

Now To Him Who Is Able - Week 4

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¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

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

(Eph 3:14–21)

- Last week – we looked at how He is able to do far more abundantly than we think – especially in our stewardship and joyful generosity
- “according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...”
- What does it mean for Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith?
- How do we experience “Christ in you the hope of glory?”
- How do we “live by faith in Jesus who loves us and gave His life for us?”
- We will resume our series in John in two weeks, but we are looking at this passage from Ephesians together because as we prayerfully make a decision about the future location for our church, we want to do so in unity, wisdom, knowing the reality of Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith, having Biblical framework on joyful stewardship, and understanding God’s purpose for the Church — all of this — for the glory of God.

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

Today — we are looking at these seven words: To him be glory in the church.

What is the church? Who is the church? The Redeemed in Christ

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ

(1 Pe 2:4–5)

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pe 2:9–10)

Why the Church?

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him (Eph 3:7–12).

To proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ — and to make known the manifold wisdom of God. The Church is the “theater” for the display of God's manifold wisdom (Lu 15:10; 1 Co 4:9): “a spectacle (*Greek*, ‘theater’) to angels.”

¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Lk 15:10)

The Church on earth exists to know, love, and glorify Jesus.

The Church reveals the manifold wisdom of God in the heavenly realms. Angels can see. They rejoice before God. He is glorified in heaven and on earth.

If the Church on earth exists to know and love and glorify Jesus – that means that you exist to know and love and glorify Jesus.

Paul's prayer – To Him be glory in the Church – means to Him be glory in the lives of Christ followers on earth.

The visible Church on earth has a very specific purpose.

The Church on earth is God's idea, God's doing – designed by God and structured by God. But what happens when a local church gets it wrong? Jesus has something to say about that in the Revelation to John.

To the Church in Ephesus

² “ I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent

(Re 2:2–5)

Good works, toil, patient endurance, guarding the truth, enduring and not growing weary – but Jesus says, you have abandoned your first love – so remember, repent, and do the works you did at first.

Is Jesus your first love?

To the Church in Smyrna –

Jesus commends them for holding fast in the midst of tribulation, poverty, and slander — and tells them not to fear their future suffering and to be faithful unto death.

⁹ “ I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

(Re 2:9–10).

In the face of future suffering will you be faithful unto death?

To the Church in Pergamum – Jesus commends them for their faithfulness, how they honor the name of Jesus, and how they refuse to deny their faith in Jesus — but He also says that some among them are holding on to false teaching that leads to idolatry and sexual immorality. He says Repent!

To the Church in Thyatira – Jesus commends their works, love, faith, service and patient endurance but He also says they are tolerating Jezebel – a false prophetess leading them into sexual immorality and idolatry. He says, Repent!

Is anyone tolerating false teaching, idolatry, or sexual immorality? Are you willing to live according to the truth of God’s Word and to honor God’s clear design for human sexuality? Can we remember that any sexual activity outside of the covenant of marriage between a man and woman is sin? Can we honor the very good gift of sexual intimacy from God within God’s design?

To the Church in Sardis – “ I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you

(Re 3:1–3)

Do you see the danger of spiritual apathy and complacency?

To the Church in Philadelphia ⁸ “I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

(Re 3:8–11)

Do you see that keeping the word of Jesus – of not denying the name of Jesus and patient endurance matters to Jesus?

To the Church in Laodicea

¹⁵ “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹ The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ ”

(Re 3:15–22)

Laodicea was near two cities – one known for a healing hot spring and another known for fresh cold water, but Laodicea had to bring in water by way of clay pipes across a desert – and some people would literally vomit upon drinking the water in Laodicea. The point Jesus is making is that this church was of no use, self-deceived and self-reliant because of wealth. They were lukewarm and not realizing they were wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Jesus says “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

To God be glory in the Church and in this church.

The visible gathering of Christ followers is meant to glorify God on earth.

The purpose of the Great Commission – to him be glory in the church

The purpose of committing to a local church – to him be glory in the church

The purpose of preaching - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of making disciples of Jesus - to him be glory in the church.

The purpose of praying together - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of keeping God's Word - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of serving others together in Jesus name - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of patient endurance in the face of suffering - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of teaching the next generation - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of baptism - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of communion - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of celebrating the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of gathering to sing songs of praise - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of honoring the name of Jesus - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of joyful generosity with a local church - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of gathering for fellowship - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of our parking lot party this afternoon - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of caring for widows and orphans - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of sexual purity - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of marriage - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of loving one another - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of forgiving one another - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of being kind to one another - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of encouraging one another - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of striving for unity in Christ with one another - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of authentic gospel communities - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of reaching the nations - to him be glory in the church

The purpose of the Church? To him be glory in the church.

