

(Ephesians) God's Glorious Plan

by Brian Brodersen

God's plan is to elevate man to an unthinkable position forever, and Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of God signifies the fulfillment of this plan.

Duration: 52:29

Scripture: Psalm 8:4-6, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Ephesians 1:18-22, Hebrews 2:5-9

Topics: "Gods Plan", "Church Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of people in carrying out the work of God. He points out that throughout history, both in the Old Testament with the people of Israel and in the New Testament with the church, God has chosen to use people to accomplish His purposes. The speaker highlights the lack of availability of people today for the Word of God and the gospel, which he believes is a reason for the scarcity of salvation and preaching. He encourages believers not to rely on God alone to get things done, but to actively make themselves available for God's work. The speaker also emphasizes the exalted position of Jesus Christ as the head of the church and the comfort and glory that comes from having Him in control.

Transcript

We're still in the first chapter of Ephesians, and tonight we're going to be finishing up chapter one, looking at the last three or four verses of the first chapter. And so, let's have a word of prayer, and then we'll consider these final words of the first chapter here. Having begun this epistle with a brief summary of the spiritual blessings that belong to those who are in Christ, Paul then went on to pray that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened, that we would be able to know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and then what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his own right hand far above all principality and power.

And Paul then continues on through the remainder of the chapter, and he says that Jesus has been given dominion over every name that is named in verse 21, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. And he, God, has put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. So it's interesting how the apostle, as he's praying, he just seems to be swept away by the spirit into this exaltation of Christ.

He's praying for us. He's praying for the saints, praying that we might know the exceeding greatness of his power. And then it's almost as though the spirit of God just sweeps him up and carries him away.

And he goes into this moment of exaltation, this moment of praise as he declares the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead and not only raised from the dead, but that he has been seated at the right hand of God and that he now is over all principality and power and so forth. It's interesting that Paul seems to imply in these words here that the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ is the greatest demonstration of the power of God ever. That seems to be what he's implying.

And as I pointed out in the last study of all the different occasions on which God displayed his power that Paul could have drawn from as he was praying for us, oh, Lord, that they might know the exceeding greatness of your power. As we pointed out last time, we could have referred to creation.

He could have referred to many of the events that transpired with the children of Israel and their departure from Egypt or their experience in the wilderness or the many miracles that were done during the Old Testament period or the many miraculous things that were done in the earthly ministry of Jesus. But he points to the resurrection of Christ, but not only the resurrection. Notice he points to the exaltation of Christ also.

And it seems that he's saying that this is the greatest demonstration of the power of God ever, the resurrection and the exaltation of Christ. Now, the question that arises in my mind is, what is Paul really wanting to communicate here? What is what is he getting at as he's talking about the mighty power that was displayed in the resurrection of Christ and in the exaltation of Christ? You know, there are things that are not clearly stated in the scripture, but yet seem to be implied. And as you look at some of the things concerning the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, as you look at the whole idea of Christ being glorified and given a name that is above every name, if you really think about that, there are some questions that arise.

Now, the question that arises, as I think about this whole idea of Jesus being exalted to the right hand of God and his enemies being made his footstool and that sort of thing. One of the questions that arises in my mind is, what is the difference between the future glory of Christ and the past glory of Christ? And why is it in the future that it seems that the glory of Christ will be greater than was his glory in the past? Because remember, Jesus Christ had a past. Jesus is not like any other person that ever lived.

Jesus lived before he ever came to earth. He is the eternal son of God. And as the eternal son of God, he dwelt, of course, eternally in the presence of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

And he partook of as, of course, he would being the eternal son of God, he partook of the glory of God. And when he's praying to the father just before his betrayal and his trial and his death, he prays and he says, Father, I would that these that you've given to me, I would that they would be with me in the future and that they would behold the glory, my glory that I had previously, the glory that I had with you before the world ever was. So we know that Jesus had a previous glory, the glory of the son of God, the eternal son of God, a glory that can't really be improved upon.

