since we are told that He was fulfilling His role as our priest—the one who mediates between God and man—I believe that His tears and His pleadings were primarily for us. He knew that we would have to follow in His footsteps in death and this grieved Him; this broke His heart. As our perfect priest He did not want to see us suffer. But the Father made it clear that there is no other way.

Let me explain and in so doing I am going to reach back to some of the truths we learned in Ephesians, the Gospel of John, and the Song of Solomon. But in order for you to have a place in your heart where this explanation can sit and actually take root, you are still going to have to choose to let the Word of God have a greater authority over your life than your own opinions.

You are going to have to relent of your sense of justice and choose to believe along with Moses that: "He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is" (**Deuteronomy 32:4**)! Let's repeat that: "He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is"

As such you are going to have to choose to believe that God in His wisdom has allowed in your life what He could have easily prevented by His power because He knew it was all necessary—every bit of it.

I know that does not make you happy, but I did not say that I expected you to be happy. I just expect you to let the Word of God have its proper place of authority over your life or else, mark my word, you will stay in your place of darkness spurning the blood of the covenant which will just result in God finding even more creative ways to wage war against your *Old Sinful Nature*. So I would suggest that you act rationally here, choose to relent and let Him be your God.

From Death to Life.

Now even though we were chosen from before the foundations of the world to belong to God, we still had to be awakened from our sleep or resurrected from the dead. Thus, God worked ***all things***—not just some things but all things—out in our life, according to the counsel of His will, in order to accomplish this purpose in our life (***Ephesians 1:4, 11-12; 5:14***). Therefore, all that has happened in your life has been according to God's wisdom so that you would wake up from the dead and be alive toward Him. Nothing was random or even excessive; it was all purposeful and intentional.

You see according to ***Romans 6*** and ***Ephesians 2:1-5***, before coming to Christ we were dead men, lost in our sin, enslaved to the devil. Death ruled over us not life. Just look at those in your life (family members) who do not know God and it is easy to see the power and death grip that sin has over their lives; sin which has been passed down from generation to generation. This sin and rebellion has kept them from experiencing the life that God has offered to them. And, make no

mistake, God has offered them life. However, every one of them has chosen to reject the authority of God in their lives. Just ask them; I am sure they won't hesitate to tell you that they never intend to subject their lives to His control.

This scenario is actually quite similar even with many believers. Sadly, far too many people have believed God for salvation but have never made Him Lord of their life. Either they have never learned, or because of the wounds they have incurred have never been willing, to trust God in the core of their soul. As a result, they are still bound by that generational sin and their unbelief has kept them from experiencing the life that God has offered to them.

But enough of "them" we are speaking about you. Death ruled in your life and you needed to be awakened from the dead; which explains the pain that God brought into your life. It was this pain that awakened you to your need for someone bigger and greater than you. It was this pain that caused you to look to God for hope and salvation. And it is this pain that has brought you the understanding that there is more to being a Christian than just knowing that you're going to heaven.

So judgment or punishment of our *Old Sinful Nature*, which plays itself out in pain, difficulty, tragedy, and terror, accomplishes this purpose in your life. It is the impetus to your waking up from the dead, coming to God, and receiving His life. Without this kind, loving and purposeful intervention by God in your life, like so many others, you would still be dead in your sins, destined to live this life without Him and to spend an eternity separated from Him.

Right now you might still be thinking about "them" believing that God is still not just and that it is not fair that He brought you to this place. Why did He not

cause my father, my mother, my brother, my sister or whoever to believe like He caused me to believe? I have to tell you that your questioning, while sincere, is off base for it is not in accordance with the truth. God did not cause you to believe (He forces Himself on no one); rather, He invited you and He used the circumstances in your life to make Himself visible to you. And He has done the same for “them.”

Keep in mind; it is clearly evident that God has granted to each person a measure of faith so that if they choose they can be saved (***John 1:12***). Everyone has the ability to believe; they believe in all sorts of stuff. It’s just that so few people place their faith in the one gave them that ability.

The Bible makes it clear that God reveals Himself to every man, woman and child, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. In addition to the consciousness of God which has been placed within us, from the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see His invisible qualities— His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God (***Romans 1:19-20***).

Besides, He clearly says that those who seek Him with their whole heart will find Him (***Deuteronomy 4:29; Proverbs 8:17; Jeremiah 29:1***); it does not matter who they are or where they live. As such, all are without excuse and everyone will one day bow themselves before Him knowing that all His judgments are true and righteous altogether (***Philippians 2:10; Revelation 19:2***).

Our new life in Him.

