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Sunday, March 30, 2025

Ephesians 6:10-18

For the last few weeks as we have come to the final section of the Book of Ephesians we have noted that the believer is involved in a warfare, a battle. We have seen that this battle is against a formidable enemy, Satan and all of the hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. In fact we've been trying to make the point that committed Christians and Satan are on a collision course of sorts. It is inevitable that at some point our lives will intersect with the forces of Hell as we choose to live for God. There is absolutely no question about that. The adversary works hard. He works effectively. He works manipulatively and strategically against the children of God.

However, as we have learned, in spite of this strategic manipulation, Paul doesn't minimize the call for Christians to stand firm because it's so hard. In fact, if anything, he reinforces the absolute necessity for us to stand firm. And as Christians, this is possible because as we've also learned, we have the ability to operate - not in the power of our own might - but in the power of His might.

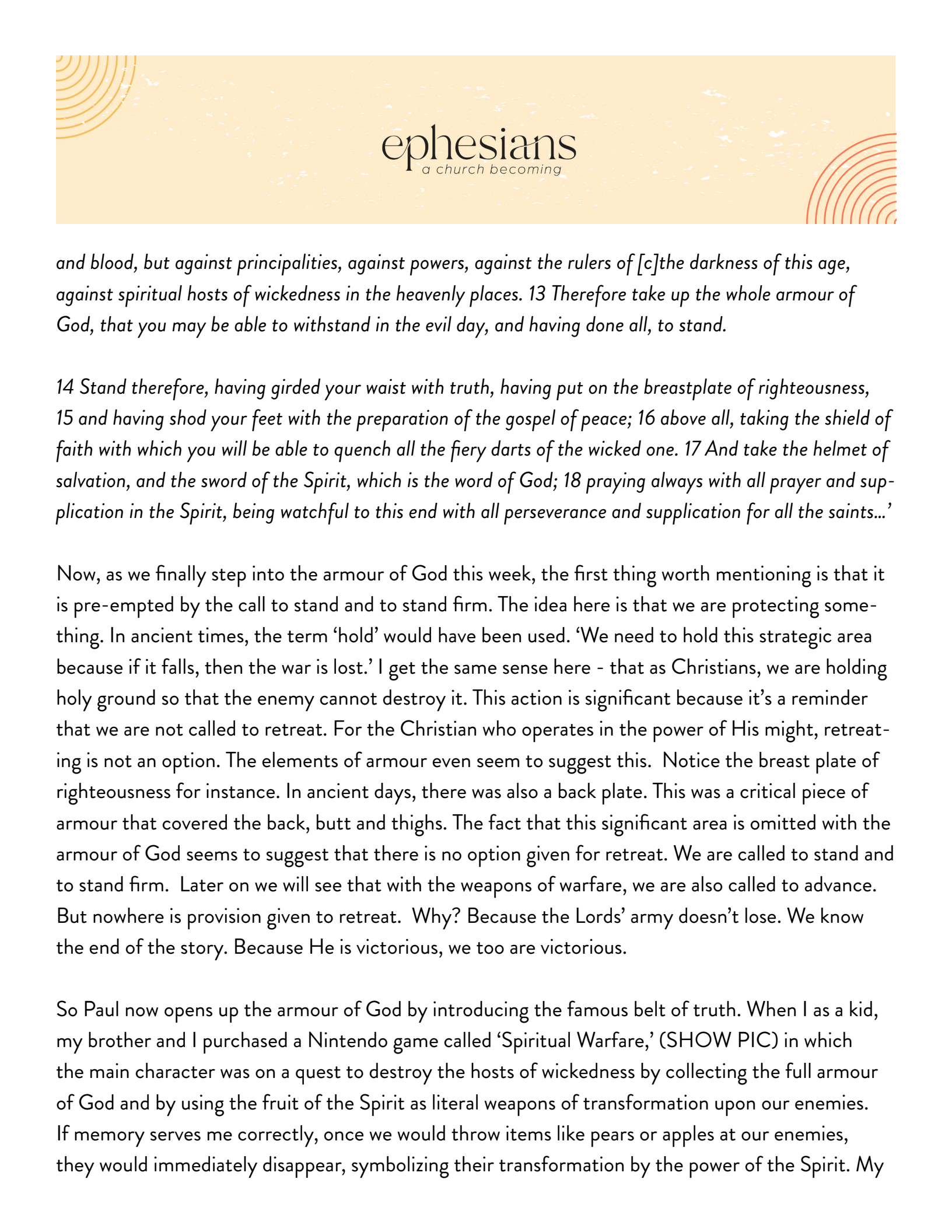
And as we learned last week, before even getting into the protection that the armour gives us, first and foremost there needs to be a willingness to even enter into the battle, that we as Christians are going to be faced with. This is what it means to count the cost of discipleship. And quite simply, if we aren't even willing to stand in the power of His might through difficult times, then the armour really is pointless because the armour of God serves as our protection in the battle against evil.

