

Fare Well
By Don Green

Bible Text: Ephesians 6:21-24
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We come to a text today that I am quite certain has far more importance to you and to your life than might seem at first glance because of the kind of ordinary nature of the things that it seems to be saying. Look at Ephesians 6:21 through 24 with me as we consider this final text from the book of Ephesians in God's word. Ephesians 6, beginning in verse 21,

21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.

These are Paul's final words, his concluding words, his parting words to the church at Ephesus and the other churches that were in the circle of those who would receive this letter in the first century. If you were with us last time, you'll remember that Paul in verses 18 to 20 had told us to and instructed people to pray for the people of Christ and to pray for the proclamation of Christ. It was a ringing call to prayer that we realize had great significance for our own church body here in the days to come. And here in the final four verses, Paul is closing it out and he, as it were, he's saying farewell as he closes out this letter and his words give us an abiding example of how sincere personal concern marks life in the church.

For those of you that are especially committed to our body, we see in what is laid out here a sense of what life in the body is supposed to look like. This is not simply Paul saying goodbye 2,000 years ago, the spirit that animates what he says is that which we should look at and say, "Oh, this is now how I live in the 21st century in the context of a local church." And Christ calls us not only to come to him in faith for personal salvation, when Christ saves a man, he also calls him out of the world in order to be a part of a body of believers. He calls us into his church, not just to a private devotion to Christ and you see that laid out very clearly in the four verses that we're going to look at this morning and basically we're going to structure today's message around two hinges really, two

sides of a coin. We're going to look at life on the human level and then life on the divine level as that which would frame our thinking about our interactions in the church.

So here we go, exciting time for me. This is a wonderful text and, you know, I'm going to say something that is very obvious, very basic and yet for some it may be a thought that's never really occurred to you because we've been conditioned over the years, we've been conditioned to think about the Bible from a perspective of how it applies to our own lives and we forget that the Bible rose up in the context of real human beings 2,000 years ago. It's easy to overlook a most basic fact as you read Scripture and as you read this letter to the Ephesians. The early church was filled with people that really weren't all that much different from us. They were real people who had a real love for each other. The Bible historically, humanly speaking, the Bible was born out of real relationships between people who cared for each other and you see that ever so clearly in what Paul says here in these four verses, and you see it even in the way that Paul sends Tychicus with the letter.

Look at the first two verses of our passage today with me again, verses 21 and 22. Paul says, writing to those who would receive the letter soon from his hand, he says, "But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts." Now, just think for a moment about what the situation is here. We've talked about it many times. Paul is writing from a prison and those who would receive this letter did not have access to him and yet they loved him. They cared about him. Paul was their spiritual champion. Paul was a direct link to the Lord Jesus Christ to them because he had seen the Lord with his own eyes. The Lord had appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Paul had seen him resurrected. So when Paul spoke to them about Christ, he spoke with authority; he spoke as the one who brought them into contact with their Lord Jesus Christ. So as is often the case, the man who presents Christ to you, the man who nurtures you in faith, think back to maybe the person who led you to Christ, think back to those who in times gone by have instructed you in Christ, maybe a parent, maybe a sibling, maybe someone else, but you have a certain, there is a certain place in your heart, a certain affection that you have reserved in your heart for those who led you in the Lord. Well, in the first century it was no different. These people had a love for Paul and they recognized who he was and he wasn't simply an authority figure to them, he was that but he was also a man whom they cared about, whom they loved. So they know that Paul is in prison, humanly speaking, with an uncertain future ahead of him, perhaps his life is on the line and they may never see him again, and unable to communicate with him, Paul sends them this letter through the hand of Tychicus.

Now, about a year ago, a little over a year ago, we actually did a study on the man Tychicus and we have some CDs in the back, just a handful of them for those of you who would pick those up. Maybe you didn't hear that message, kind of will round out some of the things that we said here today. Those CDs are available for no charge or they are downloadable on our website so feel free to use that to supplement what we're going to talk about here today.

