

Introductory Comments for Conference

by Kenny Pittman

The eternal purpose of God is to express his fullness in Christ, through the church, and in individual believers, and we need to see the eternal, have a sense of anticipation, and be prepared to receive God's word.

Duration: 16:40

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18

Topics: "Eternal Perspective", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a sense of the eternal in our lives. He shares a personal story about a book called 'The Ultimate in Intention' that ignited a passion for the eternal in a sister in Richmond, leading to the growth of the testimony of Jesus in that community. The speaker urges the audience to see beyond their small universe and to anticipate and prepare for God's word and moving. The sermon concludes with a call for prayer, asking the audience to pray aloud for everyone to hear and focusing on the verse Romans 8:29, which speaks about being conformed to the image of God's Son.

Transcript

Good evening. I'd like to have you all turn to the front of your handbook. Everyone should have one of these handbooks.

Jerry noted that most all the information you need will be from this handbook, so I'd like for you to turn to it. And just in way of introduction for our time together this week, I would like us to look at these verses on the front of this handbook. The theme for the conference the Lord has laid on our hearts some time ago, number of brothers and sisters from different assemblies sought the Lord together, was this thought of revisiting the eternal purpose of God.

But in a peculiar way, to see this eternal purpose of God as seen first in Christ, in this verse we'll read from Colossians 1:18, says, and he is head of the body, the church who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence to see this eternal purpose in Christ. Second, you'll note that we need to see this eternal purpose of God in the church. This verse is a verse the Lord laid on our heart.

Ephesians 1:22 and 23 and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. And then finally, we were impressed that

we need to see the eternal purpose of God in the Christian regarding the Christian. And we chose this verse Romans 8 29.

I think everyone knows this for whom he did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Now, brothers and sisters, as we come to this time, the Lord seems to impress me with a few things, just a few things I want us to focus on tonight.

And maybe we could use those things for the focus of our prayer as we close tonight. But I believe that as we come to this matter of the eternal purpose of God, we need three senses, not seven senses. We need three senses.

And may the Lord in his mercy give us the sensings as we come to him. The first is a sense of the eternal. If we don't have a sense of the eternal as Christians, we're dangerous.

You know, the other day I was near my house going down the road and I saw this bumper sticker on this car and this bumper sticker said, I am the center of the universe. I couldn't believe it. I actually sped up.

This young lady flew past me as they sped up. Luckily, I didn't get a ticket split sped up to see who the center of the universe was. I couldn't imagine, you know, sometimes you've even maybe thought that, but you wouldn't dare put a bumper sticker on your car.

But I believe if we don't see the eternal, that's what it becomes. We become the center of the universe. All of the Christian life has to do with me, my needs.

I don't doubt for a moment you have great needs. We all are needy people. But if the center is our needs, if the center is ourself, we become the center of the universe.

Think how sad that would be. Brothers and sisters, I believe above everything else as we come to this time, our one need is we need a sense of eternal. We need to see the big picture.

All of us need to see the big picture. I remember, well, it's been well over 30 years ago. A brother who was gracious enough to come, Vern, wrote a book, The Ultimate Intention.

And that book, that view of the ultimate, that view of the eternal caught fire on a sister in Richmond and that view of the eternal ignited a flame in other sisters in Richmond. And the testimony of Jesus, the brothers and sisters that I am privileged to meet with and to this day in Richmond are because someone caught a glimpse of the eternal. We need to see the eternal.

May God deliver us from this small universe that you and me, are you the center of your universe? Oh, may the Lord open our eyes. That's the burden for this conference, that we would see outside and beyond who we are and see the Lord Jesus in a way we never have before. A sense of the eternal.

This eternal is as large as Christ. We need to see the eternal in Christ Jesus. It's as large as the Lord Jesus.

Now, can you just for a moment imagine how large that is? Oh, how we need to see a large Christ. Brothers and sisters, most of my problems and I suspect maybe you're not too much different. Most of your problems result because you have seen a small Christ.

May the Lord Jesus give us this heavenly view in such a way that we would see a large Christ. That's the eternal purpose of God. Oh, that we might see him.

You know, but it doesn't only include the Lord Jesus somehow in this great mystery, it includes us. Now, can you imagine? I think that's the strangest thing. God in his wisdom has chosen a people to express that fullness of the Lord Jesus, as it says in Ephesians 1, 22 and 23, that the church is the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Can you imagine? I suspect when you look around at the church, you wonder if that's possible. I suspect when you look at the church, you're not too different from that great philosopher said, the more I get to know people, the more I like my dog. You wonder, is it possible that in the church? The fullness, the eternity of God can be expressed.

Do you know that's God's heart, brothers and sisters, that should lift us up, that he so loves us, that he has so chosen us, that he has so favored us, that he has brought us to be that full expression of Christ? You know, the place, the only place in the scripture where the phrase the eternal purpose of God is, is in Ephesians 3, 10. When it says that now through the church unto the principalities and powers, God will make known the all various wisdom of God through the church, according to the eternal purpose of God. What a grand privilege we have.

He could have chosen the heavens of the heavens to contain his glory. He could have chosen the most grand temple. Someone today was reminded, because I'm in the building industry, reminding me that I ought to go to Europe to see those temples that those buildings that lasted.

He could have chosen the most grand structure. But he chose you and me to be the place where his fullness is ultimately expressed. Can you imagine it? That ought to lift our hearts, that ought to cause us to rejoice.

And not only that. But this eternity of God, this this sense of the eternal, it is so small that it includes you. And me, as an individual Christian.

God is interested in you. God is interested in me. I'm always amazed when I read Colossians 1:27, that mystery hidden.

Christ in me, the hope of glory, Christ in you, the hope of glory. Brothers and sisters, this eternal purpose of God includes Christ, a large Christ. It includes his church, where all of his fullness one day will be manifest.

And it includes you as an individual believer. May we ask the Lord this week to give us a view of the eternal brothers and sisters as we press into difficult days. I wonder if this won't determine the end, what we have seen and what we have laid hold of.

May the Lord help us and give us that sense of the eternal. Now, the second thing that seemed to impress me as I was before the Lord was that what we need in coming to our time this weekend, this week is a sense of anticipation. I wonder if you aren't a little bit like me.

You noticed I've said that more than once. Have you lost your anticipation? Have you heard things like this so often that the edge is gone, that you sort of go through and you say, I have heard that or do you come with a sense of anticipation? Do you really have deep in your heart a sense that the Lord will meet you this

week? Do you have deep in your being a sense that the Lord will visit you this week? Brothers and sisters, I believe we need that sense. That sense of anticipation.

I was reading some of the Psalms last night, and I think of that Psalm 73, verse 25, and it says, There is none I desire in heaven beside thee. And there's none on earth. Think of that.

Think of David's desire when he said in Psalm 27, verse four, he said, One thing have I asked of the Lord, and that will I seek after that I may behold the beauty of the Lord and may dwell in the house of the Lord. Think of that. Do we have that sense of anticipation? Young people and children, those of us that have been here many years, one need we have is a sense of anticipation to meet the Lord.

I have been asking over and over, Lord, if that is absent in me, give that to me. Give me that yearning. Give me that desire.

The psalmist said in Psalm 42, as the deer pants after the water brooks. So my soul longs for thee, O God, give me that anticipation. I believe, brothers and sisters, that's what we need.

And finally, I believe we need a sense of preparation as we have prayed for this conference. I don't know how the Lord has led you to pray, but I can tell you in Richmond, as we have prayed over and over for this conference, the word that seems to come out of every prayer time has been, Lord, prepare us. Lord, prepare us, prepare us for your word, prepare the young people to see you in a way that they never have.

Prepare the children to have a living relationship with you in a way that they've never seen you. We've been recently hearing some messages in Richmond about how soon the coming of the Lord is. It's put, it's re-impressed this thought on our heart.

It has left us with a sense that we need to be a prepared people. Brothers and sisters, as you come this week, may our prayer be, Lord, prepare us. If we're unprepared, prepare us tonight.

If we're unprepared, prepare us to speak for you to speak. If we're unprepared, prepare us so that you can move. Prepare us that we one day can utter with like mind those that say in Revelation 22, verse 17, the spirit and the bride say, come.

That's a prepared heart. So these things, I hope they give us some focus as we come to pray. May the Lord give us a sense of the eternal.

May he lift us out of ourselves. If you've heard things before, may he give you a sense of anticipation. And may above everything else, he give us a sense of preparation that we may see him and be prepared for his word and his moving.

And what we'd like to do is have us have a few moments for prayer. And we want you, dear brothers and sisters, to pray loud enough so that everyone can hear you, everyone in this auditorium. We don't want any church mouses head bowed, quietly whispering in a devotional way.

Everyone lift up your head and let's pray. Let's seek the Lord as we never have, even if it's just a few minutes and say, Lord, would you give us a sense of eternity, a sense of your eternal purpose? Would you give us a sense of a spirit of anticipation? And would you give us prepared hearts as we gather this week? We want to ask the brothers and sisters to pray and to pray out loud. And even if you would, if you're not so shy, stand up and pray that everyone can hear you.

And then after we pray, Jerry will close our time together. So could we begin and encourage one another to seek the Lord?

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