

September 25, 2001 by Steve Brandon



The Glory of the Church

Ephesians 5:23-27; Matthew 16:18

1. Jesus Loves the Church (Ephesians 5:25-27)
2. Jesus Rules the Church (Ephesians 5:23-24)
3. Jesus Builds the Church (Matt. 16:18)

This evening we will begin a series on the church. As we are in the process of establishing a local church here in Rockford, it is good for us to press on in our understanding of the church. We need to know what the church really is and what the church is supposed to be doing in the world. We need to be clear on these things. So, for the next eight weeks, we will look at various aspects of the church.

Tonight, I would like for us to look at the church from God's perspective.

This past week, my family visited another church in town. As we put Hanna in the nursery, we were given a slip of paper, which we were to keep until the end of the service. When we went back to retrieve Hanna, we were to present this slip of paper, identifying that indeed she is our child. On this paper, it was written that we won't be able to get our child from the nursery without this piece of paper (a good practice -- prohibits people from abducting children). Anyway, as we were on our way to the nursery and I was holding this paper. My son, SR, saw that I was holding it and asked what it was. I explained how we needed it to get Hanna out of the nursery. I told him that if we lose it, we won't be able to get Hanna. Seeing how valuable it was to me, he asked to hold it.

I gave it to him reluctantly only after telling him of its importance: "SR, if we lose this paper, we won't be able to get Hanna out of the nursery." As I watched him, he cared for this piece of paper very carefully. He held it out in front of him and held it tight. He treated this piece of paper far differently than other pieces of paper he often uses. It was a treasure to him. Why was it so precious in his sight? Because it was precious to me. What was important to me was important to him.

I tell you that story because it illustrates very well the burden of my message to you this evening. My burden is to give to you a clear perspective of how God views the church and, as a result, how we ought to view the church. We shall see that the church is precious and valuable in His sight. We shall see that God cares intimately for the church and has gone to great lengths to establish and secure the church. My burden is to have us moved by God's great love and care for the church to have the same heart for it.

I would like for us to embrace the words we sang tonight:

I love Thy kingdom, Lord, the house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved with His own precious blood.

I love Thy Church, O God! Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye, and graven on Thy hand.

Notice how Timothy Dwight, the hymn writer and grandson of Jonathan Edwards communicates. He says that he loves God's church. He then explains how his love for the church is similar to God's love for it. Our redeemer spent his own precious blood for the church. Furthermore, the church is to be compared with the apple of God's eye (i.e. is it is precious in His sight). In other words, our love for the church is as a result of God's love for it.

My burden is to instill within you a love for the church of Jesus Christ. I can give you a personal testimony of my own love for the church. From my own heart, I can echo the third and fourth stanza of this hymn:

For her my tears shall fall; For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be giv'n, Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy I prize Her heav'nly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows, Her hymns of love and praise.

Timothy Dwight mentions how his tears, prayers, cares, and toils will be given to the church. Furthermore, he describes the church as his "highest joy." My heart expresses similar affections. It is for the church that I have quit my job. It is for the church that I have set my heart to labor for the rest of my days on earth.

My desire for each one of you is that you would love the church as well. Look at the fifth stanza:

Sure as Thy truth shall last, To Zion shall be giv'n
The brightest glories earth can yield, And brighter bliss of heav'n.

This describes the great spiritual realities of the church. In Zion (i.e. the church) we have "the brightest glories earth can yield." I want to press this truth to our heart this evening. It is why I have entitled my message, "The Glory of the Church."

Let me tell you another story, to show you my heart with this message (and series). When I was a sophomore in high school, a curious thing happened to me. Since I lived only two blocks from school, it was my habit to go home for lunch. Well, one day, I returned from lunch only to find that I had been elected as sophomore class vice-president. Apparently, there was a large publicity effort shortly before the student body elections (of which I knew nothing) that attempted to overthrow those who were running for the various offices. Those who were running had their names on the ballots and had produced posters and pamphlets to help their cause. But through this last minute publicity effort, I was elected as a write-in candidate. I had done nothing to get this. It was all a covert operation done apart from my knowledge of anything happening. I came back from lunch and was told that I had been elected.

After a bit of deliberation, I decided to accept the office. I thought that it would be a good experience for me. But here is what I found. I didn't find their duties to be pleasurable in any way. I found my responsibilities to be burdensome. I could have done without many of the activities that I was involved with organizing and helping to plan. It was a burden to me. My involvement wasn't a joy.

Why? I had no love for the ultimate end of many of the things we did. I saw no great results from my activities. I found that much of it was busy work. Quite frankly, I was pretty disinterested in much that was done (which is why I didn't run in the first place). I had no heart for such an organization.

Down through the years, I have led various other organizations and have found them mostly to be burdensome. Until I was involved with the church. Then it all changed. I saw that the church was higher than we are. I saw that I could whole-heartedly agree with every one of the activities of the church. I saw the enduring value of the church. I saw how God loved the church and it changed my perspective.

That is my burden for you all this evening. My desire is that you would never see involvement in Rock Valley Bible Church as a burden, but that it would always be motivated by your understanding of the greatness of this institution God established, called, "The Church." I have seen the glory of the church and I want you to see it too.

With that as an introduction, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Ephesians, chapter 5.

These messages for the next eight weeks will be decidedly topical. I trust that God will use them in your hearts and minds to understand how God views the church and how we ought to respond.

Toward the end of Ephesians 5, we find ourselves in a passage of scripture that joins two institutions of God: the church and marriage. These two concepts are intertwined, like threads of a rope throughout this entire passage. Furthermore, they are linked very closely. For instance, the love a husband is to have for his wife is to be like the love which Jesus Christ has for His bride, the church. The submission of a wife to her husband is like the submission of the church to Jesus Christ.