For now, it's enough to say this: Tychicus was a man who served alongside of Paul in ministry for 15 years or more. You can trace him through the book of Acts and through many of Paul's letters. You can see that he was a man in one sense from our perspective who was in the background and yet from Paul's perspective as he wrote, Paul had by his side a close trusted friend and ministry partner that he was going to entrust this letter to. You think about it, I know Tychicus is not a man who is on anyone's radar here in the 21st century unless you're just teaching through the Bible verse by verse, but if you think about it, there was a period of time where this inspired letter from the hand of the Apostle Paul was exclusively in the possession and custody of Tychicus. What was he going to do with it? Well, you and I all benefit from the fact that Tychicus was faithful to his responsibility; that he delivered the letter as Paul instructed and asked him to do and we now bear still to this day the wonderful consequences that Tychicus was faithful to his ministry. It's a wonderful thing to think about that there were real people in the background just like in a church today, there are real people in the background who serve faithfully, who the consequences of their ministry echo on even though maybe they're never a public source on the platform or something like that. Well, we thank God for people like that.

So Paul sends to the church a man who knew his heart and Paul sends a man that he is confident is going to have the interest of the church in his heart as well and what I want you to see, what I want you to think about as we are kind of going through this together, is to contemplate as you read these words the love that is assumed in what is said, the personal concern, the interest for one another that is at stake in what is being said here, and to realize that that is the way life in the body of Christ operates. This is the way that it is supposed to be. This is the standard. Think about it this way: this text would make no sense whatsoever in the context of a church of 20,000 people where no one really knows anyone. It makes no sense if there is no sort of relationship and everybody is just operating on a principle of anonymity, being a witness to an event on stage that has no involvement with relationships in life. It would make absolutely no sense, but in the context of a church where there are relationships and care and concern and people know one another and look for each other week by week, then this makes sense and gives us instruction.

Look at what Paul says three times in this short section of Scripture. Paul says, "Tychicus will give you an update on my situation." Look at it there in verse 21, he says, "But that you also may know about my circumstances." He says, "For this purpose, in order that you might know about my circumstance, I'm going to do something." And then he repeats himself, he says, "So that you may know how I'm doing," and he says there in verse 23, "so that you may know about us," there in verse 22, I should say. Verse 22, "so that you may know about us." Paul says, "I understand that you're concerned about me and I'm sending Tychicus so that he'll be able to bring you up-to-date and that your concern, your prayers for me, your unanswered questions are all going to be taking care of. I won't take time to put them in writing here, I'm going to send Tychicus and he'll give you a verbal report to update you on how I am doing." Beloved, I want you to see something really simple there. For Paul to say that three times means that he was very conscience of their concern for him, and the fact that he was conscious of it, I'm saying things that are just so

basic here. I'm almost ashamed of myself to talk this way. They were concerned for him. They wanted to know how he was doing. Do you realize that that is simply an overflow of what Christian love looks like? A personal concern for the person next to you? An interest in how they are doing? Paul was addressing that concern as he spoke with them. So Tychicus was more than just a courier for the letter, he was a representative of Paul who was going to say, "Here's how Paul is doing."

But notice something else, not only were they concerned for Paul, what you see woven into the fabric of what Paul says here, Paul was concerned for them too. Look at verse 22, Paul says, "I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts." Paul says, "I'm concerned for you. I know that you're troubled. I know that you are uncertain about what's happening and I'm sending this representative, I'm sending my trusted co-laborer Tychicus to you, and I know what Tychicus is going to do, he's going to comfort you. He's going to settle your anxiety. He's going to encourage you in Christ. You're going to be stronger as a result of the fact that Tychicus has come to you." And so Paul couldn't go personally because he was in a prison but he sends a man that he trusted into the situation of the churches there and says, "Tychicus is going to comfort you as well."

Now, think about this with me: this book of Ephesians, we have seen the loftiest of doctrinal and theological and biblical themes. We've seen lofty calls to unity and holiness and love in all manner of relationships in the church, in the family, in the work place. All of these lofty themes that have been put forth and yet you come to this text in verses 21 and 22, do you realize how utterly ordinary this seems what Paul is saying here? These time contained concerns between men and women? There is something ordinary about it. There is something very human about it. You have a relationship with someone and you're concerned about them. Well, that's the way it was with them, and just the ordinary nature of here's something in writing, "Tychicus, go deliver it. Tychicus talk to them. Tychicus, tell them how I'm doing." There is something so very ordinary and human about it and yet don't miss this, don't miss what gives rise to that. What these concerns are are a symptom, they are a mark of something deeper. They are a mark of the principle of the love of Christ in operation in a human heart. They were concerned for Paul because the love of Christ was in their hearts in a way that drew them in concern to the one who spoke for him and Paul cared for them out of that same principle of love.

