

WCCC 2023

Brother Ted Peng

**God makes known His manifold wisdom
through the church (1)**

Good morning brothers and sisters. It is so good that we can gather together. It is a very special time for these few days. I am sure that the Lord has an expectation for all of us. We also have expectations for ourselves. Let us quieten our hearts, that the Lord may be with us all the time.

When I think about the theme of the conference, "Behold I am coming quickly, hold fast to what you have that no one may take your crown". This is the verse in the Lord's letter to the Philadelphia church. The brothers have assigned me to share on a verse in Ephesians 3. It has to do with the eternal purpose of God, and is actually the second aspect of it:

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church
to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
Ephesians 3:10

So in essence this particular verse, the church ought to be a testimony of the greatness of the wisdom of God. Another thing that is special about this verse is "now the manifold wisdom of God".

When I was pondering on this theme and this particular verse, I find that it gets deeper the more I think about it. On another hand, it opens up more questions we have about the eternal purpose of God. It opens up things that we can see clearly the eternal purpose of God, especially how relevant it is to the church and to our own lives.

When it is connected to the Philadelphia church, it actually says that the eternal purpose of God is an extremely practical thing. The Philadelphia church is a demonstration, a real example of the eternal purpose of God. These people respected the eternal purpose of God. They took part in it and honoured it. As a result, they are such a wonderful example.

To us it says the eternal purpose of God is not an empty or theoretical thing. It is extremely practical. It applied to the Philadelphia church so many years ago, and it applies to you and me today. Our church, and ourself.

When we look at the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians, you find that the wonder is that it says “now” in verse 10. Through the church, the principalities and authorities in the heavenly places - they see the wisdom of God **now**.

So brothers and sisters, thank God that His eternal purpose is not only for that day in the future. It is now.

Another thing is that when we read into the first part of the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians 1. Verse 10 speaks of the specifics of the eternal purpose of God.

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

Ephesians 1:10

So here we see the fullness of the times. When it says “gather together in one”, or “sum up in one”, another translation says, “head up in Christ”. The two ideas are here. One idea is that everything together is summed up in Christ. When we sum up in Christ, like we are now sitting here. Some translations read “headed up”. When we are together, there is one Head above all. So that is what this word “summed up” or “headed up” means.

Thank the Lord that He says sum up or headed up in Christ. When we gather here we are headed up in Christ. We are under Christ as the Head. Thank the Lord that when we are gathered under the Head Christ, we have a unity. Everybody is thankful and everybody is happy.

That eternal purpose says that one day, not only us, but the whole heaven and the whole earth will be under this Head. So that is not here yet. That is one of those days. God is working on that, He has never given up.

What does the church do? Thank the Lord that we are already under that Head. We are already summed up in Christ. And Christ is already our Head. And the churches, we who are doing that right now, we become Philadelphia.

Brothers and sisters, this is the picture the Lord is giving us. May that be an encouragement to all of us. That the eternal purpose that God has given us is not an empty one. It is so high and so holy, but on the other hand it is so practical. One day the whole universe will be under the headship of Christ. There will be no fight, there will be no disagreement. Everybody will honor the Lord. On that day.

But even today, we are together. Christ Jesus is our Head. And we want to offer ourselves to be His people. Offer ourselves to follow Him. Offer ourselves to be His servants. And that is very practical. That happened in Philadelphia.

Brothers and sisters, in a very crude way, this is an overview of what the Lord is telling us.

I thank the Lord that so many years ago, in 1986, WCCC started. So many of us who were there, now we really thank the Lord. In all these years at WCCC, heaven opened to us. He gave us the purpose of the church. Telling you the truth, He has even given us the purpose of our individual lives. So we really thank the Lord.

In 1986, I was 42 years old. My translator was 4 years old. How many of you weren't born yet? Do you see something here? The Lord expects generation after generation. How He has blessed my generation! How He has blessed my older generation; and how He has blessed the generation younger than mine. And He is also going to bless the generation of the 20-somethings. God's blessing is not impractical. God's blessing is extremely practical. It requires us to walk on with Him.

