

of God's purpose for His church. We read in Eph. 5 in the last part of vs. 25 and following, Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; 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." God's purpose in the world now is to gather out from the world those who are to be to the glory of His grace through all eternity.

This is the primary purpose of His activity. In Eph. 1:18, he prayed, That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. It is right and proper that we should constantly think of what wonderful things we have in His blessings to us and of how marvelous is His grace to us. But I believe that these verses show us that a fundamental purpose in His grace is the glory of His inheritance in the saints. It is His purpose to gather out from the world those who shall be to His glory forever. Now we all as Christians have a very important duty to perform in connection with this work of gathering them out. but the first and primary part of it is to make sure that we ourselves are a worthy portion of that which he calls his church, the Body of Christ, that which He gathers out from the world for His glory. And so we have this emphasis in the NT on the fact that we should grow up into Him in all things.

Eph. 4:11-15 brings it out very clearly. God has given His church apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers. Why? For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of ~~Christ~~^{Christ}, and then He doesn't say, "Till you grow to be what He wants you to be". He says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". And vs. 15