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Eternal Purpose Transcriptions  
Class # 1 130808

## Overview of God's Purpose

I'm calling this class The Eternal Purpose. Today I'm going to give some introductory remarks, mention what we're going to be talking about in the class, and say some preliminary things that are going to be foundational and important for us as we go along.

You could say this class is about the eternal purpose of God. You could just as well say it's about the church. You could say it's about "Israel My Son" (Exo 4:22) That's all saying the same thing to me. I didn't just make three different statements. I think I said the same thing in three different ways.

I could sit here and tell you that the eternal purpose of God is bound up with the church, but just saying that isn't saying much. In fact, just saying that is a bit dangerous because our propensity is always to try to define spiritual realities based on what we've seen with natural eyes. And we've all seen and heard and experienced different things in the church. Human beings have many ideas (some good and some bad) and they are all wrong by nature. I mean, if they are *our* ideas, then they are coming from the wrong mind, and they must be replaced by His light. We must never take our understanding of something we've seen, apply it to words in Scripture like "eternal purpose", and think we've comprehended something. Don't ever do that. Let the Lord open the eyes of your heart and awaken your soul to His view of His own eternal purpose, and then you might begin to understand something about the church.

As God begins to open the eyes of your understanding to see what He has always wanted, and the reason that He wants it, the many perspectives from which He has described it, the things He's done to secure it, the purpose for it, and the way He gives Himself to it... well then purpose ceases to be a concept in your mind and becomes a living view in your soul seen through the eye of faith. Then the church begins to mean something to your heart that it already is to God. **Then the reality of God's purpose starts to define the word "church" instead of your understanding of the church being what defines God's purpose.** Do you see the difference?

What you think about the church is actually what we're trying to get rid of in this class. You may be someone that says "No, I love the church!" That doesn't matter. There are a million natural, completely circumstantial, personal, religious reasons why people love or hate the church that usually have nothing to do with God's perspective. Someone may say they love the church because they have a real nice pastor, etc. Or maybe they love the church ever since they did a children's camp when they were young, and it was a great experience, etc. Ok that's nice and I'm glad, but that's not what the church is. Church isn't a camp or a pastor or a nice building or friendly people or good coffee...

Someone else may say they hate the church. And if you ask why they hate it, they may say "because the pastor through a hymnal at me when I was seven". Or maybe they were criticized, hurt by church leaders, whatever.... You may have had a bunch of bad experiences with the church, but your bad experiences have nothing to do with the church either.

You might say, "Someone told me I was going to hell when I was fifteen and ever since then I've hated the church." Well that has nothing to do with the church. Do you understand? That has to do with somebody's foolish comment and your overreaction. Your experiences of natural people in a natural building with natural religious activities, good or bad, should not be your understanding of the church. **Your understanding of the church should be God's understanding of the church worked in you by His Spirit, through opening the eyes of your heart.**

It sounds weird to say this, but the church is such a hot topic today. There are so many different opinions and thoughts about it. Mega church? Mini church? Home church? Worship church? Silent church? Is it a warfare church? There are so many kinds of churches! How do you do church?

Now I'm not saying all these things are necessarily bad in terms of expressions of the church, but I am saying that none of them define the church. You don't just try out a new model to see if it works. What you do is you let the Lord define the thing in the light of His own understanding, and then the natural expressions come to line up with that view. Maybe you do hold meetings in a house or online, or whatever, but the *definition* of the church is that thing that God has always seen and wanted and brought about through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What I'm trying to get at is that saying, 'The eternal purpose of God is the church' is not really saying anything! I say this in all my teachings, but the greatest enemy you have to knowing the

truth is the collection of thoughts you already have about something. It's just always in the way. It's always in *my* way. Let's put down our ideas at the very outset of this class and let the Lord start to deal with our hearts about what's real in His light.