So my burden, and I believe that of many brothers, is that the younger generation will catch on to this thing. To catch on to God's wonderful eternal purpose. And that God's eternal purpose becomes our responsibility. And you will walk a meaningful life - this life - and you will be a blessing to so many people around you. That is what the wonderful gift God has given us - His eternal purpose. It makes everything different.

Brothers and sisters, I will put that before you. This time we have 3 sessions.

The first session, because the theme of the conference has to do with the Philadelphia church, I want to spend some time to share with you how the eternal purpose of God is related to the Philadelphia church. Remember the theme says, "hold fast to what you have. Do not lose your crown." What is the thing they had at that time? What was their crown? Why did they have a crown? That is one thing I want to share with you.

The other thing is when the Apostle Paul speaks of the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians 1 and 3. When we read about the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians 1,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
Ephesians 1:10-11

Verse 10 says the eternal purpose of God. One of these days, God will make everything under Christ, and summed up in Him. Verse 11, "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will". So verse 11 is immediately after verse 10. And verse 10 speaks of the eternal purpose of God.

Verse 11 says we have received an inheritance according to the eternal purpose of God. So you see the apostle Paul has put the eternal purpose of God and the inheritance together. When we think of inheritance we think of many things - money, house, all these things.

Why did the apostle Paul, right after the eternal purpose of God, write about the inheritance? Why did he mention the inheritance is according to the purpose of God?

Then we read verse 12: "that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory."

So what he is really saying is that we are going to get an inheritance from God. This inheritance is according to His eternal purpose. And verse 12 says that we will get it to the praise of God's glory. This inheritance is not for our benefit. The inheritance, when we really get it, will be to the glory of God the Father.

Dear brothers and sisters, you see that he put the eternal purpose of God and the inheritance together. When you think of the eternal purpose of God, you may think it is His thing. But when you think of inheritance, you think of what you will receive. So it is a wonder that the apostle Paul puts these 2 things together. He is essentially saying that the eternal purpose of God is my business. It is my responsibility, my duty. It is related to me. It is my inheritance. I think this is what he is trying to say.

Another thing about the inheritance is this: when we talk about the eternal purpose of God, we think that this is the apostle Paul's wonderful idea in AD60. We think that maybe his great revelation is his invention. Apostle Paul didn't think so. He thought of it as the inheritance of God. That God has given this to His people from a long time ago. It is just that the great majority of people paid no attention.

There were people over 20 centuries before Christ that paid attention to this. Abraham paid attention. Moses paid attention. Ruth paid attention. David paid attention. Isaiah paid attention. So many prophets paid attention to it. And they called it an inheritance. They did not know this was the eternal purpose of God.

When you think about this, we are not alone. This wonderful eternal purpose of God is not hidden in mystery. There are people who knew it. It affected their lives. It affected the life of Abraham, Ruth and David.

Dear brothers and sisters, I just gave you a preview of what God has placed in my heart. I am sure you have thought about these things. Thank the Lord that they are in Ephesians and Revelations. Let us get into it.

About this church of Philadelphia, Revelation 3 contains the letter from the risen Lord Jesus to them. He actually wrote the letter to them. As we know, the Lord said, in v11 to hold fast to what they had, and not to lose their crown. And when you read one verse down, He says, "to those who overcome, I will write 3 names on them. One name is the name of my Father. The second name is the name of my Father's city. And the third is my new name."

What does that mean? It means when you go out, you represent these 3 names. You represent the name of the Father. The Philadelphia church, when they went out, represented New Jerusalem. When they went out, they represented the Lord.

This is how the Lord praised them, and expected of them. What are the things they already have? The Lord Jesus said 2 things.

The first thing is in Revelations 3:8.

"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

I want brothers and sisters to "kept my word", and "kept my name". In v10, there is another thing they have kept.

Because you have kept My command to persevere

They kept the command to persevere.

