

Chapter 6

Maintaining a Proper Objective

“Unto him [be] glory in the church ...”
– Ephesians 3:21

Continuing in this series, it ought to be our desire to always be the kind of church that people need. As we've learned so far, we must always remember that the churches of the Lord are distinct. They are separate, they are different, and they are in sharp contrast compared with the philosophies, reasoning, and the pursuits of not only the world, but also with what would be considered the religious mainstream today. The Lord's church is radically different from everything that is man made. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "*I will build my church,*" shows that His church is distinct by design. In 1st Timothy 3:15, Paul referred to the Lord's church as the house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth, indicating that it is distinct by design. It is also distinct in its purpose and function. It's unlike any other organization upon the face of the earth. If we're going to be the church that people need, this God ordained distinction must be maintained. The church must not follow the allurements of our contemporary culture, allowing ourselves to become just another religious organization. If a church of the Lord Jesus Christ begins to mingle, merge, harmonize, be compatible with the world, or we begin to harmonize and become comparable with modern day Christendom, we lose our distinction. Once we've lost our distinction, we cease to be the church that people need. This distinction must be maintained.

In this message I will cover maintaining a proper objective. If we're going to maintain our distinction, remain separate, remain different, we have to maintain a proper objective. In Ephesians 3:21, it says, "*Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*" I want to consider, first of all, the importance of having a proper objective. In considering the importance of having a proper objective, we also see the danger of having an improper objective.

An objective is something that we aim for, something that we strive to achieve. It is the end in view. An objective

becomes our ambition, our aspiration, our object of quest, the thing that we are seeking after.

Where there is an objective, whether it's a proper objective or improper, there are means and methods that are adopted to reach that objective. Whatever our objective is in life, as individuals, we have means and methods of reaching that objective. A company has an objective. They have means and methods of reaching that objective. An objective becomes a determining factor of means and methods that we use. Therefore, it is of extreme importance that we have a proper objective, because it determines the means and methods that we use. It also shows the danger of an improper objective.

In Jeremiah 2:33, we read, “*Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love?*” Remember, to trim means adding to or removing from. As you trim a bush you take away, but at the same time you could say “All the trimmings”, which adds to. It is a subtracting from and an adding to. That is a means or method.

What was their objective in Jeremiah 2:33? Their objective was to seek love, to be loved, and accepted. It was a very wicked time. Jeremiah goes on to say “... *therefore hasth thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.*” In order to be loved, they took the things of God and they took away from the things of God or in some cases they added to the things of God. They had an improper objective, that being, “We want to be loved, we want to be accepted.” In order to achieve that, you have to also have un-biblical means and un-biblical methods to achieve your objective. It is of extreme importance that we always have a proper objective.

When the objective of a church is to be loved and accepted by the world, it is guaranteed they will adopt un-biblical methods in order to achieve that objective. When a church goes down that road, they're on their way to ceasing to be, not only the church that people need, but ceasing to be a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If it is the objective of a church to lure and attract a crowd, that church will begin to adopt means and methods that will give them a crowd. We've seen this, of course, through the last several decades. Many think it is the objective of the church to see souls saved. You say, "Well that's a good objective." It really isn't. That's not to be our objective. Churches brag, "Our goal, our objective, the only reason we are here is to see souls saved." Well the problem with that is, you adopt means and methods to get it done. This is what has resulted in reducing salvation to a decision. "Make a decision for Christ." In their mind, the more decisions they get, the more souls that have been saved, and they have reached their objective.

They simplify salvation so much that they really cease to teach and preach the gospel. They preach another gospel. This is what has led to "repeat a form" prayer. "All you have to do is repeat this prayer." You look at 99% of tracts that are out there today and on the back of them is, "Repeat this prayer." That's blasphemy and that's heresy. An individual has repeated a prayer. What do they do after they've repeated a prayer? They go to the same bar they went to last week because nothing has changed. All they have done is repeated a prayer. We can mark another one up, another soul has been saved. "We're reaching our goal." Churches will set goals, "We want to see four hundred souls saved this year. This is our goal." What happens? You begin to adopt means and methods to reach that goal.

All of this has resulted in churches being filled with the unsaved who live no differently than the world or who live their lives differently from the world but it is strictly works based righteousness. When I use the term churches now, I'm using it very loosely. I'm talking about religious buildings. It causes the buildings to be filled. They are factory made Christians. Christian schools have a habit of producing factory made Christians. This isn't a slam against Christian schools. I'm not saying that you shouldn't send your kids to one. That's not what I'm saying. The Armenian

churches are the same thing. Because their goal is to see souls saved. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not against seeing souls saved, but that's not our goal. That is not the objective.

