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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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Proposed Vision Statement:

First Baptist Church, Durham, N.C.

We exist to delight in, display, and declare the glory of God, equipping His people to spread that delight to all nations through Jesus Christ.

“We exist to...”: Our existence as a church is not accidental, but part of the special plan of God for the world. God has a purpose for us as a church, and therefore we must have a strong sense of purpose in everything we do. Our purpose must conform to that revealed by God in the Bible.

Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

[We would not even exist—either as individuals or as a church—if God had not created us and sustained us, and therefore we exist for His pleasure and glory]

Ephesians 3:10-11 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[God had a distinct purpose in creating the church, and everything the church does should conform to God’s purpose]

“delight in...the glory of God”: The first purpose of us or any church must be to delight in the glory of God. “Delight” means to love from the heart, to find immense pleasure in, and to live daily for God’s glory. God’s glory means the bright display of His nature—His attributes—in the world. This concerns worship from our hearts, singing praises to Him from glad and sincere hearts, and yearning with all our hearts to see God glorified (i.e. displayed) in this world. This means rejoicing in God’s Word and God’s Son as the clearest displays of His nature. This means the God of the Bible is our treasure and our pleasure, displacing all other pretenders to the throne of our hearts.

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

[God is to be our first delight, and all other things are less than Him]

Isaiah 26:8-9 Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you.

[Part of delighting in the Lord is to delight in His reputation among all peoples, to delight in His glory being shown in all the earth. We yearn for God's glory with all our hearts, and yearn to see Him exalted among the nations]

Psalm 104:24, 31-32 How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures....May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works-- He who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

[As Christians, we delight in the way the physical world displays the glory of the God who made it. We look at the stars, oceans, mountains, trees, animals as special creations of our mighty God, and it should cause us a special delight, since "This is our Father's world."]

Jeremiah 15:16 When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty.

Psalm 119:16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Psalm 119:47 I delight in your commands because I love them.

[Delighting in God's glory centers around delighting in what reveals His glory clearly, namely His written word—the Bible. We delight in the Scriptures primarily because they reveal God to us. We show our delight in Scripture by faithfully reading the Word ourselves, by faithfully attending the preaching and teaching of the Word, and by obeying from our hearts the commands of God as declared in His Word]

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

[The clearest revelation of God's glory is found in His Son, Jesus Christ. We exist to delight in His Son, our Savior, to the glory of God the Father]

Psalm 43:3-4 Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. ⁴ Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

Philippians 3:3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

[As God reveals Himself in His word, His light and truth guides us into a powerful worship in which we gather together in His presence and proclaim that He is our God, our joy and delight. Delighting in the glory of God means ultimately to worship by the power of the Spirit glorying (boasting in) Jesus Christ, and utterly turning away from confidence in our own abilities]

“display the glory of God”: Our second purpose must be to spread our delight in God’s glory by living openly in such a way that God is put on display through us. To “display” God’s glory means to put it out openly, for all the world to see. It means to live moment-by-moment by the power of the Spirit that all might see God in the way we live: His love, mercy, forgiveness, holiness, patience, justice, etc. It especially means to put sin to death motivated by our greater delight in God resulting in a consistent practical holiness evident to all.

Isaiah 61:3 They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

[God’s people are planted by Him to be “oaks of righteousness”, living a holy life in a lost world that by so doing, they may put God on display]

1 Timothy 1:15-17 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[Our salvation itself is a great display of God’s glory, making it clear to all who observe us that Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the worst of sinners]

1 Peter 1:15-16 just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

[We display God’s nature most clearly when we live holy and pure lives in this present evil age. Because God is holy, we imitate Him by our holiness. Thus we must put sin to death every day, in order to fulfill our vision of displaying God’s glory]

Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

[When God saves us, He creates us anew to be the light of the world. By living openly for Christ in the world, we are imitating and displaying the attributes of God by our good life, that they may glorify our Father in heaven. Our imitation of God displays God’s mercy, compassion, love, justice, hatred of evil]

“declare the glory of God”: Our third purpose must be to spread our delight in God’s glory by boldly declaring verbally His name, His nature, and His word. Since the glory of God is most clearly seen in the gospel of Christ, declaring God’s glory means to proclaim Christ crucified and risen through public verbal witness, so that people of all nations may repent and believe in Him.

