

The Birth and Construction of the Church

by Stephen Kaung

The Church is the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus, chosen according to the good pleasure of God's will, and is being conformed to the image of His Son.

Duration: 38:00

Scripture: Romans 11:33

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the Church from God's viewpoint. They highlight that God has a purpose for the Church and has laid out a plan to fulfill that purpose. The speaker references Romans 11:33-36 to emphasize the wisdom and knowledge of God and how His ways are unsearchable. They also mention that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. The ultimate purpose of the Church is to be conformed to the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Lord, how we praise and thank Thee, because it is Thy desire and Thy delight to dwell among men. Oh, how we praise and thank Thee, because Thou art looking for Thy rest, and Thy rest is in the man that Thou hast created. O Lord, it is also our deep desire that we may be Thy rest.

O Lord, we ask Thee that Thou would come into Thy rest in the midst of Thy people. How we praise and thank Thee for all Thy provisions. How we thank and praise Thee, Thou hast indeed clothed us with gladness, Thou hast indeed filled us with Thy joy.

Oh, we do come together to bless Thy name, to praise and to worship Thee, and to offer ourselves afresh to Thee for the fulfillment of Thy purpose among us. We do commit this morning into Thy hands. We trust that Thou art with us, and Lord, we ask Thee that Thou would speak to us.

Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth, in the name of our Lord Jesus. After the meeting yesterday morning, I was chided by my brothers. They thought that I should continue and forget the time.

Since I was speaking on eternity, I shouldn't be so conscious of time. So this morning, as a punishment, I have to continue on what I hadn't finished yesterday morning. I do hope that brothers and sisters will bear with me.

We are considering together on a very important subject which concerns every one of us. It is not only in the heart of God, but it ought to occupy a very large place in the heart of all those who love the Lord. And our subject is, of course, the Church.

We desire to see the Church not from the historical viewpoint, nor from the contemporary viewpoint, but we believe that if we want to know what the Church really is, we have to see it from God's viewpoint. In other words, we need to have an eternal perspective. And then we will see what the Church is in the heart, in the mind, in the eye of God.

We mentioned yesterday morning that the Church is the mystery of the Christ, as we find in Ephesians chapter 3. It is a mystery because before the world's foundation, it is conceived by God. And this is hidden throughout the ages, waiting for the time when that mystery is to be opened up to be revealed to us. And we do thank the Lord that this is an open mystery now.

We know that this is the purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus throughout the ages. I mentioned yesterday morning that there are four key phrases which may help us to understand the Church as the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus. And these four phrases can be found in the first three chapters of Ephesians.

Now the first one is in chapter 1, verse 5. According to the good pleasure of his will. The good pleasure of God's will. God has a will.

God is the supreme will. He can do anything that pleases him. He does not need to answer to anyone.

He is God. He is sovereign. He has his pleasure.

He has his delight. And it is the pleasure of God to have the Church. The Church is not something conceived by man.

It is not something according to the pleasure of man. But we must see that the Church of God is according to the good pleasure of God's will. I think it will be very helpful if you try to see through the Bible what is it that God is pleased with.

What is the pleasure of God? Now, of course, the pleasure of God, in another sense, is God's will. Because his pleasure is whatever he will, whatever he wants. Because God is good.

Therefore he is pleased only with that which is good. The pleasure of God is the good pleasure. It is the good will.

Now, in Ephesians chapter 1 you will find these words. He has chosen us in him before the world's foundation that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. What is the good pleasure of God's will? The good pleasure of God's will is that he has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we might be holy and blameless before him in love.

This is the good pleasure of God. We are chosen not because we are worthy. We are chosen not because we have done anything.

We are chosen not because we will it to be. We are chosen according to the good pleasure of God's will. Oh dear brothers and sisters, we need to see that today we are chosen.

We are chosen in Christ. We are chosen before the foundation of the world. We are chosen before we exist physically.

We are chosen before we know anything. We are chosen before we can will anything. We can desire anything.

It is not our desire. It is not our doing. It is the good pleasure of God that he has chosen us in Christ Jesus.

Very often we think that we are chosen. It means that we are saved. Now, of course, whom he has chosen, he will call and whom he has called, he will justify.

No doubt about that. But here you'll find God has chosen us in Christ Jesus that we may be holy and blameless in love before him. We are chosen that we may be holy.

And of course, you know the word holy means separated. We are chosen to be separated from the world. We are chosen to be separated from ourselves.

We are chosen to be separated from everything but unto God. We are chosen for his son. We are chosen that we may be given to his son as God's exclusive gift to his beloved.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you know that we are very exclusive? Non-exclusive in the sense that we restrict our fellowship just to those who agree with us. Not at all. In this respect, we must be very open.

As open as our Lord. We must receive whomever the Lord receives. But dear brothers and sisters, so far as we are God's gift to his son is concerned, we are most exclusive.

And because of that, you'll find God is very jealous. He is very jealous. Why? Because he has chosen us to be gift to his only begotten.