Why? Because one person says, "If the eternal purpose of the Lord is the church, then He must have really low standards because the church is a mess!" Well what you think is a mess or what you think is incredible, doesn't define anything. I keep saying this, but our view of the church doesn't change anything. It doesn't make the church any better or any worse. What we need is God's understanding. And what we'll find (and discuss later) is that God's understanding of His eternal purpose comes to be realized and known in a corporate, glorified body for His Son, the body of Christ.

Let me just say this: It should strike us as important, and cause us to stop in our tracks and think for a moment, **that God actually wants something**. Have you ever just stopped and thought about that? God doesn't need anything. I'm sure that He was completely content before any physical creation came out from Him and pointed back to Him. But the fact that He wants something should stir your heart.

Now, man has a bunch of wants, too. Man has so many things that we want from God. We have all kinds of purposes that we want to use God for. We don't usually say it quite like that, but that's really what we want. We like the idea of having a God and His spiritual resources available when natural ones fail us. We like the idea of having a spiritual body when our natural one gets old and dies. We like the idea of having a God that can protect and bless and look after our most valuable things. We like having a God, and we have purposes in our hearts for that relationship. There is always something or other that we like about it. We have many purposes for Him.

But the question I want to pose to you is this: Is what YOU like about that relationship the same thing that God likes and wants? In other words, has your expectation been conformed to His expectation? **Is what you want an out-working and expression of the one thing He wants?... the thing He has always wanted, and the reason for which He created all things?**

Because in the great majority of all of us, we want something that is far different than what He desires. That's what we see when Israel came out of Egypt. They all had their own purposes for God. They had expectations and God wasn't meeting them. They were murmuring and mumbling and complaining. But what gave them the right to complain? Or even more, what gave them the thought to complain? Personal expectations and personal purposes for God,

that's what. Personal ways they wanted to know and experience Him, worship Him, receive from Him. One time they actually fashioned their imaginations and thoughts and carnal imaginations into a golden image. But this wasn't the only time they tried to create God after their own understanding. They never stopped doing that!

"God should do this..." "He should do that..." Remember the sons of Korah? "Why is Aaron the only High Priest? We all can do this!" "God should be giving us what we need in this way and in that way, etc... Why isn't He giving us a wider variety of food groups?" Whatever it was, they were all full of their own purposes for God.

And yet God's purpose was single. It was perfect. It was complete and it never changed. Nothing changed it. This should give you pause. At one point when the entire group of them – six hundred thousand men of fighting age, plus children and women— were grumbling, God told Moses to step aside because He was going to consume them and start over with him! Moses said, "Wait, You just took them out of Egypt! They've been in there for four hundred years... They've multiplied... Remember God, You did the whole Red Sea thing... The plagues... You're going to do all that again?!"

And I can picture the Lord saying, "Yes... Absolutely I'll do it again. I'll do it a hundred times until I find a people who will walk according to My purpose, because MY purpose isn't going anywhere. I've had the same purpose since before the creation of the world."

I'm making up this conversation, but I'm sure Moses was quite shocked and thought, "Wow! This isn't about just getting an oppressed people out of a bad situation! This is about something that **YOU** want. This is about something that **YOU** desire. You have a desire. And apparently, Your desire is not our desire."

I think God's desire slowly came to be the desire of Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and some of the ones who began to see by faith and to walk in His light (to the extent that it was available under the Old Covenant). Man has a multitude of purposes for wanting a god, but God has one purpose—one perfect, big, awesome purpose for wanting a creation, and it's not complicated. It's big. It's huge. It's immense. It's bottomless, but it's not complicated.

When you're seeing something in the light of the Lord, you never sit there and look at it and say, "Wow, that's really complicated! I don't really understand." It's not like that. In the light, the purpose is certainly huge, but it is also single and simple and obvious. That's what we're going to find about the eternal purpose of God. It's not complicated. It's not a bunch of different

things and you have to remember them all. It's not like learning math or history where you have to memorize facts and apply them and not forget this or that. It's not like that.

In the light, things are obvious. In the light you just see what is real. But you realize that when you're seeing, you're not seeing the fullness of it. It's not a convoluted maze of information, it's just a matter of one single thing filling up your heart and becoming the motivation that moves and constrains and defines you. Do you understand what I'm saying?

