

God's Purpose In The Church

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[0 : 00] Praise God. It's really been a blessing to be here with you this past week. Thank you all for your hospitality.! Thank you all for your hospitality. We've been blessed and encouraged. My desire this morning is to continue with some of what we've been hearing and talking about.

You look at the path that God has, and I want to end up and just encourage us, encourage the church this morning.

What is God's plan for His church and for His people? And we'll look at a few aspects of that. And I trust that we can continue to have faith to pursue what God intends for His people and to have that vision in front of us and to have that purpose in front of us.

But I was thinking about this path in the straight and narrow. This past week, we've been enjoying getting into the mountains a little bit around here.

We don't have too many mountains like this back east. And so, experiencing your roads to get up there, it's interesting.

[1 : 23] You think about the 200 out here, and it's a nice wide road. You can go fast out of town here. But then you get off the road, and you get back on the gravel road, say coming up to Mount Baldy up here. We were up there yesterday.

And the road gets a little bit narrow. And the closer you get to the mountain, the closer you get, the smaller the road gets, the narrower the road gets.

You get up past the residential places and up on the forest roads, and it just gets smaller and gets smaller. We get up to the trailhead then, and you've got to get out of your vehicle, right?

And now here, the path becomes very defined and very distinct and very narrow. And it gets a little bit harder, doesn't it, Chad? We attempted to walk up here, hike up here.

And it certainly is a lot more difficult than it is driving down the 200 to Missoula. But there was something that we had in mind, and this is what I want to look at.

[2 : 35] What is this goal? What is in front of us? And where does this take us? And this is what I want to encourage us with this here. There was something that we were after.

We were willing to put in the hard work. We were willing to... for it to be a little bit difficult. We were willing to put effort into it because there was something we were after.

And you get up then to the top of the mountain. Well, on the way, we enjoyed a lot of huckleberries, so that was a treat. So God blesses us.

God gives us what we need as we're on this path. But yes, then we get to the top, and we've accomplished our goal. We've arrived at our destination.

And you look at this, and you're like, okay, this is what we suffered for. This is what we put the effort in for. So that was a blessing for me to think about that.

[3 : 37] You take, even many times we think of the path, and again, I appreciate this, even as a foundation. It's not easy. It takes surrender. We need to lay down our lives.

We need to take up the cross. You referenced, Joe, you referenced Philippians chapter 3. So he had something in mind.

And it's not just like, well, I guess this is our lot in life to suffer, or I guess this is just the way it is, or this is just the circumstances we find ourselves. No, there was a goal.

There was a prize. There was something that Paul was going after. There was a reward. There was a reward.

So you see here, there is suffering. There is a death. There is a surrender. There is a taking up of the cross, identifying with the cross of Jesus Christ.

[5 : 18] But where does it lead us? Where does it take us? It should bring us into resurrection. It should bring us into life. There is a prize. There is a reward that we're going after.

Not as though I had already attained. Either were already perfect. So he didn't just get there. This was a journey that he was walking after. But I follow after. If that I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

So what is our motivation to keep walking on this path that God has in front of us? What is our motivation to seek out the narrow path instead of the broad way?

[6 : 24] What is our motivation to keep going when it gets hard? When the trail gets steep? Or when it gets rocky? When you feel tired?

You feel like you've been walking for a long time? What? We press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

There is something worth going after. There is something worth fighting for. There is something worth laying down our lives for. And Paul talks about that here in Philippians.

So I want to look at a bit in the context of the church, the body of Christ, God's people. God has a call for His church.

He has a reward. He has a purpose for His people to accomplish, for His people to walk in.

[7 : 23] And so I want to look at a couple of these in examples. Obviously, again, we have the foundation. We talked a little bit about repentance, of surrender.

Christ is our head. He is the head of His body. We endeavor to walk in truth. The words that was mentioned. Love.

Love for each other. These are not new ideas. But again, God builds His church. So there's three examples that I've enjoyed thinking about already for the church of God, for God's people, for the body of Christ.

And you are a part of that today. Yes, God has a plan. He has a purpose for you individually, for you specifically. But it's not just about me.

