

Second Sunday after the Epiphany; January 16, 2022  
Ephesians 3:14-21  
"God Loves Us in 4-D"

**For this reason I kneel before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the entire family in heaven and on earth receives its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he would strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner self, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Then, being rooted and grounded in love, I pray that you would be able to comprehend, along with all the saints, how wide and long and high and deep his love is, and that you would be able to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.**

**Now to him, who is able, according to the power that is at work within us, to do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.**

It is pretty much common knowledge that what you read on Wikipedia must be read with some skepticism. While it remains a go-to source for those who want a basic sketch of a subject in just a few minutes, and although its editing and fact-checking standards have been tightened, there is still quite a bit of questionable information on Wikipedia.

Having said that, I'd like to share something with you from Wikipedia. (Don't worry, this will go somewhere.) This is the beginning of the Wikipedia page on four-dimensional spaces:

The idea of adding a fourth dimension began with [Jean le Rond d'Alembert's](#) "Dimensions" published in 1754,<sup>[12]</sup> was followed by [Joseph-Louis Lagrange](#) in the mid-1700s, and culminated in a precise formalization of the concept in 1854 by [Bernhard Riemann](#). In 1880, [Charles Howard Hinton](#) popularized these insights in an essay titled "[What is the Fourth Dimension?](#)", which explained the concept of a "[four-dimensional cube](#)" with a step-by-step generalization of the properties of lines, squares, and cubes. The simplest form of Hinton's method is to draw two ordinary 3D cubes in 2D space, one encompassing the other, separated by an "unseen" distance, and then draw lines between their equivalent vertices...

Higher-dimensional spaces (i.e., greater than three) have since become one of the foundations for formally expressing modern mathematics and physics. Large parts of these topics could not exist in their current forms without the use of such spaces. [Einstein's](#) concept of [spacetime](#) uses such a 4D space, though it has a [Minkowski structure](#) that is slightly more complicated than [Euclidean](#) 4D space.

There's a problem with this information. Without knowing a whole lot about geometry, physics, or history, I can confidently state that there is – I know it's hard to believe – wrong information in this Wikipedia article. The concept of four dimensions did not in fact begin with the Jean le Rond d'Alembert's "Dimensions" in 1754. The concept of four dimensions actually started in the mind of God, from eternity, and was first recorded by St. Paul about 1,710 before Jean le Rond d'Alembert's mommy met him.

The eternal, timeless love of God is four-dimensional. In order to see it, you need the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit supplies the lens of faith through which this spectacular love of God comes into

view. You can't see it on your own, no matter how hard you squint, strain, or concentrate: **For this reason I kneel before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the entire family in heaven and on earth receives its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he would strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner self, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.**

When he brought you to faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit opened your eyes see to the love of God in all its glory. And here was the result of the Holy Spirit working with his power, through the gospel: **Christ...dwell[s] in your hearts through faith.**

Once we see the love of God for the first time, Christ comes to dwell in us, to actually make his home inside of our hearts. Then we see God's love in all its glory, for then we see his Savior, Jesus Christ. Nowhere is God's breathtaking love more clearly seen than in his Son Jesus. And every time we hear the wonderful news about Jesus, every time we receive his body and blood in the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit refocuses and refreshes the vision of our faith so we see God's love in Christ with brand new clarity.

And what does God's 4-D love, based in the love of Christ and seen through the lens of faith, look like? What love do we see? Paul tells us that with that power of the Holy Spirit, we will **comprehend, along with all the saints, how wide and long and high and deep his love is...**

Did you notice that? God's love in Christ goes four-dimensional: it's wide, it's long, it's high, it's deep. But wait a second. Height and depth are really just two different ways of looking at the same dimension, right? So really it's 3-D, and it's sort of redundant of St. Paul to talk about the height and depth of God's love, right? I don't think so. I don't think Paul lost track of what he was saying and accidentally gave two different ways to look at the same dimension. I think his point becomes clear when he says God's love **surpasses knowledge**. Seeing God's love is unlike seeing anything else. You could never dream up his love. You could never understand it – let alone believe it – without the Spirit working faith in your heart.

But once we have that faith, even though our minds can't wrap around the concept of God loving you in four directions, by the faith that the Holy Spirit has put in us we see how God loves in four dimensions.

