

FIRST CORINTHIANS
Lesson 61–January 17, 2021

/If you're in the resident congregation turn off your electronic devices and put them away. Let this be a place where you aren't distracted by the world.\

/Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church

Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...an intimate, local Christian Church with worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. Welcome to this Bible lesson! In Ephesians, Chapter 3, Verses 14 to 19, the apostle Paul prays for us believers in Christ...

/EPHESIANS 3:14

For this reason (prayer)...I bow my knees before God the Father (who is the prototype of the best father)...

/EPHESIANS 3:15

...from which Father every family in heaven and on earth (angels and humans) derives its name...

/EPHESIANS 3:16

...that God the Father would grant you believers in Christ, according the standard of His glorious riches, to be strengthened in the innermost being with divine power through His God, the Holy Spirit ...

/EPHESIANS 3:17

... so that Christ may dwell in your hearts (in your thoughts and in your conduct) through faith...and so that you might keep on being rooted (like a plant) and grounded (like a building) in unconditional love...

/EPHESIANS 3:18

...and that you may be able to comprehend, along with all the saints...(all believers in Christ)...and that you may be able to grasp what is the breadth

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*(how wide) and the length (how long) and the height (how high) and the depth (how deep...God the Father's unconditional love is for you)... *

/EPHESIANS 3:19

*...and that you may be able to know, through experience, the unconditional love of Christ as well...a love which surpasses knowledge...that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God the Father. *

In the midst of the chaos in the world, there can't be enough messages to remind us believers that our God is in control of the universe...that He has us personally in mind by name at all times...that He has a plan for His believers...and that He has a personal plan for each of us. God is on our side. Romans, Chapter 8, Verses 31 and 32...

/ROMANS 8:31

*What then shall we believers in Christ say face-to-face with all these things? If God the Father is for us believers in Christ, and He is, who is ever going to be successful in opposition against us? *

/ROMANS 8:32

*If God the Father did not spare His own Son (our Lord, Jesus Christ), but delivered Him over for us all, how will the Father not also, now that we are in union with Christ, freely give us all things? *

By right we ALWAYS can expect the best our God has to offer.

At Barah Ministries we know this truth...that Jesus Christ is God. As the Lord He is 100% Deity...He is God the Son, a member of the Triune Godhead. He is also 100% human just like you and me, and His name is Jesus Christ. The Lord...God the Son...became flesh...Jesus Christ...and lived among us. He is the uniquely born One...100% God and 100% man in one Person forever. He is the Sovereign God of the Universe. He is the Jewish Messiah.

At Barah Ministries, we make a difference by teaching the Word of God from God's perspective and not from man's perspective. As those who make Barah Ministries our spiritual home, we are Christians. Being a Christian means we believe in the DEITY of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have a deep, intimate, and personal relationship with Him.

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God has an enemy, Satan, whom God made ‘the ruler of this world.’ He is a liar who deceives the whole world, including you and me. He doesn't want us to get to know God, and he interferes with our chance to know God. In John, Chapter 12, Verse 31, the Lord says...

/JOHN 12:31

“Now judgment is upon this world...now the ruler of this world (Satan) will be cast out (he will be dethroned at a future time).”

Satan’s strategy against the human race is religion, which is designed to make us either indifferent or antagonistic to God. Matthew, Chapter 23, Verse 15 says...

/MATTHEW 23:15

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees...you hypocrites! You travel around on sea and land to make one convert to your religion and when he becomes converted, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are!"

Religion deceives many into thinking they are saved when they might not be...and it works really well! Billions of people are deceived. Those who are deceived by religion don’t stop to examine the doctrines of their religion to look for the deception.

The Word of God...the Bible...is the truth...and it informs us about Satan's insidious deceptions. As believers in Christ, we are in union with Christ, and we have the victory over Satan through our Lord, who has overcome the world.

/TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
The Systemic Destruction of Unity

LESSON INTRODUCTION

On your birth date, whatever it is, you were born INTO a kingdom of disunity. The disunity began in angelic history with an evil thought from an evil creature...Satan...the enemy of God...Isaiah, Chapter 14, Verses 12 to 14...

/ISAIAH 14:12

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“How you have fallen from heaven...O star of the morning (Satan)...O son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth...you who have weakened the nations!”

/ISAIAH 14:13

“But you (Satan) said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the third heaven (the abode of God)...I will raise my throne above the stars of God (above the angels in the second heaven)...and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north (above mankind and the first heaven...planet earth).’”