It's not just about you. As we know, we surrender our lives to Him. And then He brings us into His fuller plan.

[8 : 31] He has a great perspective. He has a great perspective. He has a great picture that goes beyond just my life, even my family in the next day or the next week, the next year.

God has a huge perspective. He has a big picture. And you're a part of it. God has a plan. He has a purpose in all of this. Three things that I want to look at briefly is a tabernacle, the church of God, the body of Christ, as a tabernacle, as a building, as a place for God to dwell in.

Number two, an army. An army of God. The people of God to accomplish His purposes. To do what He desires to be done.

To reach the lost. To be a witness. To be a testimony. To be an army. And third, to be a bride. To be a people prepared for Jesus Christ.

For His pleasure. For His fellowship. With Him. And I trust in these three things, God can continue to give us a motivation.

[9 : 44] Again, a prize. Something to go for. Something to walk after. And then when God works in our hearts, again, God is preparing us in all of these aspects.

We face trials. We face opposition. We face difficulties. Sometimes our circumstances brings us into places that feels difficult. We say, is this necessary?

But if we see what is ahead of us, if we see the reward, we've been blessed back at a home church, back in Lancaster, thinking about the reward.

And there is a reward for God's people. For you personally, individually, once you get to, I trust God blesses us throughout our life, but there is a reward even beyond this life.

In the church of God, in the body of Christ, there is a reward for God's people to be blessed with. Obviously, our motivation is not just to be rewarded.

[10 : 51] Our motivation is Jesus Christ, but this is, again, connected with this reward. I feel one of the greatest rewards we could have is ultimately to be in fellowship with God, to be in fellowship with Jesus Christ in eternity.

It was earlier this week or last weekend, we were talking a little bit about eternity. Is there time in eternity? It can be challenging. But there is this reward, again, in front of us.

And we can think of, or we can, might not be able to grasp all of that, but we know that God has something very special in mind for God's people. A tabernacle. one of the things God has called His church to be and what He is preparing in your life, in the life of the church, as He brings us together, God is building a tabernacle. We have a pattern of this in the Old Testament when God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle. And it was the dwelling place, it was supposed to be the central focus of the children of Israel. [12:10] This was going to be where God dwelt, where God lives. God specifically said to build a house, to build a tabernacle, that He could dwell among His people.

And then also in Ephesians in the New Testament, Now therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit.

This is an amazing thing for me to consider, that God would live, that God would dwell, that God would find a habitation right here in this earth.

That's what He did in the tabernacle, and again, we see it as a pattern. God manifested His presence there. It was the central place of worship of the people of Israel, but God desired even more than just an outside worshiping of Him, but a knowledge of Him, a fellowship with Him, a coming into relationship with Him.

And again, we see that in the church of God and the people of God. God's desire to build a habitation, to build a temple. So you take any kind of building, you look at this building here, what are all the pieces, all the components of it that make it suitable for us to meet in it this morning?

[13:57] Even that God is putting together a habitation, He's putting together a building where He intends to dwell in, where He intends to manifest His glory out of.

God wants to dwell here in our midst. I know God dwells, He lives in our hearts personally and in a special way and that's necessary, that's needed individually and personally to be a part of the greater perspective or the greater vision that God has, the greater purpose.

But I believe it goes beyond just individually. Again, it starts there and that's very necessary. You need to walk with a personal relationship with God. But then as you grow in that, as you walk in that, God desires to bring you together with other like-minded believers.

He desires to bring you together in a body of believers. And in that place, God somehow manifests Himself in even greater ways, in a more perfect way.

for all of my life, God is going to be working in me. He's going to be perfecting me. In all of your life, God is going to be changing you and transforming you into His image.

[15:18] And so I'm not, Paul talked about that in Philippians. He hasn't come to a place where He's perfect in all of this. But somehow, when God brings us all together, there is a much more complete representation of who He is.

And it's there in His body, in His church, where He represents who He is in a much more complete and a perfect way in the body of Christ.

So God desires to bring together and build a place where He dwells, where He is manifested, where He lives, and where He can show Himself.

