***Jesus Will Build A Glorious Church (Eph. 5:27), Part 2***

1. overview
   1. "We can't solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." Albert Einstein
   2. The Father determined in the eternal counsels that the church would partake of three powerful dynamics. These components are further developed throughout the book of Ephesians. Chs. 1-3 show us the destiny and glory of the church. Chs. 4-6 show us the implications of God’s grace.
   3. **Holy** – set apart to be His people possessing the beauty of God (Ps. 90:17; Isa. 61:3; Rev. 4:4)
   4. **Without blame** – animosity, hostility, and blame towards God and one another removed (Rom. 8:1; Col. 2:15; Rev. 12:10; Gen. 3:10-15)
   5. **Before Him in love** – 1st and 2nd commandment (Matt. 22:37-40)

“… ***the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.***” ***Eph. 1:22-23***

* 1. It is the Father’s plan for the church to be the full expression of His personality, power, and purpose. What God wants us to become cannot be accomplished by the work of the flesh and our own strength.

“***Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God***…” ***2 Cor. 3:5***

* 1. The fellowship of the brethren ***(that they may all be one)*** that God desires can only be accomplished through fellowship and cooperation with the Spirit.

“***Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***” ***Eph. 4:30***

* 1. Paul gives four basic commandments regarding our response to the Spirit’s leadership: to be filled (Eph. 5:18), to walk (Gal. 5:16), to not grieve (Eph. 4:30), and not quench (1 Thess. 5:19-20) the Holy Spirit.
  2. **Grieving the Spirit** – Eph. 4:30: Paul exhorts the church to not grieve the Holy Spirit which is the hindering of the Holy Spirit’s leadership in working love and unity in the community of God.

***Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus****..****.” Rom. 15:5***

* 1. The Sermon on the Mount is the clearest prescription of what Christian community is to reflect. According to Jn. 17:21, the community of Jesus in the earth is to reflect the relationship dynamic of the Trinity. This requires the work of the Holy Spirit.
  2. It is therefore essential for pastoral ministry to primarily gain their insight and cues from the Word as there are many flesh-based definitions of how our needs and desires can be fulfilled.

1. community– relating with one another in christ

***“According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation*** *(Mt. 16:18)* ***other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:10-11***

* 1. “We all must live in two spheres - in society and in privacy. To survive in society, we must thrive in privacy.” Abraham Heschel
  2. Fellowship - Our fellowship with the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of the brethren are two sides of the same coin. It is therefore essential that we not put interacting with God, privately and corporately, opposite to our interaction with one another in friendship.
  3. The community that God desires is only as strong as the inner-life of the soul of that community.

***“… what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” 1 Jn. 1:3***

* 1. Fellowship begins with our interaction with the Trinity. There is significant impact that awaits us when our communion becomes Trinitarian because it brings us into the “divine romance” of the Father and the Son. In doing so communion causes us to get our eyes off of ourselves, get lost in the divine fellowship and empowered to give ourselves to one another in love.

***“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” Matt 16:18***

* 1. The church is built upon not only the doctrinal and conceptual truth of Jesus Christ but on our dynamic understanding of Christ that comes from the Word and our interaction with the Father by the Holy Spirit.
  2. **The modern culture of subjectivity has long since been in danger of turning into a culture of narcissism, which makes the self its own prisoner and supplies it merely with self-repetitions and self-confirmations**. **It is therefore time for Christian theology to break out of this prison of narcissism, and for it to present its doctrine of faith as one of the all-embracing history of God***.* This does not mean falling back into objectivistic orthodoxy. What it does mean is that experience of the self has to be integrated into the experience of God, and the experience of God has to be integrated into the Trinitarian history of God with the world*.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and*** ﻿﻿***the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. 2 Cor. 13:14 (NKJV)***

* 1. The reality of the Trinity has powerful contemplative value. We’ve been invited to participate in the eternal fellowship and communion of the Godhead.

1. Ephesians: the glory of the church

***“… just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love...” Eph. 1:4***

* 1. God has determined from before the ages that He would have a people who would be voluntary lovers, holy (set apart and beautified), and blameless (intimacy without shame and without animosity between them and God and among one another). Holiness, in essence, is love for God and one another.

***“…and raised us up with Him*** *(Jesus)****, and seated us with Him*** *(Father)* ***in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*** *(privilege, access, authority)****…” Eph. 2:6***

* 1. Though we were formerly enemies as children of wrath, God’s eternal decree insists on our glory and destiny. Those who were once His enemies but are now highly exalted adorn the court of heaven.
  2. When these truths touch us we view God, others, even our enemies and ourselves differently.

***“… in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Eph. 2:22***

* 1. Former enemies of God have now become the place where God’s glory will dwell, and from where He will express His fullness throughout all of eternity.

***“… so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.” Eph. 3:10***

* 1. Powers and principalities (good and evil) gain insight into the plan of God by the way we relate with one another.

***“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name…” Eph. 3:14-15***

* 1. The church is an international family of affection on earth and in heaven.

***“…to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Eph. 3:21***

* 1. God’s glory will share in the same glory of Christ Jesus and in partnership with Him display it through all the ages forever.

***“This mystery*** *(Bride of Christ)* ***is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.” Eph. 5:32***

* 1. The church is the glorious Bride of Christ destined to be equally yoked and reign with Jesus forever.
  2. In the building of community it is essential that we ask the Father for insight into these truths. The prayers of the apostles, such as Eph. 1:17-19, are designed with this in mind.

1. conflict with the flesh: the challenge of community

***For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Gal 5:13***

* 1. We are free to love. The purpose of our emancipation in Christ is so we can love God and love one another.

***Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Ex. 7:16***

* 1. In light of our glorious emancipation in the gospel, Paul calls believers to resist sin by not letting sin run it’s course in our lives and by not making ourselves available to sin (through word and deed).

***12 “Therefore do not let sin reign*** *(let it run its course)* ***in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts …” Rom. 6:12***

* 1. In Christ we now are free to obey God by presenting ourselves alive, ready to respond to Him through His power to obey His commandments to love.
  2. ***“I did it my way.”*** ***Frank Sinatra.*** This sums up the perspective of the flesh in relation to God. The flesh can be referred to as the exalted-self. It is the internal urge to be self-consumed, self-absorbed, self-important, and self-sufficient.
  3. “The flesh is the ego which feels an emptiness and uses the resources in its own power to try to fill it. Flesh is the ‘I’ who tries to satisfy me with anything but God's mercy.”[[2]](#footnote-2) John Piper

***For*** *(because)* ***the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Gal. 5:14***

* 1. Giving opportunity to the flesh is the greatest hindrance to growing in community. The most

neglected works of the flesh are our internal attitudes and dispositions, i.e. anger, envy, speech.

***But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another***. ***Gal. 5:15***

* 1. Paul’s answer to this dilemma is to call the church to walk with the Spirit, which we do by fellowshipping with the Spirit and submitting to His leading towards righteousness.

***He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Ps. 23:3***

* 1. The primary Pauline definition of the Spirit’s leading is the Spirit bringing us into His war

against the flesh.

***For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. Gal 5:17***

1. The Trinity and the Kingdom by Jurgen Moltmann pg. 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The War Within: Flesh Vs. Spirit by John Piper http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/the-war-within-flesh-vs-spirit [↑](#footnote-ref-2)