

Grace and Purpose

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, July 6, 2025
PASSAGES	Ephesians 1; Ephesians 2; Ephesians 3; Acts 6; Colossians 1; 2 Timothy 2; 1 Peter 1; 1 Corinthians 15
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:31:08 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Left to ourselves we build a religion of quid pro quo — do something God wants, get something we want. Ephesians says the opposite: God is not hungry, not short-handed, and not keeping score. His eternal purpose is that Christ would dwell in our hearts, that we would comprehend a love too large to comprehend, and that we would be filled with all the fullness of God.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ A transactional relationship with God is natural to the human mind, and it is self-focused — it projects onto God the way *we* would behave if we were crossed.
- ◆ The sacrificial system was never God being fed. His desires from beginning to end are to bless, to prosper, and to express love to his creation.
- ◆ We are not butlers in God's household. Ephesians calls us adopted children, and God is the adopting party, not us.
- ◆ Paul's apostleship was a gift he neither applied for nor deserved — he was persecuting the church when it was given. The church is not staffed by the most competent people God could recruit.
- ◆ The gospel has a life of its own. Luke says "the word of God continued to increase"; Paul, in chains, says "the word of God is not bound."
- ◆ The purpose of all that grace is not efficiency. It is so that Christ may dwell in your heart, so that you may grasp his love, so that you may be filled with the fullness of God.

- ◆ Comprehending the love of Christ takes supernatural strength, because the natural mind turns away from a love that large.
- ◆ This is God's project, not ours — and he is not a builder who leaves a tower half-finished.

► 1:31:08

Matt opened not with the text but with the neighborhood. Hope Chapel grows mostly by organic connection — a friend bringing a friend — but he wanted the room to know what deliberate outreach has looked like: a professionally edited book of testimonies called *Reset*, mailed to about a thousand homes around Crestview; monthly postcards to people who move in; and a prayer-walking team that blesses houses along Choquette, Woodrow and Ruth. Training requirements: none. “It’s not paid training, but it’s a good experience. You could put it on your CV.”

Praying for houses, and a new idea

► 1:34:02

Occasionally a house sticks with him. He writes down the number, prays over it at home, and then writes the family a letter explaining why they are getting a letter from a stranger — with a book from his own shelf that matches whatever came to mind while he prayed, joy or the fatherhood of God, his business card tucked into the chapter he recommends, gift-wrapped by his assistant Debbie and hand-delivered. “I spooked one person. I was like, I’m not selling anything.” The new idea, offered for the congregation to pray over: A-frame signs on the sidewalk with a large QR code linking to the exact moment a member’s testimony begins in a Sunday recording, one word summarizing the story. The signs are already in his office, unassembled.

The god who needs feeding

► 1:36:18

Matt has been reading the *Iliad*, where a Greek or a Trojan promises Athena a herd of calves in exchange for help in a fight. That instinct is not confined to Homer. If I do something you want, you owe me something I want. A disaster arrives and we assume we have offended: I missed one quiet time — is that why the car broke down? “This kind of business negotiation relationship with God is really natural for the human mind to fall into. It’s not healthy, but it’s really natural.” And it is self-focused twice over — about me, and a projection onto God of exactly how I would behave if someone forgot my birthday.

► 1:38:18

Ask a Babylonian why humanity exists and you get the *Enuma Elish*: quarreling gods, a father who wants to kill his noisy children, a corpse split to make the sky, Marduk crowned king — and at the very end, in a couple of lines, human beings made to feed gods who were tired of the work. Matt was not mocking it. He was pointing out that when we back into religion by instinct, we end up worshiping ourselves. Which is why the Bible reads, in his word, almost extraterrestrial: even in the sacrificial system, nobody was feeding God. He was not famished. He is not weak, no longer able to save with a strong arm.

“Nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.”

ACTS 17:25 ↗

The recap: what Ephesians has already said

► 1:41:07

Hope has been walking through Ephesians slowly. Matt recommended the opposite as a supplement: read it in one sitting, the way you read a letter from your mother or your boss. It is roughly the length of a long email. Then he rewound to the opening.

“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace.”

EPHESIANS 1:4–6 ↗

“Before him” is not God merely being aware of us at a distance; it is standing in his presence. And the stated purpose of his will is adoption — “not to fill out an I-9 and do things for him for the rest of time.” He is the responsible party. We are not adopting him.

► 1:43:00

“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility... that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace... For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”

EPHESIANS 2:14–18 ↗

Access again — he wants us standing before him, and not as knickknacks. Not a new assembly of people only, but *one new man*, so intimate that it is truly said of us that we belong to Jesus' own body. Matt named the false humility that shrinks from that: "Oh, if only I could be in just the borderlands of heaven, at the edge. Just the waiting room is fine for me." No. "He wants you all the way in. The burning hot, ooey-gooley core of it all, his very own self." Which is why [Ephesians 2:19–22](#) calls us members of the household — again, not butlers — grown together into a holy temple.

What a temple is actually for

► [1:45:12](#)

Not a heavenly Uber Eats. When Moses' tabernacle was finished, God overshadowed it and came in with his glory — and he had not been homeless before that. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and the galaxies besides. The tabernacle was a hangout spot, for lack of a better word, a place he invited people to meet him. His presence was already everywhere, and then it was all the more there, until the priests could not stand to serve. "That's a relational display of glory, not fireworks for no reason." Which is why an offering matters: bringing an offering brings *you*. Matt credited that line to Steve, learned Steve had it from the Bible, and passed on Geno Hildebrandt's joke about preachers — quote the man the first time, "I've heard it said" the second, "as I always say" the third. "So that one's mine now."