It's an aspect of the church. It's an aspect that you are called to be. This is part of the calling, the high calling that God has for His people. It's a tabernacle, a habitation of God through His Spirit, a place that God lives and dwells.

What amazing potential. The second thing is an army. The people of God are called to be warriors, to be a people prepared to accomplish His purpose, to walk in His, yes, to walk in His ways, but even greater than that, to accomplish His desires and His purposes, to reach the world, to bring in the harvest.

[17:03] 2 Timothy 2. Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier and if any man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

You have this word hardness here. You endure hardness. It's part of what God brings us into, part of the path that we walk in, part of that narrow way that God calls us to is to endure. more. But yet again, there is a purpose in this. There is a prize. There is a reward.

reward. Again, I don't want us to get so focused on a personal reward. Our motivation needs to be Christ Jesus himself. But I think you get the picture.

You understand when we say there is something to walk after. This is the vision I trust God wants to continue to bring into our lives. We don't get stuck in just today and just what's right in front of me.

[18 : 23] Yes, it demands faithfulness. We take one step at a time. But when we have this high calling in front of us, when we see what God is after, it can give us the motivation.

It can give us the endurance we need to keep going. Keep walking. Be faithful. Be diligent. Take that next step. You might not be able to see very far.

You might not be able to understand why is it so hard right now. But God is preparing something for you. Endure hardness as a good soldier. You want to be a warrior?

You want to be effective in the kingdom of God? You want to accomplish all that God has for you, your family? Endure.

Continue. God is preparing something. in Ephesians 6. We have the whole armor of God.

[19 : 20] I don't think we're going to read all of it. But again, you have this analogy of being prepared. And God equips. God gives what's necessary. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand. And then He continues and He expounds on the different pieces and the elements that He equips and enables. salvation and truth and peace. The sword of the Spirit. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. again as soldiers or as army of God. There's a spiritual battle. There's a spiritual aspect here that we fight in.

[20 : 34] It's been mentioned for next weekend to have some times of prayer. There's an aspect that I feel we're called to wrestle in the Spirit.

We're called to be warriors in the Spirit. Many times I think we find ourselves in our desire to be at peace with mankind around us, to be at peace with humanity around us, to not be in conflict.

We kind of take this same mentality sometimes in the spiritual. But God calls us to be people of war, if you may, to be soldiers, to stand against, to wrestle against principalities and powers.

God has called His church, He's called His people to be an army, to be soldiers, that we can be effective with the sword, that we can be effective with the shield.

that we can both be protected, but also to be able to move ahead on the offensive and to bring liberty to the captives, to bring light into darkness.

[22 : 04] darkness. This is what the church of God is called to, to be an army, to be equipped, to be a people that have endured, that are prepared and ready for the difficult things.

Any battle, any fight, again, we kind of, we want to step back from conflict. And I know in conflict, in human relationships, we desire peace, we endeavor to walk together in love, but there is this aspect, this side against spiritual wickedness, against principalities, against powers.

We're not to shrink back. We're called to fight, we're called to be warriors, we're called to be aggressive. Again, with the direction of the Lord by His Spirit, by His power, it's not by our ability, it's not by our capabilities, but as God enables, as God empowers, as God equips, as God prepares, as God gives the tools and the ability, may we be willing to fight, may we be willing to go there, may we be willing to accomplish the plan and purpose for God.

So an army, are you ready to be tested? Are you ready to be put into difficult places as a soldier? Are you ready for boot camp? Are you ready for God to begin to train you? God to be ready for God?

[23 : 57] I think it's David that said, by my hands, he breaks. I forget what it is that he breaks, but God trained David's hands to war, was his testimony.

morning. And David, it's interesting to see David's life. Yes, his intimacy with God, his fellowship with God, in his songs, in his spirit, again, his fellowship with God, his love towards the Lord.

God, but then he was also a fierce man. He was also a warrior. He was also prepared and equipped with great courage, faith, to stand against the enemies of God's people.

And God gave him great victories to be an army, to build the kingdom of God.

