

“Unfathomable”  
John 13:1-7, 31-35  
Rev. Denise W. Ingram  
Seder Meal & Maundy Thursday Worship 2011

Unfathomable! There is so very much about God that is unfathomable!

Webster’s dictionary defines unfathomable as “not capable of being fathomed; impossible to comprehend.”

To comprehend that God is eternal, without beginning and without end, is extremely difficult. Trying to comprehend eternity, spending the rest of all time with God is hard to do. The concept of eternity is unfathomable. Picture the Mount Rushmore National memorial – those 60 foot high sculptures of former Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln--carved into a South Dakota mountain. The rock of that particular mountain is a smooth, fine-grained granite. The granite is considered extremely durable, the estimates are that it erodes only 1 inch every 10,000 years! Picture a solitary eagle flying past those sculptured faces once a year and letting its wing gently brush against the granite. How many millions of years would it take for that eagle’s wing to erode Abraham Lincoln’s beard away? When all four sculptures have been completely erased and the face of the mountain is smooth, eternity will just be beginning! Unfathomable!

Just as God is eternal, God is omnipresent. Being omnipresent means God is present everywhere in all creation in the same exact moment. Present with us in Kettering, Ohio just as God is present in Swaziland, Africa, Edinbrough, Scotland, Barranquilla, Colombia, Tokyo, Japan at the same exact moment. In any one moment, these countries are in different time zones experiencing different seasons of the year while God is fully present with them as God is fully present with us. Unfathomable!

God as Creator seems unfathomable as one contemplates the vastness of God’s creation. Scientists calculate there are some 900 thousand different kinds of living insects, 91,000 species that live in the United States alone, 297,326 species of plants including 9,671 species of red and green algae alone, 1,203,375 species of invertebrates (animals without backbones) including 40,000 different types of crustaceans and 2,175 types of corals. There are 59,811 species of vertebrates (animals with backbones) including 29,300

species of fish, 9,956 birds and 5,416 mammals. There are also 5-10 million species of bacteria and up to 120,000 types of fungi. No wonder hand washing is so vitally important!

Think about the uniqueness of human beings, how skin color, facial features, even body types depict the individual beauty of a particular race; the skin of African natives so black it almost seems blue, the lovely brown skin of South American natives with their dark brown eyes and black hair, the white blond hair and almost translucent skin of Norwegian people, the red locks, green eyes and freckled complexion of a bonny Scottish lass. God's creation is unfathomable!

Ponder all the different nationalities, races and cultures upon the earth and the commonality we share as children of God whether a Christian living in the United States, a Muslim living in Afghanistan, or a Jew living in Jerusalem. Individually unique, yet all under the umbrella of God's love "*for God so loved the world that God gave the Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*" God's generous love, love that includes every single person in the world seems unfathomable.

It has been said, "Christ loves all as Christ loves each and Christ loves each as Christ loves all." That saying often comes to mind as members come forward to receive communion in the 8:30 service. If Martha had been the only one, Christ would have given his life, if it had only been Jim, Christ would have given his life, if it had only been Annette or Kim or West or Bill, Christ would have given his life because he loves all as he loves each and loves each as he loves all. Unfathomable!

Jesus, as the revelation of God, demonstrates the mercy of God. Throughout the gospel stories, Jesus chose to love, forgive and restore people each and every time he faced the choice between a person and the law. The bent-over woman who sought healing for eighteen years did not have to wait another day because Jesus chose to heal her on the Sabbath, the blind man condemned for his sins or the sins of his parents who had his sight restored and his sins forgiven by Jesus.

Jesus offers that same mercy, love and forgiveness to us time and time again. Whenever we disobey God, choosing our own way rather than God's way, it is "as if" Jesus says "try again, see how you do next time. When you fail, seek me out yet again and follow my

lead. Need a second chance, for the 10,000<sup>th</sup> time? You got it.”  
Unconditional love and unending second chances. . . . unfathomable.

The prophet Isaiah’s description of Jesus the Messiah is, “he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases.” Jesus not only took on all the sin of the world such as murder, adultery, idolatry, stealing—past, present and future—, he also took on our brokenness and our human frailties, i.e. addictions, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimers, Cerebral Palsy, mental illness and many more. Jesus knows how we suffer and what it feels like. He gets it! He not only gets it – he journeys with us through those dark valleys – and he redeems our suffering. Unfathomable!

Jesus gave his life that your life and mine might be ransomed.  
“. . . *Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* (Eph. 5:2) Doesn’t that just blow your mind? That Jesus loves you so much he was willing to go to the cross for your sins. Unfathomable!

We gather this Maundy Thursday, mindful that it was Jesus’ last night at table with his disciples before he was betrayed, questioned and condemned, beaten and crucified upon the cross for our sins and the sin of the world. It is unfathomable that Jesus willingly went to the cross in our place. Jesus’ love is a love like no other, a love that forgives, a love that offers second chances thousands of time, a love that is ever present. Love so amazing, so divine . . . a love that is truly unfathomable. Thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ for his unfathomable love!