That is what has brought salvation down. They'll say salvation is as simple as A, B, C ... Accept, Believe and Confess. That's all you have to do and you're saved. You won't find that in the word of God. These individuals will say, "We want to see souls saved, but it's for God's glory." Well if it's for God's glory, then do it God's way. Preach His word and leave the results with God. That's God's way. But let's be honest, it's not for God's glory. It's to see how many we can run through the baptistery, see how many souls we get saved in a year. It's sad.

An example of maintaining a proper objective in evangelism. In Mark 10:17, we read the story of the rich young ruler. *"And when Jesus was gone forth into the way, there came one running, ..." this man was excited, "... and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"* This man wanted to be saved. He had a wrong idea concerning it, but he had some desire for salvation. He was eager. He knelt down before Christ. What did Jesus do? "Well, young man all you have to do is accept, believe, and confess and it's done." That's not what He did. Did Jesus say, "Well, just repeat this prayer"? Not at all. Jesus immediately presented the law of God to him, because it's the law of God that brings conviction of sin. The first thing Jesus did was preach concerning God's character in Mark 10:18, *"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."* So here's a man, "What must, what can I do to be saved?" Jesus immediately presents to him the character of God. Then He goes on in verse 19, *"Thou knowest the commandments"*, He's presenting the law to him now, *"Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother."* Jesus declared or He preached God's character, He preached God's law. Verse 20 the young man says, *"And he*

answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.” He’s telling Jesus “I haven’t broken the law.” The preacher today would say, “That’s good just accept, believe, and confess and we’re all set.” But this man had to realize that he was a sinner.

Jesus goes on, *“beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor”*. I believe that’s repentance. Jesus is preaching to him repentance. This man had a problem with covetousness, and Jesus is telling him to repent. Someone comes, “I want to be saved.” “Repent, turn from your sins”, is what Jesus is telling him. Then He goes on in the last part of verse 21, *“... take up the cross, and follow ...”* Jesus says, come take up the cross, *“... and follow me.”* That is, he had to exercise faith toward Christ. Verse 22, *“And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”* Jesus let this one go. This man would have not gotten away from the Armenian today. This man would have been forced to repeat a prayer. He would not have gone away. If someone comes running and kneels down, “I want to be saved”, the Armenian today is not going to let him get away. This man is going to be saved. But Jesus just kept preaching the word.

He went on to explain to the disciples in verses 24, *“the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, ...”* This was this man’s problem. *“... to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”* People today try to make it so easy that they do away with the fact that it is a miracle. It is a miracle for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Yet, many are making salvation as simple as A, B, C.

Jesus goes on, *“And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”*

Salvation is never to be reduced to anything less than a miracle of God. It is not a decision. It is not a prayer. It is the miraculous working power of God upon a soul. When the objective becomes salvation, we lose sight of God's glory and then we begin to adopt means and methods to get them in, and means and methods to get them down the aisle. Churches today use all kinds of means and methods. "Get them down the aisle and then we'll have our counselors deal with them." In other words, "We'll have our counselors put some pressure on them and they'll say a prayer and we can count that toward how ever many souls we want to see saved this year." That's pitiful.

Notice the foundation of this objective. In Ephesians 3:21, Paul said, "*Unto Him be glory in the church ...*" Two key words are, "unto Him". That's the foundation of our objective. Unto Him. He's the center, He's the purpose, He's the foundation of our objective. The objective is to give Him glory. *Unto Him be glory*. This is what Paul was talking about in 2nd Corinthians 4:5. He said, "*For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; ...*" Not ourselves but Christ Jesus. Whether it be true individually, whether it be true collectively, as a church, when we lose sight of who it's about, we cease to be the church that people need.

In Psalm 100:3, notice a couple phrases. "*Know ye that the LORD He is God: ...*" Now notice the next 3 words, "*... it is he ...*" Then go a few words further and we read, "*... and not we ...*" It is He and not we. He's talking here about creation, "*... it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; ...*" But, you take those 2 phrases, "*it is he*" and "*not ourselves*", and that is to always to be so. That's what will keep us distinct, it's He. It's all about Him. It's not about us, it's not about Home Baptist Church, it's about Him.