Now, watch what this means for us here today in the context of our lives together at Truth Community Church. What do we do when we come together? We interact with each other. We know something about each other's lives and that depth of relationship informs our prayers in the way we meet each other's needs. You see, the church is not intended to be an anonymous place where you come in like you're going to a movie theater and you share an experience watching two hours on the screen and then you walk out without any kind of personal relationship with the people that you gathered together with to see the movie. That's not the way the church is at all. No. No, Christ saves a people in part so that these people would come together in relationships of love, lasting mutual concern, devotion to one another, concern for one another that is expressed on a human level and simply, I am concerned about how you are and you are concerned about how I am on a

very human level. It seems so ordinary and yet the reality of it is that this is what God wants from us, this is what God calls us to do and in the process of these seemingly simple ordinary human relationships without you and I even being aware of it, little by little God is using that to accomplish eternal purposes of sanctification in our lives that prepare us for heaven. In heaven, we will be gathered together with the saints of all the ages in a perfect fellowship, in perfect communion with Christ. Our body life together is simply the training ground and the preparation for which that happens. We won't be in heaven anonymously separated from one another, we'll be there to fellowship together enjoy and around the throne of Christ.

This has some encouraging implications for most of you, some convicting implications for a few of you. What does this say to us? What does this perspective do for us when we see the way that the early church gathered around each other and supported one another with this kind of mutual concern and we realize that they were setting a pattern of precedent that would be the model for us to follow in the 21st century later on? They weren't even thinking in those terms but that's what God did through what they did. What does that perspective do? It's very basic. This perspective does something to us. This perspective should move you or affirm you in what you're already doing. To move beyond your natural selfishness in life, your natural selfish perspective in the way that you think about the church, to move beyond that and say you are here for the sake of others in the body. You are here to be an instrument of love and concern for the other people in the church. I've said this so many times and I'll keep saying it over and over again, it just impresses itself on my mind more and more and more. We come together and you come together to the body of Christ week by week and the way that you should think about it is you should not come to church thinking, "What am I going to get out of this? What is in it for me?" That's entirely the wrong way to think. That is absolutely contrary to the spirit that animated Christ to go to the cross to save us from our sins. You come to church, you come together with the people of God either formally in situations like this or in smaller gatherings privately, you come together and say with the mindset of, "How can I contribute to the life of these fellow Christians that I am going to be with? What is it that I can give away out of my life, out of my concern, out of my love that would contribute to their well-being?" instead of saying, "Hey, what have you guys got for me here today?" It's a completely different perspective on the way to think about why the church exists and what your role in it is.

The Lord Jesus Christ pointed us in this direction. The Lord Jesus Christ said in John 13:35, he said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if," what? "If you have love for one another." You see, that's more than an emotional sentiment. It's more than, "Oh, I feel generally good about those people even though I don't have anything to do with them." That's not it. That's not love. It means that we gather together with a sense of, "What can I contribute?" If you are a Christian, you are driven in part by a desire to contribute to the well-being of others in the body of Christ. You don't exist as a silo in the church of God. A church thrives on this kind of mutual concern and it dies without it.

So let me just, I'm already in your house, I might as well go straight to the kitchen and go right into the pantry and deal with a couple of things here. I say these things gently but I

want you to think through these things. People will defend themselves, justify in their own mind why they stay on the periphery, why they're not involved, why they're the last ones in and the first ones out without ever talking to anybody. Not just in our church but in other places. You say, "Well, I'm too shy or I'm too busy or I don't feel comfortable with that. So then," they say, "I won't be involved." Well, here's the thing: that's the wrong conclusion. You don't think that way. That's not the right way to think. That's not a biblical way to think. Okay, let's say, because really the way you should think about it is this, you say, "Okay, I am too shy, I am too busy, I'm not that concerned," rather than saying, "And so therefore I'll stay on the margins and I won't be involved," that's the wrong way to think. That's the wrong conclusion. What you have to say if you're like that is to say, "Oh, and so therefore I have to change. I can't be this kind of person as a Christian. I can't be like that and justify my own self-centeredness as an excuse to not be concerned about the people of God." That doesn't work. That doesn't compute. That's trying to divide a number by zero. It doesn't happen.

