

The Purpose of the Church

By Nick Bibile

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

For the perfecting of the saints

What is the purpose of the church? Is it not to evangelize to preach the gospel to bring unsaved to the kingdom of God, to do the will of God in obedience? Yes. The Christians are called soldiers for Christ. In evangelism we enter into enemy territory and as a soldier we need to be equipped as we go into enemy territory, we need to be spiritually equipped.

Apostle Paul speaks of perfecting the saints.

It says perfecting of the saints, some versions say equipping of the saints. The believers are perfect in Christ as Christ's righteousness is credited to us. In a legal standing we are perfect in Christ, but the saints/believers are not perfect in this life, meaning not perfect in sanctification as we are growing in perfection.

Let's see the word equipping. Apostle Paul uses the Greek word *katartismo*, it comes from the Greek word *katartizo* to mend something, repair or prepare something so it will be complete for use. We see the same Greek word is used in Matthew 4:21

Mt 4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

We see here James and John the two brothers were mending their fishing nets. It's the same Greek word used here, they were mending, equipping their nets, making perfect for the next catch of fish.

Ga 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Here we see when a believer falls into sin, those who are spiritual need to go and restore that person. The same Greek word *katartizo* is being used.

Lu 6:40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Again the same Greek word is used for perfect, perfect means here to prepare.

We see how God orderly perfectly arranged so beautifully, cornerstone being the Lord Jesus, with the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, then evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the body. How can you equip someone? Well according to majority of the churches they believe you need to attend some seminars or church growth? Read Rick Warren's book and in 40 days you will be fully

equipped. There is no 40 days waiting period, it is not looking for a seeker sensitive movement but to the word of God alone. The Pastor's work is to teach the fullness of the word without sugar coating, or give with melted butter. So the desire of the pastor is that his body, the believers/saints would be strong in the Lord and the local church would be strong. A pastor who cares for the body will pray for the ones that are weak. Listen what the word of God says when it comes to equipping.

When the word of God is preached in it's fullness, they will be equipped as the word of God is powerful.

2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The body/believers are not perfect, there is a lot of repair needs to be done, lot of mending to do, so the believers would be fully equipped, perfect for what? For the work of the ministry.

Sometimes God will use trials and suffering for perfection.

1Pe 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

We too were spiritually ruined, minds were darken, our wills were crooked and affections were unsanctified. Just like James and John mending their broken nets, God in his grace mended us, repaired us and renovated this ruined building. Why does God in his word equip us?

For the work of the ministry

The disciples were fishermen, they were mending their nets, but the Lord called them as he was going to give them a new job a new ministry as he said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." But first he equipped them, made them perfect for the ministry. Only they need was to be with him and to hear his word and to follow him.

He is the master and they were servants as we see the Greek word used here for work/service is diakonia. This comes from the Greek word diakonos means a servant, the emphasis here is the work to be done and not the relationship between the Lord and the servant Greek word doulos a bond slave.

The word diakonia means service or the ministry. Pastor preach the fullness of the word which will repair mend the believers for service. They would be equipped and perfect for the service.

1Th 3:10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

The believers will not be hearers of the word only but be doers of the word as they will become laborers for God. They would be involve in working for the ministry in serving God.

So the desire of the pastor is that his body, the believers/saints would be strong in the Lord and the local church would be strong. A pastor who cares for the body will pray for the ones that are weak.

Once they are equipped and become laborers for the Lord, they can be used mightily to help others who are weak and growing in the Lord, they can edify those who are in the church.

For the edifying of the body of Christ.

Today you hear as some say they go to church to be edified and the what they really mean is to feel good, a self esteem of one self. Many will edify one another with worldly talk, like in a club or in a society, they will make friends, talk about mutual things, of the football game, politics, movies, cooking talk of other people. This is what the world is doing and for many so called Christians this is the kind of edification they know as they get a good feeling when they associate people in the church. This is not what the Bible is speaking.

The Greek word used here for edify is oikodome means to build. Literally to build, to construct a building, but in context the meaning here is not literal but figurative it is used in a metaphorical sense.