Notice in Psalm 115:1, "*... not unto us ...*" then notice, "*... but unto thy name ...*" Not unto us, but unto thy name. This is the foundation of our objective. It's about Him. It's not about how many people are baptized, how many professions of faith are made, how many little children

in Sunday school repeat a prayer. It's not about us. It's about God. It's all about God. "Well don't you think that God is pleased when little Johnny repeats a prayer?" No! I don't think he is. Not at all, because little Johnny has been deceived into thinking he's saved when he isn't. The church feels good about themselves, because, "We're getting closer to our goals." It's not about us, it's about God. So, "unto Him", if this breaks down, everything falls. It has to remain, unto Him. As soon as that breaks down, the church begins to pursue their own ends, their own means, their own methods, to achieve whatever their ends, whatever their goal, whatever their objective is.

Let's look at the objective. Paul said, "*Unto him be glory in the church ...*" The word "glory" there refers to an act done by us toward Him. The word glory conveys the idea of praise, tribute, gratitude, and homage. This is to be our aim, our ambition, our aspiration, the quest of the church, that in everything we do, God is praised, God is given honor, God is given glory, God is given tribute, God is given homage. In everything, unto Him be glory.

The word glory means to honor, to exalt God. It's not our achievements. We're simply to honor and exalt God. That is, as a church it is our duty to elevate God, it is our duty to promote God. You're not going to get a crowd today by promoting the God of the Bible. It's not going to happen. The world does not want to hear about the God of the Bible. The world wants to hear about a God that does not threaten their current belief system. That's not the God of the Bible. It is our duty as a church to uplift God. It is our duty as a church to exalt God, to honor God, to elevate God, to promote God. That is, when people walk in the door, it's not about activities, it's not about all the other things that go on in various places. It's about God. It's all about God. That must always be our objective, aim, ambition, and aspiration. That is what our quest is. It's to honor, to exalt, to promote God, in everything that we do.

It is our duty, it is our responsibility as a church to show forth the greatness of God. You know what happens when you show forth the greatness of God? Man is brought down to nothing. People don't like that today. Exalt God and man automatically is brought down to nothing. We are to draw attention to God. The messages are to draw attention to God. Worship is to have our attention on God. It's not to fill our time with a bunch of programs and a bunch of nonsense, then have enough time for a 5 or 10 minute message. That has nothing to do with God. That's entertainment. When a church gets into the entertainment industry, when the church begins to compete with the world for entertainment, they're going to lose every single time. You can't compete with the world. No church can. They fail every time. That's why they've got to keep going for more and more and more. We have to keep our focus.

The design of the church is to showcase the breathtaking beauty of God. "Well, so and so might get angry, they might leave, they might never come back." That's true. But, you see, our responsibility is to showcase God, to promote God. If they walk out of here and they never come back again, as long as we have done what God has told us to do, we have nothing to apologize for. Nothing at all. If somebody has been rude to somebody and caused them to leave, that's a different story. But, we're talking about, if we just do what we're supposed to do, many are going to leave. The church is not to apologize for that.

Our responsibility is to draw attention to God, and we're to concentrate all of our energies on glorifying the Lord. That's the reason behind everything that we do. Everything that we do is to point to Him. This isn't what the world wants, but it is what the world needs. Everybody that walks in these doors needs the Lord. I'm not saying that everyone that walks in the door is lost, but everyone that walks in these doors needs the Lord. That's what we're to present, is the Lord. That's what they need. They may think they need a lot of other things. But, we're not here to meet

the perceived needs of the world. We're here to point them to their need, which is the Lord.

In Romans 11, Galatians 1, Philippians 4:20, 1st Timothy 1:17, 1st Timothy 6:16, and on and on we could go. We read the words “unto Him be glory”. Every one of those verses, just like Ephesians 3:21, ends with the word, “*Amen*”. Unto Him be glory ... amen. That word “amen” is expressive of the desire of the heart. That should be the desire of every member of Home Baptist Church, unto Him be glory. We all may have various opinions about a lot of things that don't matter in the big picture. We need to have enough spirituality about us, enough spiritual maturity about us, “this is my opinion, but unto Him be glory, amen”, and leave it at that. Just be satisfied that God gets the glory.

The word amen is a word of belief. When we say “amen”, we are saying “I believe that”. When we read “unto Him amen”, we are saying I believe that. He's to get the glory.