Now, playing off this call to stand, we now see the elements of the armour of God - his protection for us - in these next few verses.

If you have your Bibles turn with me to:

Ephesians 6:10-18

'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the [b]wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh



ephesians

a church becoming

and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of [c]the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...'

Now, as we finally step into the armour of God this week, the first thing worth mentioning is that it is pre-empted by the call to stand and to stand firm. The idea here is that we are protecting something. In ancient times, the term 'hold' would have been used. 'We need to hold this strategic area because if it falls, then the war is lost.' I get the same sense here - that as Christians, we are holding holy ground so that the enemy cannot destroy it. This action is significant because it's a reminder that we are not called to retreat. For the Christian who operates in the power of His might, retreating is not an option. The elements of armour even seem to suggest this. Notice the breast plate of righteousness for instance. In ancient days, there was also a back plate. This was a critical piece of armour that covered the back, butt and thighs. The fact that this significant area is omitted with the armour of God seems to suggest that there is no option given for retreat. We are called to stand and to stand firm. Later on we will see that with the weapons of warfare, we are also called to advance. But nowhere is provision given to retreat. Why? Because the Lords' army doesn't lose. We know the end of the story. Because He is victorious, we too are victorious.

So Paul now opens up the armour of God by introducing the famous belt of truth. When I as a kid, my brother and I purchased a Nintendo game called 'Spiritual Warfare,' (SHOW PIC) in which the main character was on a quest to destroy the hosts of wickedness by collecting the full armour of God and by using the fruit of the Spirit as literal weapons of transformation upon our enemies. If memory serves me correctly, once we would throw items like pears or apples at our enemies, they would immediately disappear, symbolizing their transformation by the power of the Spirit. My

ephesians

a church becoming

brother and I played this 8bit game in all of its glory and I remember that once we got the belt of truth - that was key - because that started the ball rolling for the other pieces of armour to follow suit.



Now, it's interesting to note the order of the pieces of armour here, and that the belt of truth comes first. What I would like to do here today is suggest that there is a significance to the order, especially when it comes to the first piece mentioned, the belt of truth. I would also like to propose that because this is mentioned first, it is perhaps the most foundational piece of the entire armour of God.

Now when we think of a belt, we often think of a thin piece of leather with a buckle on the end that helps to keep pants on our hips. But I want you to notice that the term belt of truth does actually not exist in Scripture. Let me remind you of what Paul specifically says in verse 14:



ephesians

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Ephesians 6:14a

‘Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth...’

The original word for ‘girded’ that Paul uses here is the word ‘perizōnnymi’ which means to secure and fasten ones garments. You see, Roman soldiers in Paul’s day wore skirts that looked very much like Scottish kilts. Over these skirts they wore a cloak or tunic, as it was called. When they were off duty, at home, they wore the tunic un-girded, hanging loosely on their bodies. But when they were about to enter battle, they would gather the tunic around their waste, holding it together with a belt. They would then “tuck up the tunic” under the belt, thus leaving their legs free to move freely.

To ‘gird up the loins’ was to prepare for action. Which is why Paul begins his description of the armour here: we will not be able to stand in spiritual warfare unless and until we have girded our loins, unless and until we have buckled around us the belt that holds everything together and frees our legs to move.

That belt is truth. And we gird up our loins with this truth.