How could you improve upon the glory of God? But yet what the New Testament seems to imply, the apostles and Paul in particular, is that there is a greater glory coming in the future. Now, this is where it gets very interesting. And I think the greater glory has everything to do with the fact that it's going to be a man that is glorified.

You see, the previous glory of the Lord was his glory as God, the future glory of the Lord is his glory as not only God, but as the God man. Here's the amazing thing. Here's the mind boggling thing.

Here's the thing that will baffle you if you think hard enough about it, that there is a man sitting at the right hand of God. There's a man, a human being sitting at the right hand of God. Now, as I said, there are things that are not clearly spelled out in scripture, but yet they seem to be there by implication.

And I want to share a couple of thoughts with you that. You've probably never thought of before. I didn't read this anywhere, it's just the product of thinking, and maybe it's, you know, that I've been thinking too much, so don't get scared.

But, you know. One thing that's clear is that there is a history that predates our history. God, of course, is eternal.

We are living in time. Our universe is a tri-universe made up of space and time and matter. They're all three intricately connected.

You can't separate one from the other. But time began when God said, let there be time. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And God said, let there be light and so forth. That's when time began. But there is a history that predates time, not a human history that predates time.

But there is, of course, God dwelling in eternity in the past. And it seems to me that the angels are not part of the present creation. It seems to me that the angels go back before the beginning of time and some time back in eternity.

You see, we can only think in terms of time, so we have to use that, even though it's not technically legitimate. But sometime before the universe was ever created, God created the angels. And we don't know when that was.

We don't know how long ago that was or how long things went on with this. Relationship between God and the angels, we don't really know anything about that, we're not given any details of it, but we are given certain hints in scripture that that was the case. We read in Job, chapter 38, that when God laid the foundation of the earth, all the sons of God shouted for joy.

That tells me that the angels were there as God was creating the world. So they preexisted, they were there before the space time matter universe that we live in came into existence. Now, here's where I'm going to get into some major speculation.

And these are just thoughts, but it seems like something like this might have happened way back when. It seems that perhaps God, after having dwelt for whoever knows how long eons of time, perhaps with the angels and doing whatever they were doing, we don't know. But before I proceed, let me say that if you read Isaiah 14 or Ezekiel 28, you can read that later.

You will find references there to the person we call Satan. But the interesting thing in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 is we meet him before his fall. Actually, Isaiah 14 is the account of the fall of Lucifer.

Ezekiel 28 gives us a similar account, but it gives us a bit more detail. But what it shows us is that there was this relationship that existed between God and the angels prior to the creation of the world. And there's this one particular angel that is referred to in Isaiah 14 as Lucifer.

We don't really know if that was actually his name, but there is this being. We know that there are other powerful angels. Two of them are named for us in scripture, Michael and Gabriel.

Michael is called the archangel. And so back to our story. It seems that perhaps at a given point in time.

The time before time that God maybe gathered the angels around and said, you know, I've decided that I want to make a new creature. I want to make a new creature, and I want to make a weaker creature, and I want to make a new creature, and I want to make a new animal, and I want to make him directly in my own image, and I want to give him dominion over everything that I've made. It seems like that might have happened.

I don't know if it really did, but it seems, it seems like that might have happened. And we know that there was a rebellion that took place in heaven. And could it be that the vast majority of the angels said, Lord, that is a great idea.

God, we are one hundred percent behind what you want to do, Michael and Gabriel in particular. Amen, Lord. Great call.

Go for it. We can't wait. But there was one angel that perhaps didn't really like the idea that thought in his heart.

No, I disagree. I am opposed to this. We know that a rebellion was sparked at some point.

We don't know what the cause was, but maybe it was something like that. And as I carry on, you'll see why I think it could have been something like that. But let's just say that for argument's sake, that that did happen, and then this angel went about and began to spread his perspective on the whole thing.