Now, let's get back to you. When you wake up from the dead and give yourself to Jesus, in turn He gives you a **new nature**—His nature—which we have talked so much about. And this happens at the moment you receive Christ into your life. Now the implications of this **new nature** are beyond your wildest imagination but, for the purpose of our topic, it explains why the present judgment that we experience is necessary.

From God's perspective our **new nature** defines us. It is our real life and it is an eternal life which has been hidden with Christ in God. Our **new nature** is who we will be forever. Our *Old Sinful Nature* will not endure; it will perish and will not follow us into eternity.

But God does not want to wait until we physically die for us to experience our new reality. That is why Jesus prayed in **Matthew 6:9**: "Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name, your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Have you thought about that prayer and what it means? The kingdom of God coming down to earth and the Father's will being done in earth in the same measure and quality as it is in heaven, can only be accomplished when heavenly beings are busy doing the work that the Father gives them to accomplish.

1 Corinthians 15:48-49

As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

If you belong to God, if you have been given this ***new nature***, then you have been changed; you are a heavenly being and are not part of this world anymore than Jesus is (***John 17:16***). And as a heavenly being, your job is to literally bring the kingdom of God, which is holy and perfect, righteous and true, down to earth.

That is what we are doing here; that is why God leaves us on this earth (or according to ***John 17:18*** literally has sent us to this earth) and does not just take us home to heaven. For we are God's masterpiece; He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago (***Ephesians 2:10***); and in so doing bring the kingdom of God to earth.

You have to get this point. If you have been given this ***new nature***, then you are a heavenly being and you must learn to live like one. It is not ok that you continue to live like one who is earthly where everything about you is fixated on earthly things instead of heavenly things. You have been given new life by the precious blood of the new covenant and you must no longer live contemptuously and profane the blood by which you have been sanctified. You must bear the image of the heavenly.

But there lies the problem; very few of us are in touch with these truths or do not believe these truths; thus, we do not live as heavenly men or women and do not fulfill this call on our life to invade the earth with God's glory. We may know these truths (and in that way I guess we can say that we believe them), but we are not yet willing to live as if they are true (so in that way we can definitively conclude that we do not truly believe them). Thus, God takes it upon Himself to convince us of the reality of these truths.

As we studied in **10:14**, we are not just comprised of our *Old Sinful Nature* and our **New Creation**; we also have our mind/soul which dictates the activities of our body and the realities of our day-in-and-day-out life. And our mind/soul has been conditioned—programmed to believe that we are just earthly people striving to carve out the best earthly living possible as we wait for our experience of eternity once we die. Accordingly, we mistakenly live (albeit often well intentioned) as if we must try and reach out to heaven to experience glimpses of God in our life versus believing that we have been made new and it is possible to live as a heavenly man or woman here and now.

We have also been programmed to believe what our *Old Sinful Nature* tells us to be true; which just happens to always be the complete opposite of what is true (**Galatians 5:17**). We have listened to our *Old Sinful Nature* for so long that we actually have our ears finely tuned to its voice and the voice of the enemy (the devil) which controls our *Old Sinful Nature*. This is why we have such a hard time hearing the voice of God in our lives; the competition for our mind/soul is intense and we tend to habitually move toward the familiar, which is why these patterns must be broken.

We have also been trained, by the same pain that God used to wake us up from the dead, to trust in our own wisdom and our own resources instead of trusting in this God who, in our opinion, has so cruelly wounded us. We have simply not understood Him at all.

Simply said, everything about our old life and our messed-up perspective with regard to our experiences in this life have militated against our believing and trusting ourselves to Jesus—everything! Thus, our mind/soul has to be renewed,

rewired, and reprogrammed to live as heavenly men and women (**10:14; Romans 12:2**). We have to literally be disconnected and detached from all our old patterns of thinking and believing and practically start all over. We have to learn why we can trust ourselves to Jesus and how to trust ourselves to Jesus resulting in our living—not just being, but living—as **new creations** of God.

That is where the present pain, judgment, and punishment are necessary. I have not seen very many people come to the Lord and just believe that God loves them such that they filter all that has happened in their lives through the reality of His love. Instead, most people are so shut down, closed off, wounded, and damaged that over time they have to be convinced that it is better to trust themselves to Jesus than to trust themselves.

Thus, God brings circumstances and pressures into our lives to show us and teach us the vast difference in our practical and physical reality when we trust Him versus trusting ourselves. When we trust Him (regardless of what is going on in our lives), we experience His peace, His pleasure, His rest and His love; but when we trust ourselves we don't. We are left with the paltry and miserable so called "comfort" that this world has to offer, which has never been enough and has never satisfied.

