

The Character, Destiny, and Duties of the Church

Throughout Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, much is revealed concerning the church's character, destiny, and duties.

The Character of the Church

The church, in both its universal and local dimensions, has been richly endowed by God with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3).¹ These include

- access to God (2:18; 3:12),
- acceptance by God (1:6),
- adoption by God (1:5; 2:19),
- equal standing before God, regardless of ethnic or national distinctions (3:6),
- inheritance (1:11),
- positional exaltation (2:6–7),
- predestination (1:4),
- reconciliation to one another (2:14),
- reconciliation to God (2:13, 16),
- redemption from sin (1:7),
- regeneration from spiritual deadness (2:1, 5),
- the headship of Christ (1:22–23),
- the indwelling of Christ (3:17), and
- the sealing of the Holy Spirit (1:13).

These blessings are present realities for Christ's church. Many of them are unprecedented and unique to this dispensation, having never been bestowed upon God's people prior to the coming, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (4:8–10) and the church's subsequent establishment (Acts 2:40–47).

The Destiny of the Church

Just as the church has a glorious and blessed character, it also has a glorious and blessed destiny. Through the church, it is God's intention to

- reconcile all things in Christ (1:10),
- build a fitting dwelling place for Himself (2:22), and
- present to Himself a redeemed company "not having spot or wrinkle," that is "holy and without blemish" (5:27).

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all parenthetical citations refer to the Book of Ephesians.

The Duties of the Church

Therefore, in response to these glorious truths and in obedience to the commands of Holy Scripture, it is resolved that we as churches of Jesus Christ should:

- Act such that our deeds are characterized by holiness, love, worthiness, and wisdom (1:4, 12; 4:1; 5:2, 8–9, 15–17);
- Ever increasingly learn about and appreciate the love of Christ, our hope and inheritance, and the greatness of God’s power (1:18–19; 3:17–18);
- Endeavor to perform the good works that God has prepared for us to do (2:10);
- Rely upon the Lord for our strength and vitality (3:16; 5:18; 6:10);
- Strive to live in harmony with one another, always pursuing unity and acting in gentleness, patience, deference, and forgiveness toward one another (4:2–3, 32);
- Recognize that the commonalities uniting us are greater than the differences dividing us (4:4–6);
- Engage vigorously in the work of the ministry, evangelizing and discipling those within our spheres of influence, that they might be brought to ever-increasing levels of spiritual maturity (4:11–15);
- Seek to follow in all areas of life the example of Christ’s love for the church and the church’s submission to Christ (5:22–28, 33; 6:1–9);
- Avoid sinful practices, as they are inconsistent with God’s character and His will for the church (4:19–31; 5:3–14, 18);
- Resist the Devil and all his works, recognizing that our battle is spiritual—not physical—in nature (6:11–18);
- Regularly give thanks for all things—including the church itself, and the blessings we have received by our membership in it (1:16; 5:4); and
- Love the church and care for it, just as Christ loves the church and cares for it (5:22–32).

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