

HOPE FOR THE WORLD

Ephesians 3:7-13



SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, we heard about how the manifold wisdom of God was to be revealed through the church. Paul says to the churches in Ephesus (and to us as well) that we cannot experience the fullness of the gospel without the church. And yet, we still struggle to grasp the beauty of the Church. Pastor Andy shared three ways that might be the case. First, church can become a means to our own end. We fall into a trap where we treat the church as a place for our comfort and pleasure. Second, church can become a means for the church's end. Church as an institution and the ministries, programs, and events that it has can become an idol where they are prized with more value than the individuals that make up the church. Lastly, Church can become a means to culture's end - where in order to be relevant to the culture, becomes one that listens to what culture dictates how church ought to be.

Sometimes we struggle with the tension between these three and at times we feel the pull inward, focusing on the institution of the church too much, becoming a holy huddle. Other times, we feel the pull of culture outwards and become too focused on what the world tells the church how they ought to behave.

But ultimately, we must remember that church must be a means to God's end. And in order to do that, we must be committed to the gospel, we must be called into a gospel community, and we must be sent out as a missional community.

When we look at Christ, rather than the position or stance he took, let's adopt his posture of love, the hope that he had for the world, We must understand that we are all uniquely wired and gifted to display the wisdom of God, the multi-colored, multi-faceted wisdom of God.



OUTLINE

1 THE STRUGGLE OF GRASPING THE BEAUTY OF CHURCH

When we view church as a means for our own end, we begin having a consumer mindset. We must realize that though individual salvation is important, communal redemption is also part and parcel of God's plan for us. When church becomes a means for church's end, we begin idolizing the ministries and platforms we are building. When church becomes a means for culture's end, we begin straying towards what the culture tells the church how she should behave.

2 CHURCH AS A MEANS TO GOD'S END

Ultimately, church must be a means to God's end. In order to be faithful to that, we must be committed to the gospel, we must be called into a gospel community, and we must be sent out as a missional community (remembering that God is a "sent" God. As God sent Jesus, Jesus sends us to display the manifold wisdom of God.

3 A POSTURE OF LOVE

Sometimes we can be discouraged. Perhaps we have been hurt by church. Perhaps we have been entangled in the politics of church or the differing opinions and views of people within the church. Yet more than a position or stance that Jesus took, let's take on a posture of love for others, a hope for the world - that our Father is in charge and sovereign over all things.



kairos
church

? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Have you ever been jaded or angry at the church?

2

Do we treat church as an afterthought, bonus, or means to our own end?

3

How do we become a church whom's means is for God's end? Not the church's end or the culture's end?

4

Have you found yourself so focused on doing "good" that you've forgotten the gospel? Or have you found yourself so deeply engrossed in being "holy" that you've forgotten to go out and do good?

5

How much do you believe that the church in Jesus is the hope of the world?



BIG IDEA

We can struggle with grasping the beauty of church because we either a) make church a means for our own end, b) make church a means for church's end, or c) make church a means for culture's end. But we must remember that church is meant to be a means to God's end. As we commit ourselves to the gospel, as we become committed to a gospel community, and as we are sent out as a missional community, let's be encouraged and filled with hope - taking on the posture of Jesus as a loving servant, having a hope and child-like faith that our Father is in charge and sovereign over all.