And anything that may interfere with that, anything that may distract that, he is very jealous over all these things. We are to be holy before him. And not only holy, but blameless.

Or maybe in some version you'll find without blemish. How can we, who are full of spots and blemishes, that we may be without blemish? We may be without blame before God. This is only possible through his great love towards us.

It is God's love that has taken away all our spots and all our blemishes. It is love that has covered a multitude of things. It is love that has accepted us in his well-beloved.

Now, dear brothers and sisters, this is what the church is. The church is a glorious church without spots or wrinkles or any of such things. To be presented to his son as the bride.

And this is all according to the good pleasure of his will. Again, you'll find in verse 5, having mocked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself. Again, according to the good pleasure of his will.

We are mocked out. God has mocked us out beforehand. That is, before the foundation of the world.

For adoption through Christ Jesus to himself. Now, of course, we know the word adoption here means friendship. It is just another way of putting it.

I often say that God does not adopt children like we adopt today. The way that God adopts is he begets us to adopt us. You'll find that he has begotten us and he has adopted us.

He has taken us to himself. Not only as children, but as grown-up sons. And this is the good pleasure of God's will.

That is the reason why you'll find in Hebrews, it is said, the church is called the church of the firstborn. Our Lord Jesus is the only begotten son. Our Lord Jesus has become the firstborn of all creation.

And now you'll find he has so taken us unto himself. He has so united us with himself that the church is called the church of the firstborn. We are all sons in Christ Jesus, and this is his good pleasure.

You remember Paul said, it pleases God to reveal his son in me. It is the good pleasure of God. See, this is true.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have a very great responsibility. Since we are chosen, we are called, we are marked out according to the good pleasure of God's will. So this is where we begin.

We begin in the good pleasure of God's will. Then we have a very great responsibility. And our responsibility is that we may please him in all things.

Dear brothers and sisters, is it our desire that we may please Christ? That we may please God in all things? Do you remember the life of our Lord Jesus? When he was on earth, he said, the Father always hears him. Why? Because he does everything that pleases the Father. Our Lord Jesus has never done anything that displeased the Father.

He does not live for his own pleasure. He lives for the pleasure of his Heavenly Father. Now, dear brothers and sisters, you find that as Christ lives for the pleasure of the Father, we ought to live for the pleasure of our Lord Jesus.

We are chosen according to his pleasure. Therefore, we must live to please him. We cannot live on this earth just seeking our own will, doing our own pleasure.

This is not what we are called for. This is not what we are chosen for. We are here to please him.

We are here to be his pleasure and his delight. So this is the first phrase that we find in connection with the Church as the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus. Then you'll find the second phrase in verse 9, which he purposed in himself.

First, there is the pleasure of God's will. Then, secondly, you'll find the purpose, which he purposed in himself. And then, in the third chapter, you'll find he purposed that purpose in Christ Jesus.

We mentioned yesterday morning the pleasure is an idea. The pleasure is something that is within his mind. Now, when that good pleasure is precipitated, it becomes a purpose.

Sometimes you may have some idea, but you do not come to the point of making a determination or a decision. Sometimes beautiful ideas float through your mind, they come and they go, and they just fade, fade away. Nothing is accomplished.

It is almost like a dream that passes. But not so with God. When God has an idea, when God has a thought, when God has a good pleasure, when God delights in something, you'll find that he comes down to a purpose.

Purpose is the essence of good pleasure. There, the good pleasure is being precipitated into a purpose. God is a God of purpose.

God never does anything by chance. God is never forced into anything. You know, that's how we live.

We often do things by chance. And very often we are just forced into doing something. But you can never force God to do anything.

He is never directed by external forces. He is the God of purpose. Before he undertakes anything, he has a desire.

He has a decision. He has a determination. He purposes in himself.

You know, if the Church of God is left to our purpose, then you'll find it is very dangerous. Why? Because to us, the Church of God doesn't seem to be very appealing at times. Sometimes, if you really know the Church, it is just a little bit too much for the flesh.

But we do praise and thank God that the Church is the purpose of God. God has purposed it. God has decided.

And God is determined to have it. And this purpose, he purposed in Christ Jesus. It means that this purpose concerns Christ Jesus.

This purpose is made for Christ Jesus. Do not think that we are the purpose of God. Of course.

You remember Romans chapter 8? There's a verse that we often use, especially when any brother and sister is sick, or any brother and sister is afflicted with something that you do not know how to explain and how to comfort. We always say, well, all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. Now, so long as you love the Lord, everything will be all right.

Everything will turn out all right. Because the word of God says, all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. Sometimes I feel these words when they are spoken.

Just like Job told his friends, these are proverbs of ashes. All things work together for good to those who love the Lord. Now, that's the verse we often quote.

But we often misquote. Because the word of God does not stop there. You'll find the word of God continues and says, all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, who are called according to His purpose.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are called according to God's purpose. Now, what is that purpose? Of course, that purpose includes you and me. We are included in that purpose.