Our dear brother Dana will concentrate on v10, but I wanted to tell you, brothers and sisters, "kept my name", "kept my Word" and "kept my perseverance".

The brothers and sisters in Philadelphia were real with the Lord Jesus. Not only with His Word, His name, but also His perseverance. The Lord walked the way of the cross, and they also walked the way of the cross.

We can say that we have kept His Word and kept His name. The church in Pergamum also said that. But here they have kept His perseverance. That means that they have been living in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

This is the first thing I want to mention to you, that the Lord said this when seeing them after 30 years. I say 30 years because the Lord walked on the earth till about AD30. Then apostle Paul and Peter served the Lord till about AD60. And about AD90, apostle Paul and Peter passed away, and only John was left. The Lord wrote the letter to the 7 churches through John at around AD90. When the Lord Jesus saw in AD90, how the church in Philadelphia walked with

the Lord. They not only kept His Word and His name, but kept His perseverance. They kept His way of the cross. That is why Philadelphia church is who they are.

The next thing is in v9. In verse 9, the Lord Jesus mentions 3 things: the first thing has to do with lies. The people from the synagogue of Satan are liars. They said they are Jews, but they are not Jews, they are liars.

The second thing in v9 is that the Lord said that He will have the synagogue of Satan come bow down at their feet. And the third thing is that the Lord will tell them that "I have already loved you".

The Lord did not say these 3 things lightly.

The first thing about liars. When our Lord first walked on the earth, He saw a young man under the fig tree by the name of Nathaniel (John 1). The Lord said, "He is a real Israelite. In him there is no guile." There is no deceit. This was an absolutely honest young man and Israelite. And the Lord said that He would give him an open door to heaven, and he would see the angels going up and coming down on the Son of Man.

See how the Lord called him a real Israelite, in him there is no guile?

These people of the synagogue of Satan came to the church of Philadelphia and said they are Jews. But the brothers at Philadelphia saw through them and rejected them. Thank the Lord that He saw honesty in them. And they cannot stand lies. In v8 you see that the Lord has given them an open door, just like the Lord gave Nathaniel the open door to heaven.

This is extremely encouraging to us who are young. Nathaniel was very young. The Lord is encouraging us to be like Nathaniel, to be honest with yourself. Do not allow anything dishonest to come into the church.

Number 2, the Lord said that He would ask the synagogue of Satan to bow down at their feet. The last time the Lord had this thought was recorded in Isaiah 60. In Isaiah 60, the Redeemer comes to Zion. The Redeemer comes to make Zion really good. To make people in Jerusalem really good. To the extent that those who despised Jerusalem, those who hated Jerusalem, now see these good people and say something in their own heart. They will say "this is indeed the city of the Lord". That God really is their God.

This is the Lord's expectation 700 years before He came. And the Lord said at that time, "I am going to have these people who hated Jerusalem come to Jerusalem and bow down at their feet". And the Lord said, "I am going to make Jerusalem an eternal excellence, a joy from generation to generation."

This is when the Lord was called Redeemer. The wonder is now the Lord sees the Philadelphia church, and how they are good. At that time it was a city of the Lord, now it is the church of God. The real church of God. So God wants those of the synagogue of Satan to come bow down at their feet.

The third thing is that the Lord says "I have already loved you". Is there anything strange about this thing? When the Lord says that He has loved the church, there is some specific thing that He meant. When the Lord loves you or me, or anyone in the world, there are no conditions. But when He says that He loves the church, there is a condition, there is an expectation.

If I remember correctly, the only time the Lord says He loves the church is in Ephesians 5. That Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. The reason is that He wants the church to be a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and to be holy and without blemish. In other words, when the Lord says He loves the church, there is an expectation. The expectation is that the church will be a glorious church. She is holy, separated unto God. Without blemish. The world is not there. Satan is not there. All these things are not in this glorious church.