A tangent about grace, and it is the point

► [1:47:47](#)

At [Ephesians 3:1](#) Paul writes "for this reason" — and then does not say the reason. He detours, and picks the phrase back up at verse 14. Not a copying error, Matt said; a Pauline tangent, and a worthy one.

"Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

[EPHESIANS 3:7–8](#) ↗

Paul did not apply. He was harassing the church when the appointment came. Matt pressed the implication: the church is not staffed by the alpha, the wealthy, the smartest, the best speakers. "That's exactly what you would think if this was a human enterprise run by humans for us to do something for

God as if he needed it.” And the unsearchable riches of Christ are not the opportunity of a lifetime to work off your debt “by making license plates in the sky for God forever.”

The word has a life of its own

► 1:52:01

Nor are these dark times unprecedented. “It’s been dark. As long as there have been two brothers of the same parents, we’ve been killing each other.” And in that world he spoke, he redeemed, he built a church out of people who were harassed, robbed and killed. Matt stacked the evidence: [Acts 6:7](#) says “the word of God continued to increase” — odd phrasing, as if the message itself were alive. [Colossians 1:5–6](#) says the gospel is “bearing fruit and increasing” in the whole world. God’s plans do not collapse for lack of a volunteer; he raises up servants from the small, the weak and the outside — even from among his opponents.

“...for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!”

2 TIMOTHY 2:9 ↗

A human enterprise could be imprisoned and intimidated into oblivion. Poor, confused, threatened, martyred — the church is still here. [1 Peter 1:23](#) says we were born again through the living and abiding word of God. “We do bear a message, but in truth, that message bears us.” And Paul, who outworked every other apostle, filed the credit elsewhere: “by the grace of God I am what I am.”

So what is all this grace *for*?

► 1:56:26

If he is the power and the brains behind the operation, why not send everyone home? Back to the plan, hidden for ages in God:

“So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

EPHESIANS 3:10–11 ↗

Not primarily to whip us into shape, and not even primarily to launch a movement with a new way of life. Something cosmic, far bigger than any of us — and, Matt noted dryly, you do not always look

around a church and think the wisdom on display is impressive. That is rather the point: the wisdom being displayed is God's.

“For this reason” — the sentence Paul finally finishes

► 1:57:33

At verse 14 he returns to it, and what he asks for is power — strengthened with might through the Spirit in the inner being. Then comes the why, in three parts. Why would you need supernatural power poured into you? For a golden retirement? “Do you need power for that?”

“...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

EPHESIANS 3:16–19 ↗

One: Christ dwelling in your heart. Two: strength to comprehend a love that surpasses knowledge — and you need the Spirit for that, because the natural mind flinches from a love that large and files it under gobbledegook. Three: filled with all the fullness of God — and the “you” is plural. Remember the tabernacle and the glory that came and then came more. That is what a living temple is.

He finishes what he starts

► 2:01:23

Lofty enough that the obvious reaction is: I can't pull that off. True, Matt said. You can't.

“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, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

EPHESIANS 3:20–21 ↗

This is not our project that we are hoping God will assist with. It is his, and he does not abandon what he begins. Jesus is the one who mocked the man who laid a foundation and could not finish the tower, and the king who marched out without counting his troops ([Luke 14:28–31](#)). We assume God would

scold us for that and then fail to live up to it himself. He starts things that he finishes. The inheritance is locked away under his protection.

► 2:02:48

So yes — serve, obey, give, pray, share, be generous. But those are not the prize. “The why is that Christ would dwell in our hearts, that we would know his love, and that the fullness of God would dwell in us. That’s very different from a vending machine relationship with God.” And the closing turn was the one worth carrying out the door: as much as you want depth of relationship with him, as much as you want to abide in his love forever, he wants it more. We forget while we are making a sandwich, thinking about the sandwich. He never stops thinking about it. We get intimidated and discouraged when people say mean things to us. “He’s never going to run out of steam on this. This was always plan A. And you can trust him.”

Matt closed by praying that the Spirit would strengthen the inner person of everyone in the room, and then made the invitation plain: if you are near Christianity but next to Jesus rather than in him, talk to someone. It does not have to be the pastor — the priesthood of believers is alive and well. Talk to the person in your pew, or whoever brought you, or the heart ministry teams standing at the front.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- Acts 17:25
- Ephesians 1:4–6
- Ephesians 2:14–18
- Ephesians 2:19–22
- Ephesians 3:1
- Ephesians 3:7–8
- Acts 6:7
- Colossians 1:5–6
- 2 Timothy 2:9
- 1 Peter 1:23
- 1 Corinthians 15:9–10
- Ephesians 3:10–11
- Ephesians 3:16–19
- Ephesians 3:20–21
- Luke 14:28–31

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Where does the quid pro quo instinct show up in your own praying — what do you catch yourself trying to trade with God?
2. Matt said we project onto God how we would behave if we were crossed. What part of your picture of God is really a picture of you?
3. Paul was harassing the church when his commission was given. What does that do to the idea that God recruits the most qualified?
4. Of the three purposes in Ephesians 3:16–19 — Christ dwelling in your heart, comprehending his love, being filled with God's fullness — which one do you find hardest to believe is meant for you, and why?
5. If the prize is relationship rather than performance, what does that change about one specific thing you are planning to do this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnWq8eQ2u9w&t=5468s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.