But what is that purpose? That purpose is that we may be conformed to the image of His Son. In other words, His Son is the center of that purpose. And we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

The purpose is concerning His Son. And this purpose is to be realized in, by and through His Son. This purpose of God is not to be realized by us.

This purpose of God is not to be accomplished by our efforts. You'll find that this purpose is purpose in Christ Jesus. And that is, it shall be realized through Christ.

And because of that, it is most sure He cannot fail. Once God has made His purpose, He will see it through, through Christ Jesus, His Son. And that is the reason why that our Lord Jesus came to this world.

That is the reason why He went to the cross. And there you'll find at the cross He cried out, It is finished! The purpose is being realized. Out of His death and resurrection, the Church is born.

The purpose of God, that He has purpose in His Son and for His Son, is being realized. It is all His doing. Marvelous is His way.

And then thirdly, you'll find the third phrase, it says, verse 11, according to the counsel of His own will, that we shall be to the praise of His glory. First the pleasure, then the purpose, and then you'll come the counsel. After God has made a purpose, and then He begins to plan.

He begins to lay down a plan. Probably you remember in Proverbs it is said, Without counsel, purpose cannot be fulfilled. You need counsel in order to have your purpose realized.

Oh, many people have very good determination, but they never have counsel. That is to say, they want this, they want that, but they have never laid down a plan as to how to arrive at that point. God has made a purpose, and now He lays the plan.

In saying this, I remember especially these verses in Romans chapter 11. It says, O depth of riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable His judgment, and untraceable His way, for who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor, or who has first given to Him, and it shall be rendered to Him. For of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things.

To Him be glory forever. Amen. You'll find that the counsel of God is marvelous.

How in the counsel of God He has decided beforehand to send His Son to this world, and how according to the full knowledge of God and the counsel of God that Christ shall be crucified by the hand of the lawless, and how He prepared Abraham as the father of the Jewish nation, preparing a pure race out of which Christ shall be born, and how salvation shall be first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, and then neither Jews nor Gentiles, and here you'll find we become all one in Christ Jesus. This is the counsel of His will. If we know anything of His counsel, you'll find that truly no one has been His counselor.

He has laid out His plan all by Himself, and wonderful and marvelous are His ways. The counsel of His will. And then lastly, the fourth one, which you will find also in verse 11, according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, and then verse 19, according to the working of the might of His strength.

The pleasure, the purpose, the counsel, and then the working. The working, according to working, the working of the might of His strength. God is the one who conceives the idea of the church.

Nobody else has the right to conceive any idea about the church. Nobody has the right to manufacture anything according to His pleasure, because the church is according to the pleasure of God's will. It is

according to the purpose of God, purpose in Christ Jesus.

It is according to the counsel of His will. It will be according to the blueprint that He has laid down. And finally, it is according to the working of the might of His strength.

In other words, it is not by our working. It is not being the energy of the flesh. It is the working of the might of His strength.

God said, I will do it. You remember the Lord Jesus said, I will build my church. And the gate of Hades shall not prevail against me.

What is this working of God? You read Ephesians chapter 1 and chapter 2 and you'll find it. You'll find at first that working of the might of His strength works in Christ Jesus, in raising Christ from among the dead. First you'll find Christ came to this world.

He went to the cross. He was buried in the tomb and people thought now that's the end. But here you'll find the working of the strength of His might in raising up Christ from among the dead.

And He set Him down at His right hand in the heavenlies. The might of His strength raising Him from the dead. Not only from the dead but out of the earth.

Set Him high up at His right hand above every principality and authority, power and dominion and every name, not only in this age but also in that to come and has put all things under His feet. This is the might of His strength. He has already done it.

We have seen Christ being raised from the dead. Death cannot hold Him. We have seen Christ being taken up to heaven.

The earth cannot hold Him. We have seen Him seated at the right hand of God because the Holy Spirit is poured out and we know that He is above all things. God has put all things under His feet that He may be the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all and in all.

This is the working of the strength of His might. Now this same working works in us because you read Ephesians chapter 2 and you'll find the same thing. What has been demonstrated in Christ Jesus the head is now being worked out in the body which is the complement of the head.

There you'll find we who are dead in sins and transgressions, we who are hopeless and helpless, and you'll find how He has quickened us with Christ Jesus, how He has raised us up together, how He has made us sit down together in the heavenly in Christ Jesus that He might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Here you'll find the same working that has been demonstrated in Christ is now working in us that is in the church. And this is how the counsel of God is carried out.

This is how the purpose of God is realized. This is how the good pleasure of God is being fulfilled. Dear brothers and sisters, do we need to have any doubt? Need we be in fear? Lest God cannot get what He desires? We worry too much.

We worry for God. We don't need to. You'll find that it is all His doing.

He will do it. God cannot fail. He will get what He wants.

He will give the church, a glorious church, without fault and wrinkle or any of such things as His gift to His beloved son, that His son may find satisfaction and pleasure in that. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the church from the eternal perspective. And because of that, we know it is from eternity, passing through time, back to eternity.

And it is all unto the praise of His glory. I'll stop here and give my brother a few more minutes.

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