

GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE CHURCH: GLORY!

Ephesians 3.10-13: Live for God's glory and enjoy Him forever!

Theme: God's purpose in the Church is His glory, so live for His glory (and you will find yourself enjoying God both now and forever!).

Look at all that God has done in the Church:

- (v6-7) He has made “new creatures”: Jews and Gentiles alike made members of the same Body.
- (v5) This is something that was hidden in the plan of God since before time.
- (v8-9) And then God revealed it to Paul, the least of all saints.
- (v1-4) And then God used Paul to bring it to us (even today: we can read the revelation God gave him).

But, that begs a question: Why? What for? What is God's purpose in all of this?

- We studied God's purpose a while back when we first started this church, and we learned that His purpose in everything and everyone is clear and simple:

To glorify God (and for us: to enjoy Him forever).

- Well, we have arrived at a passage of Scripture that speaks specifically about God's purpose in the Church, the Body of Christ. So, let's see if what we saw before holds true...

I. (v10-12) God is glorified by the Church.

A. Point to Make: Why did God allow Satan to sin? ...Adam to sin? ...Israel to sin? ...us to sin?

1. God *knew* from before the beginning of time what would happen; He is omniscient. So, why did He allow sin to enter His perfect creation—why did He allow all the suffering, death, and destruction?
2. Answer: God planned it all and allowed it to happen (the sin and resulting suffering in our world) so that He could glorify Himself.
 - a) You see, there are certain attributes of God that He could not manifest without allowing our failure, rebellion, and sin.
 - b) Specifically: (Eph 2.7-9) His kindness (i.e., His goodness in love, mercy, and grace).
3. And that brings us to Paul's statement in Ephesians 3.10, about the God's purpose in the Church...

B. (v10) The Church glorifies God by manifesting His wisdom.

1. Key Observation: The mere *existence* of the Church is what puts God's manifold wisdom on display (we don't have to *do* anything).
 - a) Don't get confused with the change in terms here from “body” to “church.” Paul is talking about the “Body of Christ” (v6) which is the “Church” (v10, 21).
 - b) This is use of the two synonyms is consistent throughout Ephesians: The “Universal” Church is the Body of Christ, the union of all true believers in the Lord.
 - c) (Eph 1.22-23 cf. 2.15-16) The Church is the Body of Christ, the union of both Jews and Gentiles as members in “one new man,” Christ being the Head of the Body.
 - d) And this Body, the Church (which never existed before, and was not even revealed before) is what glorifies God by simply existing! Why is that...?

2. The Church puts God's manifold wisdom on display for all to see.

- a) And, Paul is even more specific: The existence of the Church puts God's wisdom on display for a very specific group of beings: Principalities and powers in heavenly places.
- b) (Eph 6.12) Whatever else these principalities and powers might be, we can rest assured that they are our spiritual enemies.
 - (1) This means the principalities and powers are Satan and demons.
 - (2) They are the fallen angels and “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis 6, Job 1-2, etc.

3. Why would God want to show Satan and the fallen angels His superiority in wisdom?

- a) Because *they* started the fight! Lucifer rebelled (before Adam ever sinned: Gen 3.1) and it appears he took a third of the angels with him.
- b) This is the theme of the Bible, the conflict we see from the beginning of Scripture all the way to the end: The conflict over the throne (who will reign over creation?).
- c) The existence of the Church displays God's infinitely superior wisdom over all His enemies.
 - (1) Example: (Luke 20.9-14) This parable about Israel shows us the intention of God's enemies in the crucifixion (v14). They wanted to remove God from the throne and sit there themselves—they wanted to rule over their little world.
 - (2) (1Cor 2.6-8) Had God's enemies known what God had hidden (and planned), they never would have done what they did—they never would have crucified the Messiah.
 - (3) (Eph 3.10) But they did, and in that God's manifold wisdom is put on display for all...
 - (a) Not only did God gain the victory through the cross (a surprise all!)...
 - (b) But, He used His enemies to do it!
 - i) Had the enemies of God known of the Church beforehand, they never would have crucified Christ.
 - ii) But yet by crucifying Christ, they played right into God's hand, playing the part He designed for them to play since from before time began.

4. The mere existence of the Church, the Body of Christ, testifies to all (especially to God's enemies) that God's wisdom is superior.

- a) And that means that just by being saved, you glorify God—your mere existence as a son of God, a member of the Body of Christ, is something that God uses to display His wisdom.
- b) But, it gets better...

C. (v11-12) The Church glorifies God by manifesting His kindness.

1. (v11) God's eternal purpose is to be gloried: Romans 11.36.

- a) (v10) He is glorified in all that *He* does (His works manifest—put on display—His attributes for all to see).
 - (Eph 3.20-21) Even the mere existence of the Church glorifies Him in this way.
- b) (v11-12) But He is also glorified in that He gave us access (open and free) to Himself...

2. (v12) God is glorified when you draw near to Him with boldness and confidence.

- a) Think about our condition before salvation...
 - (1) We were wicked, rebellious, self-righteous, and self-centered; we were God-haters and self-lovers.
 - (2) God was angry with us every day because He hates all workers of iniquity; He is the consuming fire that will devour wicked men like dry leaves in a furnace. And rightly so.

