

The Church

God's Plan for His Glory and Our Good – Part 8

Introduction

This morning, I want to conclude our series on the church by briefly surveying the entire book of Ephesians as we consider the relationship between the glory of God and the purpose of His church in light of the story of redemption and reconciliation.

Exposition

I. The Story of Our Redemption is about the Glory of God

Ephesians 1:11-14 – “¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

Ephesians 2:1-10 – “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

Our Redemption Magnifies God's Power to Save Sinners in this World!

II. The Story of Our Reconciliation is about the Glory of God

Ephesians 2:11-21 – “¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of

God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Ephesians 3:1-13 – “For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.”

Our Reconciliation Reveals God’s Power to Bring Peace and Unity between Different People!

Conclusion

As the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, as First Baptist Church of Camden, we exist to be a living, walking, speaking testimony to the Glory of God from our personal redemption to our corporate reconciliation. We engage in the five ministries of teaching, fellowshiping, worshipping, serving, and evangelizing for the express purpose of making much of the saving power of God in Christ Jesus! Not for the purpose of making much of ourselves!

This is why Paul is so concerned with the Church in Ephesus’ unity! In **Ephesians 4:1-3**, he writes, “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Paul understood that if the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace was not maintained, then the glory of God would be devalued by those observing the church. And the same goes for us, First Baptist Church, here in Camden, Arkansas. We have been called to “no longer walk in the futility of unbelief” (**Ephesians 4:17**). Instead, we have been called to walk “in love, as Christ loved and gave himself up for us” (**Ephesians 5:2**).

So I want to conclude by asking you all a question with every head bowed and every eye closed – As a member or potential member of FBCC, will commit to making this church about the glory of God? Will you be willing to lay aside your preference for the sake of the glory of Christ in this community? Will you commit to doing your part so that others might come to know that love of your Lord and Savior?

If so, just right where you are sitting, with every head bowed and every eye closed, this is between you and God, would you raise your hand as a sign of your commitment to God's Glory at First Baptist?

Ephesians 3:20-21 - ²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.