

**WCCC 1989**

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**God's Eternal Purpose (2)**

*Ephesians 3:1 – 12 For this reason I Paul, prisoner of the Christ Jesus for you nations, (if indeed you have heard of the administration of the grace of God which has been given to me towards you, that by revelation the mystery has been made known to me, (according as I have written before briefly, by which, in reading it, you can understand my intelligence in the mystery of the Christ,) which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it now has been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the power of the Spirit, that they who are of the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings; of which I am become minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, according to the working of his power. To me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ, and to enlighten all with the knowledge of what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things, in order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access in confidence by the faith of him.*

Please pay attention to verse 11 'according to the purpose of the ages, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord'. That is the eternal purpose that God has purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us bow our heads and pray.

Our God and our Father, we come before You with our hearts full of praise. Your will is so wonderful. We thank You Lord because You have already set Your Son to be the head of all things. Open our eyes so we will receive Your Son to be our head. We thank You because the will that You have ordained in Your Son is so perfect which is that we can be saved in Your Son and because of Your Son we can obtain sonship and that we can be the bride and helper of Your Son. We prostrate before You and worship You because of Your wonderful eternal will. We want to place the time this morning in Your hand. May Your Spirit enlighten Your words so that we can truly see Your glorious purpose in our hearts. Draw us so that we can partake of Your purpose. Please listen to our prayer. In the name of our Lord, Jesus. Amen.

Yesterday morning we shared on the eternal purpose of God which He has purposed in Himself. Before the creation, God in Himself and according to His own pleasure has predestined an eternal purpose (will). And that will is His own Son. He purposed to have His beloved Son to be the head of all things. And He wants all things in heaven and on earth to be summed up in His Son. He wants His Son to be the head of all things. And this will is truly a good will. And this will is a perfect will. This will is indeed an acceptable will. Today we need to let Him to be the head in each of us because God has established His Son to be the head of all things. And we need to put Him first to be the head of the church. Today we need to know the Son of God because the eternal purpose of God is focused on His beloved Son.

We remember Paul in Philippians 3 told us that since he met our Lord on the way to Damascus, he has considered all things to be dung and has considered the knowing of Christ Jesus as excellent. From that point on he only had one passion and that was to know Christ because Christ is God's eternal purpose. If we know Christ, then we can know that glorious eternal purpose of God. Paul said, I have to know Christ. I want to know the power of His resurrection. I want to fellowship in His sufferings. I want to conform to His death, that maybe I can gain the resurrection'. Of course, that resurrection does not mean the common resurrection. The original language is the surpassing resurrection which is what the bible called the first resurrection. Brothers and sisters since the eternal purpose of God is His beloved Son, we should use our days on earth to pursue to know the Son of God. Nothing is more important than this. We must know the Son of God.

This morning we want to go a step further. Yesterday we shared on the eternal purpose which God has purposed in Himself. Today we will share on that eternal purpose that God has purposed in His Son Jesus Christ. There is a slight difference between the two even though they are very closely related. In the first chapter of Ephesians we see that God before the creation has purposed in Himself that good will. Of course in God Himself there is only His beloved Son. So the eternal will that He purposed concerns His beloved Son and that is, His Son shall have pre-eminence in all things. We see in Ephesians 3 that God destined a purpose in Christ. This purpose is destined in Christ Jesus. What is this eternal purpose that God destined in Christ? It is the church. Brothers and sisters, so you see in the bible, for example in Colossians 2:2, it said that God's mystery is Christ. God has a mystery. The word mystery does not mean it is mystic. This mystery means there is a secret in God. And there is a need for revelation to know this secret. If this secret has not been revealed, it will be only in God and no one will know this secret. What is this secret in God? The secret in God is Christ. And this is told to us in Colossians 2:2. In Ephesians 3:4, Paul said if you read it, you will understand my understanding of the mystery of 'the Christ'. Here it tells us about the mystery of the Christ. Colossians 2 said the mystery of God. The mystery of God is Christ. In Ephesians 3:4, it said the mystery of Christ. In the original language Paul said in reading it, you will see

that I truly understand the mystery of the Christ. Before the word 'Christ' there is an article. Sometimes in the bible it said Christ. And sometimes it added on an article 'the Christ'. Those who know the original language told us there is a difference in these two. There is a difference between 'Christ' and 'the Christ'. The Holy Spirit is very accurate in using words. There is a meaning to whether there is an article or no article before a word. What does Christ refer to? Christ refers to Christ as an individual. What does 'the Christ' refer to? The Christ refers to the corporate Christ. Christ refers to Christ as an individual. The Christ refers to the relationship between Christ and the church. He is the head of the church. The church is His body. So it is called 'the Christ'. In the original language, the difference is clearly defined. But brothers and sisters, please be careful, although there is a difference between Christ and the Christ, yet you can never separate Christ and the Christ because the Christ is the corporate expression of Christ. Christ is Himself; the Christ is Christ among us. And that still is Christ Himself. Paul here tells us that He knew in depth the mystery of the Christ. In other words, He knew what the church is. We know that the church is another mystery.

