Good morning. Have you ever stopped to think that you are part of an eternal plan? That this plan for you began before conception? Our existence began in the mind of God with a plan for each of us involving eternity before the foundation of the world. (\*Ephesians 1:4-5), “according to the good pleasure of His will.” He drew up works for us before we were even born; Francis Chan writes, He made “plans for His sacred church and includes us in those plans.” Aren’t you just in awe that God includes us in His church; it is an eternal organism, comprised of people all backgrounds, ages, nationalities, and races brought together to form a unified temple of our Holy God—a *community of purpose* (\*\*Ecclesiastes 12:13). And the formation of a unified temple of our Holy God is the whole duty of man, a community of purpose, made up of the individual lives of purpose, holding firmly to the confession of our hope in Christ. Each member of this community of purpose takes hold of Jesus and never lets go. Each contributes by edifying one another, worshipping together, and engaging in the shared mission of the church to spread the news of Christ’s salvation in a transformed and transforming life. As part of the church, the Bride of Christ, each believer leaves behind what once was and commits the self to following Christ, just as the disciples did (\*\*\*Mark 1:16-18), culturing heart and behavior to align with His. The Westminster Shorter Catechism sums things up for us: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” God created us and formed the church for His glory, to live in harmony with God and with God’s people—knowing God while being known by Him. As Paul

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\*Ephesians 1:4-5

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will . . .

\*\*Ecclesiastes 12:13

Now all has been heard;

here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments,

for this is the duty of all mankind.

\*\*\*Mark 1:16-18

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

writes in Ephesians 4:1, “I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthing of the calling by which you have been called.”

And here is a wonderful truth: We glorify God by enjoying Him, by holding firm to the confession of our hope, the Lord Jesus Christ! We glorify the father by responding in obedience and by joyfully serving Him, forsaking sin and thriving in grace. As Isaiah writes,

5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you;

I will bring your children from the east

and gather you from the west.

6 I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’

and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’

Bring my sons from afar

and my daughters from the ends of the earth—

7 *everyone who is called by my name,*

*whom I created for my glory,*

*whom I formed and made*.” (43:5-7).

Yes, each member of the church, the Bride of Christ is “created for” God’s glory! Like the called twelve, we are to forsake our former lives and follow Jesus, to set ourselves on mission for Jesus—that is, living a dedicated, purpose-filled life. And for a member of the church, the Bride of Life, the purpose-filled life is an evangelical life, a life of clean heart looking to make Christ the magnificent center.

Listen, my friends. God is not the supporting actor in our story. He is not the co-star! Each of our stories contributes to the larger story of the Glory of God and the Saving Grace of Jesus. When Jesus is the focus of our story, the question becomes, how am I contributing to the larger story? As I hold firmly to the confession of my hope, looking to Christ, and—as it were—dropping my nets, is my life glorifying God? And am I *enjoying* Him? Think about the moment in a wedding when the groom turns to view his bride, when their eyes meet, and he feels so obviously that “this is the one!” That moment begins an eternal love. Should out look to Christ not reflect that recognition of “HE is the one”? We should be fascinated and overwhelmed by joy when we commit to Christ. Christ was crucified, He suffered, and He did to conquer death, hell, and the grave to include us in the story of His Father’s plan—in His church, in His eternity.

So, *ENJOY GOD!!*

Psalm 37:4

Take delight in the Lord,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Psalm 32:11

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;

sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Psalm 16:11

You make known to me the path of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

John Piper writes, “Joy is the serious business of Heaven”!! Family! Enjoy iHH

Him, being satisfied in Him, knowing He is trustworthy. To delight in God is the duty of the Christian. “The joy of the Lord is our strength”—this is not a cute little saying; no, it is an element of the care you take in your relationship with Him, your shield and stronghold. Begin by enjoying His love. The Gospel author John writes, “By this the Love of God was revealed in us, that God has sent His only Son into the world to that we may live through Him” (4:19). We are created to know and to enjoy God through His Son. We are to glorify Him. We are to feel blessed to be in community of believers, a community of purpose. We are to hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering—without looking back to our old lives. We are to live in awe that we have been created and formed for His glory, conceived as part of His plan before the creation of the world. John 15:11 tells us, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy be in you and that your joy may be full.” Leave the nets. Leave behind what was and ENJOY following Jesus!

Passages in support of this sermon:

Mark 1:14-22

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

Hebrews 10:19-25

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.