Isaiah 12:4-5 "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.

Isaiah 66:19 They will proclaim my glory among the nations.

Psalm 96:2-3 Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Luke 9:60 "...go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

[Our declaration of the glory of God centers around proclaiming His Kingdom, that God rules powerfully over the entire universe. It also centers on declaring His nature and deeds to all people]

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

[Part of declaring the glory of God is simply to let our love for God's name and nature flow out from our lips in praise, for "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks." This should be a daily practice, but also especially done Sundays in concert with other Christians]

Galatians 3:1 Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.

Colossians 1:28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

[Our display of God's glory must extend beyond merely living in daily imitation of Christ. No matter how much we seek to imitate God, no one will ever be saved merely by watching our daily lives. The Bible makes it very clear that justifying faith comes from hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed verbally. God has committed to us the message of reconciliation, and we exist in great part to spread that gospel word that all who hear it in faith may receive eternal life]

"equipping His people": Our church also exists to equip God's people. This means to be a conduit by which God pours into His people all they need to accomplish His purposes on earth. It involves discipleship, teaching, training, encouragement, financial support, prayer, love, material benefits, and anything else God's people may need to finish His work in this world. We do not seek to make mere converts for Christ, but to make mature disciples, fully equipped for every good work. The centerpiece of our equipping ministry must be the teaching and understanding of the Word of God which He has ordained for this equipping purpose. We also seek to do this for all of God's people, not just church members, as God gives opportunity and empowers us by His Spirit.

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

[The church builds itself up to full maturity only as each member uses spiritual gifts. God gives the growth, but He uses the gifts of Christians to accomplish that equipping. Thus a healthy church will have a community mindset. "watching over one another in brotherly love" so that no one among us is hardened through sin or fruitless in life]

Hebrews 13:20-21 May the God of peace... equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[Ultimately equipping the saints to do God's will is God's job, not ours. God alone can cause growth. But our efforts through prayer and use of our spiritual gifts is the conduit through which He equips us to accomplish our ministries]

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[Thorough equipping for every good work is done primarily through the teaching, rebuking, correcting and training ministry of the Word of God. As the Word is taught and lived out in our church, people will be thoroughly equipped to do all the good works God calls us to do]

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Hebrews 3:12-13 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

[We equip each other daily through encouragement, mutual edification, and accountability for protection from sin]

“to spread that delight to all nations”: The purposes of God are worldwide and evangelistic, and so must our church’s purpose be worldwide and evangelistic. The equipping we do has a missionary focus, preparing God’s people to make disciples of all nations, from our nearest neighbors to the most distant peoples on earth. Disciples are those who have, by the grace of God, come to delight in God’s glory through Jesus Christ. We exist to see that delight come to the hearts of as many people from as many nations as God permits us to reach.

Isaiah 12:4-5 ***“Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.*”**

Isaiah 66:19 ***They will proclaim my glory among the nations.***

Psalms 96:2-3 ***Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.***

Matthew 28:18-20 ***Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***

[The equipping aspect of the Great Commission is implied. As we make “disciples” of all nations, we are making learners, followers, obeyers of Christ’s commands. We will build them up in their faith, and send the back out to reach the nations for Christ. The ongoing reproduction of the church was implied in Christ’s promise that He would be with us to the very end of the age. Thus the center of our equipping is spreading our delight in the glory of God to all nations as evangelists and disciplers]

Philippians 4:14-18 ***Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.***

[We also equip God’s people to spread that delight by contributing financially to their work, as the Philippians helped Paul in his ministry by supporting him with gifts]

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 ***Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ² And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.***

[Finally, we equip the people of God to spread delight in God by praying for their ministries. We specifically pray that the message of the Lord may be honored and spread rapidly, and that God’s

servants may be delivered from the persecution that inevitably results from the faithful declaration of God's word]

“through Jesus Christ”: Everything we are and hope to be as a church is only in and through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13:20-21 **May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

John 15:5 [Christ said] **"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."**