When God looked at the Philadelphia church, He saw a glimpse of that. They were going in the direction of a glorious church. That is the reason why He said "I have already loved you". Remember this word "already". It means it is not just His thought - He has observed it for a while.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is extremely encouraging to us. Do we actually have the same desire the Lord Jesus has for His church? Absolutely honest, not allowing anything dishonest to come to the church?

Secondly, are we willing to be the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, separated unto Him? So that when Satan comes, Satan has to prostrate at His church?

And the third thing, do we have an aspiration to be the glorious church for our Lord? Every time we think of a glorious church, we think "not us". "Not me".

The Lord did not like that. He wants us to have the aspiration to be His glorious church. Is it easy to do? Of course not. But here is a group of people. The Bible says they have only little strength. That means they are not a megachurch. They are not a famous church. They are like you and me. But somehow the Lord moved them. And they want to please the Lord. Thank the Lord that they are our example and encouragement.

I hope brothers and sisters, that I leave that with you, when we see where we meet, whether in Seattle, or downtown LA, have the same thought as the Lord. You, have the same thought as the Lord Jesus. You and I, have the same aspiration as this Philadelphia church. And on't say that it

is impossible. The Lord did not look for perfection. He wants all of us to have that thought to walk with Him on that way. I hope this is how the Philadelphia church will encourage you.

When we think of Philadelphia, we often think of it as saying something in the future. This Philadelphia church was in Asia minor, about 100 miles east, slightly north, of Ephesus. A real church. A real group of brothers and sisters.

The apostle Paul wrote the Ephesians letter in AD60. The Lord Jesus wrote to the Philadelphia church in AD90. The Bible didn't say whether in this 30 year period, the Philadelphia church read the letter to the Ephesians. I personally feel that in 30 years, it is easy to cover 100 miles.

But no matter what, these brothers and sisters in the Philadelphia church caught the eternal purpose of God. They lived before the Lord. They made a difference. They became a blessing to you and to me. May that be an example and encouragement.

Let me switch gears to this inheritance. If you look at Ephesians 1, the apostle Paul speaks of the eternal purpose of God and this inheritance together. When he wrote about the inheritance, he said that this is according to the eternal purpose of God. He also says those who have received that inheritance will live in a way to the praise of the Lord. This is in Ephesians 1.

Why is this inheritance not a trivial thing? You remember the Lord Jesus gave an example. Our Lord came to the earth, and in His earth was God's purpose. When He was 12 years old, He went to Jerusalem, and His dad and mom were looking for Him and found Him. And He said, "I have to be mindful of my Father's business".

He was 12 years old. Like those in our children's class. So very early on, He was mindful of His Father's business. Towards the end, like our brother shared, our Lord said, "not my will, but yours be done."

You also remember in John 17 the Lord had a really long prayer. The first thing He prayed was "Father, the thing you sent me to do, I have done". So in His whole life, the most important thing to Jesus was the Father's will.

In Luke 15, Jesus told the story of 2 brothers. The young brother told his father, "give me what belongs to me. I want to go to the world and make it." It didn't take long for him to waste it all. He failed. He thought, "my father has everything. Why don't I go back and tell him 'I have sinned against heaven and against you'. I want to come back. Don't consider me as your son. Consider me as your hired servant." He went back. The father saw him from a long way away and ran over and hugged him. The son wanted to give the father his speech. The father did not let him finish and kissed him. And the father told the servant to get the best robe, and bring the ring, bring the shoes to place it in his son.

The first son wasn't happy. "I have served you all these years, and yet you never even gave me a goat to have fun with my friends". The father told him "all these years you have been with me. All that is mine is yours."

The story of the first and second son, as you see it, the father, in his heart, wanted to give them their inheritance. "All that is mine is yours". Whether the first son appreciated that or not the Bible didn't say. But the second son came back.

What do these 3 things mean? What does the best robe mean? Remember this father is a land owner. What does the best robe mean? It means that whoever sees you, they will know you are my son. What does the ring mean? It means you have authority over this land. When people see you wearing this ring, they know you have authority on this land. What do the shoes mean? It means you can walk over this land, to take care of the servants and do all the things you need to do to make this business prosper.