And before you know it, there were a third of the angels that came forward and said, we reject. Your idea, we're not for it. And this one steps forward and says, as a matter of fact, I think I have every right to.

Take your position. We know that this being that we call Satan sought to exalt himself above the throne of God at a point sometime in the past. That's what Isaiah 14 tells us.

He said he would exalt his throne above the throne of God, but he was cast down. Now, here's the interesting thing. It seems that God went ahead with his plan, and so he creates this creature that he intends to give dominion over everything.

That's man. It's Adam. And God has a plan to bequeath to Adam everything that is his.

But this rebellious angel. Is still in opposition. To God and to God's plan.

So after God creates the man, he makes his way into the place where the man is living. And he has a plan. He figures that.

He can thwart the plan of God in some way. He can prevent this from happening. He has a plan to turn God's creature against him.

And knowing that God is just and righteous and will judge sin just as he had experienced himself. He anticipates that if he can turn God's creature against God, that God will then retaliate and bring judgment. And then the plan to have this new creature.

Be the one in whom God would glorify himself would be thwarted, and so he comes into the garden and he does that very thing. He deceives the woman who in turn. Brings the man into that rebellion.

And God, as the devil perhaps anticipated, pronounces judgment upon the man, and now he's cursed to die. And because he has to die. The plan of God to exalt this being and give him dominion over everything is seemingly thwarted.

God is lost. He's not able to do what he planned to do because the creature that he planned to elevate is now under a divine curse. How could he possibly be delivered from this divine curse? Well, here's where it gets really interesting.

God does the unthinkable. What Satan never dreamed could ever have occurred. God decides that he will become a man.

He will become a man and he will live a perfect life. He will please God perfectly, and then he will sacrifice himself for the ones who rebelled against God, and he will basically undo what Satan did. And in the end, there would be just as God planned a man who would inherit all that God had desired to give to him and be the instrument through which God would be glorified.

And here's the amazing thing that there's a man sitting at the right hand of God tonight. The right hand of God is the most honored position, not in the universe only, but outside the universe. The right hand of God is the most honored position that there could ever be.

And here tonight we have a man there. Now, let's look at a couple of verses. Turn with me over to.

Let's look at Philippians chapter two. And keep in mind everything I said. Look at verse six of Philippians two.

Speaking of Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, which means simply that he was God, God, the son who being in the form of God did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. Now, listen to this, that at the name of Jesus.

Now notice it doesn't say that at the name of the Lord. But I think the interesting thing here is that it's the human name that's being elevated here, that at the name of Jesus, the man. And you see, this is a distinction between the future glory of Christ and the previous glory of Christ.

Previously, he, of course, shared in the glory of the Godhead. But in the future, he's going to receive the glory as a man. That's the amazing thing.

And this is the thing that the devil would have never conceived of. He would have never conceived that God would become a man in the first place, but he never, ever, ever would have conceived that God would become a man forever. And that's what happened when Jesus was incarnated.

God, the son is a man tonight sitting at the right hand of the father, God, the son will remain a man forever. And because God, the son. Willingly submitted to the father to become a man forever.

God, the father has elevated him and given him a name that is above every name. And it's through God, the son. Who became a man that God fulfills his eternal plan to make a creature that he would bestow.

All of his blessings upon. Turn over to Hebrews chapter two. Hebrews chapter two.

Let's read in verse five. Speaking of God, for he has not put the world to come of which we speak in subjection to angels, but one testified in a certain place saying, what is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor.

You have set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet, for in that he put all things in subjection under him. He left nothing that is not put under him.

You see, this is what God declared. I'm going to create a being. I'm going to put everything under him.

David in the eighth Psalm, from which the author of Hebrews is quoting. David, when he contemplates this, when he's out there in that in those fields tending the sheep and he's thinking about the things of God and he's going over all of this and somehow he's getting insight to what God has done in his desire to take man into and to elevate him to this incredible position. David says, what is man that you are mindful of him, that you would put everything in subjection under him? David is marveling at this.