/ISAIAH 14:14

“I (Satan) will ascend above the heights of the clouds (taking over the function of God)...I will make myself like the Most High.”

The original disunity. The original selfishness. The father of division speaks. To prove his boast, God is allowing Satan to rule planet earth for a period of time. Satan will NOT make Himself like the Most High. In fact, he will prove that he is nothing like our Most High God. Satan will suffer a consequence for his disunity...Isaiah, Chapter 14, Verse 15...

/ISAIAH 14:15

“Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol (the Lake of Fire)...to the recesses of the pit.”

Tyrants always come to an end they seldom anticipate. In arrogance, tyrants believe with all their hearts, in spite of massive amounts of evidence to the contrary, that their evil seditions will succeed. They are bullies. In God’s universe, they will not succeed.

In reflection on the first twelve chapters of our study of Paul’s first letter to the believers in Christ at Corinth...there is a single theme...DISUNITY... with many examples of it and many facets unfolding. We live now, and we always have lived in a kingdom that is divided against itself. In Matthew, Chapter 12, Verse 25...

/MATTHEW 12:25

Jesus said to them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste...and any city or any house divided against itself will not stand.”

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A tyrant has no integrity and cannot hold together a kingdom. Is the United States and its people divided against itself? If so, it will not stand. It will be laid waste. But believers in Christ will not be laid waste. As believers in Christ, we are IN Satan's kingdom but we are not OF Satan's kingdom. Philippians, Chapter 3, Verse 20 says...

/PHILIPPIANS 3:20

*(As believers in Christ)...our citizenship is in heaven...from which heaven also we eagerly wait for a Savior...the Lord Jesus Christ... *

Everything we experience here in Satan's kingdom is foreign to us...foreign to our very nature. To assign an identity to ourselves as suggested by this kingdom is ludicrous. Instead, as we study about the first-century church at Corinth, what we see in them are the very things we see in ourselves to this very day. We allow ourselves to be swept up into division and disunity. In today's lesson, we'll take a look at the systemic disunity being revealed to us in today's world.

SONG INTRODUCTION

In the poem *Footprints in the Sand* by Carolyn Joyce Carty, a man questions the Lord...

/FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

“LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most
troublesome times in my life
there is only one set of footprints in the sand.”\

/FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

“Lord, I don't understand why when
I needed you most you would leave me.”

The LORD replies... \

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/FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

“My precious child
I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering
when you see only one set of footprints
in the sand, it was then that I carried you.”\

If you’ve got problems, there’s a place to put them where they’ll be handled.
The group For King and Country says the place to put our problems is on
God’s SHOULDERS.

/MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

SHOULDERS

For King and Country

/OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Father, thank you for divisions because they illuminate the people who are on our side...in unity with us...thank you for giving us the mental serenity that is required to live in the disunity of Satan’s kingdom...planet earth... thank you for helping us to stop having lofty expectation of others who are deceived by the kingdom of darkness, especially our fellow believers in Christ, because our expectations are nothing more than premeditated resentments and disappointments...

...show us how to make a difference in the world...show us how to stand out in the world...give us the courage to tell the world about Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ and His gospel message of hope...teach us how to lead our fellow believers in Christ to His Word...and make us a perfect reflection of Your thoughts to a lost and dying world...

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...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

/TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
The Systemic Destruction of Unity

When something is systemic, it is a standard way of operating. It is an effect that is reflected in every facet of an operation. For example, in God's plan what is systemic is His unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace. You see this systemic sphere of operation reflected in every single thing that is part of God's plan. In Satan's kingdom, what is systemic is deceit. It is the standard way of operating reflected by everything in Satan's kingdom.

Paul Harvey was an American broadcaster who worked was aired on ABC Radio in Chicago and throughout the nation. For more than three decades, from the 1970's to his death in 2009, Harvey addressed millions of listeners, six days a week, giving them the backstory to people, things, and events both famous and not-so-well-known. One of the thrills of my tenure at ABC Radio in Chicago was getting to work with him. Often, I'd end up on the elevator with him. Inevitably I'd be staring at him, rather in awe, and as he exited the elevator he'd look at me and say with his deep and melodic radio voice, "Rory...good day!" It was his signature sign-off to his radio broadcasts. It was always worth a great laugh.