The third thing, a vision for the church of God, for the people of God, is a bride. You take each of these aspects, some of them are so very different, but I love to see how scripture talks about these things.

[25 : 31] And I believe that we can accomplish every one of these. And God calls us to each one of these. The tabernacle, an army, a bride.

In Revelations 19, we have this picture. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him. And I love these pictures, these glimpses throughout Revelations. We have obviously very difficult things that are described of the end of the world, of the trial, the tribulation, of the challenges, offenses, of the offenses against God's people, and just the desire of the enemy to overcome.

And at times, it seems like that happens throughout Revelations. But then you get, I love, you go through a difficult chapter, and it's like, wow, that's really hard.

I hope we don't have to live in that time. But then you come to these pictures of the throne of God, and this is one of them, and you see God's glory, and you see the things that are described, again, God's throne, His power, His authority, as just nothing is going to overcome our God, nothing is going to overcome or overthrow who He is.

[27 : 17] and again in the midst of the difficulty and the challenges that we see on the earth, even. But then you come and you see God's throne, you see His place, you see Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and His, He is worthy to open the book.

So here again we have one of these pictures. And the great multitude, the voice of many waters, the thunderings, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come.

Here you have this aspect again of the throne of God. This is something to live for. This is a prize. This is a reward. This is a vision, a goal that we can live for.

The marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed with fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

So you take this idea of a marriage, you take this idea of a wedding, blessing. And I'm trying to grasp what does this mean to Jesus?

[28 : 47] What does this mean to the Lamb? What does this mean to the bridegroom? Other references throughout Scripture talks about the bridegroom.

we have the example of Isaac, Abraham wanting a wife for his son Isaac. And the whole story, Abraham sends his servant to find a woman that is suitable for his son Isaac.

his servant goes, he finds the woman, he brings her back, and she becomes the wife of Isaac.

But again, here we have the marriage of the Lamb. What does this mean to Jesus? What does this mean to the Lamb? And the potential, the possibility for you and I to be a part of this bride, to be a part of this wife that has been made ready.

And then you think of the satisfaction that it brings to Jesus Christ. You think of the reward that he has. For the reward that was set before him, he endured the cross.

[30 : 10] He gave his life. So he, yes, he did it out of love. Yes, he gave his life because he loved us. But it goes beyond just, okay, I do this because I need to, or because God asked me to, or my father.

But he did this because ultimately there's a reward that he gets out of this as well. He gets a wife. He gets a bride. to me there's no greater way to describe relationship, to describe delight, to describe fulfillment that's possible than a relationship like this.

So again, I'm thinking of Christ. What is it that somehow Christ gets this kind of satisfaction, this kind of reward? I go back to the even, what is the purpose of humanity?

Why were we created? Why did God make humanity? And you see this potential that, yes, God is there in eternity.

[31 : 22] No beginning, no end, and the fullness of God is there. God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit.

God the God is not lacking in anything, but yet, to kind of make my point, was there something that God was missing, in a sense?

So He created humanity with the ability to fellowship with Him, with the ability to know Him. Even like you have your friends, and you're able to talk, and to communicate, and to enjoy each other's time and fellowship.

Is that what God was looking for when He created humanity? And here I see the ultimate culmination, the ultimate fulfillment of that relationship, and of that potential for Jesus Christ to have a people, to have a church, to have a bride, that He is delighted in, that He is fulfilled in, that He finds satisfaction in.

Again, you have the potential to be a part of that. The church of God is called to be prepared as a bride, to be prepared as a wife, who is ready for that time.

[32 : 55] So even in our life, our journey here, the things that we go through here today, God is perfecting. I think Paul talks about having espoused the church that he was writing to, being espoused to one, Jesus Christ.

So he had this focus that what he was ministering, what he was bringing to the church, was to prepare the church, to get the church ready, to be for Jesus Christ, to be a delight to him.

The marriage of the lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready. Again, what an opportunity, what a possibility to be a part of that.

And again, God is preparing that today. His spirit is at work in our hearts, in our lives, as we gather together, as we encourage each other, as we minister to each other, as we challenge each other. God is preparing a bride. His spirit is preparing a wife for Jesus Christ. Again, this is the vision that God has before us.