You see, the whole nature of Christian existence is in part defined by a love for one another. Read the book of 1 John if you question my thinking about this, you question what I'm saying and you'll see over and over again that John says that love for other Christians is one of the marks of a true Christian and to not care about other Christians calls into question the reality of your spiritual condition, beloved. So we can't just sit on the margins and say, "Well, you know, that's just not for me." That doesn't make any sense. That's like saying, "Well, you know, I know that most people in the world breathe and they eat but that's not for me. Those activities, I'm just not interested in them and so I'm not going to breathe and I'm not going to eat because I'm just a little too shy for those kinds of things." That's not the way it works. You have to recognize what life in the body is supposed to be like, what being a Christian is like, and to step beyond those self-centered excuses and say, "Somehow I need to reach out to at least one person. I need to do something to avail myself and to make myself available as an instrument of concern and love to the body of Christ."

Having said that, I thank God that the spirit of love animates the body of this church. I've said that many times too. I'm so grateful for the way that the love and fellowship and mutual concern is just evident on the surface to anyone who walks in the street and would just sit and observe and watch what happens when we gather together. They would see there is love in this place and I'm grateful for that because you are the ones that make that happen. But knowing that we are all in different points of our life in Christian growth, we have to ask this question, you have to ask this question of yourself: do I add to that love or do I only take from it? Am I just a passive observer or do I participate and make myself a part of it? Because the point that we see coming out of this letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesians is, he says, "Beloved, I know that you're concerned about my circumstances. I know you want to know how I'm doing. You want to know the things about us, that's why I'm sending Tychicus. And by the way, I'm concerned about you too. I know that Tychicus when he shows up, that he's going to comfort you. I'd do it personally if I could. I can't and so Tychicus is going to do it on my behalf." And this mutual concern on a human level is going to play itself out in a way that is a reflection of the broader love of Christ and his body. This is what true Christianity looks like, not

anonymity in the midst of a movie theater with 20,000 other people. Real Christianity is played out in the way that so many of you do it, that seemingly simple, uncomplicated, just genuine concern that injects yourself in someone's life and wants to know how they are. That's cool. That's the human dimension to living out life in the body of Christ.

But as we gather together, it's more than a social club. It's more than people gathering together around a common human activity. There is life at the divine level also. This is our second point for this morning: life at the divine level. And as Paul closes the letter, you're going to see that there is a transcendent element to this love, this human concern. Oh, it's there in human relationships on a horizontal level but there is a vertical dimension to this that is inescapable. We're concerned with each other not simply from human motives. We're not simply concerned that earthly life would go well for one another, there is a concern of the highest order, of an eternal dimension that wishes the fullness of the blessing of God on those who we come together with. You see, we come together not only in the sense of personal concern, oh, there's that, there's an element of it, but we view each other, we see each other, we think about each other, we pray for each other as those with eternal souls who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and we have a desire for the highest order of the blessing of God to be operative in one another's lives. That lifts it into a whole other realm and you see that reflected in what Paul says in these final two verses of the letter to the Ephesians.

Now, the custom in the ancient world was to write a letter and to close it with a wish for the reader's health or happiness and you see this reflected in many ancient documents. Paul picks up that general cultural tradition and sanctifies it and uses it for much higher ends. Look at how he bestows a final closing wish upon his readers in verse 23. He says, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love." As we look at these closing verses and I have this little emotional sentiment going on in my heart right now wanting to linger over them because I don't want this to end, this book of Ephesians to end, but it will. Notice, first of all, the God-centered view with which Paul closes the letter. He speaks of God the Father in verse 23, the Lord Jesus Christ in verse 23, and then he repeats it again, the Lord Jesus Christ in verse 24. So he is closing on a high point and you see that Paul as he closes this letter is doing far more than saying, "Yeah, have a good week as you go out. Have a good week. I hope your work week goes well." That would be fine as far as it goes but Paul's motivations and his concern and the centrality of his thoughts are God-centered all the way from the beginning.