In 1965, more than fifty-six years ago, Paul wrote something that still rings true to this day, perhaps even more so now than then. It's called, "If I Were the Devil." I'd like to share it with you.

/IF I WERE THE DEVIL
Paul Harvey

"If I were the devil...if I were the Prince of Darkness...I'd want to engulf the whole world in darkness. And I'd have a third of its real estate, and four-fifths of its population, but I wouldn't be happy until I had seized the ripest apple on the tree — You. So, I'd do whatever is necessary to take over the United States. I'd subvert the churches first — I'd begin with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: 'Do as you please.'"

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“To the young, I would whisper that ‘The Bible is a myth.’ I would convince them that man created God instead of the other way around. I would confide that what’s bad is good, and what’s good is ‘square.’ And for the old, I would teach them to pray, after me, ‘Our Father, which art in Washington...’”

“And then I'd get organized. I'd educate authors on how to make revolting literature exciting so that anything else would appear dull and uninteresting. I'd populate television with dirtier movies. I'd pedal narcotics to whomever I could. I'd sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction. I'd tranquilize the rest with pills.”

“If I were the devil, I'd soon have families at war with themselves, churches at war with each other and within themselves, and nations at war with themselves...until each in its turn was consumed. And with promises of higher ratings, I'd have mesmerizing media fanning the flames. If I were the devil, I would encourage schools to refine young intellects, but neglect to discipline emotions — just let those run wild, until before you knew it, you'd have to have drug-sniffing dogs and metal detectors at every schoolhouse door.”

“Within a decade I'd have prisons overflowing, I'd have judges promoting pornography — soon I could evict God from the courthouse, then from the schoolhouse, and then from the houses of Congress. And in churches, I would substitute psychology for Christianity, and I'd Deify science. I would lure Priests and Pastors into misusing little boys and little girls and church money. If I were the devil, I'd make the symbols of Easter an egg and the symbol of Christmas a bottle.”

“If I were the devil, I'd take from those who have, and give to those who want until I had killed the incentive of the ambitious.”

“And what do you bet I could get whole states to promote gambling as the way to get rich? I would caution against extremes, and hard work, and Patriotism, and moral conduct. I would convince the young that marriage is old-fashioned, that swinging is more fun, that what you see on the TV is the way to live. And thus, I could undress you in public, and I could lure you into bed with diseases for which there is no cure. In other words, if I were the devil, I'd just keep right on doing what he's doing.”

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“This is Paul Harvey...good day.”

On your birth date, whatever it is, you were born INTO a kingdom of disunity. It is God’s intention for you to abandon that kingdom for God’s kingdom, yet to thrive as you live in the midst of a divided kingdom. It is God’s intention for you to reflect the possibilities of unity in a kingdom of disunity.

What are the possibilities of unity? If a horse can pull a four-hundred-pound load in a cart, how many pounds can be pulled if an extra horse is added to pull the cart? You might be arithmetic in your approach. You might say four-hundred plus four-hundred is eight hundred, and your math would be right.

Actually, two horses could pull a sixteen-hundred-pound load in a cart. Why? It’s called the synergistic effect. A synergistic effect is created when two or more entities combine to create an effect that is greater than either one of them could have manifested alone. God’s idea of unity has genius in it. Genesis, Chapter 2, Verse 18...

/GENESIS 2:18a

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone...”

Yet what do we see in operation? We see believers in Christ operating as if they are part of Satan’s kingdom. We get in relationships, but we operate alone. We kill the impact of unity. We kill the synergistic effect. We blame. We argue. We operate selfishly. In case, you weren’t noticing the theme of our last several months of study of First Corinthians, there you have it. Division and disunity among those whom God placed in unity at the movement of salvation. A group of people placed in Satan’s kingdom, who are not OF his kingdom, yet who have adopted his systemic method of operation...disunity...elitism...division.

Is there any hope for Satan’s kingdom? When we return from the break, we’ll take the offering, and then we’ll investigate the answer to the question.

/FIVE MINUTE BREAK

NOBODY

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Casting Crowns

/TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

The Systemic Destruction of Unity

Thank you for giving. Your giving has made it possible for us to develop a youth ministry, and it is already having impact. Most of the kids went home after the first lesson and challenged their parents about certain ideas about church and God (like tithing) that were being taught in the home. That is not my preference, but that certainly is what happens when you teach the truth of the Word of God. We provided parents with notes from the lesson so they could see exactly what is being taught.

