

Rediscovering God's Church

NY message on 01/01/2017 at Concord church

One of the grandest & greatest themes of the Scripture is the Church—the object of God's affection, the future bride of His beloved Son. God's intention is to provide for His Son a perfect companion for all eternity.

The Church is also God's redemptive agent in the world BUT His challenge is the very people, who comprise the church. He must get us/receive us/carry us/ make us, in our unruly/wayward/naughty/disobedient/disorderly and rotten condition, to become the perfect bride of His only Son.

The Mirror of God's Word.

Scripture compares God's Word to a mirror that reveals our inward spiritual condition, so that we may see ourselves as God sees us: all the way to the end result—not only as we should be but as we will be.

The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart(1 Samuel 16:7).

Once we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and confessed Him as our Lord by our mouth {in other words we have been reconciled with God and cleansed from our sins}, it (the mirror) shows us what we have become as God's new creation in Christ.

We experience in a personal way these truths of the Scripture:

- *Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away: behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

- *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them(Ephesians 2:10).*

In the early part of the year, we will look into the mirror of God's Word, so we can learn individually as well as collectively, what **we are like** in God's sight. God's final objective is not just redeemed people; His goal is a special people. We will examine the seven pictures of God's people as revealed by the apostle Paul in the New Testament. For now, Let's move forward and learn about God's redemptive purposes.

God's purposes in redeeming His people to Himself are found in the book of Exodus: And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying *“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: you yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now than, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the people, for all the earth is Mine”* (Exodus 19: 3-5 NASB).

There are two primary objectives of redemption as revealed in these words of God to Israel.

1. A direct, personal relationship with God.

Notice, what God said about the actual act of redemption. “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought to Myself”. This Scripture reveals that God brings the redeemed to Himself. His first purpose of redemption is to bring His redeemed people into a direct, personal relationship with Him. It is surprising how few people in the Old Testament period seemed to grasp this concept. They were interested in the Law, material blessings and the Promised Land.

They were looking at **things**, which is why most of them missed out on a wonderful, direct, personal relationship with God. Even today, many people in the church do not seem to fully understand that the primary purpose of God is to bring us to Himself. Every thing else is secondary.

2. His Own Possession.

The second purpose of redemption is for God to make the redeemed into His own possession. Other translations use the phrases “a special treasure to Me”(NKJV). “My treasured possession”(NIV), and “a peculiar treasure unto me”(KJV).

The indication is that God wants to make us some thing **personal. Peculiar, special.** This is far above the level of what we could imagine or think for ourselves. That is why He redeemed us.

A New Creation/People.

Earlier, we read from 2-Cor 5:17 that talks about the new creation. We have to remember and understand that God invests in people. He is much more concerned about people than about things. This truth is illustrated beautifully and simply in Deuteronomy 32:9 “For the Lord’s portion is His people”. God’s purpose centers on His redeemed people—His portion in all that has happened and is happening in the world. We must as the redeemed must clearly understand that His ultimate goal is not only to redeem individuals; it is also the creation of a Special People—a single, new, organic(not artificial) whole. Something vastly different from what exists around us in the world.

In His prayer to His Father, Jesus revealed to us tremendous insight into the particular stage in God’s purposes in which we are living today. *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as you Father are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which you gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them and You in Me.; that they may be made perfect(complete) in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me”* (John 17:20-23).

Jesus’ ultimate vision is to blend individuals from every race and background into a visible unity. The world sees things in time and space: it does not see **mystical realities** of the Spirit Realm. If we as the true Church, are going to reach the world with God’s redemptive message, we must be Spiritually Healthy and Visible—some thing the world can see and appreciate.

Thus we can not hide or downplay our Christianity. In 2017, the Concord Community Church must be a true reflection of God’s redemptive people. As we move forward, others will also be drawn to Him in personal relationship and will join us in becoming His own Special treasure/portion/possession for all of eternity.