

God's Glorious Goal

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[0 : 00] I'm encouraged to be here with you guys for today and tomorrow and for Sunday. Just to let you know where we're heading, tonight we're looking at God's Glorious Goal and then tomorrow morning we're looking at God's Glorious Gambit, just to get the G's together, you might have seen the Queen's Gambit movie.

And then on Sunday morning we're going to be doing God's Glorious Grace. Now the idea is that God willing, Sunday will be a good day to bring anybody to church so that on Sunday they'll hear God's Glorious Grace but also, motivated by God's Glorious Grace, we'll actually be on about seeing how that might continue to work in us as we work through this Mission-Minded weekend. So why don't I pray that God will be at work in us this evening and the weekend, let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, thank you that we can meet here this weekend.

Thank you for the freedom we've got to do that and thank you for the freedom we've won in your Son. And we pray that having heard and studied and thought and prayed this weekend together, that you would continue to do your work in us for your glory, to see your kingdom expand and grow, that many might be saved, many might be matured and many might be kept for that great day when the Lord Jesus appears.

We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Well, like most good things, they start small. And so Jesus started working by investing deeply in 12 men, you know that, that's what happened.

[1 : 35] And from them, those people had gone out and the Gospel of Jesus has gone to the ends of the earth, it's gone to us here in Australia. And so I want us to put in our Gospel-shaped glasses tonight to remind us and to refocus us on the things that unite us and the things that are going to inspire us to keep running the rest of our lives on Gospel mission.

So it's like a war effort. Our mission strategy requires every person, right, to actually be engaged, every citizen engaged to go on about their coordinated effort that we might see the kingdom of God grow.

And so tonight I want to lift our eyes to the glorious goal, the target, where we're heading, the goal of our labours. And to be going somewhere means that we really first need to know where we're at and then get our directions sorted out so they don't get all muddled up and go the wrong way.

And so in the beginning, we're going to start at the beginning of the Bible and then we're going to get to the end eventually, right, on the way. And so in the beginning, things started small but things started well, right?

And so in the beginning, you'll know that there was the garden, the Garden of Eden and then there was Adam and Eve in the garden. And in the garden, God set things up perfectly.

[2 : 57] Everything was great, everything was good. And God himself, can you just try and picture this? God himself walked and in the midst of his people and spoke to them.

That's how things started. God with his people. God was their God. They listened to God. They heard God speak, obeyed his voice and did what he said.

God provided for all their needs. Nothing was lacking in the garden. And the goal that God gave was that the earth would be filled with his image bearers, bringing about God's glorious rule all over the world by his people.

And God would be dwelling amongst them. And everything in the beginning was good. Everything was great. Everything was perfect. It was actually, we're told, very good in the beginning.

So the Garden of Eden was paradise. The Garden of Eden was heaven, if you like. Until everything goes south. Everything goes sour.

[4 : 17] And our propensity is then to believe the lie. Everything goes south because of sin. Sin comes in and you get sickness.

And death enters the world. And what was perfect becomes corrupt. And now we were forced out of the garden. Everything was lost.

Now, right now, just so you know, to get your bearings right, you don't have to sort... It's helpful to be reminded of this. We are not in heaven.

We're not in the Garden of Eden. We're not there. We're living in a world which is corrupted and not perfect. And so, it is a waste of time to try and make this world our home and our houses perfect.

I mean, you've just got to own a house and you know what it's like. It's falling apart and you've got to keep painting and fixing it. That's our world. No point trying to have a mansion in this world and try and make this our home.

[5 : 24] This place is living with imperfect people. And the more you have, right, the more you have, more other people want to take it off you.

And you've got to set up walls and you've got to set up fences and things and police forces to try and stop people taking what you've got. Ever since we've been forced out of the garden, though, God has had a plan to make all things new.

To make things perfect with a perfected people. And so, when Jesus comes in John chapter 1, we hear that in the beginning. So, John chapter 1 verse 14. The Word, right, remember?

The Word who is God became flesh. God becomes flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father full of grace and truth.

But Jesus only lived around the place for 30 years or so. And His mission was to establish once and for all, fully and finally, the way back to the Father.

[6 : 36] The way back to glory. And then He ascended back to glory. And so, we're waiting now for the time when He'll return and we're waiting for all things to be restored.

Where He's gone to prepare a place for us, we told Him, John, a perfect home for us. And one day He will bring about the end of all things. And when He does that, at the same time, it will be the beginning.

That'll be the beginning of everything being perfect again. Which brings us then to Revelation 21. The last book of the Bible. It's the penultimate chapter we're looking at here in chapter 21.

What John sees is this.

Remember again, what he sees is a new heaven and a new earth, a new cosmos. He picks up the imagery from Isaiah 65. The old gone, the new comes.

