

GOD'S PURPOSE: CELEBRATION

We are here to celebrate Jesus today.

And if we celebrate Jesus, we also celebrate the Church.

The Church is the body of Christ.

He is the Head and we are the body.

Paul said, when one part of the body hurts every part knows the hurt.

When one part of the body rejoices every part knows the joy.

So we cannot appreciate Jesus and then fail to appreciate each other.

That is why Paul directs the church - God's chosen ones to live holy lives.

He calls the church to live fully in the love that God has lavished on us.

He calls us to also be compassionate, kind, lowly, meek, and patient.

Oh it would be nice to stop right there.

We could almost live comfortably by experiencing those qualities.

But then Paul smacks us hard, right between the eyes and in the gut.

If we have a complaint we are to forgive.

If we have a complaint?

Is it possible that there is someone here who has never complained?

Is it possible that someone here has never been treated unfairly?

Is it possible that someone here has never disliked an experience?

That is inconceivable.

Paul tells us what to do when we feel a complaint coming on.

Forgive each other.

We discussed these verses briefly at prayer meeting a few weeks ago.

We realized the church is not like a department store, or restaurant, or business.

Those places all have return counters and complaints departments.

I don't like what you gave me so I want my money back.

You didn't treat me nice so I'm going somewhere else with my business.

Paul says there is no complaint department in the church.

The Pastors are not the complaint department.

The Church board is not the complaint department.

The lobby is not the complaint department.

Facebook is not the complaint department.

In the Church we only have the forgiveness department.

Turn potential complaints into forgiveness.

As the Lord has forgiven you, you must forgive (vs. 13b).

This is not an option for the church.

Might I give you a suggestion?

If you think it is your right to complain about Jesus - become a Mormon.

Or turn Jehovah's Witness.

Become an atheist or agnostic.

Although an agnostic should have nothing to complain about.

An agnostic doesn't even know if God exists.

None of them care about Jesus in the least.

Be anything but a person who is pretending to follow Jesus.

You'll be happier in those other places.

You'll never be happy in the church as a complaining Christian.

I love you too much to see you go through life miserably.

Paul says take your complaints somewhere else.

He prefers you take complaints to the cross where forgiveness flows.

But if you aren't interested in that, go somewhere else.

Complaint is a cancer that gnaws away at what is healthy.

Complaints suck life and dampen creativity.

That is why God turns away from His people who complain.

I can hear someone say, "Well I would never complain about Jesus!"

If you complain about the church you complain about Jesus.

"If you do it to the least of these my brethren you do it to Me" Jesus said.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" Paul said.

Christ can only rule where He dwells.

And if He is dwelling in the body, which is what we are called to be, anything we do to each other is done to Jesus.

Jesus wants us, above everything else, to put on love.

Love binds everything in perfect harmony.

That is what characterizes the church and is worth repeating.

Love binds everything in perfect harmony.

The end result of love is thanksgiving that leads to all forms of praise.

It results in doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

This passage of Scripture practically preaches itself.

I don't need to elaborate on it.

I just need to tell you to believe it and embrace it.

Just do it.

And we will be a beautiful, harmonious, loving, God adoring people.

We will be a people of celebration.

That is the Church that Jesus is calling.

He seeks those in whom He can dwell and who praise the Father.

He seeks those who will make a Godly impact on their world.

The celebration on the first Palm Sunday Jesus should be like child's play compared to how we celebrate Jesus today.

As Jesus road into Jerusalem the disciples were really hooting it up.

Now Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father with all authority and power.

Isn't that something even greater to celebrate?

Yet we hmmm our way through songs, can't wait to sit down.

They were rowdy and loud as Jesus paraded into Jerusalem.

Now, because of the resurrection, Jesus enters human hearts.

Isn't that something even greater to celebrate?

Christ in you the hope of glory, isn't that something to shout about?

But isn't it lunch time?

Isn't it time for this parade to end?

People were yelling and singing and probably dancing.

Kids were everywhere bumping people's knee caps together.

Making them spill their double low fat goat milk latte.

Waving palm branches and shaking out spiders in their hair.

There was pandemonium in the streets.

Everyone was celebrating the mighty works of God through Jesus.

We know the words of their enthusiastic praise.

Blessed is He who comes, the King in God's name!

Glory in the high places!

Now, because of the ascension, Jesus is here.

Jesus is with you everywhere.

He is not confined to one location at a time.

We don't have to take turns waiting for Jesus to visit.

Isn't that something even greater to celebrate?

Don't we have even more to celebrate than the disciples did?

We have way more to celebrate.

We are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved.

But the religious complainers stood in front of Jesus.

The parade ground to a halt.

The most they were willing to acknowledge about Jesus was Teacher.

They saw nothing of God in Him.

They dismissed Jesus as the Messiah.

They denied the validity of His miracles and wonders.

He was not worthy of all the celebration.

Teacher, make them stop.

All this commotion just isn't right, it isn't healthy.

Don't you hear what they are saying about You?

These complainers just didn't like all the fuss.

They didn't like Jesus getting all this attention.

But Jesus said the rocks would cry out if the people didn't.

That would really give you something to complain about.

The Pharisees' complaints literally broke Jesus' heart.

As He drew near the city He wept over it.

The people's hearts were so hard and calloused.

They were not able to embrace the fullness and revelation of God.

They had rejected and killed the prophets sent from God.

They were about to reject and crucify God in flesh - the Son.

They were not willing to celebrate.

They tried to squash the celebration with their complaints.

Complaining reveals we do not know how to live wisely.

Paul says, when Christ dwells within we will teach and admonish in wisdom.

He tells us in vs. 16 we will sing songs and will refuse to be silent.

We will be eternally thankful in our hearts to God.

Experience the reality of Paul's words.

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (verse 17)

Is your heart overflowing in celebration today?

Or are there complaints ravaging your heart today?

Is your voice exalting Jesus the Living Word dwelling in your heart?

Or is a hard and bitter heart gagging the praise due to Jesus?

Celebration is part of God's purpose for the Church.

Invite Jesus to be your Lord.

Let Him be the King and Lord of your life.

Let's celebrate and give thanks to the Lord today.

But let's make sure it is not the exception but the rule of each day.

Make celebration your habit through the abiding presence of Jesus.