- b) (Eph 2.8-9) And yet God saved us.
- (1) (Eph 2.7) And He saved us because He is kind. His saving us manifests (puts on display for all to see) God's *kindness* (His goodness in love, grace, and mercy).
 - (2) God saved the condemned. God loved the unloveable. God was *good* to the wicked. The righteous Judge took the punishment for the wicked criminals.
 - (3) (Rom 8.28-39) And now look what God says about you! Do you believe that?
- c) If you believe what God wrote about you in Christ, draw near to Him (e.g., Heb 4.14-16)!
- (1) God is good (omnibenevolent) and therefore He is *kind* to you in Christ.
 - (a) If you are saved, God has *nothing* but kindness for you!
 - (b) If you are saved, even God's discipline (chastisement) is kind and loving!
 - (2) Therefore, when you (through Scripture, prayer, submission, and obedience) draw near to God in boldness and confidence to know Him and love Him more, you are showing to all of creation that *God is trustworthy*, that *God is faithful to His Word*.
- d) Drawing near to God in Christ is an act of faith because it is only through God's Word that we know of our right standing with our Creator. Think about it...
- (1) In our hearts we *know* that we are wicked... we *know* that God is angry with the wicked every day and that Judgment is coming (that's why we struggle at times drawing near to God; that's why we still fear death, even though death for us is our ticket to heaven).
 - (2) But we have learned in the Scripture of the Gospel and of Christ's sacrifice for us.
 - The Bible says that in Christ we are saved from God's wrath, that we are clean and righteous in His eyes because Jesus took our place of punishment and gave us His place of perfection and righteousness.
 - (3) And when we believe that (really believe it!), we act upon it because that truth is like a magnet drawing us to the Creator: He is good and kind, and He has accepted us fully and completely in the Beloved Savior! We *want* to be near to God.
 - (4) Therefore, when we draw near unto God with bold confidence because of who Christ is and what Christ has done, we manifest to the world that God can be trusted! He is faithful; He keeps His Word!
 - (5) Drawing near to God is an act of faith because we act on what the Scripture says about His kindness (His goodness toward us in Christ—His love, grace, and mercy).

D. Review & Summary: God is glorified in the Church.

1. The Church glorifies God by its mere existence (the existence of the Church manifests God's superior and manifold wisdom to all His enemies—He outsmarted them big time!).
2. The Church also glorifies God by drawing near to Him in bold confidence, to know Him and love Him more. Taking advantage of that “access” to God in Christ manifests God's kindness and faithfulness—it shows to the whole creation that God is kind and can be trusted always.

II. (v13) God is glorified by the Church Members.

- Point: As we live (individually) according to God's plan and purpose, we glorify God even more.

A. The Principle: (John 17.4) We can glorify God on earth by finishing the work He gave us to do.

1. This gets us back to the concept of stewards and a stewardship.
 - Each dispensation in the Bible deals with a specific stewardship (responsibility, task, charge, mission) that God gives to a steward or group of stewards.

2. (Eph 3.1-5, 13) We've seen that Paul is the first steward of the new stewardship called the Church Age, the dispensation of the Body of Christ.
 - a) (Acts 20.24) Paul's ministry (his "course"—race—he was running) was to preach the Gospel God gave him to every creature possible.
 - b) (1Cor 9.23-27) Paul knew that he could very well fail in his race (fail in his course, in his stewardship), and so he labored intentionally and diligently—he worked hard at it!
 - c) (2Cor 4.16-5.11a) Like he says in Ephesians 3.10, this meant suffering, difficulties, trials, and tribulations. But, Paul kept his eyes on the goal line (on the Judgment Seat of Christ) and labored with joy in the ministry of the Gospel to others (primarily to the Gentiles).
 - d) (2Tim 4.6-8) And when it was all over, Paul finished his course well—he was a faithful steward in that which the Lord has entrusted to him.

B. The Pattern: We can glorify God by following Paul's example.

1. (1Cor 11.1) Paul, being our first and model (exemplary) steward, shows the rest of us how we can also be faithful stewards in that which God has entrusted to us.
2. (1Cor 4.1-2) We, like Paul, have been entrusted with the mystery of the Body of Christ—the Gospel for the Church Age.
3. (2Cor 5.9-10) We, like Paul, will be judged (individually) for what we have done with that which God has given us.
4. We, like Paul (and like Jesus, whom Paul served; John 17.4) can glorify God on earth by finishing the work He has given us to do (the "course" given us to run—our ministry, our mission).
5. And that means that, like Paul, we have to be intentional and diligent in the mission God has given us: (Eph 3.13) To live and labor for the glory of others...
 - a) Evangelism: Intentionally and diligently laboring to rescue lost sinners from the wrath of God and give them a home in *glory*.
 - b) Edification: Intentionally and diligently laboring to help other believers grow in Christ and live for Him according to the Bible so that they might receive a full reward of their inheritance (their crown of *glory*).
6. And as we do this, God is glorified all the more: His wonderful attributes are put on display for all creation to see.

God's purpose in the Church is His glory, so live for His glory!

1. Be saved!
2. Draw near to God in Christ (to know Him and love Him more each day)!
3. Then go forth from His presence and live for Him by finishing the work He gave you to do (like Paul)!

In that, you will find joy, happiness, and fulfillment.

- Remember our purpose: *To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*
- In order to enjoy God now and forever, you have to glorify Him. But, if you (intentionally and diligently) live for God's glory, you will enjoy Him! And when you enjoy Him... you will glorify Him all the more!

God is good and kind: He and He only will give you lasting joy (today, on your death bed, and for eternity).

- Everything else, in the end, will leave you empty and disappointed.
- Only one thing will result in eternal joy: God (knowing Him, and making Him know).
- That is why we are here; that is God's design in our creation. Live according to the design, and you will glorify God... you will enjoy Him... and by enjoying Him, you will glorify Him even more.