[7 : 57] I don't know about you, but I like new things. Alright? I like new things. They're not scratched, they're not dented, they're not busted. In fact, I drove my car over some white paint this afternoon.

And now I've got white paint on my black mud guards and it annoys me. Okay? I like new things. I like shiny things. Generally they've got no scratches, they're not ruined yet.

But everything new I have soon becomes used. Soon wears out. Becomes obsolete, rusts, ruins and then is disposed of.

That's what's going to happen to your car. Right? We had a brand new car. We bought it in 2005, I think it was.

And it's now crushed and gone. Right? That's what's going to happen. It's going to wear out.

[8 : 56] It's going to be obsolete and ruined one day. But not the new heaven and not the new earth. The new heaven and earth will be perfect for all eternity.

It will never wear out. It will never rust. Never rust. Never be destroyed by those who live in it. We won't wreck it. Because we will be perfect as well.

And there will be no climate change created with or without man. The perfect climate. The sun will not burn out. The sun will actually be...

The sun will be... The light will come from Jesus himself. Jesus the Lord will be providing the light. And we read that there's no sea. The sea was a place of dread.

A place of unrest. And the place where all kinds of evil and sea monsters came out. Particularly in Revelation. The sea monsters come out of the sea. There's nothing to fear in the new creation.

[9 : 58] Everything is new. This new cosmos. And also you see that there's a new Jerusalem. Now we're not going to go spending a great deal of time on the new Jerusalem. But a new Jerusalem is the city of God's people.

The new Jerusalem is beautiful, spotless and radiant. Some of you got married. Some of you are looking forward to getting married.

And some of you may well be one day married. Right? And I have noticed just quietly that those who get married, the brides look absolutely spectacular on that day.

They do. And I have been in the privileged position to be looking down the aisle as the bride comes down the aisle. Right? And she looks spectacular.

Right? She's probably spent a few months getting ready for that. Right? Getting the right hair, the right makeup, the right washing lotions and potions and all that kind of stuff.

[11:05] Right? Looking absolutely gorgeous. And the bloke might take an hour or so to get dressed that morning. But the women look fantastic. Right? And all eyes are focused on one person only.

Right? Everyone is looking at the bride coming down the aisle. And the bride is looking at one man only. Her husband walking down the aisle to be with her.

Now, the bottom line is this. The new Jerusalem is radiant in glory. It is absolutely spectacular. It is beautiful and wonderful.

And the new Jerusalem is a city that God has made that way. And God has prepared this city to be radiant glory.

And did you hear that? God himself is the one who's made this city. God is the one who's done it. God himself has made the city to be that way. And if you pick it up in Ephesians chapter 5.

[12:08] Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her. Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. So he might present the church to himself in splendor.

Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. That she might be holy and without blemish. The new Jerusalem, God's holy bride, comes down out of the heavens to the new earth.

And I want you to notice one really important thing here. Notice this. God is there. Now that is, we sort of gloss over that.

But God is there. There is no point of a new creation without God being at the centre. And do you hear that?

God again dwells with man. Look at verse 3. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

[13:08] He will dwell with them and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. Now some of you have been looking at Genesis recently. And some of you looked at Genesis a little while ago.

But you should be thinking Genesis chapter 17. Okay? Genesis chapter 17. And the covenant that God made with Abraham. Listen to Genesis chapter 17 verse 1. When Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, I am God Almighty.

Walk before me and be blameless that I may make my covenant between me and you and may multiply you greatly. Then Abraham fell on his face and God said to him, Behold, my covenant is with you and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham. For I have made you a father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful and I will make you into nations and kings shall come out of you.

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout the generations for an everlasting covenant. Listen to this. To be God to you and to your offspring after you.

[14:13] And I will give you and your offspring after you the land, your sojournings or the land of Canaan for an everlasting position. And I will be their God. When God rescues his people, makes his covenant with the people, saves his people, establishes his people, God says, I will be your God.

And he promises there will be many nations come to be and recognize him as their God. That is the covenant God promised Abraham in Genesis 17. And God would actually be their people.

Fast forward to Exodus chapter 6. Come to Exodus chapter 6 for me. Come back. Exodus chapter 6. Exodus chapter 6.

Verse 7. This is the promise God makes to deliver his people. I will take you to be my people and I will be your God.

And you should know that I am the Lord your God has brought out from under the burden of Egyptians. It's repeated in Jeremiah chapter 7. It's repeated in Jeremiah chapter 11. Repeated in

Jeremiah chapter 30.

[15:19] Repeated again in Ezekiel chapter 36. God is saving a people and he will be in their midst and they will be his God. Now in the end, which brings about the new perfect beginning, which goes on forever and ever, that is now realized.

