

**6/5/22 “The Wisdom of God Through the Church”
Ephesians 3:10**

I. Introduction

“Give yourself to the Church. You that are members of the Church have not found it perfect and I hope that you feel almost glad that you have not. If I had never joined a Church till I had found one that was perfect, I would never have joined one at all! And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect Church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us... All who have first given themselves to the Lord, should, as speedily as possible, also give themselves to the Lord’s people. How else is there to be a Church on the earth? If it is right for anyone to refrain from membership in the Church, it is right for everyone, and then the testimony for God would be lost to the world!” – Charles Spurgeon, [“The Best Donation,” \(No. 2234\)](#) an exposition of [2 Corinthians 8:5](#) delivered on April 5, 1891 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England.

Let’s read Ephesians 3:10...

Main Idea: According to God’s redemptive plan, He currently makes His wisdom known through the Church. As Christians, we want our perception of and participation in the Church to conform with Christ’s perfect design.

Outline:

- 1) The Setting (Ephesians 1–3)**
- 2) The Significance (10)**
- 3) The Application**

Purpose: My prayer for us as we look to this verse is that God would continue to strengthen us as a church.

- I. The Setting (Ephesians 1–3)**
 - i. Philippians (59 AD); Ephesians (60 AD)**
 - b. The Corporate Greeting (1:1–2)**
 - i. Saints**

1. The word here for saints is Greek word that means “holy ones” “singled out ones” “set apart ones” people who have been dedicated or consecrated to the service of God.
2. In New Testament, the word often used for church is *ekklēsia*, a term meaning “those who are called out.”
3. The English word *church* comes from a Greek word that means “those who belong to the Lord.”
4. The church is not the physical building where Christians meet, or a religious organization. The church is the gathering of the redeemed—those who have been called by God the Father to salvation and given to Christ (John 6:37; 10:29; 17:6, 9, 24).

ii. Faithful

1. This word is a reference to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The church is made up of people who have believed in Jesus Christ for eternal life (Acts 4:32).

c. The Shared Blessings (1:3–14)

- i. Chosen
- ii. Adoption
- iii. Redemption
- iv. Forgiveness
- v. Wisdom and Insight
- vi. God’s Inheritance
- vii. Sealed with the Spirit

d. The Plural Prayer (1:15–23)

- i. Knowledge
- ii. Hope (18)
- iii. Calling (18)
- iv. Source of Power and Strength (19)
- v. Mutual Authority (Head, Lord, Savior) (22)
 1. We submit to Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church. He is our Master, Lord, and King (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18).
 2. He rules over His Church by His Word. God’s Word is ultimate standard of what we believe, what we teach, and how we live. (cf. Gal. 6:2; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:20–21).
 3. The glory of Christ is our greatest goal (cf. 2 Cor. 5:9).

e. Our Conversion (2:1–10)

i. Past (1–3)

1. “Dead in our trespasses and sins”
2. “Walked according to the course of this world”
3. Dominated by “the prince of the power of the air”
4. Disobedient and “living in the lust of our flesh”
5. “and were by nature children of wrath”

ii. Salvation

1. Mercy (4)
2. Love (4)
3. Regeneration (5)
4. Grace (5)
5. Common Craftsmanship and Deeds (10)
 - a. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”
 - b. By both word and deed we are to advance the gospel to all the nations (Luke 24:47).

f. Reconciliation (2:11–22)

- i. Shared Christ (13)
- ii. Reconciled to God – Nearness (13)
- iii. Reconciled to One Another (14–16)
- iv. Same Household (19)
- v. Collectively are the dwelling place of God through Spirit (21–22)

g. Common Ministry (3:1–13)

- i. Common Gospel**
- ii. Common Suffering**
 1. Gospel is worth Suffering for

II. The Significance (10)

¹⁰so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

This verse is a powerful declaration of God’s purpose for the church. It is through the church that God’s manifold wisdom is made known. Notice the phrase “So that.” Paul has been explaining the benefits and characteristics of the church. And here, at the apex of the first half of Ephesians, we see “So that.” So what? This is a

purpose clause. It shows that everything he has been writing has been built up to this moment.

The word “manifold” means “multifaceted” it’s a compound word used to stress the depth and profoundness of God’s wisdom seen through the church. No one could have figured out how God would unfold His plan of redemption. No one could have known that He would form the church, and through the church, He would continue to advance His redemptive purposes.

This wisdom is made known to the world, but look at the verse it says, “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” This is a reference to fallen angelic beings. The church doesn’t just have significance for the world. God has chosen to put His wisdom on display through the church to the spiritual realm.