He can't believe it. Now, listen, it says, but now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus.

Who is made for a moment lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. So you see, Jesus. He is there at the right hand of God.

At that place of highest honor, and he is there as a representative of humanity, and he is there as the guarantee that all things will ultimately be put under man as God intended them to be. Originally, that plan was temporarily, seemingly thwarted by the activity of the devil. But of course, it wasn't really thwarted at all.

Because God had already planned to redeem man by doing the unthinkable, by becoming a man himself. Now, here's something to think about as well. God's plan is to take man, the creature, the only creature created in the image of God.

Not even the angels are created in the image of God. Evidently. We're never told anything about the angels being in the image of God.

We're actually told by the Apostle Paul in the fifth chapter of First Corinthians that we are going to judge angels. The implication is that God is elevating man above the angels. If the scenario I laid out to you is.

Legit in any way, you can see the consternation of. A few angels. But that's God's plan.

So God has this incredible plan to take man, this creature created in his image, and to elevate him to an unthinkable position forever. That's the plan of God. But think about what the devil has been doing from the very beginning.

He has been trying to prevent that from happening. He's been trying to keep that from coming to pass. So what does he do when he comes into the garden? What does he say to the woman? He says, has God said that you shouldn't do this or that or the other thing because you will die? You're not going to die.

No, God knows that if you do that, you're going to be like him and he doesn't want anybody to be like him. You see, the devil lies to the woman. God wants to take man and elevate him to the highest position.

The devil doesn't want that to happen. So he comes along and he does anything he can to try to keep man from attaining what God has desired for him. So he says, no, no, no.

God's actually keeping you back by making you obey him. If you disobey him, then you will really be like him. You'll be greater than him.

And so what happens? The woman disobeys. And what does she find? She finds that God was right and the devil was wrong. And the devil has been doing that ever since.

And man has been falling for it ever since. Think of the various religions that we are faced with in our world today. Think of Hinduism or Buddhism or think of Islam.

You can think of any religion. And what are these religions? They're all. Lies.

To keep men. From the glory that God has for them by offering them. A different glory, an inferior glory.

That's what these religions are. They're the same thing that Satan offered to even the garden. He's saying you're going to be like God if you do this.

And these religions are basically saying a similar thing. You are already God, just realize that you're God and so forth. But what is being offered to them is something that's far short of what God actually has for man.

So what the devil is doing to put it in the modern vernacular is he's just ripping people off. That's what he's doing. You see, God has his plan to take man and exalt him.

Think of humanism, secular humanism. The secular humanists are vehement against Christianity. They hate the whole concept of Christianity, a God, Christ, a creator, a savior.

They hate that. And what is their position? Their position is that we are going to exalt ourselves and we are going to be great. And man is God and we don't need any of this other stuff and we can do it on our own sort of a thing.

And what are they doing? They're selling themselves short. The very thing that they're trying to attain is the very thing God is offering, but they can't see it. Man.

Who embraces. Atheistic humanistic philosophy is basically attempting to be God. Himself.

But God has a position of exaltation that he's offering to human beings that is incomprehensible, inconceivable, it's so far beyond anything we could ever really. Imagine that Satan comes in and he rips people off, he sells them short. He says, oh, you can be God, you can attain to this level right here, just reject Christianity, reject Christ, reject the God of the Bible, and you can have all of this.

But God's over here saying, oh, no, no, look, I want to take you up to here. I want to elevate you far beyond anything you ever dreamed of. But this is the work of the enemy to go about and to.

Keep. God from fulfilling his desire. To take this creature created in his image.

And to give him dominion over everything. So here's where we get back to our text in Ephesians, and here's why we see Paul is saying. That the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ is the greatest demonstration of God's power ever, because now you see what's going on, Satan and every bit of his strength.