Maybe today among brothers and sisters, the concept of the church is a common thing. We think we all know what the church is. When we walk into a town and we see a tall building with a cross – the church has a particular style – and we say this is the church. We always see this kind of churches. But in reality, the church is the mystery of the Christ. I hope that the Lord can open our eyes to truly see that the church in fact is the mystery of the Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:12 it lets us see the same thing. It said just as the body is one, but it has many members. Even though there are many members, yet there is only one body. And so also is Christ. In the original language, it said and so also is the Christ. I do not know whether brothers and sisters think it is heresy when you come across 1 Corinthians 12:12. 'For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, and so also is the Christ'. You will say how can you put it that way? We can only say 'and so also is the church' because the church is one body but many members. Every believer is a member. Although we as members are many, yet we are still one body. This clearly is the church. How can you say so also is Christ? But the Holy Spirit knows what He is talking about. He is referring to the Christ. And that is the relationship between Christ and the church. And so here it really is talking about the church. Although it is talking about the church, yet He is using the Christ to represent the church because the church is the Christ. If the church is not the Christ, then that is not the church. Dear brothers and sisters, I hope you are clear about this point. The purpose that God has purposed in Christ is the church.

We see a phrase 'in Christ' in the Book of Ephesians. And our brother has already mentioned about this point. Anyone who reads Ephesians cannot help but notices this phrase because this phrase has shown up many times in the Book of Ephesians. There may be nine times or more. Sometimes it uses the

words 'in Him'. And here it leads us to see that God has put all His fullness in Christ. And we are made perfect in Him. All things are in Christ. Outside of Christ, there is nothing. Outside of Christ, there is no you or me. Outside of Christ there is no church. We see that all things are in Christ. And God purposed in Christ a good will. And this good will is purposed in Christ. Please remember that this good will is not purposed in you or in me. Do not think that God purposed His will according to you or to me. The good will that God has purposed is according to Christ. And what has He prepared in Christ? He said He is going to prepare a bride for His Son. He has given all things to His Son. But He is still not satisfied. And He is going to do a greater thing for His Son. Although all things belong to His Son; although His Son has all things; and all things declare His glory, yet He still feels that is not enough. Therefore, He said He needs to prepare a bride for His Son; a suitable bride who can unite with Him and can be His good helpmate. And because of these reasons, God purposed a will in Christ. He will give the church to His Son to be His bride and helper. And when did God destine this will? This will was predestined before the foundation of the world. Even though this will has been predestined, yet it is a mystery because this will was hidden in the heart of God Himself.

No one knew about this matter throughout the ages. Our God is very good in keeping secrets. You see over the ages, no one knew. Even though this was so, yet throughout the ages, oftentimes God has revealed a little something of His will. You know if you have a precious secret in your heart, even though the time has not yet come, sometimes you cannot help but reveal a little about the secret. But even after you revealed a little about the secret, the people listening still do not understand. And this is just the same as the secret that God has in Christ. For instance, in the creation of Adam and Eve, God had already revealed some of this secret. God said, 'it is not good for man to be alone. I want to prepare a wife and helper for him'. We see that after Adam was created, he was by himself. He did not have a wife or a helper. God brought all the different animals He created before Adam. And Adam gave a name to each of the animals. Adam had to be a genius zoologist. He did not need to go to school. He was the first man to give the names to every animal. But I believe that God's purpose of bringing the animals before Adam was not just to name them. I believe that God had a deeper purpose when He brought all the animals before Adam. Adam saw all the animals; some were small like worms; some were big like elephants; some were like orangutans and some were like crocodiles. God brought all the different kinds of animals before Adam. But Adam could not find himself in any one of the animals. He felt that none of the animals could be a match for him. And he could not find his helper in any of these animals. One after another, he thought to himself that he could rule over them, but none could be his wife because none was like him. So God ushered them away from Adam and this is the law of elimination. Each animal was eliminated. That is to say, among all God's creation, Adam could not find a wife. God said, 'now I will make a wife for you'. Maybe if Adam found a monkey and he was satisfied, then it would be disastrous. Thank God each was eliminated. Then Adam could receive what God had