Question: But how is God’s manifold wisdom made known through the church?

i. The Existence of the Church Proclaims Christ’s Unforeseen Victory

Luke 22:3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.

John 13:2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

John 13:27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”

“The hostile powers had sought to frustrate the work of God, and believed they had succeeded when they conspired against Christ and brought about his Crucifixion. But unwittingly they had been mere instruments in God’s hands. The death of Christ had been the very means He had devised for the accomplishment of His plan. So it is here declared that the hostile powers, after their brief apparent triumph, had now become aware of a divine wisdom they had never dreamed of. They saw the

Church arising as the result of Christ's death and giving effect to what they could now perceive to have been the hidden purpose of God."¹ – E.F. Scott

Throughout history, the church has suffered persecution and often intense persecution. It has suffered from those external threats, but the church has also suffered from the internal threats of false teaching. The true church can never be defeated or destroyed despite all of this. Jesus said that he would build His church and that the gates of hades would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Though the circumstances around us may seem hopeless or impossible, we need to realize that Christ promises the church will not fail. Jesus pronounced His victory over sin, death, Satan, and demons at the cross. And according to His perfect plan, He displays His wisdom and victory through the church until He returns. Our gatherings on Sunday morning mean something. They declare that our King has won, and it makes this known to all creation, even in the spiritual realm.

ii. The Church Displays God's Wisdom in Reversing the Effects of the Fall

Question: How does God save and transform a fallen, sinful, and rebellious people?

Answer: By regenerating their heart (Eph 2:1–10) and sealing them with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13).

These two components are a part of the New Covenant recorded in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36–37. There God says He will make a New Covenant with Israel, that they will be given a new heart, that He will write His law on their heart, and that He will pour a new Spirit within them and dwell with them. The New Covenant is the promise of a renewed humanity.

We need to understand that the Fall corrupted humanity. It made us spiritually dead. It gave us a sinful nature. It turned our hearts to stone. Something had to be done for us to be made right with God. How can a holy God dwell with sinful men? The gospel.

¹ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 197.

The church is the first fruit of redemption. We are the preview of the life to come. The more we are set apart and walk in the righteousness of Christ, the more the wisdom of God is displayed through the church. This means that our individual and corporate holiness matters—our individual and corporate conformity to Christ matters.

This is incredible! We can't take this for granted. We have been called to such a high and glorious calling in Christ. That is why Paul says in the second half of Ephesians, "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." (Eph 4:1)

You might be sitting there and thinking to yourself, "Hey... wait a minute Adrian, you just said that the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah and Ezekiel was for Israel. Last time I checked, I wasn't an ethnic Jew."

That leads us to my last incredible implication...

iii. The Church Displays the Wisdom and Mercy of God Towards Gentiles

Question: How does God put His immense wisdom and mercy on display?

Answer: By saving pagan Gentiles who never sought Him in the first place.

The church exists to display the wisdom and mercy of God in this age. It does so because it is comprised of both Jew and Gentile. Two groups who were once violently hostile towards one another are now reconciled and unified in Christ. In this way, the gospel is the only true unifier of humanity. The gospel transcends all ethnic, language, cultural, political, socio-economical, and other man-made barriers. Jesus is the only One who can unite people, and He does so by the power of His Spirit through the gospel. And the church is the evidence of that.

The church provides a visible display of the mercy and wisdom of God to Gentiles, but it also displays it through proclamation. We proclaim the only message that can save and reconcile sinners from every ethnic background. The gospel is the only message that rescues people from the domain of darkness and ushers them into the kingdom of God.

In these three ways, the wisdom of God is made known through the church. It makes this known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places and the watching world. When people see the victory of Christ, the renewed humanity, and the mercy of God through the church, it is a powerful testimony.

III. The Application

In Scripture we see a picture of the early church and some of the ways that it sought to walk in a manner worthy of their calling.

1) Be Committed to Christ

We see that the early church was “devoted” to Christ. The word has the idea of faithful, enduring, persevering, courageous commitment. Amid hostility, rejection, and persecution, the church displayed a bold love for the Lord Jesus and one another.

And so, as the world around us continues to increase in opposition to Christ and His Church, seek the Lord for the grace you need to remain committed to Him.

2) Be Committed to Scripture

The picture of the church in Scripture is that they were committed to Scripture. The Holy Spirit renews our minds through the Scripture and produces spiritual growth. Paul says in Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

If we neglect the private reading and study of Scripture, we will become spiritually weak. In turn, we will lack discernment, be more prone to fall to temptation, and be ill-equipped to minister the Word to others. So read, study, meditate on and memorize Scripture.

You can do this privately and corporately. I know most Bible studies have taken a break for the summer, but when they come back in the Fall, join the women’s or men’s Bible study and be committed to the Scripture.