[34 : 22] this is the purpose that God has. I just want to read a few verses to hopefully give us faith.

We see, sometimes we see, we have a vision of something. We see something up there. We see that mountain up there.

We're like, wow, that would be amazing to be able to do that. I think you were in Alaska recently, James, right? And you saw Mount McKinley. You saw that from a broad road.

You saw that from an easy road. You know, some people climb Mount McKinley, but you think, I don't think I'm ready for that. I don't know if I can do that.

I don't know if I can accomplish that. Well, this is where faith comes in. And when we believe in what God can do, when we put our trust in Him, when we have faith, it gives us that motivation.

[35 : 30] Not just what we can do, what we can accomplish, but it puts us in the place where God accomplishes His plan, where God does amazing things.

God works in our lives by faith. Not because I've made myself ready, I've built myself up to be able to climb Mount McKinley, but because of what God's Spirit does, because of His work in our lives. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

By the Holy Spirit, this was Jesus' words, His promise to His disciples, you're going to be prepared, you're going to be equipped, you're going to be given what is necessary to accomplish God's plan, to be witnesses, to carry out even what Jesus had taught them.

When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, again, God's enablement, will not just for you to try to figure out, and for you to try to be good enough, but God's Spirit will come upon you.

[36 : 59] God desires to build up His body, His church. He gives what is necessary. This is an aspect, again, and I trust it can be an encouragement and build our faith.

In Ephesians 4, he gave some apostles, prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. He gives these things. Again, the Spirit of God provides. The Spirit of God works. The Spirit of God is preparing his church, his body.

Here we see it is through some of these gifts. But it is the Spirit of God that is working, that is enabling, and again, his intent, even in these gifts.

And what is your part in? The body of Christ. Again, you take the building that we looked at, and each part of a building is necessary to come together to be a full and functioning building.

[38 : 06] What is your part in that? But again, there's a purpose here. For the equipping of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

God wants to do this. God wants to work in our hearts and our lives. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, from 1 Corinthians 12.

There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. God works all in all. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

Again, the Spirit of God working and enabling and equipping and providing what is necessary. John 14. Again, Jesus' words to His disciples, And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may abide with you forever.

The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

[39 : 21] Again, God dwelling inside us.

God dwelling in the midst of His people. This is when we know this, when we believe this, when we trust that God is here in the midst of His people, God gives what is necessary.

God gives direction. God gives wisdom. God gives understanding. All that we need is found in Him. Our faith can arise when we can say, Yes, God, what you intend to do, I trust that you can do that. What God wants to do in your life, in my life, what God wants to do in His church, God can do that as we believe Him, as we say, Yes, Lord.

Romans 15, Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[40 : 52] Again, lifting up our eyes, saying, What's possible? God, give us the faith. Give us the ability to grasp and to say, Yes, I'm going to walk on this path.

I'm going to attain, I'm going to strive for the prize of the high calling of Jesus Christ. Again, not just because I've exercised enough, I've hiked enough, or I've put in the work.

It takes diligence. Yes, it takes faithfulness. It's step by step. But it is ultimately by the power of God. God fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

So we have three things here. Joy, peace, and believing, or faith. And I love how these aspects all come together. It's not just about, Okay, now we have faith, and now we can run as fast as we can. But there's also joy in this. There's also peace as we walk with God. There's hope, abounding in hope, by the power of His Spirit.

[42 : 09] Again, when God works, when we allow His Spirit to work in our hearts, in our lives, we say, God, come and fill us with the Holy Ghost.

Then we abound in hope because of Him. May God give us faith to believe, to say yes.

God, we will continue to walk after the prize, to press toward the mark. God give us faith.

I'd like to look at Isaiah 62. We're going to go through this chapter. And I'm blessed with so many aspects here in this chapter.

We can take it very much for the church today. It begins for Zion's sake. And in Scripture, we have Zion, we have Jerusalem, and we see God's heart and His passion, His desire for Zion, for Jerusalem.