Whether it is the best robe, the ring, or the shoes, it all has to do with the inheritance. It has to do with the responsibility. One day, this will be your responsibility.

So you see, this story we often share at Sunday School, this father has the inheritance in mind. He wants his first and second son to inherit their inheritance and be responsible for it.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is inheritance, of course. But if you look at all the people in the story, who has the purpose? Who has the thought for the long run? It is the father.

Inheritance and the father's purpose are connected. The Lord Jesus expects when people hear this story, the father has a purpose, the father has an inheritance. The inheritance is not only for the first son, it is also for the second son. It is for everyone. This is in the Lord Jesus' heart.

When the apostle Paul wrote Ephesians 1 and put the eternal purpose of God and the inheritance together,

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

His glory is praised. Dear brothers and sisters, you see, it is wonderful! This heavenly inheritance is for you and me to own forever. But when we own this thing, it is out of ourselves. First of all, the inheritance is not for me. It is for the Father and the Father's purpose.

Isn't that wonderful? How many times have you felt that we have been constrained by ourselves. We are in bondage to ourselves. Everytime we hear inheritance we think of the benefit to ourselves. But the Lord has freed us from this.

Yes we will receive the inheritance. But this inheritance is for the glory of God. The wonder is that He brings us into this. The apostle Paul saw that and put it together: the eternal purpose of God and the inheritance.

In Ephesians 1, Paul further says that we are the first to hope. He doesn't stop there - he says "you also have received the inheritance". So this is not a private thought. It is a big thought - for you and me and everyone. And the Holy Spirit is going to be the guarantee of that.

"...Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."
Ephesians 1:13-14

And he would go on to say that the Holy Spirit would illuminate our heart so that we can see something. What do we see? That the inheritance that is in us becomes us. If we think that the inheritance is important, it becomes a big part of us. And God will see something wonderful. He will see His own inheritance in you and me. This is in v18.

So you see, brothers and sisters, this is how the apostle Paul used the idea of inheritance to describe how the eternal purpose works out. We will receive His inheritance. This inheritance - a big part of it - is the eternal purpose of God. When we receive it, the Holy Spirit will guarantee that it is in us. It is not something we hear in one ear and out the next. We will really receive this.

When it happens to all of us, God will be so happy. He will see that this inheritance is now in them, in His own saints. The Bible says this is the riches of the glory of the inheritance in His saints.

Thank the Lord, dear brothers and sisters. If we see that, we should open ourselves to this inheritance. This is not only an objective thing. It is a subjective thing. It has to be in me. It has to work. God sees that it is in me. He is happy that His inheritance is now in me. I have changed. The eternal purpose of God is now part of me.

If we go on further in that chapter, you see that God has put His Son to be the Head of all things. Everything in heaven and earth will be under Him. And God has given Him to His church. He is the Head of the universe. God has given Him to His church. The church is His body, the fullness of Him fulfilled everywhere. So you see the parallel of this inheritance and the eternal purpose of God. This inheritance now is in us. We appreciate that, and God sees it. The eternal purpose of God now works out. We are His body. Christ Jesus, who is the Head, is in each one of us. This is what the picture Paul is telling us.

When I was given this assignment by the brothers, it was hard. But as I pondered over this inheritance over days and months, I was so encouraged. Apostle Paul was really wise. The eternal purpose of God is not an isolated thing. It is something appreciable to you and to me. Even more wonderful is that now it connects us to people in history.

Brothers and sisters, consider these stories. Abraham. And I am going to share about Abraham and Ruth.

You may say Abraham is too old. It doesn't apply to us. But you have to think of Ruth. Ruth was only 20 years old or so. Very much like some of you. These are wonderful stories. We all know Abraham. How going to Canaan was extremely difficult. He did not have a Bible. He did not have brothers and sisters. He did not have prayer meetings. He did not have Bible study.