3) Be Committed to the Fellowship

The term “fellowship” (Gk. *koinōnia*) refers to “sharing” or “partnership.” Every believer has a permanent fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ through faith in Him. This produces a fellowship with one another. We demonstrate this fellowship through a loving commitment to serve other believers and encourage them to love and good deeds.

A person also demonstrates this fellowship by being an active member of the local church. In the local church context, we can live out the one-another commands our Lord has given us. A list of those commands includes the following:

1. Love one another (Rom. 12:10; 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11–12; 2 John 5).
2. Live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16; 15:5; cf. Gal. 5:26; 1 Thess. 5:13).
3. Welcome one another (Rom. 15:7; cf. Rom. 16:16).
4. Admonish one another (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16).
5. Care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25).
6. Serve one another (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:10).
7. Bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2).
8. Be patient with one another (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13).
9. Be kind to one another (Eph. 4:32).
10. Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
11. Sing praises with one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
12. Regard one another as more important than oneself (Phil. 2:3).
13. Speak truth to one another (Col. 3:9).
14. Encourage one another (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:25).
15. Seek good for one another (1 Thess. 5:15).
16. Stir up one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24; cf. 1 Tim. 6:17–18).
17. Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16).
18. Pray for one another (James 5:16).
19. Be hospitable to one another (1 Pet. 4:9).
20. Be humble toward one another (1 Pet. 5:5).²

² John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 752.

As these commands indicate, the Christian life is not to be lived in isolation but constant communion with Christ and His people. If you aren't a member of a local church, I encourage you to become a member and be active in the life of the body. And this isn't a membership promotion for Cornerstone. I hope that wherever God has planted you, that you would find a biblical, faithful, healthy local church and become an active member there. Brothers and sisters, we must cultivate a love for the local church and encourage others to do the same.

4) Be Committed to Prayer

The early church recognized the need for God's wisdom and grace. The believers in the book of Acts were characterized by a persistent commitment to pray privately and corporately. This should still mark the church today. God is honored, and the church is blessed when believers rely on God's providential care and power. Spiritual deficiency and apathy will result when churches fail to draw near to the Lord through prayer.

I encourage you to set aside time each day and each week for personal prayer and prayer for one another. The Church office regularly sends out prayer requests through the prayer chain email. When you see those come through, pray for your brothers and sisters. In addition to that, pray for the elders and pastors. Look to Ephesians 1 and 3 and pray those prayers for Cornerstone as a whole. Take advantage of the prayer of others and let us know through the connect cards or by contacting the office with any prayer needs you have. Also, pray with one another whenever you have a chance.

5) Be Committed to God's Glory

God is zealous for His glory. As the church, we should be passionate about His glory. We do this by loving Him and walking in obedience to His Word in all things.

Another meaningful way the church glorifies God is through worship and praise. Whenever the church gathers, we get the privilege of worshiping God through corporate praise. True worship encompasses exalting Christ from the heart. We get to do this every time we gather together and sing.

Think about it. From the moment of our salvation, a song begins in our heart, a song of love, worship, and praise, which will continue into eternity. In our Sunday morning gatherings and any other place we sing corporately, that song is lifted again. Although the song will go into eternity, the church is the one setting on earth where Christ's name is truly and genuinely exalted.

Sunday morning gatherings matter. We are the visible testimony of Christ's glory, honor, and worth. We should never use words like optional, unnecessary, inconvenient, or non-essential to describe the church. Instead, we should say church gatherings are necessary, glorious, a privilege, delight, and joy.

6) Be Committed to Sharing the Gospel

A passion characterized the early church to preach the gospel and make disciples. As believers, we understand the hope of eternal salvation. We know the reality of God's coming judgment. We should be eager to proclaim the good news of salvation.

Continue to pray for faithfulness in this area. Continue to share the gospel with those whom God puts in your path. Continue to take hold of opportunities to share the gospel through evangelism and outreach events. Let us be a church that is faithful in proclaiming the gospel.

IV. Conclusion

a. A Pastoral Plea

- i. Ephesians 5:25** "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"

"Nothing in the world is dearer to God's heart than his church; therefore, being his, let us also belong to it, that by our prayers, our gifts, and our labours, we may support and strengthen it. If those who are Christ's refrained, even for a generation, from numbering themselves with his people, there would be no visible church, no ordinances maintained, and, I fear, very little preaching of the gospel." Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Best Donation," sermon no. 2234, preached April 5, 1891, in *The*

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Containing Sermons Preached and Revised
(Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim, 1975), 37:633, 635.³

Your presence and participation in the church matters, because the glory of God matters.

³ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017).