prepared for him. We know that God put Adam into a deep sleep. And out of his side, God took one thing. Today we said it was a rib. But in the original language it was just one thing. I do not know whether in men is missing a rib or not. The bible only said one thing was taken out. And from this thing out of man, God built a woman. Then God woke Adam up and God brought this woman before Adam. Adam saw and said, 'this is me – the flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. This is me and I will call her woman'. In Hebrew man is called ish and woman meish. 'This is me and this is my wife'. And she became his helper. If we have knowledge of the New Testament, we all know that Adam is the first man. And he is the type of the second man, Christ. Eve is the first woman. And she is the type of the second woman, the church. It seemed that God could not contain the secret in Him. Once again God tried to reveal a little more of the secret. For example, in Genesis 24, Abraham knew that his son, Isaac, was almost forty years old and was still without a wife. So he sent his old servant back to his old country to find a wife for Isaac. And the old servant found Rebecca. In that chapter we can see God's amazing work. Abraham represented God the Father. Isaac represented God the Son. And the old servant represented the Holy Spirit. You see that God has a mind for His Son. The Son did not reveal His own wish. The Father, because of His love for His Son, He wanted to prepare a wife for Him. I think today is the same. Many young people do not want to marry. They want to delay marriage. Isaac was already forty years old and still was not married. The father was anxious for him. But the Holy Spirit was working. We see that God in His sovereignty made all the preparations. It was not the work of men. It was the Holy Spirit arranging the situations and brought Rebecca to Isaac. And this of course is a type of Christ and the church. At that time, neither Isaac nor Rebecca knew about the arrangement. We can find many other examples in the Old Testament.

In New Testament times, the bible tells us in the fullness of time, Christ came to this world. He was born of woman, born under law so as to redeem us who are under the law to be out of the law so we can gain the sonship. Because we are of the flesh, our Lord took on a carnal body. He wanted to unite with us. He became a man. And because of this, He could substitute for us. He became our substitute on the cross. God truly bruised Him. And blood and water flowed out of His side. And God used the blood and water that flowed out of His side to build a church. And this is what our Lord referred to when He said, 'I will build my church upon this rock'. The Lord is that rock. The church is built upon Him. The precious blood that flowed out of Him cleanses our sins. The water that flowed out of Him represented His life. And this life was given to us. And because of this reason, we can unite with Him. And God offers us to His Son to be His bride and His helper.

Brothers and sisters, we thank and praise God because the mystery that God has in His Son throughout the ages has now been manifested. In Ephesians 3, Paul told us that now through the prophets and the apostles, the mystery has been revealed. There is no excuse if we still do not know this today because this

has been revealed. Brothers and sisters, the center of God's heart is Christ. But the church is in union with Christ. Thus in God's eternal purpose, the church also has an important place. Today we all know that we have to pursue to know Christ because Christ is the eternal purpose of God. But do we know that today we also need to pursue to know the church, because the church also has an important position in the eternal purpose of God?

I feel that among God's children, especially with those who pursue our Lord, we know we need to pursue to know the Lord. This is the most accurate. But when we are pursuing our Lord, we can easily fall into one-sidedness. And what is this one-sidedness? It is when we pursue the Lord; we emphasize our pursuit to know Christ individually and our individual experience of Christ. Of course, this is important. But when we were individually pursuing the Lord this way, what will be the result of our pursuit of the Lord? Is the result leading us to be a great spiritual person? Do we have this secret desire in us? We thought if we pursue the Lord this way, it will be nice if one day we can be like madam Guyon. Because our pursuit is entirely on an individual pursuit, then the pursuit will emphasize on just being a great spiritual person. If we read God's words, we know that the eternal purpose that God has destined in Christ is not about spiritual giants. It is not about an arm being bigger than the others. If you have been to the Vatican in Rome, you know that in a painting of Michelangelo on the ceiling, an arm of the person in the painting is especially big. It has a very strange shape. If only what God wants is a big arm, or a big leg. One time I went to dinner at a friend's house. The daughter of this friend is an artist. When I was having dinner, I looked up and saw a painting hanging on the wall. There was a table in the painting. On the table there were fruits and other kinds of food. These are good. But in the middle, there was a hand sticking out. I asked my friend the meaning of this painting. He said when his daughter was painting this painting, she thought there was something lacking and so she painted a hand there. What if you are eating and suddenly a hand appeared from the table, then you would not want to eat at all. Brothers and sisters, what God in eternity purposed in His Son is not some spiritual giants. It is not a single arm or a single leg. What God wants is a body. What God wants are all different members of the body being built up and fitted together. He does not want strange development, but rather normal growth within the body, full of the stature of Christ. This is what God has purposed in Christ in eternity. Brothers and sisters, we cannot only emphasize on how spiritual we are as an individual. We need to emphasize on all brothers and sisters being built up together. Sometimes if you grow faster than brothers and sisters, you need to slow down for their sake. You see Caleb and Joshua could have entered into Canaan thirty-eight years ago. But they were willing to wander in the desert with the Israelites for thirty-eight years, so that they could enter into Canaan with the next generation of the Israelites. Brothers and sisters, what God wants in Christ is the church. It is not just you or me. Of course, you and my spiritual conditions are closely related with the church. If each of us is not spiritual, how can the church be spiritual? But our spiritual pursuit should not be for ourselves. It should be for the church