Are you following me? In order for you to live as a child of God (as a heavenly man or woman) you have to be made aware of whom you really are. It is very Matrix like. Although Neo was unplugged from the system, He still had to learn to believe that he was the One before he could live outside of the rules and controls of the Matrix.

Our experience is similar; however, our freedom to live outside the rules and controls of this world and our ability to know who we are only comes when we understand who God really is and what He is like and why He, in His wisdom, has done what He has done.

Now, unfortunately, suffering, like little else, connects us to who we are in Him. It causes us to be dependent upon Him and it is one of the most effective tools to strip away our sick affection for our *Old Sinful Nature*. It is the pathway to truly living and experiencing the pleasure—yes I said pleasure—of who we are in God.

Believe me, so much of the suffering we endure would not be necessary if you would just choose today to believe God and fully, completely, and exhaustively trust yourselves to Him instead of to yourselves. I encourage you, especially those of you who have the biggest gripes and all that stored up anger toward God, to make that decision and start living now as a heavenly man or woman.

I am clearly being sarcastic for sure, as it should be pretty clear that you are not even capable of instantly choosing to believe that God truly loves you or you would have done that already. After all, who wants to go through suffering?

But it does not work that way. You have to learn why you can trust yourself to God and how, which involves this process of dismantling all of your old patterns of trust which you have developed throughout the years and replacing them with new patterns. However, your old patterns run so deep within your soul that God has to keep bringing around various circumstances to show you and prove to you that He faithfully loves you. And His work is thorough as His intent is to root out of you every last area of wrong belief and unbelief.

Simply said, God is teaching you to bring the kingdom of God from heaven into earth. He is training you to accurately represent Him to others so that those who still need to be awakened from the dead might rise to new life and all others will justifiably be sealed in their decision to reject the living God (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

But you first have to start living as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven; therefore, you have to know what that kingdom is like, how it operates and what the King desires. These are things you have to learn; they are not innate. You have to know your King, as a person, you have to let Him truly be your God, and you have to trust yourself to His rule over your life. That is the only way it works.

Let me summarize: everything that God has allowed in your life has flowed from His wisdom for your life in order to teach you why you can trust yourself to Him and how to trust yourself to Him in every nook and cranny of your soul in order that you might know who you truly are and live no longer as an earthly man or woman but as a heavenly man or woman who has been sent to bring the kingdom of God down to the earth.

By the way, your training is inevitable. God loves you too much and desires you to know Him so badly that He is going to do what it takes to convince you to trust yourself to Him. Therefore, I think it is time that you stop fighting Him and let Him teach you in order that you might live according to your **new nature** in Christ.

The Trouble with choice.

Now some of you may be able to kind of accept what I have described but still are mad that God created things this way in the first place. Why did He have to allow sin if He knew how badly we would be hurt? Why did He just not create us

to live as heavenly men and women and not have to go through this entire terrible ordeal? After all He is God and nothing is impossible for Him.

These are some good questions (or complaints) and the answer is rooted in the very character and nature of God. Because God is love He does not force us to be in relationship with Him; rather, He lets us **choose** to be in relationship with Him. Choice is a fundamental attribute of God's love and it seems to be a principle that He will not violate. We must choose to come to Him. We must choose to love Him. We must choose to give ourselves to Him. We must choose to believe Him. The Father does not want puppets; He wants lovers.

I will get into that further, but let me explain another truth that is critical to our understanding of God's wisdom in how He has created all things. Unlike the angels, we were not created to serve God but to be in love with God. Keep in mind that in terms of what we "do" here on the earth, our only true service of God is to believe in Him. **John 6:29** says: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Belief; that is what God requires from us (which is why the renewing and reprogramming of our mind is so essential). What we "do" in terms of those works that I mentioned before which God prepared for us are actually works that He does in and through us. We just make ourselves accessible to Him (through trusting ourselves completely to Him) so that He can accomplish all that He wants as we experience His life in and through our own (**John 14:10-14; Galatians 2:20**).

But anyway, I was reading the other day in the book of Daniel and in this one vision of heaven, Daniel saw God sitting on His throne and thousands upon thousands of angels served Him (**Daniel 7:10**); and it struck me that He created

them for a completely different purpose than He created us. As we studied in **1:14** angels are servants and they are actually sent by God for the purpose of caring for us—for those who receive salvation. They are His messengers, swift as the wind and servants made of flaming fire (**1:7**).

But He created us in order that Jesus might have a bride not more servants. He already has myriads and myriads of servants. This is actually quite shocking. That is why David and the writer of Hebrews, in **2:6**, ask, “What is man that you should think of him, and the son of man that you should care for him?”