He went. He made mistakes again and again. He was 100 years old when he had Isaac. God told him that he would take care of Ishmael, but His covenant was with Isaac. Another 20 years, God tells Abraham to bring Isaac to Mount Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering. That means you have to kill and burn him. That is so hard for Abraham and Sarah.

"Lord, Isaac you love. Your covenant is only with him. Now you want me to kill and burn him?" But Abraham didn't say anything. He brought Isaac to the mountain. Just as he was about the kill, the Lord said, "stop. I know that you are obedient to me. I give you back Isaac. From now on, the whole nations will be blessed by the seed of Isaac."

Did you see Abraham walk the heavenly way? He could have gone back to Ur, but he didn't. His wife, his sons, his grandsons could have gone back to Ur, but they didn't. They loved a country in heaven. And even more, the Lord brought Abraham through an experience, so that he now knows that the Lord will use one among Isaac's seed to bless all the nations. It elevated Abraham to a different level.

Another 20 years, when Isaac was supposed to get married, and his very wise servant said, "if I go to your country and find a good girl, but she won't come to Canaan and wants Isaac to go there, what should I do?" Abraham said "no, you have to swear you won't. Because God's covenant is with Isaac. And God's covenant to us is on this land. My son doesn't have to get married so soon. But the covenant of God has to be kept."

So dear brothers and sisters, you see here that Abraham and his family walked the heavenly way. But God also revealed to him His eternal purpose. That nations will be blessed by the descendent of Isaac. Christ Jesus.

This is Abraham.

Moses, at 80 years old, you might say he is too old. But the Lord appeared to him in the desert and sent him to Egypt. "My people have suffered and are surrounded by foreign gods. Now you want to bring them to the desert, out of Egypt and finally into Canaan".

Almost 2 million people came out of Egypt. About 600,000 are fighting-age young men. Most of them wanted to go back to Egypt. There was water, grass, rivers and lakes. Life was easy. Not only for them but for their wives and children. Again and again. Finally the Lord said that they were not qualified. This generation would not be allowed to go into Canaan because their hearts were not there. A new generation would come out and they would go into Canaan.

Thank God for Moses, Joshua and Caleb. They brought up this new generation. 38 years later, they were ready. They entered Canaan. It was difficult for Moses. All these 40 years, the burden lay on his shoulders. Once he told the Lord that these people are too hard. "Am I supposed to carry them like my own baby?" The Lord didn't answer but solved his problem. I think the Lord was telling him yes, you need to carry them all as your own baby. It was so hard for him. Finally he wasn't able to go in. But the Lord brought him to the highest mountain and showed him the whole land.

The second generation went in. Thank the Lord.

This is about inheritance. Moses himself didn't get to go in. But from a heavenly point of view, he has seen everything. He has entered. Thank the Lord. God buried Him alone.

According to God's eternal purpose. In the last year in the wilderness, in Deuteronomy, Moses told his people, "when I die, there is one among you that is going to rise up. He is a prophet like me. You should listen to him." Thank the Lord that He gave Moses the sense that there will be one whom all will listen to.

This is the first part of the purpose of God: that Christ shall come.

The second part is about the church. Moses was faithful in the household of God. The household of God is the second part of the eternal purpose of God.

Ruth was about 20 or younger when her husband died. Her husband's brother and father died. All the men in the family died. Naomi woke up and wanted to go back to Canaan. She told Ruth. "Your dad and mom are here. You grew up here in Moabite land. You should go back because I cannot take care of you." Ruth said, "Your God is my God, your people my people. Where you live I will live. Where you die I will die. And there I will get buried".

Ruth is not saying that she is going to visit Bethlehem and then come back to Moabite land. She declared that your God is my God. I will be buried there after I die. In other words, your inheritance is my inheritance. God's land will be my inheritance. And she went back with Naomi.

