



Today's Message

Date: October 15, 2023
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: ***God's Plan for Eternal Glory***

Text: Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction: The 26th chapter of the Baptist Confession of Faith presents the biblical doctrine of the church. Its description is detailed, longer than any other section of the confession. It also uses lofty language to stress the church's status as the center of God's activity in this world. It declares that the "Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, in whom by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner." It describes us as gathered "under Christ the head" and as being "the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that fills all in all."

The expression, *the primacy of the local church*, was once common currency in discussions of the doctrine of the church. However, seismic shifts in theology and culture have made the idea seem antiquated and quaint in our current world. A growing chorus of voices among the evangelical *avante-garde* claim that the local assembly is irrelevant—even a relic from the past.

The crucial question that we must ask is not, how do *we* view the church but rather, how does *God* view the church.

The sermon text, set in its context, teaches us that . . .

I. God displays his intrinsic glory in creation . . .

- A. The created order exists as the canvas for God’s self-portrait.
- B. In the creation, God reveals himself truly, but not fully.

II. but displays it most clearly in the church . . .

- A. The church is the locus of God’s self-portrait.
- B. The church displays his attributes most clearly and fully.

III. so that every sentient being will ascribe glory to Him . . .

- A. Humanity and angels will praise him.
- B. “Elect and evil” will praise him.

IV. forever!

Today’s take-home truth: The local assembly exists as the pinnacle of God’s eternal plan to glorify himself in creation; it is both the sphere and instrument of his glory.

Implications: