

In All her Glory

Like Christians need to be reminded of the importance of baptism—not as a “been there, done that” aspect of a Christian life, so do Christians need to be reminded of that to which they now belong—the body of Christ, the saved, His church. Christ *“loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless”* (**Ephesians 5:25-27**). This passage tells us that the church for which Christ gave Himself is glorious, that is, honorable, esteemed, of high repute. Surely if Christ gave Himself for it, it should be highly esteemed.

In Position

The church for which Christ died is glorious because of its position in its relationship to Christ. Everything about our Lord is glorious. Even His voice is authoritative and glorious: *“And the LORD will cause His voice of authority to be heard”* (**Isaiah 30:30**). His name is glorious (**Nehemiah 9:5**). His body is glorious. *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself”* (**Philippians 3:20,21**). His gospel is glorious. *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God”* (**2Corinthians 4:3-4**). His appearing shall be glorious—*“looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus”* (**Titus 2:13**).

The church for which Christ died must be glorious because it partakes of his glory as His bride (**Ephesians 5:25-32**). This bride is His body. The church is glorious because it partakes of Christ’s glory as His body. The Father put *“all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”* (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). Writing to Christians, Paul said, *“Now you are Christ’s body ...”* (**1Corinthians 12:27**). Since Christ is glorious in all characteristics, and the church is one with Christ as His bride and as His body, in this intimate relationship it must be honored and esteemed. Any who think they exalt Christ while casting reflections upon the church, actually dishonor Christ Himself.

In Purpose

The church for which Christ died is glorious because of its purpose. The purpose of the church is to make known the *“manifold wisdom of God”* (**Ephesians 3:10**). The word “manifold” means manifesting itself in a great variety of forms (Thayer). Indeed, every characteristic feature of the church makes known the wisdom of God. This wisdom is seen in the duration of the church. It will continue forever (**Ephesians 3:20-21**). The wisest of men have never been able to establish an institution that will endure forever. The outreach of the church shows the wisdom of God. It not only is universal in its scope, but it reaches out to heaven itself, for there its head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is at the right hand of God. The wisest of men have never been able to set up such an institution. The organization of the church, the laws given to govern it, all make known the wisdom of God.

The purpose of the church is also to be a part the salvation of man—not that you must be in the church to be saved, but that only the saved are His church. Paul describes it as the place of reconciliation by the cross, that is, through the sacrifice of Christ (**Ephesians 2:16**). It is the place where man, who left God by reason of his sins, may return by obedience to the gospel and be reconciled to the One whom he offended. Christ purchased the church with his blood (**Acts 20:28**), and it is by the blood of Christ that we are redeemed from sin (**Ephesians 1:7**). It is abundantly evident, then, that if we are to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, we must be in that which he redeemed with that precious blood. One would be making a serious mistake in embracing the idea that the church is not essential, and that it has no real part in man's salvation.

In Price

The church for which Christ died is glorious because of the exorbitant price paid for it. In consideration of the value of the materials used in the construction of the tabernacle, the cost was great (**Exodus 25:1-9**). But the cost of Solomon's temple was even greater. Solomon *"made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones"* (**2Chronicles 1:15**). At least 183,000 workers were used in the construction of this magnificent structure (**1Kings 5**). But the price paid for the church was far greater. It cost the blood of the only Son of God (**Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7-14**). And again, one would be making a serious mistake in thinking that the church has no part in man's salvation, when God paid such a price for it.

In Purity

The church for which Christ died is glorious because of its purity. Remember the earlier reference (**Ephesians 5:15-27**) regarding the glory and purity of the church. When one obeys the gospel, God's power to save, and is added by the Lord to the church (**Acts 2:47**), he is cleansed from every sin; he is a new creature in Christ, with the old things passed away, and all things become new (**2Corinthians 5:17**). He is to walk in *"newness of life"* (**Romans 6:3-4**). He is to be pure in mind: *"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things"* (**Philippians 4:8**). As a child of the living God, with Christ ruling and reigning in his life, with only the purest of thoughts filling his heart, he will be pure in speech, pure in conduct, and thus cause the church to have the glory that Christ intended for it to have in its purity.

In Perfection

The idea of perfection is that of completeness, lacking in nothing. The church for which Christ died is glorious in its perfection, in its all-sufficiency. The responsibility God gave the church lies in three areas: in evangelism, in preaching the gospel to all the world; in edification, in teaching and encouraging every member to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in benevolence, in supplying the needs of those lacking among God's people (**Ephesians 4:11-16**). The success of the early church in meeting its responsibility clearly shows that it is capable of doing all that God has given it to do. Since God does His part in making the church glorious, it is for Christians to see that its glory shines into the hearts of all men everywhere.