and especially for our Lord. So I hope brothers and sisters would not take the church lightly because in God's heart, the church is very important. If Christ cannot gain His church, then our Lord will be so lonely. If He cannot gain the church, then He does not have His helper. The bible shows us clearly that in the eternal purpose of God, the church has a very important position.

Today's problem is here: do you know the church? How do we know the church? Today if we look around at the current situation, we can never know the church. If we look back to find the church in the past history, we also will not be able to accurately know the church. We need to go back to eternity past to know the church. We have to go back to the eternal purpose that God has purposed in Christ because the church transcends history. Even before the time of history, the church is already there in the heart of God for His Son. Let me go deeper on this matter. Before the creation, in the mind of God, He has already given the church to His Son. Not only was it in God's mind, but God in fact has given the church to His Son. Why is it so? It is because our God transcends time. When He had that thought, it instantly became a fact. Time belongs to us. Today we live in the time so we still see the church being built. It seems that our Lord has not gained the church. But from God's side looking at it, the Lord already gained His church. In other words, the Holy Spirit today works from that which has already been accomplished to it being realized for us. The Holy Spirit is not working from something nonexistent to something in existence. If brothers and sisters can see this, then you will never lose heart. No matter what conditions you see on earth, you can thank and praise God, because you know that it has already been accomplished. Brothers and sisters, the church is a mystery. The bible tells us the church is the mystery of the Christ. Because it is a mystery, it needs to be revealed. If there is no revelation, you cannot fathom the mystery. Indeed, it is so. This mystery, through the apostles and the prophets, has already been revealed. We have already read it in the Book of Ephesians. But brothers and sisters, the principle of revelation is always the same. Although this mystery has once been revealed and also written in God's word, yet if we do not have revelations when we read it today, this will only be words written on paper. What we have touched are only words and sentences. We still do not truly know the church. We need the revelation from the Holy Spirit to truly know the church. So in the first prayer that Paul had in the Book of Ephesians he asked God to grant us wisdom and a spirit of revelation that we may truly know God. Without revelation, your knowing is not true knowledge. You cannot follow that knowledge to carry out something. There are many people who said they already found the pattern of the church in the New Testament when they read the New Testament. And they said they can now build a church. They can assign a few to be the elders and a few to be the deacons. And then the New Testament church is built. And they will be the apostles.

Brothers and sisters, this shows us that even though this mystery has been revealed in the bible, but if the Holy Spirit has not revealed it in your heart, you still have not seen the church. So we need to pray before God, and ask God to