Look back at chapter 1. Notice how this starts. Paul ends up right where he started. He says in chapter 1, verse 2, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." In verse 15, he says, "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints." Grace, peace, faith, love being at the very start of his letter and he writes these magnificent six chapters that follow and then where does he end up? Right where he started. The truth of the matter was he had never moved from those themes. He says in verse 23, chapter 6, look at it with me again. I like to keep the text in front of you. He says, "Peace be to the brethren,

and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love." What has Paul done here. He has adapted this cultural custom of the way that letters were closed and exalted it to pray for a final blessing upon his readers; this final blessing that he would send them away with.

And what is it that he wishes for these Ephesians? Beloved, take it another step. What is it that you should wish for the people of Christ that you gather together with week by week? What should be the perspective that informs the way that you look at one another in the face? What is it that should inform the way that you talk with each other within the body of Christ? In other words, beloved, it becomes so transcendent. It never ceases to astonish me how the most basic, simple, ordinary communication and the simplest of words in Scripture point us to such searching transcendent truth about the way that you and I should exist. This text is one of them. What is it when we come together that we should ultimately be seeking for each other? What should be on our mind? What should be on our heart? What should be the concern that we have for these people that we speak with week by week? It would be that they would know the fullness of divine blessing, the fullness of grace, the fullness of peace. To know the greatness of the love of God as we sang about just before we started this message. The greatness of the love of God. I would want you to know all of that to the full; that we view each other not from a perspective of what can you do for me and not even so much what I can do for you, although that's part of it. That we would be viewing each other from a perspective that I want your eternal soul to know the fullness of the grace, peace and love of God. That's what I desire for you. That's how Paul ends his letter for one another.

So all of a sudden when you see this, we stop thinking about each other in such superficial ways, such selfish ways. When you – listen – when you truly desire the love and grace and peace of God upon someone, then you can't just walk away from them. You can't just ignore them. You can't just say, "Well, this is all about me and I'm too shy and too busy to be a part of this." Well, where in that is this kind of concern of transcendent eternal blessings that would belong to you? How can you want that for someone and then want nothing to do with them? The two don't compute. How could the love of Christ be truly present in a soul that didn't somehow seek this blessing for those that Christ himself loves?

Let's look at the text a little closer here. Notice what Paul says in verse 23, he brings God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together as the singular source of spiritual blessings to the believers. In equal measure he says, "Peace to you from God that Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." How could he do that? How can he say that except for the reality that Jesus Christ is God himself. They are equally sources of these spiritual blessings. He says, "Peace be to the brethren." It has the idea of spiritual wholeness. Before Christ, sin had separated you from God, fractured your existence, but yet now in Christ you are reconciled to God. Now in Christ your sins are forgiven; they are taken away; they will not be held in account against you anymore. You have been reconciled to God and you are at peace with him. Flowing out of that is an inner sense of peace and then flowing out of that is a sense of peace and harmony in relationships within the body of Christ.

Reconciled to God vertically, content and at rest internally, and then flowing over into the lives of others. The fullness of peace, Paul says, is what I wish upon you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 23 again, Paul goes on and says, "and love with faith." Not just peace but love with faith. Love flowing out of God's gift of faith to us, being that which would mark our lives. Paul says, "I want you to know the love of God as you go through life together as believers. I want you to know the fullness of that self-sacrifice, to rest in the knowledge that God has provided for you, God has cared for you in Christ, God has secured the eternal well-being of your soul out of his love for you. I want you to be saturated in that and I want you to have that spill over, that same sense of concern to spill over in your relationships with one another."

Then he closes the letter on a high note. Look at Ephesians 6:24, he says, "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love." This gracious, generous, undeserved favor from God, I want you to know the fullness of that. I want you to rest in it. I pray that the undeserved favor of God would surround you and keep you and motivate your existence and give you spiritual rest and comfort with each other. To remember that Jesus Christ did everything necessary for you to be accepted by God. Paul says, "I want that for you." Notice that he's not talking in just abstract theological terms as if you were opening up a theological dictionary and reading definitions here. Paul is saying, "This is what I want for you, these immeasurable, eternal benefits from God of grace, love and peace. I want that to mark your existence. I want you secure in this generous love of God."

