

Sermon Reflections

The Mission of the Church (Ephesians - selected)

Summary: God designs to accomplish His mission in the world through faithful local churches. Engage God's mission by entering into the local church's mission.

The Mission of the Local Church

1. Let's Exalt Christ's Name Together (Eph 1:6, 12, 14; 2:7; 3:21)

- Eph 1:6, 12, and 14 state that God is praised through our election, salvation, and future glorification. How do you define praise? How is praise related to worship? What are examples of the wrong places to which our culture directs worship? How can we guard ourselves against similar idolatry, both toward things in the world and also in the church?
- In Eph 3:21 Paul wishes for God to be glorified in the church. The commands in the New Testament are in general addressed to the local expressions of the body of Christ; as such, we do not see the New Testament portraying "solo Christians" who are not involved extensively with a local body of believers. In what ways does our local church body (GBC) either provide us forums for ministry or equip us to reach outside of GBC to evangelize and minister? How can we ensure our service for Christ is firmly connected to this local group of believers? What are specific advantages to ministering within the church, or based on the church's equipping?

2. Let's Edify the Church Together (Eph 4:1–16)

- Eph 4:15 and Col 1:28 task the church with maturing believers after the model of Christ. How is the church to carry out this task? What are the specific tools the church can use to complete this task? What does the end goal (maturity in Christ) look like when complete?
- Eph 4:16 indicates that the church is building itself up properly when the members are involved with one another in love. What will loving involvement with one another look like? How can you find someone else to build up? What will you do to build them up? How can you self-consciously cultivate a mindset of always looking for how you can build up fellow believers, both in one-off and systematic fashions, as best fits given situations?

3. Let's Evangelize the World Together (Eph 6:19–20)

- Each of us has a measure of gifting in ability to be a "gospel-teller," and also to be a "gospel-connector." How do you ensure that you are doing some of each, as particular needs arise, while also using your gifts to their best ability? Eph 6:18 and 2 Cor 5:20 state at least two aspects of our gospel work — what are they and why are they important?
- How can you ensure your evangelism, discipleship, etc., is church-centric instead of individual-centric, and yet without communicating that the person is just "filling a slot" in your church program (i.e., that you care for them as an individual)? How can you have brothers or sisters help hold you accountable so that you are supporting Christ's mission for the church instead of your own agenda?

"The Church is the mirror that reflects the whole effulgence of the Divine character. It is the grand scene, in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe." — Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*