give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we can truly see the mystery of the Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, if you can truly see the mystery of the Christ, we deeply believe that there will be a great change in you. It is because the church is not something, the church is the Christ. Whatever is not of our Lord, it is not in the church. Although on the surface, the church is the gathering of the believers, but in fact it is Christ in me and Christ in you. Years ago I gave an example. At that time we were also in a special conference and Brother Sparks was with us. I said I wanted to give a simple engineering formula to illustrate the church to brothers and sisters. I knew that Brother Sparks would not agree to it. He liked to talk about high and deep things. If you have heard Brother Sparks spoke before, you know he liked to use long words, like universality and centrality. But I am a simple person. First, I asked Brother Sparks to forgive me. I said what is the church? Assuming that there were only three Christians in the whole world today – Peter, James and John, what is the church then? Was the church the gathering of Peter, James and John together. If it was so, then this church had many problems. Peter in his nature liked to be the head. James and John also wanted to be the heads. They brought out their mother because their mother was the aunt of the Lord Jesus. And the words of the aunt should carry some weight. If these three people were the church, then this church had three heads. And there would be division. James and John were brothers. Peter was only loosely related. And then you see there was division in the church. And this would not work. What is the church then? The church is the Christ in Peter plus the Christ in John and also the Christ in James. This is the church. Is this correct? What is the church? The church is Peter, James and John plus Christ. Is this the church? If this is so, then you see a church that was half spiritual and half carnal. This is not the church. What is the church? It is the Christ in Peter minus Peter, plus the Christ in John minus John and the Christ in James minus James. This is the church. This is correct. So what is the church? The church is the Christ. It is not Peter or James or John. Outwardly it is Peter and James and John. In reality the three of them have been dealt with by the cross. They have rid of themselves. What remains is Christ Himself. And this is the Christ. This is the church.

Brothers and sisters, if this is the church, then what is that we see today? How big is the requirement of this on us! Whenever our old self comes out, then we destroy the testimony of the church. We need to be severely disciplined before God. What is the church? The church is the body of Christ as told to us in Ephesians 1: 22 – 23. God has given Christ to be the head of the church. The body of Christ is the church, the fullness of the one who fills all in all. The church is the body of Christ. The body is an organism. It is not an organization. The body is living. It is not a lifeless thing. The body is not rules and regulations. The body has a life and the law of life. The body cannot be separated from the head. The body is one with the head. All the fullness dwells in the head. But all the fullness in the head also dwells in the body. Christ is the source of fullness. The church is filled with this fullness. Christ is the head of the church.

The church is the body of Christ. So you see in here Christ is the authority, and the church carries out all the commands of the head. And this is the church.

So brothers and sisters, what is the church? The church is the fullness of Christ. Think about it. Is the church we see today poor or full of fullness? What is the reason that we cannot see the fullness of Christ in the church today? It is because we have been filled with a lot of other things. We need to empty ourselves so that the fullness of the head can fill the church. Only this way can we manifest the glory of Christ Himself. What is the church? The second chapter of Ephesians shows us the church is a new man. In the old creation, there are many differences. Although in the second chapter of Ephesians, the biggest difference is the Jews and the Gentiles. The difference between the Jews and the Gentiles were due to several reasons. Not only is there a difference in race, there were also the difference in religion and the difference in etiquette and more. Thus at that time there was no going on between the Jews and the Gentiles. In the temple, the gentiles could go to the court of the Gentiles. Behind the court of Gentiles was the court of the women. There were written signs. This was the boundary for Gentiles. And if they went further and entered, it would be death. The gentiles did not have a part in it. The gentiles were the outside people. The Jews looked at the gentiles as dogs. Why? It was because the things the gentiles eat were not clean. According to Leviticus the Jews eat kosher food. So they considered gentiles as dogs. Of course the gentiles look at the Jews the same way. So there is a great difference between the Gentiles and the Jews. They could not dine together. And they could not enter into each other's house. If they visited the Jews, they would defile their house. You can see how great the difference was. But we thank and praise the Lord. On the cross, the Lord has taken away the dividing wall. And He summed up the Jews and the Gentiles as one in Himself so that we become a new man. And He brought us before God so we can be reconciled to God.

Dear brothers and sisters, what is the church? The church is one new man. The old things passed away. All things become new. Thus in the church, there are no Jews or Greeks, no circumcised or uncircumcised, no barbarians or Scythians, no masters or slaves. Only Christ is all in all. Dear brothers and sisters, according to the original language, not only is 'there is nothing there between all the groups', it is not 'there is no difference or dividing', but it is just one. There is neither Jews or Greeks. Just like we being Chinese when we enter into the church, you no longer see a Chinese. In the church, he is a Christian only. A Jew comes in. Once he enters into the church, he is no longer a Jew but a Christian. An American comes to the church. Once he steps into the church, he is no longer an American but just a Christian. All the differences in this world remain as differences. Do not think that you can take away the differences in the world. The communists were trying to take away these differences. But you know there is no change in substance. Because of sins, the differences in this world will always be there. But in Christ, in the church, all these differences were taken away on the cross. All these are old creations.