Barah Ministries is committed to teaching the truth in every ministry. The truth illuminates. Your giving allows us to keep making a difference with the hearers the Lord provides.

Let's welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall with one of his always inspiring offering messages.

/THE OFFERING

Deacon Denny Goodall\

/OFFERING VERSE

PSALM 22:16-18

For dogs have surrounded me...a band of evildoers has encompassed me... they pierced my hands and my feet...I can count all my bones. They look...they stare at me...they divide my garments among them...and for my clothing they cast lots.

/OFFERING VERSE

PSALM 22:19-20

But You, O Lord, be not far off...O You...my help...hasten to my assistance. Deliver my soul from the sword...deliver my only life from the power of the dog.

/OFFERING SONG

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THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU
Don Moen

/TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
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Satan's plan for mankind is division. Therefore, he must have a system driven by systemic disunity. It has always been this way and it always will be this way as long as we live in a kingdom run by a deceptive tyrant. We don't have to adopt his thinking as our operating procedure.

God's plan for mankind calls for unity. It's simple. God wants you to get to know Him. The way you get to know God is through the study of His Word. As you study the Word of God, you mature. As you study the Word of God, your thinking changes because you begin to think from His viewpoint and not from the human viewpoint. As you study the Word of God, your decisions change to be in line with His will. As you study the Word of God, your power changes because you use His power instead of your own.

What we see in the first century Corinthians is a group of believers in Christ, who are IN the world but not OF the world. They will be in heaven with us one day. Their lives are teaching us how not to live our lives...in division and disunity.

Yet as Christians we often lend our brains to the world system of thought.

/WORLD vs. CHRISTIANITY SLIDE

We give our brains to a kingdom that is not our domain. Much of the tribulation Christians experience is self-created, but we blame God for it. "I just know God is testing me." No. He's not. Quite often we think we have a better idea than God. We don't. Thus, tribulation.

I don't know how life has been for you since we've started studying First Corinthians. For me, relationships have been in view. And what our study has illuminated in many of the relationships in my life is disunity. It has been brutal to see disunity surface, even in relationships I thought were solid.

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Where is the disunity in your relationships? If you're being honest, is the disunity your fault? Where are you coming from in the matter of relationships? Are you coming from the selfishness of disunity or from the selflessness of mutuality? Our study of First Corinthians invites us to be honest with ourselves. Romans, Chapter 12, Verse 2...

/ROMANS 12:2a

And do not be conformed to this world (by Satan, by his cosmic system of thought, and by the flesh resident in you)...instead, keep on being transformed by God the Holy Spirit...through the renewing of your mind (as you study the Word of God)...

/ROMANS 12:2b

...so that you may see clearly...through the testing of experience...what the will of God is...and the will of God is that which is good for you and that which is acceptable to Him and that which is perfect in result.

As we face the challenges this year is sure to bring, don't forget that we are in unity with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let's fix our eyes on Him, on His thoughts, and on unity. In addition, let's reject everything that Satan is and everything he stands for. He does not have our best interests in mind.

/GOD WANTS YOU!

Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life\

The Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, wants a relationship with you? Do you have a relationship with Him? If not, what are you waiting for? First Thessalonians, Chapter 5, Verse 2 says...

/FIRST THESSALONIANS 5:2

For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

The Lord doesn't want you to be surprised, and He certainly doesn't want you to miss out on your "so great" salvation opportunity. On the day before Thanksgiving in 1987, the news on the radio in my hometown...Chicago, Illinois...was quite shocking. Our beloved Mayor, Harold Washington, was dead. He was in a meeting in his fifth-floor office at Chicago's City Hall.

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He slumped forward, his face rested gently on the desk, and in a moment, he was dead from a massive heart attack.

I can remember the day as vividly as if it were yesterday. What I remember most was wondering what it must be like to get up in the morning, and as you're getting dressed, not knowing that in a few short hours you would be dead.

All of us will die physically one day. That is hardly at issue. What we don't know is when we will close our eyes in this life. My concern is that you may be one of the people who is walking around today unprepared for this reality.

I was talking to a young man on a trip to Mallorca, Spain who was quite unprepared. I asked him if he is a Christian. He said, "No." I asked him why not. He said, "To tell you the truth, I don't even think about God." I appreciated his candor. I told him, "It would be wise to think about God all the time." He asked why, and I'll share the things with you that I shared with him. This is especially for those of you who don't have a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22a says...

/FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22a

*For all in union with Adam at physical birth (and that is every human who comes to earth) are set to die the second death in the Lake of Fire... *

You were born physically alive, yet spiritually dead. That's bad news. The worse news is that you may not have even known that is your situation.

The good news is that the Lord Jesus Christ paved the way to get you out of the predicament. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22b says...

/FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22b

*...yet all those in union with Christ (all believers in Christ) will be made spiritually alive. *

Do you want to be saved? Do you want to spend all eternity in a relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord Jesus Christ? The Lord Jesus Christ provides the plan. Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31 says...

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/ACTS 16:31

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes.”

Right now, right where you sit, you can spend the gift of faith given to you by God...and you can use this faith to be saved...Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verses 8 and 9...

/EPHESIANS 2:8

*For by God the Father’s grace you have been saved through faith (in Christ for salvation) ... and that grace and that faith and that salvation are not from the source of yourselves...it is the gift of God the Father... *

/EPHESIANS 2:9

...so being saved is not as a result of your works (deeds you have done in self-righteousness)...so that no one may boast (about saving himself).

Right now, the Lord Jesus Christ wants to save you. Funny thing about the young man I was talking to...he knew what faith is...he said to me, “It sounds like you’re saying if I put my confidence in Jesus Christ I will be saved forever.” It’s exactly what I am saying. Faith is placing your confidence in the object of your faith. When Jesus Christ is the object of your faith, you will be saved.

John, Chapter 3, Verse 36 warns...

/JOHN 3:36

“He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him.”

How can you get to heaven? Right where you sit, RIGHT NOW, you can tell God the Father that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the moment of eternal life for you. John, Chapter 14, Verse 6...

/JOHN 14:6

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Jesus said to the doubting apostle, Thomas, “I am the way (to salvation), and I am the truth (through the gospel message from the Word of God), and I am the resurrection life...and no one comes to God the Father (in heaven) but through believing in Me.”

Who is this God who saves you? The apostle Paul describes the Lord Jesus Christ...in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

/FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (Paul) delivered to you as of first importance what I also received... that it was Jesus Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures...

/FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:4

...and that He was buried...and that He was raised from the dead on the third day...according to the Scriptures...

Won't you join me in heaven? If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ right now you will.

Mayor Harold Washington had no idea that he would not celebrate Thanksgiving in 1987...at least not on earth. Yet he was somewhere. He was in heaven or he was in hell. Quite often, my thoughts drift to the young man in Spain. I wonder what God the Holy Spirit chose to do with the seed our conversation planted. I'm sure the Spirit knows how to get him the information to be saved.

If you choose to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll have no concern about the moment you close your eyes in this life. You'll be in heaven. You'll have no chance to go to the Lake of Fire. Do it now! Don't let the day of the Lord sneak up on you!

SONG INTRODUCTION

The sixth thing that Jesus Christ said while hanging from the Cross was recorded in John, Chapter 19, Verse 30...

/JOHN 19:30a

...when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”...

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It's the Greek word *tetelestai*. It means "paid in full." It was the moment when the Lord's redemption work was accomplished. He shed His blood to pay for every sin we would ever commit, past, present, and future. Our sins were paid for in the past, and they are paid for forevermore. Nothing can change this absolute fact. Here's June Murphy to say it in song...**YOU CAN'T UNDO THE CROSS.**

/CLOSING SONG
CAN'T UNDO THE CROSS
June Murphy

/CLOSING VERSES

A Doxology of Praise to Our God\

/EPHESIANS 1:3
*Worthy of praise is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us believers in Christ in eternity past with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (a place of permanence)...through our union with Christ... *

God wants us to enjoy His gracious provisions...

/EPHESIANS 1:7-8
*In Jesus...we have redemption (deliverance from slavery to sin) through His blood...the forgiveness of our trespasses...according to the glorious wealth provided by His grace...which He lavished on us...including as a gift, wisdom and insight... *

/EPHESIANS 3:20
*Now to God the Father...who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we could ask or imagine (more than is humanly possible) ...according to the divine power (omnipotence) that works within us... *

/EPHESIANS 3:21
...to Him be the glory...through the church age believers in union with Christ Jesus...and to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

/CLOSING PRAYER

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Let us pray...

/Thanks for coming!
Thanks for watching!
Thanks for listening!
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