What do we see when we view God's 4-D love? We see wide love. It is so wide that it covers every member of the human race. Every day he causes rain to fall and sun to shine all over the world to produce food for people who don't even know him, even people who can't stand him. His love is so wide that he sent his Son to die not just for some people, but for all people of every age and every place. His love is so wide it covers everyone. That's wide love.

His love is long. His love is so long that he loved you before he even created the world. He knew exactly when and where you personally were going to be born. He chose you to be his own, to come to faith, to see his love, before he ever said, "Let there be light." And he has arranged every event in human history so that we, his chosen people, would come to the waters of baptism, hear

his Word, and see his love with faith. His love is long enough to make us his very own not just for a while, but for eternity. He wants you and me, the people he loved from so long ago, to be at his side forever. That's long love.

His love is high, too. It couldn't be higher. Love so high that it caused him to send down his only Son. Love that brought God down into the world as a helpless baby. Love so high that Jesus rose above every possible temptation throughout his life. Love so high that it raised him up on the cross to die, and raised him again on Easter. All to forgive us. His love is high.

And his love is deep. It never betrays us, as human love so often does. It never flies away or disappears or gets distracted. His love could never be so shallow as our own. No, it's deep, deep enough to care not only for our souls and our spiritual needs, but for all our needs. We heard the story of Jesus changing water into wine at a wedding banquet. The main point of that story is that Jesus revealed his divine glory to his disciples. He proved to them that he was God's Son, and they trusted in him. But we can also learn about the depth of God's love from that story. Why would Jesus choose to reveal his glory at a banquet in a tiny town like Cana, to a handful of wedding guests? Because his love runs deep. Imagine the embarrassment of the bride and groom, running out of wine at their own wedding reception! Imagine how the guests would have gone home rolling their eyes and shaking their heads! So Jesus showed deep love, even in something we might consider trivial, like wine at a wedding. He did it by not only providing, but providing the good stuff – just what that bride and groom needed, and just when they needed it.

And his love for us is deep, too. He knows exactly what the right things are for us, and gives to us when we need it. And it will always be what is best for us, even if we have a hard time seeing it that way. Why? Because his love for us is deep. It cares for us in every little detail.

No wonder Paul says God's love **surpasses knowledge**. We can never wrap our minds all the way around it. But we can see his love through the power of the Spirit, through the lens of faith, in four glorious dimensions.

So, are you seeing God's love in four dimensions? Easy answer, right? Of course you are, because you have faith! You've been baptized and you hear the Word. The Holy Spirit has worked his power in your heart and Christ lives there in you.

But could you be seeing God's love more clearly? Are you taking advantage of the opportunities to grow in the power of the Holy Spirit by studying the Word, listening to it often, receiving the sacrament of Communion every chance you get? Or are you, at least to some extent, taking your view of God's love in Christ for granted?

Christians must never become complacent about their view of God's love. It is an ungodly attitude that says, "Eh, I can see God's love just fine. I know everything I need to know to go heaven. So why should I spend the time and energy to learn more? This isn't the only thing I've got to do in life, after all." It is an attitude that needs to be dropped by God's people in favor of the one that Paul wanted for the Ephesians: he wanted them firmly established, rooted in God's

Word, so that nothing could shake their view of God's love, so that nothing could break their hold on it.

And God promises here – not on an internet page but in his perfectly reliable Word – that the power of the Holy Spirit works through God's Word and sacraments is in this place, creating faith and strengthening it. Christ dwells in hearts here, hearts that see all four dimensions of God's love. Anything can happen here. Anything can happen where people grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, when people lay their past apathy at his cross and focus on the four dimensions of his love. It's no pipe dream; God can make it happen. He says so in his Word, right here in this section of Scripture: **He is able, according to the power that is at work within us, to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.**

It may be easy to become cynical and satisfied with things: people are set in their ways; they're going to see God's love as clearly as they see it now, and there's no changing it. But God is the one who changes things. His love is incomprehensible. It does more than we can ask or imagine.

As the Holy Spirit continues to work here, as Christ continues to dwell in hearts, and the love of God shines in all its brilliance, those who see his love and forgiveness will desire nothing in life more than to see it even more clearly and brightly all the time. May God give all of us that desire to grow in the power of his Word, to see his love in all its brilliance. And as he does, may we praise him as Paul did: **to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.**