In Ruth 3, she came to Boaz that night. He was the owner of the whole farm. She didn't say to Boaz "I want you to marry me." She said, "You are my kinsman-Redeemer". That means you are my closest relative, able to redeem me. Redeeming has nothing to do with sin. It has to do with redeeming Ruth so that she can now have a part in God's inheritance.

Boaz is an extremely spiritual man. It was in the time of Judges, and Boaz's farm was the only place where God's presence is there. When Boaz came back to the farm, and his servants would say, "The Lord bless you." And Boaz would tell his servants "the Lord be with you". In that time of Judges, that was the only place where the Lord's presence was there.

Ruth became part of that inheritance. The inheritance became hers, and she became the inheritance of God.

How is this related to the eternal purpose of God? Ruth walked into Boaz's farm. She became part of it. Boaz's farm was a beautiful picture, just like Philadelphia at the time. It has nothing to do with Ruth. It was Boaz. The kindness of Boaz, the wisdom of Boaz, the redemption of Boaz is there.

When Paul described the Lord Jesus, he said, "to us He is God's wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption". So Boaz is a picture of that. And Boaz's farm is a picture of what the church should be.

Essentially, Ruth walked into the eternal purpose of God. And her great-grandson was David.

If you want to find in the Old Testament a character whose inheritance was God, it would be David. In Psalm 16 that we read this morning, David wrote, "The Lord is my inheritance, the portion in my cup". This is really good land. In David's Psalm 78, God also expressed that Israel is His inheritance.

He also chose David His servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds;
71 From following the ewes that had young He brought him,
To shepherd Jacob His people,
And Israel His inheritance.
Psalm 78:70-71

David felt so strongly in his heart that God is His inheritance, and Israel is God's inheritance.

When David was being pursued by Saul and had 2 opportunities to kill Saul, he respected the Lord and His anointed one. He would not kill Saul. The second time he kept a distance from Saul and called out to him "you are my Lord. You are the king of Israel. If you chase me, I can only run

away. If you kill me I cannot resist you. But if anyone wants to drive me out from the inheritance of God, I will not allow that.”

So dear brothers and sisters, this is David’s thought and feelings about the inheritance of God.

How about the eternal purpose of God? How about Christ and His church?

The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”
Psalm 110:1

The first “Lord” is the Lord Jehovah. The second Lord he called “My Lord”. Who is that? He didn’t say. But he knows that this is my Lord who sits on the right of God. Of course he is speaking of the Lord Jesus. This is how God revealed Christ to him.

How did God reveal the church to Him? What kind of church is God revealing? A glorious church.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the Lord commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.
Psalm 133

Brothers and sisters, this is a glorious picture of what the church should be. There is a head - Aaron’s head - all the anointing coming down from the head to the beard and the garment. There is blessing of life, coming down from heaven to Hermon and unto beautiful Zion. And there God commands blessing - life forevermore.

When David wrote this, it was about a thousand years before Christ. Aaron is about 500 years earlier. So David didn’t go to a place where Aaron was there, and Hermon is there. It is in his heart and mind. This life forevermore only came with Christ Jesus, a thousand years later.

Thank the Lord that God has given David this picture of what the church ought to be.

The point is this: that in Old Testament times, the saints only knew about inheritance. Because no one talked about the “eternal purpose of God”. But God has revealed to them Christ and the beautiful church. The glorious church. The heavenly church. The spiritual church.

We are not alone. There are so many people ahead of us. The Lord has shown them the eternal purpose of God and the heavenly, eternal inheritance. And we see this wonderful, small church called Philadelphia. It is small, but real. It is such an encouragement to us.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have to stop here. May the joy and glory of the Lord be our joy and glory.

Lord, we thank you and praise you. When we review history to see generation after generation, it was so kind of you to reveal yourself to your people. That they can live a wonderful life. You also reveal your church to them as your eternal purpose. That they can devote their lives to it and walk on it with you, and be such a blessing to people in their time. And also become a blessing to us now. Lord, we pray that you move our hearts to walk with you. Open our hearts so that your burden becomes our burden. Bless my dear brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus we pray, Amen.