**That's what I want to happen during this class. I want us to be gripped by the thing that has motivated God to create, to redeem, to send His Son, to save. There's a reason for it all! Saving you was not God's purpose. God saved you FOR a purpose.** Do you see the difference? We are so self-centered and man-centered that we actually think that God's highest plan and purpose is saving US.

I just read the other day where one Christian was criticizing another for saying that God's purpose was to save us from Hell, when it is *really* to save us from sin. Now both of those have a truth in them, but I feel like both of these are still quite man-centered! Do you think God created people just to watch them fall and then fix it? Or do you think He actually had something else in mind? Something bigger and larger that moved His heart to create? Is there something that He wanted that doesn't have to do with just fixing the problems that are created by man's sin and blindness? He does have something bigger and He always has.

And if I were to try to summarize His purpose, and that's all I can really do today, I would say that the eternal purpose of God is bound up with this corporate "thing"—you could call it a creation, a kingdom, a church, a body, a wife or a bride, or a harvest— I don't really know what to call it. It's a corporate body or kingdom. It's any of those things and all of those things, because those things are all the pictures of it in the Old Testament that God used to illustrate it. They aren't different things, they're all one thing! The Lord shows you His one purpose through all of these perspectives because they're all created arrows that point to His one perfect purpose.

So let me try again, **the eternal purpose of God is bound up with this corporate thing or body or creation—whatever—that receives all that He is and has—which has to do with the love of God. And in receiving all that God is and has it thereby becomes the increase and expression of it—which has to do with the glory of God.**

Now, if only one thing gets stuck in your head and in your heart this morning, it should be this: **The eternal purpose of God is bound up with this one “thing” that receives all that God is and has (which is the love of God) and that that corporate thing bears in itself the increase or expression of it (which is the glory of God).**

Don't take me too seriously, but I think there's a sliver of truth in the following: If God just told you that His eternal purpose was to create a corporate body that would receive His life and then bear that image, and you asked Him, “WHY?? Why did You do it?” Imagine you are there with Him before the creation of the world, and there is the perfect fellowship of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, not lacking anything. And you open your mouth and ask God, “What moved You to even DO this purpose? Why did you even have a purpose??”

I think that if we understand these two words correctly, part of God's answer to the “Why?” question would be **Love and Glory**. Both of those words need to be defined by the Spirit of truth in our soul or we will do what I talked about before, we will define these words in the dark.

But, as the Lord begins to open the eyes of our heart to these realities, I think you could say that Love is the nature of God. The Scripture says, “God is love,” It is the very nature of God to give Himself, to pour Himself out. Giving Himself wasn't just a plan or a good idea. I think it is part of His own being and nature to pour out Himself, to share Himself, to give Himself. And yet in order to give Himself, He has to give Himself to that which can receive Him and bear Him and not try to mix other things with Him. And so there's a very specific kind of creation – the New Creation in Christ—that He can give Himself to.

My point is that I think that the word Love describes an aspect or reality in God's being where He is something like a waterfall. How do you stop a waterfall from pouring out? That's just what it is! How do you stop Niagara Falls from giving itself constantly? That's what Niagara Falls is! And in that way, love is part of God's being and substance and nature. It's a giving of Himself, and yet He cannot give Himself to something that is totally contrary and opposite to Him. He cannot pour Himself into a vessel of dishonor.

**So what does He do? He creates this thing, this body, this kingdom, this bride that can receive Him. He creates something that's actually made out from His same life.** We're obviously not Christ, but we're made through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We're taken from His side and we're made to bear Him, to receive Him and to be filled up with Him and then the result is that we become His expression, His manifestation.

It's like that diamond analogy from years ago. Imagine you take a big truck load of diamonds one night and dump them on someone's driveway and they say, "Get these rocks off my driveway! They're useless." But then the sun comes out in the morning and then all the diamonds receive and make manifest the light.