This belt of truth exists not only to help us to distinguish between right and wrong - anyone can do that. It’s main purpose however, is to help us distinguish between what is right and what is almost right. You see, the enemy of our souls - satan, the devil - is often referred to as the Angel of Light because deception is his main weapon. He knows that many of us are too smart to be seduced by what is blatantly wrong, so he targets what is ‘almost right.’ Look at the Garden of Eden. It wasn’t really a right and wrong scenario with Adam and Eve, was it? That would have been far too easy for Adam and Eve to spot. The serpent was cunning and manipulative - so much so, that he disguised the ‘wrong’ as ‘almost right.’ It was a decision between right and almost right. He got Adam and Eve to believe that there was a better way than God’s way. Notice that the enemy never disputed what God had told them. He knew that was not an option. So he used terms like, God didn’t really say that did He? The serpent did not target the words that God said, instead, the meaning behind them. Again, it was the difference between ‘right’ and ‘almost right’ and this has been part of his strategy since the beginning of time.

ephesians

a church becoming

We see this fundamental element clearly in nature - especially on a beautifully clear evening as we stare up into the sky. We are often wowed at how infinite and massive our universe is. Look at this picture for example.



This is one of the most recent pictures taken by the Hubble Ultra Deep Field Telescope which represents a look at deep, deep space. When you and I look at the sky we tend to see only a few stars and black space. If you have the ability to be up north on a clear night, there are a lot more stars to be seen but still the black space. The black space is deep space and this image shows what's deep inside that black space. Those aren't stars that you're seeing though. Each one of these 'stars' is actually a galaxy that contains millions of stars within it. You and I simply cannot fathom the colossal and seemingly eternal size of our universe.

Now, as big as the universe is, everything in it is comprised of things that are incredibly small yet incredibly significant. This is what is referred to as the science of fine tunings. This approach looks



ephesians

a church becoming

at how small the universe can get and the laws that are at place in the minuscule and minutia of the inner workings of our planet - and how critical they are to life on planet earth.

For example, did you know:

That the Earth is 150 million kms from the sun? If it were 5% closer, then the water would boil up from the oceans and if it were just 1% farther away, then the oceans would freeze.

Earth's diameter is 12,800 kms. If it were even 5-7% smaller then almost the whole Earth would be reduced to snow and ice.

The earth is different from other planets in our solar system in that it tilts on its axis at 23.5 degrees. If earth did not tilt on its axis then one side would get stuck on the sun side and get hotter and hotter and hotter while the other side would get colder, and colder...and colder. This 23.5 degree tilt is just precise enough to sustain life on planet earth.

Our atmosphere has 21% Oxygen – if that number were slightly higher or lower, Earth could not sustain life.

Hydrogen must convert 0.007% of its entire mass into helium continually in order for earth to sustain human life. .008% no life - .006% no life on planet earth.

And these are just 5 examples of literally hundreds. It's like a radio with a thousand knobs/dials. Each one needs to be specifically tuned in order to get reception. If even one dial is off...life as we know it on planet earth would cease to exist. It is that precise. These 'dials' cannot be almost true - they're either tuned in or not.

There's no close enough in the science of fine tuning's - it's precise and specific - because life on planet earth requires that.

It's the same way with the truth in our spiritual lives. Just as even a small deviation in these natural parameters can lead to life or death outcomes, so too can deviating from the truth have profound impacts on our spiritual health and well being. The belt of truth reminds us that God's truth is the standard that we are to measure everything by.



ephesians

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The belt of truth isn't merely a part of our spiritual attire; it is the foundational piece that ensures the integrity and effectiveness of all the other pieces. When we gird ourselves with the truth, we are securing every other aspect of our spiritual armour. It holds the breastplate of righteousness in place, ensuring that our hearts and desires are protected by what is just and good. It supports the shield of faith, with which we can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, and it readies the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, allowing us to wield it accurately and effectively.

For example - Clara leaning the Ukelele.

She thought one string was right but it sounded off. I argued that it was not right and she argued that it was fine. And so we went back and forth. It wasn't until we grabbed the guitar tuner that we were able to definitively agree on the correct tuning.

It's the same way with the Word of God. This is what sets the standard of truth for us. There's no 'close enough' or 'almost true' when it comes to tuning our lives according to God's Word. Just as a slightly out-of-tune string can disrupt an entire performance, even small deviations from biblical truth can lead to significant misalignments in our spiritual lives. Using the Word of God as our tuner ensures that we align with His will, avoiding the deception that can arise from our own interpretations or the world's influence.

