

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #3

God's Call to His Church

Feb. 5, 2025

God's Ultimate Purpose For His Church

I Pet. 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Eph. 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be Holy And Without Blemish.

Rev. 5:9-10 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ¹⁰ And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

1. Called to faith in Christ Rom. 8: 28-30; I Cor. 1:9; I Thess. 2:10- 12
to salvation in God through Jesus Christ by the power of The Holy Spirit.

2. Called to eternal life I Tim. 6: 12; Heb. 9: 15

3. Called to Sanctification I Thess. 4:3a
For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,

4. Called to Image of Christ Rom. 8:28-29
And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

5. Called to the kingdom of God I Thess. 2:12
That ye would walk worthy [axios] of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.

Worthy: 2 Greek words

Strong's #2661 = kataxioo = To Be Counted Worthy; To Be Deemed Entirely Deserving
We are counted worthy because of what Christ has already done for us on the Cross.

He is the One who is really counted worthy. [used only 4x in Scripture]

Strong's #514 = axios = To Be Worthy Of On The Grounds Of Being Fit, Meet,
Prepared, Suitable [41x in Scripture]

Kingdom: 932= basileia - especially refers to the rule of Christ in believers' hearts -
which is a rule that "one day will be universal on the physical earth in the Millennium"

Glory: 1391 = doxa which can refer to the glory bestowed upon believers, reflecting their transformation and sanctification through Christ. In the New Testament, "doxa" takes on a richer theological meaning, emphasizing the divine glory revealed in Jesus Christ and the eschatological hope of believers sharing in that glory.

Col. 1:27 which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Rom. 8:16-18 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

6. Called to holy living

I Thess. 4:7; I Pet. 1: 15-16; II Tim. 1:9

I Thess. 4:7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. [#38. hagasmos]

the process of making or becoming holy, set apart, sanctification, holiness, consecration.

I Pet. 1:15-16 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conduct;

¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Powerful Truth: When we are born again as a justified believer,

we are BETROTHED to Jesus Christ. He is our future bridegroom.

II Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I MAY present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Chaste: #53 - hagnos = This is the root from which hagasmos [#38], SANCTIFIED, comes.

Holiness or *hagasmos* in the Greek has been defined by Wescott as:

"the preparation for the presence of God."

Our life is a "preparation time" before we are to be presented to Christ as a pure virgin.

II Cor. 11:3-4 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴ For if he that cometh preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Gal. 1:6-7 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ⁷ Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

- The peril, then, is that of unfaithfulness to her fiancé.
- The engaged woman owes her love and allegiance to but one—her betrothed.
- If she shares herself with any other man, she is guilty of unfaithfulness.
- The word translated "simplicity" means "sincerity, singleness of devotion."
- A divided heart leads to a defiled life and a destroyed relationship.

Reminder: Filthy garments were associated with defilement & revealed that the priest no longer reflected holiness. Priest cannot stand before God in defiled garment.

- The garment revealed the inward condition of the heart.

Key: Just as the priests could defile their garments, we too, can become defiled by unfaithfulness, disobedience and moral unfitness.

The priests in Filthy garments is a perfect picture of a "carnal believer" who has on "blackened" garments, but is nevertheless trying to stand before the Lord.

Notice the words MIGHT and MAY. Consider: Paul desired to present this church

"as a chaste and holy virgin, without spot or wrinkle," but it appears to NOT be a given. Consider: It appears to not be automatic. Something is required of believers. We are to be obedient to the call of sanctification. When we fully surrender to the Holy Spirit, He does the work in us to prepare us to be the chaste and holy virgin, without spot or wrinkle. Ponder: Many believers are not obedient to the call to be sanctified!

The people of ancient Sardis were fabulously wealthy but by the time of the New Testament, the city was in decline. Historical writers state that the men of Sardis became soft. They dressed and behaved like women. Their skin was soft to touch like women's skin. It seems there was gender confusion in the city of Sardis and homosexuality was rampant in the city. Even though it was rich and very sophisticated, it fell into moral decay. It was an empty shell of what it had been.