Well, in the dark these diamonds *are* useless. But in the light we see that these are no ordinary rocks or stones. Light can go into them! Light can fill them! What makes them precious? They are precious because the light enters and fills and makes manifest the light. They don't have any glory of their own, but they bear the glory of another source.

That's what God does with the church. He doesn't make Himself any different. The church isn't adding anything to Him. But it does become an enlargement (so to speak) or a greater expression or reality of what He already is. But in order for it to become that, it has to receive all things from Him. It has to receive everything of Him. It has to receive the love of God.

Romans 5:5 says something close to "*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Spirit He has given to us.*" It's not that God loved you so much that He gave you His Spirit. That's not what that verse is saying. No. It says the love of God has been poured out BY the Spirit. In other words, here's the love of God: It's the Spirit that He gave you! He poured out His love... and the love was His very own Spirit poured out. The thing that defines His love, or that puts a name-tag on it or boundaries around it, is His own life, His own Spirit. What's the love of God? It's the Spirit that He's given you.

What did He give it to you for? Well, yes, you get to receive it. We are the eternal beneficiaries of that love, yet there is a purpose for getting it and that purpose is Glory.

**So let me say it again: The eternal purpose of God is bound up with this corporate thing called a creation, a kingdom, a church, a body, a wife, a harvest, etc., that receives all that He is and has, and that becomes the increase and expression of it. Love and glory...**

You know there are pictures of this all throughout the natural creation. We're so blind. We are so blind that we can walk around the natural world for eighty years bumping into pictures, illustrations, and testimonies of this purpose and not even seeing it! That's what you're seeing every day of your life! You go outside and a plants drop seeds into the earth... and then it comes back up again... then the seed gives it's life into the earth... and yet it rises and has an increase coming back up!

Or like where Isaiah talks about the rain that falls to the earth... it doesn't just fall and stay there. The mission of the rain is not unfruitful because what falls down to the earth rises up in the fruit and returns having accomplished what it was sent for. Isaiah is talking about the Word of God and how it's like the rain that falls to the earth and doesn't return void because it brings back up with it a harvest of what is sown in the earth.

These kinds of pictures are all around us in the natural creation. God designed it that way. And we're so blind that we walk in this world of shadows and testimonies and pictures, all created by God to point to one thing that He wants, and we miss it. Not only that, but we grab these created things and we make a purpose for them all for ourselves. We take the things He made to point to *His* purpose, and all that we can think to do with them is to use them for our own purposes. That's just what we do.

**But, God has His own purpose. And I think the reason for having purpose is because the nature of God is to give Himself and to glorify Himself.** I think it's to love and to glorify Himself.. And what is "glorify" except to reveal, to make known, and to show forth all that He is and has. And He does this in the corporate "thing" that He's joined Himself to. That's where He does it. That's why He decided to create.

When I use the word create or creation, don't just think of just chickens and bushes and rocks. Think of something that came out from God that He created to bear His life and glory. The natural creation could only do it in a shadowy-type of way. The natural creation could bear the lesser glory of types and shadows. But there is a new creation in Christ that can actually bear all that He IS, and can showcase it in its perfection as a new creation, as a new man, in a new covenant, forever.

We're going to look at these different pictures. We'll go through pictures of creation and kingdom and church and wife and body and harvest... And we'll see that every one of them has been fulfilled and made manifest and is being made manifest. It's been fulfilled, and yet the fulfillment of it is growing in a people. It's been accomplished, it is finished, and yet what's finished in Him needs to become finished in us. You see?

You read a verse like Ephesians 3:11 or 12— "According to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."



'Which He accomplished'... It didn't say, "He's going to accomplish it." He did it! Every one of these pictures, the way that the harvest comes about, the body, and the bride, all of it is accomplished. His eternal purpose is accomplished. But now it must conquer your soul. Now God's finished work must become your present reality.