And it's not just about knowing the truth but it has to be about living it - allowing it to continually adjust and refine us. It serves as our spiritual tuning fork, ensuring that each part of our life resonates with the purity and accuracy of God's heart.

And because Satan is the Father of all lies, one of the ways that he targets truth in the lives of Christians is by downgrading the commands of the Lord by telling us that it's simply too hard or not relevant anymore. Lemme give you an example that I think works well in our context - especially those of you who are taking the Practicing the Way course. The almost true lies of the enemy will not outright tell you to disregard the commandment to 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.' Instead, these subtle lies might suggest, 'You showed up to church - that's good enough.' This



ephesians

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is a classic example of how the truth is twisted. Showing up to church on Sundays is a great start to honouring the Sabbath, but it's only a part of what it means to observe the Sabbath. The biblical command goes deeper, inviting us to dedicate a whole day for rest, reflection, and rejuvenation of our spiritual, mental, and physical health. Why? Because Satan, the Father of Lies has been sowing the lie that we're far too busy to afford a full day of rest, and if we take that time, we'll fall behind or miss out on something crucial.

This lie not only undermines the command itself but also the rationale behind it. God instituted the Sabbath for our benefit, as a gift - it's a time to disconnect from the week's demands and reconnect with Him in a meaningful way. When we reduce the Sabbath to merely a church attendance check, we miss the rich, restorative experience intended to nourish every part of our being. What could it look like for our stress levels and our mental health and our families if we actually adhered to this truth fully? Granted, it was easier when I was a child. Stores weren't open on Sundays in Canada. It was observed as a national day of rest. But as progress tends to drive society, here we find ourselves busier than ever...more stressed out than ever.....and even a pandemic couldn't teach us to slow down and rest...

It's about more than rest though; it's about restoration and renewal. It's about setting aside the chaos of our daily grind to focus on what truly sustains us. This isn't just an act of obedience; it's an act of alignment with God's will, which invariably leads to greater peace and fulfillment. And yes it requires sacrifice and surrender.

Yet, this does not mean that reclaiming the Sabbath is beyond our reach. It requires intentionality and a commitment to reshaping our priorities. It means deliberately setting aside this day each week, not just for rest from physical work but for spiritual renewal and family bonding. Why not start small, perhaps by turning off digital devices for several hours, engaging in reflective or leisure activities that rejuvenate the spirit and the body, and spending quality time with family and friends.

Now, this is but one of those 'dials' that when tuned in correctly will give life and life more abundantly. And there are many others awaiting our attention. But for the sake of today, let this ex-



ephesians

a church becoming

ample be a reminder that the truth of God's word is meant to be followed and is meant to give us freedom. And sometimes following God's truth can be hard because our society tells us something very different. But do not be drawn into the lie that says God's truth must conform to our society. This is a lie. God's truth sets the standard - always. And as we endeavour to follow His ways, it is the power of His might in us that gives us the ability to do things that we may think we cannot.

3 Points to consider as we close this morning/afternoon:

We learned today that Satan is the Father of Lies and as such, he is a master manipulator which we clearly see in the story of creation with Adam and Eve. His manipulation often has a sprinkling of truth scattered within so as to make the deception look like truth. That's how he gets you to bite. And too many Christians fall for this. The Bible teaches us that when facing this, we need discernment - to know what the truth really is. The only way to know is to engage your relationship with the God of all truths.

As we pause and reflect on the belt of truth today, ask yourself this: "Where have I accepted 'almost truths' in my life?" It could be in how you observe the Sabbath, in how you manage your relationships, or even in how you conduct yourself at work. Are you merely doing enough to appear faithful, or are you truly living out the full depth and breadth of God's commands? Always remember, you may not be where you want to be but thanks God you're not where you used to be. There is grace. The Bible says you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. One way to resist the manipulative lies of the enemy is the knowledge of truth. Ask the Holy Spirit through prayer what truth is. Read His word to see and embrace His truth. Ask questions to your pastors if you're stuck.

Ephesians 3:20-21

'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'

Blessing



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