Rev. 3:1b I know thy works, that thou hast a name [reputation] that thou livest, and art dead. Live: #2198. Zaó The concept of life was closely tied to one's relationship with God, obedience to His commandments, and the hope of resurrection. The NT writers, particularly the Apostle John, emphasize the abundant and eternal life that Jesus offers to believers, which transcends mere physical existence.

Jesus' analysis: You are not alive, but you are dead. [#3498 nekros]

- Corpse or cadaver: A body that is vacated of life

The Holy Spirit was no longer working in them. Therefore, they are a spiritual cadaver; an empty shell of what they used to be.

- Outward things appeared well to men, but there was only the form of godliness, not the power; a name to live, not a principle of life.

It seems the church in Sardis was not aggressive in its witness to the city. There was no persecution because there was no invasion of the enemy's territory. No friction usually means no motion! The church as a respectable group of people who were neither dangerous nor desirable. They were decent people with a dying witness and a decaying ministry.

Rev. 3:2-3 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Watch: #1127 grégoreó > Present imperative participle: Be continually watching

- to watch, to be vigilant, to stay awake
- Derived from the Greek root word, egeirō, meaning "to awaken" or "to arouse from sleep."
- "It is not merely the call to be awake; it is to remain awake, to keep a vigil as a watchman in the midst of a sleeping encampment."
- often used in the context of spiritual readiness and moral alertness,

urging believers to be attentive to their faith and the coming of the Lord.

- Live in anticipation of Christ's return: a call to remain steadfast and prepared.

Received: to seize or lay hold [grab; capture] of something in order to make it your own
To graciously receive something that is freely and easily given

Hold Fast = #5083. téreó > To keep, to guard, to observe, to watch over

➤ used in the context of keeping commandments, guarding the faith, or observing teachings.
A call to diligently preserve the teachings and commandments of Jesus amidst a culture that was often hostile to their faith.

Rev. 3:3b Therefore if You Will Not Watch, I Will Come Upon You as a Thief, and
You Will Not Know What Hour I Will Come Upon You

The word translated "watch" here is from the Greek word "threw" (tereo) which means
to be alert and on guard.

There are consequences for the sleeping saint. [not watching; not holding fast]
SLEEPY SAINTS by A W Pink: What an anomaly! Drowsing on the verge of eternity!
A Christian has been: (1) awakened from the sleep of death in trespasses and sins,
(2) made to realize the unspeakable awfulness of endless misery in hell
(3) the indescribable joy of everlasting bliss in heaven, and
(4) thereby brought to recognize the seriousness and solemnity of life.
(5) He has been taught experientially the worthlessness of all mundane things and the
preciousness of Divine things. He has turned his back on Vanity Fair and has started out on his
journey to the Celestial City [Phil. 3:20-21].
(6) He has been quickened into newness of life [Rom 6:4].
(7) He has been supplied with the most powerful incentives to press toward the mark for the
prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

- Matt. 25:21, 23; II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:11-15; Phil. 3:14

Nevertheless, it is sadly possible for him: (1) to suffer a relapse,

- (2) for his zeal to abate Heb. 6:11-12
- (3) his graces to languish
- (4) for him to leave his first love Rev. 2:4-5
- (5) become weary of well-doing II Thess. 3:13; Gal. 6:9

Warning: Unless he is on his guard, drowsiness will steal over him, and he will fall asleep.

Slumber Spiritually: inattentive to our walk with God, lazy about our spiritual development,
slack in our disciplines of prayer and Bible reading.

- Heb. 3:13 Corruptions still indwell in him, and sin has a stupefying effect.
- Gal. 1:4 He is yet in this evil world. It exerts an enervating influence on him.
feel drained of energy or vitality.
- I Pet. 5:8 Satan seeks to devour him. Unless resisted steadfastly,

Satan will hypnotize him. [James 4:6-7; Eph. 6:11-13]

Thus, the menace of this spiritual "sleeping sickness" is very real.

Slumbering saints! Taking their ease while threatened by danger!

- I Tim. 6:12 Lazy instead of fighting the good fight of faith
- Matt. 5:16; Col. 4:5 Trifling away opportunities to glorify their Savior.

Eph. 5:16 Do not redeem the time.

