

⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 3:8-10

“The church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. It is not a divine afterthought. It is not an accident of history. On the contrary, the church is God’s new community...His purpose, conceived in a past eternity, being worked out in history, and to be perfected in a future eternity, is not just to saved isolated individuals and so perpetuate our loneliness, but rather to build His church, that is, to call out of the world a people for His own glory.”

John Stott

¹⁸ I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18

“If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all; and the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth.”

Charles Spurgeon

¹⁹ ... he [Jesus] went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.

1 Peter 3:19

⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Revelation 1:8

“The death of Jesus was the low point in his humiliation. The overcoming of death through the resurrection was the first step back in the process of his exaltation. This is particularly significant. For inflicting death was the worst thing sin and the powers of sin could do to Christ, yet in the inability of death to hold him is symbolized the totality of his victory. What more can the forces of evil do if someone whom they have killed does not stay dead?”

Millard Erickson

“All too often Christians expect pastors to emulate secular helping professions. We expect medical doctors to treat us, not train us to treat ourselves. We expect lawyers to advise us, not train us to solve our own problems. Hence, we expect pastors to serve us, not train us to do the work of ministry.

John Wimber

“In recent years, Americans have chosen churches not so much to meet with God and surrender to His ways, as to satisfy some personal need. Unlike the rich young ruler in the gospels, church attenders seldom ask, ‘What must I do?’ They are far more likely to ask, ‘What do I get out of this?’ ... In America’s inward directed culture, this means that every congregation must challenge its members to be more than mere consumers of religion... [The church] was never designed to permanently be a haven to those terminally addicted to self-interest.”

Bruce Shelly

²⁶ Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:26-28

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Proverbs 18:21