Is being applied to keeping Jesus Christ in the grave, and no doubt when Jesus was crucified, Satan really thought that he had done it, he gained the ultimate and the final victory because the one man who seemed like he was a threat to him. The one man who seemed like he might overthrow him was now dead. But there was something yet to come, and that was that this man was going to be resurrected and all the power of hell could not prevent that from happening.

But all the power from hell tried to prevent that from happening. That's, I think, what's being implied in what Paul is saying. All of the forces of darkness, all of the powers that could be brought to bear upon Christ were there to seek to keep him.

And listen, they had been successful. They had been completely successful up until this point. Every man that had ever lived had died and stayed dead.

How is God going to eternally exalt and bless this creature, man? He can't do it. They're all dead. They keep dying.

How is it possible that it could happen? One of them is going to rise from the dead. And so as Peter so wonderfully exclaims it, as he's preaching on the day of Pentecost and he talks about Christ. And he says whom death could not hold.

He burst the bands of death because death could not hold him. Death couldn't keep him. It had been able to keep everyone else.

But it couldn't keep him. And now through Jesus Christ, God has done exactly what he said he would do in eternity past. God has taken a man and he has elevated him and he set him at his right hand and notice he's put him above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named.

Just as God. Declared he would do. He has put a man.

Over. All other beings, all other creatures. The principalities, the powers of dominions are a reference to the angelic host, both good and evil.

And now, just as God declared, he has. At his right hand, a man who is seated there in that highest place of honor, and he is ruling over all things presently this moment. We don't see the full manifestation of his reign yet, but the fact that he's sitting there, that's what the author to the Hebrews is saying.

We do not yet see all things put under his feet, but we do see Jesus. We see him temporarily made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor. Suffering for us that he, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man, but because of that, God has exalted him and given him a name that is above every name.

And so Paul here. Is reminding us of the greatness of God's power displayed in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ and really telling us that that same power is at work in us and in the world to bring about God's ultimate purpose. Of establishing his kingdom through the man, Christ Jesus.

Through Jesus, the name that is above every name. And look at our world today, and we see the same conflict that we've seen throughout the ages is raging tonight as we speak, that same battle is going on. And we're hearing about the will of Allah.

And we're hearing about the great battle against Christ and Christianity. I mean, we're hearing this stuff. Right now, and this is just.

A visible manifestation of what has been going on in the invisible realm. From the very beginning. It's a spiritual battle, it's all a spiritual battle.

But here's the great news. Christ is already won it. He's already seated at the right hand of God.

There's no one going to take his place. He's there. He's seated at the right hand of God, that place of highest honor.

And he's there right now. Having dominion over the principalities, the powers, the authorities, he has it already. In other words, everything in the world that's going on, he is in complete control of it.

He's taking care of it. Now, sometimes it doesn't seem that way to us, does it? Sometimes we look around and we think, Lord, who is in control here? But by faith and as we stand on the scriptures, we are called to believe that God is. Sovereign, that he is working and that all these things that are happening in our world today and the things that have been happening are all things that must happen.

Because God has ordained that it be this way, but they are all leading to a climactic moment. When God will manifest. As Paul, the apostle so beautifully put it, God will manifest who is the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings and lord of lords.

There's a time coming when God is going to make it clear to everyone forever. That Jesus. Is the name above every name, wonderful, glorious reality.

So he's put all things under his feet, he says. And he gave him to be the head over all things to the church. So this one who is exalted to the highest place of honor in the universe, he's the head of the church.

He's the one who's overseeing the church, taking care of the church. He's the one who is directing the course for the church. This is the first place that church is mentioned in Ephesians.

First mentioning of it here, the church, what is the church? Some people, when you when you say church. They think of institutionalized religion. But that's not the church, according to the New Testament.

The church are those men and women. Who have by faith embraced Jesus Christ as their personal lord and savior. Those men and women that embraced him back in the first century and every century since those men and women, wherever they are in the world tonight, who have embraced Jesus Christ by faith, they are the church.