In the new creation, there are no such things. So brothers and sister, let us remember we are all brothers and sisters. We do not have these differences. I remember our brother Watchman Nee. There was a brother ministering to him. And we called him Brother Wong. And this brother loved Brother Nee. He cooked for Brother Nee. Brother Nee could not say a dish taste good. If he said this tasted good, then Brother Wong would make this dish every day. All the pay he got, he spent on food for Brother Nee. He treated Brother Nee as his master. And he was the servant. And when it came to breaking of bread, he would see where Brother Nee sat. If Brother Nee sat in the front, then he would sit in the back. Because he said he was Brother Nee's servant. Brother Nee was the master and he needed to be separated from him. And what about Brother Nee? If he saw Brother Wong sitting in the back, he would bring Brother Wong to his side, because in Christ they were all brothers. In the house, there is master and servant but there is no such division in the church.

So what is the church? The church is the new man. The church not only is the new man, the bible also tells us the church is the bride. The church is the house of God. This is in the second chapter of Ephesians. You know there are two interpretations of the house of God. What is the house? The house can be a family. It can also be a place where you live. And both interpretations are present in the bible. So the bible said, now you are no longer outsiders. You are members of the household. So we believers are in the same household. You know that God has a household. In the house of God there are only three members. They all have one mind. There is nothing among them. The Father is in the Son. The Son is in the Father. The Father and the Son are in the Spirit. And that oneness is truly beautiful. And that family is truly a beautiful family. We thank God. God said, for the sake of love, we have to expand our family. We are going to bring many people into our family. So the bible said, He gave us sonship. Not only will He give us the life of the Son, He is going to make this life grow, so that we can be conformed to the image of His Son. We have the character of the Son. In fact, in this household there are great happiness. Brothers and sisters, the church is the house of God. The church is not a justice court. The church is the house of God. The church is not a correction facility. The church is the house of God. You know many brothers and sisters in the church want to correct this and correct that. The church is not like this. The church is the house of God. There are elders, youth and children. Gradually they grow. It is a family and when you come to this family, you can see Christ in this brother's life, or Christ in that brother's life. You can see Christ in this sister and this is family. But today we come to the church, we see Adam in this person and we see Eve in that sister. We cannot see Christ. This is not the church. We need to learn to see Christ in our brothers and sisters. If you see Christ in him, it is easy to love him. If you see Eve in her, you cannot love her. If you see Adam in him, you cannot love him. The church is the family of God. We have to pursue to be like our Lord. This household is also the dwelling place. And this is the place where God through the Spirit dwells. God wants to dwell in this household. Remember what the Lord said in the Gospel of John 14? If

you love me you have to keep my commandments. My father will love you. And we will come and dwell with you. To dwell is to make home in you.

Where does God live today? Where is His house? I always said, how does Isaiah 66 put it? Heaven is the seat of God. The earth is His footstool. God said you built the temple for me. But where is the place I can rest? I dwell with those who have a contrite heart and who tremble and listen to my word. Heaven and earth are God's office. His throne is in heaven. And His footstool is on earth. This is His office. Where is His house? His house is in the hearts of those who love Him; those who trembled because of His words and those who has a humble and repentant heart. Brothers and sisters, this is His house. What is the church? The church is the bride of Christ. Our Lord through the blood and water that He shed on the cross built up the church. He cares for the church. Every day, He cleanses the church with water through His word. So this church can become pure and without blemish; without spots or wrinkles. It becomes a glorious church offered to Him to be His bride. Brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit is working in the church so we can be suitable for Him. So that when we become mature, He will come back to receive us to Himself. And this is the church. What is the church? Ephesians 6 says the church is the warrior. And that is the helper of Christ. We would talk about this later. Dear brothers and sisters, what is the church? In God's words, what is the church? How we need the Holy Spirit in our heart reveals to us so we can truly see what the church is. When we see these, then there will be a real change in us. We see that there are so many things in us that need to be dealt with by the cross. We need to see that Christ has to increase in us. We need to see how we should love one another among us. How we wish this church will mature early so that our Lord can be satisfied. Brothers and sisters, we love our Lord. And we love His church.

Let us pray.

Our Lord, we truly thank and praise You because You love the church. You gave Yourself for the church. You have cleansed the church with water through Your words so that Your church will be a glorious church offered up to Yourself. Our Lord, we thank and praise You because You have chosen us. Your grace is upon us. We wish Your will be done quickly. We want to be part of the church. We want to be used by You to build this church. Our Lord, we want You to be satisfied. We ask You to give us a willing heart to offer ourselves up from now on for You and for Your church. May You and Your church gain the glory. In Jesus name. Amen.