When we say amen, that is a word to express joy in our hearts, unto Him be glory, amen. It ought to give us joy in our hearts when God is glorified, when God is exalted, when God is promoted, no matter what the results of that is, it ought to rejoice our hearts that God has been glorified. Unto Him be glory, amen.

That's also a word of resolution. We say amen, in other words, “I resolve to do that, I agree with that.” That ought to be the resolution of everyone of us. If we're going to continue to be the church that people need, “unto Him be glory in the church” must be maintained at all costs.

Just like people, churches have trials. Churches go through seasons of trials. Just like individuals, churches have particular obstacles that they have to deal with. They have particular hurdles that they have to deal with. We may have some obstacles that another church doesn't have. They may have some obstacles that we don't have. My point is, churches have obstacles.

Churches also have temptations. As individuals, we have temptations. The church is made up of individuals. Churches have temptations. Every now and then a church might be tempted, “Well if we just let down here, we can get this one in. If we let down over here we can get this other one in.” Churches have temptations. But you just keep in mind all through the temptations, “unto Him be glory”. Unto Him be glory in the church. “Well if we just let down here, God would be glorified if this one comes in.” If God would be glorified if this one comes in, guess what? God can bring them in. You don't have to change anything to get them. You just preach, do what God tells you to do, and if God wants them here, He'll bring them in. That's just the simple truth.

It doesn't matter what any other church does, either. Off and on, for thirty-five years I've been hearing that. “Well you know down there, they do this.” What's your point? I know what the point is, “You know maybe we should consider that.” No! What other churches do, whether they be of like faith or not, should have no effect upon what we do. Unto Him glory. That needs to be our constant model. No matter what is popular. What is popular today may not be popular tomorrow. No matter what is popular, accepted, or approved by the religious world, this is our objective, unto Him be glory.

All my ministry, I've dealt with, “Well you know, Brother Dan, brother so and so doesn't see it that way, brother so and so thinks it's OK.” That doesn't mean anything to me. It has no bearing upon what we do. None whatsoever. We just have to, “unto Him be glory.” And the only way you can glorify God is to do it God's way. This must be insisted upon, “unto Him be glory” in the church.

This becomes our individual responsibility. It's the individual responsibility of each and every member unto Him be glory in the church. Churches can receive pressure from outside, though most of the pressure doesn't come from the outside. Churches can receive pressure from within from

time to time. Unto Him be glory, just keep that in mind. You must never get away from your objective, “unto Him be glory in the church.” That must always be our ambition, aspiration, the continual quest of Home Baptist Church, unto Him be Glory. That's our blueprint, unto Him be glory. All the glory goes to Him. If we keep this objective in mind, that keeps our means, that keeps our methods within the framework of biblical standards. That's all we have to do, keep our means and our methods within the framework of biblical standards. Keep our means and methods in line with God's word. We do that, we will continue to be the church that people need.

We're not interested in getting with the times. We're interested in remaining distinct, separate, and different. To do that, all we have to do is to do what God says. In every aspect. When it comes to worship, preaching, and evangelizing, unto Him be glory. When it comes to telling the lost about their needs for Christ, when it comes to appointing people into offices or as Sunday school teachers, and all of these things, unto Him be glory. When it comes to calling a pastor, unto Him be glory. You can't be wrong. You just remember your objective. Churches get messed up and they say, “Well, you know our next pastor, we want somebody young”, or “Our next pastor we want somebody older.” It ought to be unto Him be glory in everything we do. “Well this one would make a good Sunday school teacher, this one would make a good whatever.” Unto Him be glory. It's all about Him.

If we're going to continue to be the church that people need we must maintain our objective. Our objective is never to change. No matter what. Two weeks from now, a week from now, by next Sunday, this church can be in turmoil. It can happen very quickly. It can happen overnight. It only takes one person. It only takes one person in a church to just cause all kinds of turmoil. Whatever happens, as long as the bulk of the membership says, “We're going to exalt God. We're going to do it God's way. Now the rest of you, you do

whatever you want, but you're going to have to go somewhere else to do it. We're going to do it God's way.”

That needs to always be, no matter what or the turmoil is. We've been blessed. We haven't had a lot of turmoil, but that can change. If it does, we have to keep our same objective. Unto Him be glory. We're just going to keep doing it God's way. God will work it out. God's way works. That's true individually and as a church. We must do it God's way.