We are the church and Christ is the head over the church. The head, of course, is the control center. For the body, he is the head of the body, the church.

Just as our bodies are controlled by our heads, just as our bodies are directed in all of the various processes and activities that go on within our system, just as everything is done under the direction of the head. So it is to be in the church. Jesus is the head.

He wants to send out the instructions, he wants to give the commands, he wants to direct the various parts of the body. Into those works of service that will bring about his will in the world. And what a wonderful thing to think that we have the Lord Jesus Christ at the helm, the one who's exalted above everyone, the name that is above every name, the most honored person.

Is that the head of the church in that comforting to know in that glorious to know, and as you look at the history of the church, you know, you think of the great men and women that God has raised up throughout the long history of the church, and you think of the influences that they've had and so forth. But men come and men go. Leaders come and they go.

They're here for but a moment and then they pass off the scene. But Christ is ever the head of the church and he continues to work and he continues to raise up servants. He continues to empower his people.

He continues to give direction and guidance and wisdom and all those things. Boy, I'll tell you, I am so thankful that Christ is the head of the church. I'm so thankful that.

The God man is the head of the church. And Paul wants us to know this, he wants us to understand this, that he gave him to be head over all things to the church. He wants us to know the incredible position that we hold.

As the people of God, and he wants us to be filled with hope and confidence. Knowing that, come what may, Christ is at the right hand of God. And he's there, as the scripture said, waiting till his enemies be made his footstool.

That's what's happening right now. God is working to bring it all completely together under the Lord Jesus Christ. And the first manifestation of that final bringing of everything together is the church.

We are the first manifestation of that. So as the church is under the headship of Christ, so ultimately all things will be brought under the headship of Christ. Now, in verse 23, Paul finishes up here.

And he says something interesting about the body, he says, which is the fullness of him who fills all in all. Now, this statement has caused some discussion among Bible commentators as to just exactly what Paul could be saying. What it sounds like he's saying seems to be unthinkable.

It sounds like he's saying that the body. The church somehow makes Christ complete. That in some way, Christ is incomplete apart from the church.

Now, there are many good commentators who have. Who have embraced that interpretation? Others say, no, no, no, that's that's an impossibility to say that Christ is in any way, shape or form, incomplete is borderline blasphemy, so we can't interpret it like that. We must understand it to mean that the fullness of him who fills all in all that Christ is the fullness of the church.

They give the illustration of. The soul. Filling the body.

And so Christ by the spirit filling the church, and they point out that that is consistent with what the scriptures say in general, which is true. Christ fills all things. He fills the universe.

And the scriptures say that he fills the church as well. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit. But I do think.

That the other interpretation is a possibility if we understand it in. Temporal terms, and if we understand it. As not.

Implying some sort of deficiency in Christ as a being. But rather. Referring to the deficiency of his purpose.

Were the church not. Here. You see, there's a vast difference there.

We could never for a moment think there's any kind of deficiency in the person of Christ. Christ is God, the son, he's absolutely perfect. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, there's no imperfection in him whatsoever.

There's no incompleteness in him, there's no sort of deficiency, there's no area where he's wanting anything in his being in his person. But if we think of it in terms of his purpose rather than his being, I think that what it seems to be saying that some people are sort of bothered by, I think it's actually what he is saying. Now, think of the fact that Christ is the head.

And we are the body. A head as great as it is. Is deficient without a body.

Because it's through the body that the head accomplishes all of its will. You could take the greatest brain in the world and keep it alive somehow. But yet, if it doesn't have a body that it's connected to.

It's just going to sit there under the glass bubble. And do nothing. It has to be connected.

The So in the sense of his purpose, the church does bring completion to Christ because it's his purpose to expand his kingdom here on the earth. And he's chosen to do it through the members of his body through people. Without the church, God's plan that he has laid out could not be accomplished.