And what would the outcome of that be? What does grace do to you when it's real in your life? It motivates you toward holiness. It motivates you toward sanctification. It motivates you to say, "I want to be like this Lord who saved me from my sins. I want to become more and more like him." The theologian, Charles Hodge, says talking about this passage, he says, "Love to Christ..." Paul says, "I want, this is my wish for all who love Jesus Christ with incorruptible love." Beloved, what does love for Christ look like? What is it if you're a true Christian, what is it that you will find that shapes your affections? What is it that will motivate you? What is it that you will love the most? What does love for Christ look like? That's the question that Charles Hodge answers in this quote. He says, "Love to Christ includes adoring admiration of his person, desire for his presence, zeal for his glory, and devotion to his service." When you think about the Lord Jesus Christ, what comes to your mind? When you think about the short window of time that you have left to live, what is it that motivates you? What is it that concerns you? What is it that you most want to see? Do you know what? "I love who he is. I love him for his holiness. I love him for his love. I love him for his mercy. I love his humility, that he left the glories of heaven in order to come to earth. I love his spirit of self-sacrifice. I love his power over death. I love everything about Christ," you say to yourself. And when you love him, what do you want except to see him honored? This is what Hodge was talking about, a zeal for his glory that others would also come to recognize and worship him, give their lives to him, surrender in repentance and faith to him for salvation. And say,

"Do you know what? I just want to serve him." That's what incorruptible love looks like and Paul says, "Grace be on everyone like that."

What is he doing if you step back from it? What is Paul saying here? What is he illustrating? He is viewing his readers from a divine perspective. He says, "You belong to Christ, you're in the middle of a hostile world." He had just said a few verses earlier that our struggle is not with flesh and blood but against demonic forces of the wickedness in the spiritual realm. He says, "I want God's grace and peace and love to preserve you through that. I want you to grow in it. I want you to be more like that." And it's with that divine perspective that he sends them on the way.

What do we do in the body of Christ with each other? What do we do with each other in the midst of, with the reality of our sinful imperfections? What do I do with your eccentricities? And what do you do with my eccentricities and my failures and my lousy ways of being a pastor and my failures to you and your failures to me? What do we do with all of that? Do we walk away angry and embittered because, "Oh, there are so many hypocrites in the church"? No. No, we look beyond the human, beloved. We look beyond that horizontal dimension. We look beyond the petty offenses and the petty irritations that come with being close to one another in a body like this. We look beyond all of that. We don't hold it against each other. We don't take it into account as we love one another, as we deal with one another, just as God himself does not take your sins against him into account in the dispensing of his love for you. Aren't you glad he does that? Aren't you glad that God doesn't hold all of your sins against you and bring them up again and again? That Christ covered it all at Calvary? Shed his blood in order to wash all of your sins away and now God doesn't hold it against you and it won't be a barrier to you being with him in heaven? Aren't you glad for that? Well, don't you see that that's the way that we are to interact with each other here in the body of Christ? We have a divine perspective on one another that says, "I'll look past your imperfections. I'll look past the annoying things that you sometimes do." I'm speaking generally. I truly am. I don't have anyone in mind in this room as I'm saying these things. Other people annoy me, you guys don't.

But you do this, beloved: we look at each other as I often say at marriage ceremonies, we look at each other with a lover's patient eyes. We say, "Of course I'm not going to hold these things against you. Of course I'm not going to be angry and upset with you. Of course I'm not going to let those things get in the way of showing this love for you." Why? The answer to the why is the core to the way body life succeeds. Why? Because we look at each other from a divine perspective, with the perspective that says, "I want you to know the grace of God. I want you to know the peace of God. I want the love of God to be the fullness of what your experience of all of life is." And because that transcendence, that is the most important thing and these other things just kind of dissipate into irrelevance. That's how we live with each other in the body of Christ, we have concern for each other on a human level informed by a divine perspective that says, "You and I are walking together on a pathway that leads to heaven and may the love and grace and peace of God fulfill all of those purpose, fill all of us with a perspective that says yes. May God's best be upon you. May God's love and grace and peace and these

other things can go." You see, beloved, a true Christian doesn't just love Christ, he loves the people of Christ as well.

So as we now say farewell to the book of Ephesians, may we fare well with one another as we move forward as a church, sharing in this love, grace and peace of God together in a way that would bring glory to Christ.

Let's pray together.

"For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."

Seal these great truths from this great book to our hearts, O God. Make us those who love each other on a human level informed by a divine perspective. To Christ alone be the glory both now and forevermore. Amen.

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