If you go back in Ephesians to verse 8 it says, *"To me who is less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God..."*

So something was hidden in God who created all things through Christ, and the Word became the expression and creation of these things. *"...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God maybe made known by the church..."* By the church!... By the corporate thing, the body, that bears in itself the unfolding of this mystery. Do you see?

*"...made known by the church, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished and brought to pass, in Christ Jesus our Lord..."*

This is something we're going to see too. These aren't things we're waiting for God to do. He's done all that needs to be done, but what needs to happen now is that you and I must bear in ourselves this reality. He's accomplished the purpose. He's perfectly done all the work associated with it and created this new creation, a bride that came out from His side and was given back to Him; He's created this kingdom that He reigns in, but now, we must know this purpose as the sole reason that we exist and experience what He has done becoming the reality that we live in.

I'm just going to break down into four categories what we're going to look at in this class. This kind of the way I have it in my mind right now. I have the class broken down into four separate sections. The first has to do with **the identity of the church** – what is it? How does God see it? How does God define it? There are a lot of things in there, but I guess the definition or reality or identity of the church will be the first thing we talk about, and again, how that relates with Old Testament pictures, especially with Israel.

Then we're going to talk about **the birth of the church**. How does God create it? Where does it come from? Does He just grab some people and say, 'Hey, you guys are the church,' or is there some very specific, detailed way that He shows that this comes about? How does He create the church?

We'll look at this from a bunch of different stories. We're going to be using the Old Testament to demonstrate these things because that's what the Old Testament is! The Old Testament is a collection of stories, pictures, words, etc. that point to eternal realities in Christ. It honestly seems kind of weird now for someone to say to me, "Oh you're going to talk about this from the Old Testament." I understand where that comes from because unfortunately we're not really used to looking at the Old Testament like that, but at the same time, these days, I just want to reply, "Where else did you think I was going to talk about this from? Did you think I was going to talk about it from the New Testament?" The New Testament is just the declaration of the fulfillment of all the things that are in the Old Testament!

The New Testament has teaching about some of these things, but mostly it just gathers up the shadows and pictures and fragments of the Old Testament and declares them to be real in Christ. But if you really want to look to where the pictures are, you have to go to the Old Testament. You can't just go to the New Testament where Jesus says, 'I am the door.' You have to go back to all the pictures of the door to understand what door He is. He's 'I Am'-ing the door. Well there are a lot of pictures of the door.

So yes, we're going to go to the Old Testament. We're going to go looking at these pictures because if you want to know where the church came from, you have to read the story of Jacob. It's when Jacob is coming out of Laban's house with two companies that the Lord says, "You are Israel. You've wrestled with man and God and from now on you are Israel."

If you want to look at where the bride came from, you have to go to Adam and Eve, among other places. Paul himself says that.

Where does the church come from? Well, you have to go to the bloody door, because all of them went to a door and they all came out of the door as one new man. How are you going to possibly understand what that means unless you go to the God-given description of it and let the Spirit deal with your heart there?

So the categories are: the **identity of the church**, the **birth of the church**, and the third thing is the **relationship of the church**. There is this body, this corporate thing, but how does God relate to it? How does God see it? What is involved in the relationship? What are the aspects of the relationship? What's included? What's excluded? Where are the pictures pointing to it? There are TONS and TONS of pictures about how God relates to this thing that He has given His love to, and created for His own glory. So we'll look at the relationship of the church.

And the fourth thing is the **purpose of the church**. WHY did He do it? Where are the descriptions in the bible of God's reason? There are little statements in the New Testament about how we are a praise of His glory, or 'to Him be the glory forever and ever amen.' But if you want to know what glory is and means and looks like, and how that works in a people, then you have to go back to the places where God demonstrated all these things. You have to go back to the kingdom of God and all the pictures of God's glory filling up the land. You have to look at the glory in the tabernacle and temple—the places where we see the purpose for which God made and created this living corporate body that receives His Son and bears His image.

So again, the identity of the church, the birth of the church, the relationship of the church, and the purpose of the church.... Those are the four main categories of things we're going to be talking about.