What was lost is re-established, is recovered. God is God of his people and all his people honour and obey him perfectly.

What was ruined is recovered. God is perfect. In an even better way. A new, perfect way. Never to be corrupted by sin again.

Because the people who dwell there are made clean, are perfect as well. And so there, God dwells with his people, just as he did in the beginning. The creator of the universe is now in the new heavens and the new earth with his new people perfected to live with him for all eternity.

There's no more tears from the eyes of his people. There's no more death there. It is a place of eternal life. There is no more sickness.

[16:29] There's no more suffering there. There's no more crying, no more pain. And just like the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, we're reminded that the former things have passed away.

The old order of creation is done. Because the former things have passed away. The old order is gone. And we hear God himself say he's making all things new.

God is the one who will do it, right? Not mankind. Doesn't matter what endeavour we give ourselves in this world to try and make new, to make last, to fix problems.

It won't do it. God is the one who does it. The eternal, glorious, perfect city of God comes entirely about by God's doing. He does it.

But that's not our experience of the world now. The Apostle Paul, I think, actually got a glimpse of it while he's alive.

[17:28] Somehow or other, he got a glimpse of it. 2 Corinthians, chapter 12. I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago was caught up to the third heaven, whether in body or out of the body, I don't know. God knows. And I know this man was caught up into the paradise, whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know.

God knows. And he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. I suspect what he saw inspired him to keep going. He got a glimpse of it.

The goal of where the universe is going. And so what we're looking at in Revelation 21 is God's glorious goal. That's where the universe is going.

It's nothing less than the kingdom of God come fully and finally. And it's a place where everything is as it should be, as God intended, from the beginning, before the first order, got corrupted.

God's people, you and me, right? God's treasured possession, those who went out of his way to rescue and save by his son.

[18:33] You and I, who have become the offspring of Abraham through faith, just as Abraham had faith. Saved by the promises of God. People from all nations, languages and tribes, right?

Gathered to him, no longer living in rebellion against him, but living, listening to him and not the lies of Satan.

We're living in God's place. That's where we're going. Not a garden, right? Not Israel. Not Brisbane. But the new Jerusalem is where we're heading. The Jerusalem above, which has come down to the new heaven and earth. And there we're joyfully living under God's righteous rule.

Submitting to his ways. Doing things his way. Joyfully. God reigns as our God. And we as one people, worshipping the one true and living God. And we bow the knee perfectly to him.

[19:35] Give him the honour and glory. Relationships there are perfect. Let me tell you. I'm longing for this day. There's no conflict there. I don't know about you.

But I think that would be glorious. Because there's no sin. No selfishness. No pride. Won't that be good?

Won't that be good? Health is good. There's no COVID pandemics to worry about. That's not going to blow through there. There's no cancer.

Right? There's no infections. There's no death. There is no sin. There's no financial stress there.

There's no stress there. God provides everything we need. We don't need more gold bullion. We don't need better shares. Everything we could possibly want is there given for us.

[20 : 37] Nothing wears out. Nothing breaks down. Nothing corrodes. It's everything that people are looking for now in this world and try to have without God and fail.

Friends, that's God's glorious goal. But I want to take you to 1 Corinthians now. To 1 Corinthians chapter 15 to finish.

It will take us a little while to finish. But that's okay. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Come there please. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans. 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

Come to verse 50. 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

1 Corinthians chapter 15. Verse 50. 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

[22 : 05] Now listen to verse 58.

Verse 50. Verse 50. the power of sin is the law but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ now listen to verse 58 therefore my beloved brothers be steadfast immovable always abounding in the work of the Lord why knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain it's a good memory verse 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 58 but let's dig into it a bit let's dig into it a little bit God's glorious goal needs to shape the way that we think about the world today and what's happening in it and seeing the goal will focus our energy and focus our effort it must so there are two works you see there in verse 58 there are two works there is the work as to the Lord that's that's one work doesn't talk about there but there is a work of the Lord now as to the Lord you can look up Colossians chapter 3 verse 23 some stage but