We see an example in the New Testament Church when Peter preached the word of God in it fullness, the people were cut to the heart and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) Peter said to them, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:28)

Everybody who hears the word in the church will not be mended or be repaired. Some will come and will leave the church the same way they came without any mending or repairs. But some will be cut to the heart. Not all will benefit with the word of God only the true believers will benefit.

Mt 13:11 He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

The true believers will be edified, means to build. When there is a construction, you will find many workers and they all organize and busy in constructing the building. You don't find laborers just sitting and watching, they will be fired as they will become unprofitable for service. In the same way when the true believers are converted by the power of God, the same power of God will continue to use them. The power of God will not stop after conversion.

As we saw the word edify and the Greek word oikodome means to literally to construct a building, but in context the meaning here is not literal but figurative it is used in a metaphorical sense. Let us see another example. We see in the book of Ezra the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon and rebuilding the temple. Let us read Ezra chapter 9:6

6. And I said: "Oh my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt have grown up to the heavens.

Here we see true repentance in the light of the word of God.

Verse 8. "And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in his holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage."

Note you cannot even repent without the grace of God and it is God who enlightens our eyes.

Verse 9. "For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but he extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us to repair the house of our God, to rebuild it's ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem."

Here we go the Greek word oikodome, literally constructing a building in this case by the grace of God they realized of their sins and they repented then began the ministry of construction, as they repaired the house of God, mending, repairing it.

But in the book of Ephesians the church is not a building but believers gathered to worship and serve God. We are need to build one another spiritually for their growth. Edify one another is to build up one another. This is spiritual edification

Ro 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Ac 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

The purpose of the church is to build the believers and not to covet or to be greedy by sugar coating the word of God for their greediness to get money.

Today there are televangelists and ministers like Schambach, John Avanzini, Kenneth Hagin, Benny Hinn, John Hagee, Rod Parsley, T.D. Jakes, Kenneth Copeland, Fred Price and a host of others, who are preaching false doctrines that tingles the ears and give pleasure to the flesh, their motive is to make money out of the word of God and with craftiness with smooth tongues, and they can captivate and audience with great charm. They are not building the believers but to build their kingdom with peoples wallets. They live in million dollar homes, they fly around the country in their own personal jets, they ride in chauffeur driven limos. Their lifestyle does not match with the word of God.

Many people does not want to labor in reading the word of God, to study the word of God, they just want to hear and be entertain with those false teachers.

The popular TBN host Paul Crouch scream that he doesn't want to hear about "*doctrinal doo-doo.*"

Then, you'll see Crouch angrily tell people that if they want to complain to him about false teachings, they are simply wasting their time. *"Get out of my sight,"* he screams, *"I don't want to see your ugly faces!"* They blaspheme God evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne proclaiming himself to be God's *"Holy Bartender,"*

Benny Hinn with his false preaching ministry "reportedly takes in over \$100 million a year, which allows him to maintain a \$3.5 million home, and to spend \$8,000 on airline fares and stay in \$2,000/night hotel rooms.

The sad part is the true church of God is staying silent, they will not expose them. Even the reform churches are busy only exposing Arminianism, Satan is cunning as ever.

The late Walter Martin, the original Bible Answer-Man. He shared his own experience in trying to put together a coalition of church leaders to confront the heresies of TBN and other "Christian" networks.

"Recently, I committed an unpardonable sin. I sent a letter to fourteen of my colleagues, Christian leaders whom I could name, and I said, 'These are the following heresies being taught on radio and television. And it's a stench in the nostrils of God.' And then I just reproduced the quotations. And I said, 'I know you don't believe these things. Why don't we all stand together and say we are not going to give you any credibility if you are not going to stand for the foundations of the faith.' Twelve of them didn't bother to answer me. Two of them did. One said he would do absolutely nothing about it because unless they interfered personally in his program he didn't see where that was his business. And the other one said, 'Well, think of all the good that's being done on all these.. programs . . . the gospel is certainly being preached. So we shouldn't talk about things like that. (Audio tape: "Little Gods in the Church." circa 1986)

How we need to preach and witness the true gospel of Christ and tell others the danger of the false teachings. We need to labor in these last days, need to serve in the ministry and buying time as we need to redeem the time, the days are evil.

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