Really, He wants us for His Son? How can that be possible? What is it about us? Why are we so attractive and desirable to God? I don’t know; but He tells us that we are the image and the glory of God (**1 Corinthians 11:7**) and He fully delights in us. I don’t understand it but He longs to hear our voice, He gets excited whenever we turn and glance toward Him and gaze in His direction, He desires us to be with Him and He just wants to enjoy our beauty (**Song of Solomon**). Honestly, it’s beyond me but I am thankful that He is so obsessed with me.

Now God could have arranged a fixed marriage and just created us to be the bride of Christ, but where would the joy be in that. To me that sounds horrible. Could you imagine being forced to be married to someone for all eternity that you do not really know or love or to be in a relationship that is artificial since that love was contrived by another? Ugh! No thanks.

The Father wants a bride who willingly, volitionally, emotionally, mentally, and physically gives herself to Jesus. Believe me, I have experienced being in a relationship with someone who did not really love me and it was painful and lonely. Just being “married” did not make up for the emptiness. The Father does

not want Jesus to experience this from His woman; He wants Jesus to have a bride that is madly in love with Him and who willfully reciprocates His adoration. And this is why choice was necessary; and, by the way, it is also why sin was necessary.

I know this might be a bit shocking, but what happened in the Garden of Eden did not take God by surprise. It was always a part of His plan; and we know that because His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure (*Ephesians 1:5*).

You see for us to willfully, volitionally, emotionally, mentally, and physically give ourselves to Jesus we must have the right to not give ourselves to Him. We must be able to sort through all the possible so called lovers and yet decide that to us Jesus is the most beautiful, the most worthy, and the most deserving of our affection and attention.

Without that choice we could have never given ourselves completely (heart, mind and soul) to Jesus as our lover forever. Instead, we would be in a marriage that would be ½ hearted and miserable like so many that we see in this world. So in that regard, the whole issue of sin was necessary.

We have to know what it is like to give ourselves to someone or something else (including ourselves) other than Jesus. We have to know and be completely convinced in the depth of our being that no one and nothing else can satisfy us like He can and then choose to bet our lives on that truth. We have to choose to love Him and give ourselves like an adoring bride to her husband.

Choice on the one hand is the problem and the issue behind our suffering; yet, on the other hand, it is also the marvel and the beauty behind God's agape love.

So this whole journey that we are on and this whole process of renewing our minds is the way the Father prepares the bride for His Son. It is how the Father through the Spirit works to convince us of the truth that there is no other who can fill the hole inside of our hearts except for Jesus.

So when you understand these truths, when you relent and are willing to let the Word of God be authoritative over your life, this passage in **10:26-36** which once seemed so harrowing and frightful and really made you mad will melt away and become some of the most beautiful and compassionate words spoken to you by the Father. It is how you are being prepared for an eternity of pleasure; for in His presence is the fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures forever (*Psalm 16:11*). I love the way our promise of eternity is so sensual and satisfying, which is quite appropriate for a marriage that will last for all time.

So even though what has happened to you may be horrific and may have caused you so many issues in your life, remember that the Father has allowed in His wisdom what He could otherwise have prevented in His power. Therefore, you have to consider that His wisdom was so perfect that:

1. It brought you to Him;
2. It has uniquely prepared you for the job of waking up the dead and bringing His kingdom to the earth (I guarantee you that there will be people that God will bring into your life for which you were specifically trained and prepared to minister the love of God to them; when that happens, when you know that He is doing His work of love and mercy in you and through you, you will experience His pleasure and His presence

in such a way that you will be thankful for all that His wisdom has allowed); and

3. It is fashioning you into a bride who is passionately in love with His Son where your true satisfaction is found only in Him.

I am sure that this whole dynamic does not make sense to your rational mind and that is because this truth is not rational; it is relational. But I can guarantee you, if you let Jesus be your Lord your experience will be undeniable.

Therefore, going back to **10:35-36**; do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. And the will of God is that you believe and bet your life and all that God has revealed about Himself and all that He has revealed about you. Therefore, ask the Lord to strengthen you, ask Him to help you endure your times of suffering and judgment. Ask Him to help you quickly learn why you can trust yourself to Him and how to trust yourself to Him so you can experience all that He has promised.

We will get into this next week, but I want to leave you with this exhortation: we are to live by faith. It is our obedience to the Father. It is what our entire Christian experience is based on. So please take your anger at God, take your hatred for all that He has allowed in your life, take your pride, your arrogance, and your belief that there should have been a better way, and surrender it all to the God who truly loves you and is bringing you into the most amazing, fulfilling, satisfying, and thrilling relationship you could ever imagine.

Ephesians 3:14-21

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts **as you trust in him**. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Let's Pray