I just want to make one or two comments about how this shapes our ambitions okay on just shape our thinking about small ambitions okay thinking about our ambitions today and that's this any ambition we have in this world which is not shaped by the goal of where God is taking the world is actually too small it's only temporary at best I want you to believe that any goal that we have which is not shaped by the goal of the new creation is only temporary at best and so there are two kinds of work the work as to the Lord in Colossians chapter 3 for the Lord honoring the Lord that's that kind of work and there's the work of the Lord you see here in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 58 and we need to be conscious of both conscious of both all of us at one level need to be involved in both and convinced of both think about medicine for a while right we need good doctors right we do need good doctors doctors and a good health care system it is spectacular in a sense I think I'd be dead about three times over by now except for the medical care that we can receive in this country honestly and probably some of you would be dead already by now as well but a doctor you know I know you're here Chris a doctor is only ever practicing all right you're only ever practicing you're never perfect doctor and if a doctor helps someone to live another five years this shouldn't be new to you right but I'll remind us again if a doctor only ever helps someone to live another five years and that person that they've helped to live another five years dies without having come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour that person will not be in glorious God's glorious kingdom they won't be there in the new Jerusalem they won't if they haven't come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the doctor is to do their work in a way that pleases the Lord yes honest faithful loving treating the person as a person not a limb recognizing that they're definitely not God but God is God that's the way doctors supposed to do their work now start for the doctors engineers 10 fingers at myself here I used to be I don't know what I am anymore but um we need good engineers we definitely do need good engineers in fact engineers are better than doctors right engineers have saved more lives than doctors just let the record show because they've given fresh clean safe water to drink to people right and they've provided sewage systems to take away the waste from our homes now a person can have all the blessings of flushing toilets in fact we've got two in our house I don't know how many in your house doesn't matter how many flushing toilets there are in the world but a person can have all those blessings but if they never submit to Jesus as Lord and Saviour that person just to be absolutely clear will not be in glory at the same time the engineer is to do their work as in a way that pleases the Lord not lording it over others honest faithful loving kind humble recognizing that they're definitely not God now I'm picking on professionals at the moment right we need good architects right people who can envisage inspire and design all kinds of wonderful spaces you're waiting for it though aren't you but honestly in comparison to the glory to come I just don't want to offend too many people too quickly but I'll offend you anyway you ready in the light of the glorious new city to come the most magnificent structure in this world will look nothing more than a mud pie rubble compared to the city of Jerusalem the new heavens and the new earth our cities are nothing compared to the glory to come because sin destroys them has destroyed them and even the greatest civilizations that have existed in the past often lie in ruins today they do still

the architects do their work in a way that pleases God not lording it over others honest, faithful, kind, gentle, humble recognising that they're definitely not God now if I haven't picked on your industry yet

I will, I could we won't have it all night but because of the fall we need good lawyers people who work at things being worked out rightly between each other but law alone will not fix the problems of this world we are all to do our work in whatever endeavour we do as pleasing to the Lord but if it's not in line in mind of the kingdom to come and even if it is the things that we do in this world at one level they're just temporary but there's a distinction when it comes to the work of the Lord right the work of the Lord brings people from death to life that's what it does the work of the Lord only occurs when we open our mouths right and speak of the kingdom of God and the king of the kingdom that is the work of the Lord the gospel is an announcement at one level which requires clear communication people need to hear about

[30 : 39] God's glorious goal people need to hear about God's glorious gambit which we'll dig into deeply tomorrow the saying right now this saying preach the gospel and if necessary use words is far far far from helpful our works will never ever save anybody unless they know who it is we're serving and that requires speaking the words of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that requires sending people to speak the gospel to open up the word of God with people so they can hear the word of God and so repent and believe and obey the gospel of God and be rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the son he loves and so then saved from the wrath of God and be eternally in the kingdom of God that is the work of the Lord and the God of the universe uses words for the very son of God was the very word of God who proclaimed the kingdom of God is near repent and believe the good news when we engage in word ministry whatever that looks like with our colleague at work in the teaching of our kids in the leading of our growth groups in the whatever it is of opening up and speaking about Jesus that is the work of the Lord and I don't do enough of it and I'm paid full time to do it but that is the work of the Lord all people need to consider making this their ambition no matter how small a way it might look and start in the beginning in partnership with others to be involved in the work of the Lord why because that is not in vain that is not a waste of breath that is not a waste of sweat that is not a waste of energy that is not a waste of time that is not in vain and so we need to be involved in that right where we are praying for the work of the

Lord to go ahead that's what we need to be doing praying the work of the Lord will go ahead speaking the work of the Lord where we're able as we're able championing others who are doing that championing them encouraging them spurring them on putting a hand on the shoulder saying I think you could have a crack at this giving up the work as to the Lord right which will then free you up to do more work of the Lord and friends we need to be on about the work of the Lord with all our time and energy as we possibly can that's not in vain in the light of God's glorious goal that's coming

I'm going to pray our father in heaven we do pray you'd help us to be refocused refreshed reframed rejuvenated as we see afresh reminded again of your glorious goal and we do pray that your word and your spirit be working us and work in our church and work in our city and work in our bible colleges and work in our homes so we might see many many people hearing of the Lord Jesus Christ knowing him as your son your living word crucified and risen from the dead sent to glory returning to judge please father forgive us for being slack in that work and please give us a renewed energy in it we pray in Jesus name amen her it to findbla but him can you yeah