God could change his plan and accomplish it another way if he wanted to. But since he has purpose to do it this way, the church is vital to the accomplishment of his plan. Because we are the means by which the head carries out its will, its desire.

So we are the church, the fullness of him who fills all in all. That is a startling. It's an amazing concept.

And you can see why some Bible commentators have said, Oh, no, I don't want to. I don't want to say anything like that. It just seems it seems ludicrous that we could think something like that.

But I think that's what he's actually saying. You see, God has chosen to work through people. He's chosen to do that.

You know, sometimes people say things like this. They said, oh, well, you know, it'll get done somehow. You know, the Lord will take care of it.

They say that as they determine not to make themselves available. And there could be some truth to that. Of course, God can keep searching and say, OK, well, I was going to use this person, but they weren't interested.

So I will use this person. But it is possible, and we know it has occurred at times in history where God has been searching for people and hadn't been able to find him. He says that a number of times.

And if you look at the history of the work of God in the world, whether it be the history of the people of Israel or the history of the church, you find that without people. The work doesn't get done. Why is there such a dearth for the word of God in the earth today? Why are there so few that are saved? Why are there so few that are preaching the gospel? People aren't making themselves available.

And God has chosen to use people. And so we have to be careful that we don't make the mistake of just falling back and saying, oh, well, you know, God will get it done. He doesn't need me.

And, you know, in one sense, that's all true. Because God is sovereign and he's going to complete his work. It doesn't matter what man does.

And when it's all said and done, we'll know that everything took place that God planned to take place. But that doesn't eliminate the reality that God has chosen to use people. And we've got to understand that and realize that.

And we have got to see ourselves as we really are. We are members of his body. He is the head over the church.

And as the head, he has the instructions. He has the directions. He has the plan and the purpose that he wants to implement and carry out.

And guess who he wants to do it through? He wants to do it through us. He wants to do it through his body. Through us here tonight, through those who will be here tomorrow, through those who will gather wherever they're going to gather tomorrow, his body, those who are born of the spirit, those who are believers, those who are.

His children, he wants to work through us. He's chosen to do things that way. He's chosen to have men be radically connected to everything he's doing.

He's chosen to have a man sitting. At his right hand. Incredible.

He's chosen. That we. His body.

Are to be co-heirs with his son. Amazing. That's what God has desired.

That's what God has planned. That's what he has purposed. He's chosen that we today be co-workers together with him.

And so as we finish up tonight, realize that, understand that we are the fullness of him who fills all in all unthinkable, unimaginable, inconceivable, unbelievable, really. But this is what it says. We're the fullness of him.

Without us, the purpose of God will not be fulfilled like he would like it to be like he's planned it to be. So we want to realize that and we want to say, Lord, here I am. Lord, I'm part of the body.

Lord, give me some instructions. What is your will? What is your desire? And as we begin to function. In our place that God has designed for us to be in.

Then we bring that fullness to fruition and. God is glorified. Let's make ourselves available to glorify God.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you. For these unspeakable realities, these great truths, Lord, that boggle the mind, truly.

Lord, that we are the fullness of him who fills all in all is something that our minds can't understand, but yet we see it written right here on the pages of Scripture. And so, Lord, help us to embrace that. Help us, Lord, to receive it and help us to live according to it.

And, Lord, we thank you for your incredible plan for us. We thank you for your plan, Lord, to take man and to exalt us. And we think of the multitudes of men and women who are going about being ripped off by Satan, being told a lie and believing it, that they could somehow do better than what you have planned.

Oh, God, open people's eyes to see that they're being lied to. Open their eyes, Lord, to see that you have the great plan for man, that you have the most glorious plan conceivable. And, Lord, may we see many in the days to come turn away from the deception, turn away from the lies, turn away from those things that are degrading and destroying the ones that you made in your image and help them, Lord, to turn to you and use us for that purpose.

Use us, Lord, as your body to further your kingdom here on Earth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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