I Cor. 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God:
I speak this to your shame.

Wiersbe: The believer who is compromising with sin has no witness to the lost around him, those who "have not the knowledge of God."

What a shameful thing to be selfishly living in sin while multitudes die without Christ!

Paul's Admonition to Believers: WAKE UP

Rom. 13:11-14 Do this, knowing that this is a critical time. It is already the hour for you to awaken from your sleep [of spiritual complacency]; for our salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed [in Christ].

Context: The emphasis is on the imminent return of Christ. As His servants, we want to be found faithful when He returns. The completion of our salvation is near!

- God's rescue which delivers believers out of destruction *and into* His safety.

I Thess. 5:6-11 Paul admonishes the believer to WAIT UP for Christ's return by behaving in a godly way. Don't be caught off guard. The Biblical idea of waiting is HIGHLY ACTIVE.

I Thess. 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly [fully aware; understand] that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

I Thess. 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch [alert] and be sober.

Note: Sleep = *katheudo* = refers to spiritual lethargy and negligence with a view to Christ's return > To be spiritually asleep with the result that one becomes secure and unconcerned in sin as well as indolent and careless in the performance of the call on his life and the work God has prepared for him to accomplish.

The early Christians lived in anticipation of Christ's return, and "grégoreó" [watch] was a call to remain steadfast and prepared.

I Thess. 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. [armor to protect us]

Faith and love are like a breastplate that covers the heart: faith toward God, and love toward God's people. Hope is a sturdy helmet that protects the mind.

Dedicated believers: Col. 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Powerful Reminder: Lest we get the idea that watching and waiting are all that He requires, Jesus added this parable to encourage us to be working when He comes.

Parable of the 10 minas in Luke 19:11-27 > Teaches about the coming Kingdom on earth.

- A nobleman leaves for a foreign country to be made king.
- Before his departure, he gave 10 minas to 10 of his servants. [Luke 19:12-13]
- He told them to "occupy until I come." Put this money to work.

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying,
We will not have this man to reign over us.

When the man was crowned king, he returned to his homeland and called the 10 servants to give an account of how they had used the money.

#1: His mina had earned 10 more: Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

#2: His mina had earned 5 more: Rewarded with charge of five cities.

#3: Did nothing with his mina except hide it in a cloth. I was afraid of you.

- The king responded by calling him a "wicked servant."
His mina was to be given to the one who had earned 10. [Luke 19:22-24]

Some bystanders: "Sir...he already has 10!"

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, that to everyone who has, more will be given,
And as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

1. The nobleman represents Jesus who left this world but will return as King.
2. He charges his followers with a valuable commission.
3. We must be faithful to serve Him until He returns.
4. Upon His return, Jesus will evaluate the faithfulness of His own people. [Rom. 14:10-12]
5. He has promised rewards for those who are faithful in their charge.
6. Our future roles will be in direct proportion to how faithful we have been with our assets.
7. If we don't invest what God has given us on earth,
we will "suffer loss" at the Judgment Seat of Christ. [I Cor. 3:15]

Powerful Truth: How one lives his or her life results in very real repercussions
for His coming kingdom.

I Cor. 4:2 Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

I Thess. 5:9 For God hath not appointed [destined] us to wrath,
but to obtain salvation [deliverance] by our Lord Jesus Christ,

- context = tribulation period; the Day of the Lord; NOT HELL

- Believers have an appointment with salvation [deliverance] not wrath.

Walvoord: In this passage he is expressly saying that our appointment is to be caught up to be with Christ. The appointment for the world [unbelievers] is for the Day of the Lord, the day of wrath. One cannot keep both appointments. We made our appointment for salvation and rescue when we trusted Christ as our personal Savior from sin. He is the One who bore our judgment and God's wrath on the cross. Jesus Christ bore for us all the divine judgment necessary for our salvation. He has promised that we shall never taste any of God's wrath.

I Thess. 5:9-10 For God has not destined [appointed] us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are Awake or Asleep,

we will live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Salvation = Strong's 4991 = sôtéria = deliverance; preservation; *salvation*, i.e. God's rescue which delivers believers out of destruction *and into* His safety

- His coming for the body of Christ is the event that will keep them out of THAT DAY.
- ❖ Their hope in Christ's future return should serve as an encouragement to them in their suffering, motivating them to live responsibly for Him.