[43 : 31] We can take this also towards His church. I do believe God God has a heart for the nation of Jerusalem in a practical way today, the nation of Israel, the city of Jerusalem.

But again, even taking the tabernacle and God's intent when He called from Abraham and His descendants to be His people, His special people, it wasn't just to be as a pet, as David Ravenhill says this, but they were called to be a pattern.

And God was, His desire was that not just, okay, here's a limited group of people that He would want to see His purposes fulfilled in, but this was a special people that God wanted to bring His purposes to the whole world through.

So even here, Zion's sake for Jerusalem, I think, is then also applied to the church. And in the New Testament and Revelations, we have some of these same phrases and same words.

And it's very much in connection with His church, with His people. So we can take this also to the people of God, to His church.

[45 : 01] In verse 1, in Isaiah 62, For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace. And for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns.

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory. And thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name. So there's this burning desire here that we begin with.

I will not rest. I will not hold my peace until this happens. Until there is righteousness from the people of God.

Until Zion, until Jerusalem, until the church of God is burning forth with righteousness, with salvation as a testimony of who God is.

righteousness. And then righteousness will be seen. The glory of God will be seen in His people.

[46 : 11] You'll be called by a new name. Verse 3, Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

You see here what God's desire is for His people. A crown of glory, a royal diadem in the hand of God.

It's what you're called to be a part of. It's what God is making, is creating in His people, in His church. I will not hold my peace.

I will not rest until this happens. A crown of glory in the hand of God. Just imagine, what does that look like?

A royal diadem. You have the God of the universe. And for me, I think for many of us, it's easy to understand that God is sovereign, God is omnipotent, God is all these things that we can't even fully describe.

[47 : 19] He's so much more than we can comprehend. He's the God of the universe. He's there on His throne. But do we see our part in fellowship with Him, in relationship with Him, here, to be in His hands, to be a royal diadem, to be useful in the hands of God, to be a testimony, a witness, a picture, even of His glory.

Verse 4, Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, in thy land Beulah.

These are names, these are terms that describe the opposite of forsaken and desolate. For the Lord delights in thee, and thy land shall be married.

For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Again, here we have this picture of this kind of relationship of the bride. but even more than that, a blessed people, a blessed land, where God's delight is on the people and the generations following.

[48 : 44] I take, for as a young man marries a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee. Talking about the generations and sons, and just the blessing and God's desire to bring all of this together, together.

But again, ultimately, as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. Isn't that something?

Isn't that that potential, that possibility to be a part of, to be called to be, to bring this kind of satisfaction to the heart of Jesus Christ, to be a part of His bride, to actually say that God rejoices over you?

God rejoices over His people. He uses this kind of an example. It's an amazing potential, an amazing idea to think about.

God rejoices over thee. verse 6. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night.

[49 : 56] Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, until He make Jerusalem a praise on the earth. Again, this is God's working.

God is doing something. You have a part in it. God calls these watchmen, never hold their peace, day nor night.

Give Him no rest until this is done, until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, until His people are showing forth the glory of God, until He His people are revealing who God is.

Verse 8. The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength, surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine for the which thou hast labored.

But they that have gathered it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness. this was in a time where the nation of Israel were in great difficulty, and they were being overrun, they were being by their enemies, by other nations, who would come in and plunder the things that they had worked hard for, and they were, part of it was the judgment of God, part of it was because they had left God, they had turned their backs to the Lord, and so now they were in this difficult time where their enemies would come in and take things,

think of Gideon, I don't know that this was the exact same time, but we get a picture of what was happening,

[52 : 03] Gideon, when he was called of the Lord, he was fearful because of their enemies, they would come in and they would just take their wheat, they would take their grapes that they had worked hard for, this is what God is saying, it's not going to happen anymore, and it's not just, I find, he says, by his right hand, by the arm of his strength, this is something that God is going to accomplish, God will bring his people to fruitfulness, God will bring his church, his people, again when we walk in his paths, when we walk in that straight way, in that narrow way, I take these verses and God's promise that there will be fruitfulness in that, the enemy's ability to steal, the enemy's ability to take away is going to stop, and God is going to cause his people to be fruitful, to be blessed, verse 10, go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people, cast up, cast up the highway, gather out the stones, and lift up a standard for the people, again here is this call of this preparation, there's work to be done, there's something to prepare for, and again, by God's grace, by God's spirit, by God's work in his people, people like you, like these young men here,

