

Life Together - Part 2
What the Church Does– Ephesians 1:3-14
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – September 19th, 2021

Intro:

- The church is precious to Jesus, so much so that He gave His life for us. The church is built on Jesus, by Jesus, and for Jesus. It has the power to affect both heaven and earth, the devil hates it and is continually working to destroy it, but the gates of hell will not prevail because the church will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. The church is powerful, prevailing, and precious. It is precious to Him, and it should be precious to us.
- In our series, Life Together, we are looking at the life of the church, what it is, how it functions, and our place in it. My hope is that your understanding of the church will deepen, broaden, and be sharpened, that you will fall deeper in love with it and treasure it as Christ does.
- The book of Ephesians is addressed to the church opening the doors to the mystery of God, His grace, His wisdom, His glory through creating a people for Himself. In this book, He describes the church using metaphors of a family, a body, a building, an intimate partner, and an army. Connectedness, unity, oneness is emphasized because without it, all these metaphors fall apart. Without a family, we are an orphan, without a body, we are dead, without a building, we are a brick, without a partner, we are alone, without an army, we are destroyed. God highlights who we are and then what we do with an emphasis on the importance of togetherness.
- The letters of the New Testament are generally set up in two parts. We are told what is true, and then we are told what to do. Being precedes doing, and both parts are immensely important. Who you are is reflected in what you do. And when both of these are working in harmony, you will move forward through life powerfully and with purpose, with satisfaction and strength your time on this planet will count and make a difference.
- Before we dive into our primary text for this series, chapter four, which starts the “what to do” section of the book, we must understand a few things from the first part of the letter. I am going to highlight three purposes of the church seen in the opening thoughts of this letter. This is the big picture of what God is doing through the church, the things only the church does. It is essential for us to understand this before we can understand how we accomplish these things.
- As we read the text, I want you to pay special attention to all the plural language in our passage as we uncover what the church does.

We, the church, display God’s grace

Eph 1:3-7 ESV

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed *us* in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose *us* in him before the foundation of the world, that *we* should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined *us* for adoption as *sons* through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed *us* in the Beloved. 7 In him *we* have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of *our* trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

- We, the church, display God’s grace, and we do this together. The world sees the grace of God through the church. We are a people of grace. Notice from this passage all the things that God gives to us by His grace.
- He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He has not held back from us any spiritual blessings. The lie from the devil is that God is holding back from us good things (see Gen. 3). The truth is that He has given us everything we need for life and godliness, both for this life and the life to come. These things can only come from heaven, and they are only found in Christ.
- He is the one that chose us, and we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. God had a plan set in place before anything was created. He has chosen you to be in His Son. God displays His grace by choosing us. He did this because it pleased Him to do so. He did not choose us because we were something or someone special. He chose us because He is someone special, and He wants us and the world to know how good He is because of His grace.
- He chose us to be “holy and blameless” before Him. How are we “holy and blameless”? Because of His Son. If we are in Him, and He is in us, He redeems us for Himself. We take on Christ, and Christ takes on our sin so that in Him, we are the righteousness of God. We are “holy and blameless” before Him because Christ is holy and blameless.
- He predestined us, preordained us to be adopted and children through Jesus Christ. You are chosen to be a part of His family, with a good, good Father and siblings that have been redeemed because of the Lord of God displayed in our older brother, Jesus Christ. He did this because of His glorious grace, which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

Eph 2:8-9 ESV

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- In Christ, we have **redemption** through His blood, and we have forgiveness of our trespasses through the riches of His grace. We are all here because of His grace. We have all things because of His grace. There is nothing that we have done to earn these things. We have them because He has chosen to give them to us. Therefore, we have nothing to boast about.

1 Cor 1:26-30 ESV

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

- We are all trophies of His grace. We display His grace. We are a people of grace. We are not better than anyone else. We have just been redeemed. We are the reservoirs of His grace, and in humility, we receive it and display it and give this grace to others. This should help us to be humble people, thankful people, and worshiping people.

We, the church, display God’s wisdom

Eph 1:8-10 ESV

which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

- God's wisdom and will, His plan for the fullness of time, is to unite all things in Him. Both things in heaven and things on earth. We, the church, display God's wisdom in unity through **reconciliation**.
- This is to bring God and us together because of our sin's breaking of our relationship with Him. We have peace with God through Christ. God is not at odds with us or at war with us because we have been forgiven and made right and pure through Christ. In the Church, God displays His wisdom by putting us in right relationship, making us one with Him.
- He also reconciles the people of the earth through Him. Making us one with each other, breaking down the dividing walls of hostility. This is between Jew and Gentile, between all locations and languages, all races and colors, all educational and income levels; He breaks down all dividing lines and makes us one. This is God's wisdom: fellowship with Him, and fellowship with each other for all eternity.

We, the church, display God's glory

Eph 1:11-14 ESV

In 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, 12 so that *we* who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In 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, 14 who is the guarantee of *our* inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- We, the church, display God's glory through our salvation and in our inheritance. We have been saved from the wrath of God for our sin through the atoning of His Son. We have been saved from our sins, and not only that, but we have also been given an eternal inheritance through His Son.
- The inheritance is eternal life, and new bodies, and the **recreation** of all things on the days that He makes all things new (See Rev. 21:5-8).
- We have been given a deposit, a taste now of what is to come. We were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which guarantees our inheritance (like a will).
- Through our recreation, we display His glory that God makes us new, from what we were into, what we are, and will renew all things in the end.

Conclusion

- Understand what the church does, we display God's grace through redemption, we display God's wisdom through reconciliation, we display God's glory through recreation. Only God can do this, and only we, the church, can display this. This is what God is doing through us, and this is why the church is so precious to Him. We are the people in which His grace has been bestowed. We are the people in which His reconciliation is seen. We are the people who give Him glory

through His recreation of all things. So let us be thankful and cherish what He is doing through the church through Christ.