Note: This promise extends even to those believers who are not alert. A state of non-alertness affects present sanctification, but does not impact their being taken in the rapture.

Paul's Admonition to Believers: CLEAN UP

We do not want to be found dressed in dirty garments when the Lord returns.

Romans 13:12-13 The night is far spent, the day is at hand:

let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Powerful Reminder: The garment revealed the inward condition of the heart.

Key: Just as the priests could defile their garments, we too, can become defiled by unfaithfulness, disobedience and moral unfitness.

Key: A Priest cannot stand before God in defiled garment.

The priests in filthy garments is a perfect picture of a "carnal believer" who has on "blackened" garments, but is nevertheless trying to stand before the Lord. [Lev. 16:23-24, 32]

Key: We must be "partakers of Christ's holiness" in order to come into His presence.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Paul's Admonition to Believers: GROW UP

Rom. 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and

make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

To "put on" the Lord Jesus Christ means to become more like Him, to receive by faith all that He is for our daily living. God warns us not to make provisions for the flesh.

If we feed the flesh, we will fail, but if we feed the inner man the nourishing things of the Spirit, we will succeed.

Rev. 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven Followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. [same word, enduo, in Rom. 13:14]

Put On: Clothed #1746. Enduo = put on clothing or be clothed

In the New Testament, it is often used metaphorically to describe the spiritual act of putting on virtues, Christ, or the armor of God.

"Enduo" in the NT emphasized a transformation or adoption of a new spiritual identity.

Titus 2:16 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and

our Savior Jesus Christ;

Looking #4327 *prosdechomai* expresses expectant waiting where a person is ready and willing to receive all that is hoped for. This is active "looking-for-and-waiting!"

Present tense; Believer's Continual Attitude

Reminder: Our attitudes always influence our actions.

The attitude of expectant waiting should have a profound effect on the way we are living.

It should work its way out in our daily practical choices, motivating our moment-by-moment choices to mortify sin. [Rom. 6:11, Rom. 8:13; Col 3:5]

It should cause us to intentionally, radically pursue righteousness, godliness and holiness.

[Lev. 11:44, Isa. 51:1, Lk.1:74-75, I Pet. 1:14-16; Hen. 12:14; Rom. 6:22; II Cor 6:17-18,

II Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:12; I Thess. 3:13; I Thess. 4:3, 7; II Pet. 3:11; III John 1:11;

I Tim. 4:7-9; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22]

How can I maintain this expectant attitude? Depend daily on the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit Who fills and controls us [Eph. 5:18] will give us a proper opinion of Jesus by daily directing our hearts toward heaven [Col 3:1-2] and His soon Coming!

English dictionary definitions of "wait"

- to stay in place in expectation of
- to remain stationary in readiness or expectation

As soldiers we are always on duty and are not to leave our station. We are never to take a "furlough" for the spiritual war is incessant and our ever-prowling crafty enemy is invisible!

- to be ready and available
- to stay or rest in expectation...till the arrival of some person
- to rest in expectation and patience
- Waiting, therefore, is the working out of hope.

Powerful Truth: When we maintain an attitude of expectant looking,

it will radically impact our life and our usefulness to the Lord.

Dwight L. Moody: I never preach a sermon without thinking that possibly the Lord may come before I preach another.

William Gurnall Christ hath told us He will come, but not when,

that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle.

H A Ironside It is one thing to hold the doctrine of the Lord's return, but quite another to be held by that blessed hope. Hold to the Word of Truth, so that it may hold you firm when the winds of adversity blow unexpectedly into your life.

A W Pink My head may be filled with prophecy, I maybe an ardent pre-millennarian, I may think and say that I am "looking for that blessed Hope" but, unless Divine grace is teaching me to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," then I am deceiving myself. To be truly "looking for that blessed hope" is a spiritual attitude: it is the longing of those whose hearts are right with God.

- Our text may be summed up in three words: grace, godliness, glory.