God is calling us to be a part of this, to go up, prepare a way for God's people, to cast up, out of the highway, those stones, again you go up the mountain path, there's a couple times I saw a log up this side, the one place there was just a wide enough, the log had fallen over the road, and somebody was kind enough to take a chainsaw and make a path that we could drive up through there, that log would not have been taken care of, I am not getting to the top of the mountain, do you have a part here, take up the stones, gather out the stumbling blocks, the hindrances for your brothers, for your sisters, prepare a way, yes lift up a standard, it's not just a broad way, it's not just an easy way, it's not just oh whatever you feel like, there is a standard that we can lift up, but there's a way to walk in it, doesn't have to be stumbling blocks, there's a way to walk in it, you can get there, you can accomplish, there is a way to walk in this vision, behold, the Lord has proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the daughter of

Zion, behold, thy salvation cometh, behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him, again, here's this proclamation to the daughter of Zion, you can take this personal this morning, to God's people, to his church, are you a part of the church of God today?

This is for you, he's proclaimed it, behold, your salvation comes, oftentimes we think of salvation as our beginning, the beginning of our journey to walk with the Lord, our commitment, we're saved, but salvation goes beyond, and we're continually brought into a greater place of salvation, your salvation comes, behold, his reward is with him, here's this aspect, here's this, again, this word, this reward, there's a goal in front of us, there's a prize, there's a high calling in front of us, and God is promising it here, proclaim this, say to the daughter of Zion, behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him, God is faithful, people, if we look at who God is, again, it's something to, okay, I understand, God never changes, God is on his throne, he is God, but here becomes closer to us, his reward is with him, for his people, to the daughter of Zion, and then verse 12, and they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and thou shalt be called, sought out, a city not forsaken, a city not forsaken, again in Revelations, we have a picture of a city that God has prepared, and a new Jerusalem, Jerusalem, and it seems like many of these terms, it's not just a place that we go to, and a place that God, we have those pictures, God is preparing a place for us to go to, but there's something even greater than that, we are called to be a part of this new [57 : 48] Jerusalem, we are called to be a part of this city, God is preparing us to be a part of it, and this is what God's desire is, a holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, sought out a city not forsaken, full of the glory of God, a royal diadem in His hand, isn't that amazing, these possibilities, the picture that God gives us for His people, called to be a tabernacle, a dwelling place of God, a building fitly framed together for His dwelling place, called to be an army, to be effective against principalities of this world, to bring light into darkness, to bring liberty to the captives, to be a bride for

Jesus Christ, to be a people that will be a delight to His heart, that He delights in. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice in thee.

That's the opportunity that we have to be a part of His church, to be called His people. So may God continue then to give us the faith, to pursue that, the faith, to walk in that, the trust in Him.

yes, where we're at right now, God is working. God has things in mind, the difficult things that we face.

Sometimes that path gets steep, it gets difficult, but there's a place, there's a goal, there's a prize, there's a high calling that we're called to.

[59 : 46] Hallelujah. Lord, give us that faith this morning. Father, give us that, first of all, this vision, Lord, to be able to see and to comprehend, even in small parts, Lord, to be able to see ahead and say, God, this is what you're after, this is what you're doing, this is what you're looking for.

And God, then give us the faith, the diligence, Lord, yes, the surrender that's necessary to trust in You, to allow You to have Your way in our lives.

Lord, to accomplish, what You're looking to accomplish. Father, we want to come to the end of our lives. We want to say, God, be delighted.

Father, find what You've looked for, what You've created, what You've desired. What You find in Your church, what You find in Your people, God, even in our personal lives, would You find what You have died for?

miracle. And may it be a reward to Your heart, God. Thank You, Jesus. Amen. Jesus. Amen. Jesus.