So linked are these two concepts that sometimes it is quite difficult to see which reality is being addressed, a marriage between a man and a woman or Christ's marriage to His church. This is especially apparent in verses 30-32. Paul goes back and forth discussing the church and marriage. In verse 32, Paul writes, "This mystery is great," for which we think that he is talking about marriage (i.e. verse 31), but Paul says, "I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."

Though these two institutions (of marriage and the church) are interwoven, the primary intent of these passages is to teach about the submission and love which ought to be found in marriage. This is because Paul is discussing roles and relationships within the church. We are to be "subject to one another in the fear of Christ": wives and husbands (5:22-33), children and parents (6:1-4), slaves and masters (6:5-9).

Though I don't want to detract from that in any way from the emphasis upon marriage, we need also to notice that the example to be followed in marriage is the example of Jesus Christ and His relationship with the church. It will be our intent tonight to examine how Jesus views the church. So, we will come to this passage with "church lenses" on. We will pull out of this passage what we can with reference to the church.

Though I won't mention it in this sermon, feel free to apply these truths of Christ's attitude toward the church to your own marriages.

My first point tonight is that ...

1. Jesus Loves the Church (Ephesians 5:25-27).

It is clear from the text. Look at verse 25. "Christ also loved the church."

These same words are found elsewhere in Scripture:

"To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood" (Rev. 1:6).

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:35, 37).

Speaking of His disciples, John tells us that Jesus "loved them to the end (or uttermost)" (John 13:1).

Jesus loves the church.

His love of the church is demonstrated in His sacrifice for it.

Jesus told the disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Indeed that is exactly what Jesus did, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (verse 25).

Before coming to earth, Jesus was in glory with God, the Father (John 17:5), but chose to leave that glory. He "humbled Himself" and was "made in the likeness of man" (Phil. 2:7,8). He willingly gave Himself into the hands of sinful men to die a death as a ransom for ungodly sinners (Acts 2:23; Mark 10:45; Rom. 5:6,8).

We willingly sacrifice of ourselves for the things we love. Sports fanatics will sacrifice much time and many dollars to pursue their love of the sport. Think of your own children. You will sacrifice greatly for them, because of your great love for them. The maxim is, "the greater the love we have for something, the greater we will sacrifice to attain it."

The same with Jesus. He gave greatly of Himself for the church, because of His great love for the church. He endured the sufferings of the cross with joy (Heb. 12:2) to purchase for Himself a people for His own possession (1 Peter. 2:9).

Jesus' love of the church is demonstrated in His sanctifying of it.

Look at verses 26, 27, "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (:27) that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless." In other words, Jesus' sacrifice for the church was to sanctify the church.

May I remind you that those whom Jesus redeemed were not lovable people. They were sinful, ungodly, enemies of God (Rom. 5:6-10). They were haters of God who were under the wrath and curse of God (Rom. 1:30, 18). They were "children of wrath" having "no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:3, 12). There was nothing in them to attract Christ to love them, but everything in them repelled His love. In other words, those for whom Jesus Christ died were people like you and me.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne has captured this beautifully when he said, "[Jesus] gave himself to be put in their place - to bear their wrath and curse, and to obey for them. We shall never know the greatness of this gift. He gave Himself to bear the guilt of the Church" (From the Preacher's Heart, p. 169).

Indeed, "we shall never know the greatness of this gift" which Jesus gave to make the church holy! Jesus gave all of Himself to sanctify His people. Christ Jesus "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14).

Jesus made the church a glorious institution.

Look at verse 27 - [He cleansed her] ... "that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory." The church is and will be glorious in the sight of God.

I think that Daniel Wray gives us a great view of the glorious nature of the church when he writes, "The church of the living God from past to present is glorious in his sight. There is no group, no movement, no institution of any kind in the world which can even approach to the glory, the splendour, the honour, the beauty, the magnificence, the wonder, the dignity, the excellence, the resplendency of the church of God. Would to God that we could all be filled to overflowing with a profound sense of the glory of the church as God sees it! Many of our problems about the local church would be solved immediately if we shared God's perspective!" (Daniel Wray, "The Importance of the Local Church," p. 4).

Founders of institutions are given great honor and prestige for what it is that they started, and rightly so.

Dawson Trotman has been given much honor for starting the Navigators.

Bill Bright has been given much honor for starting Campus Crusade for Christ.

Moody Bible Institute continually remembers its founder, Dwight L. Moody.

But Jesus founded the church and made it glorious. He ought to receive all honor. Look back to chapter 3, verse 21, "to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generation forever and ever. Amen."

Church family, my exhortation to you all is simply this. As followers of Jesus Christ, we need to love the things that He loves. If Jesus so loves the church ... (by sacrificing for it, by sanctifying it, and by making it a glorious) ... so ought we to love the church. We ought to love the church.

Do you find it a burdensome duty to be involved with the church?

- Perhaps it is because you don't love the church.

Do you find it difficult sometimes to love the church and those in it?

- Perhaps it is because you don't see the glories of the church to see past the imperfections.

May I ask you to reflect upon the greatness of this institution that God has given to us. Reflect upon the church that Jesus came to redeem.

Rock Valley Bible Church isn't a social club.

Rock Valley Bible Church isn't a man-made institution.

Rock Valley Bible Church isn't here merely to meet our needs.

Rock Valley Bible Church is here because of God's great love to us.

Rock Valley Bible Church is here for the glory of Him who purchased it.

2. Jesus Rules the Church (Ephesians 5:23-24)

Look back to verses 23 and 24, "For the husband is head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."

Again, there is tremendous application for this passage to marriage, but, for the sake of the scope of this message, we will simply overlook those details. We are on the hunt for "church truth" this evening.

Verse 23 says, "Christ is the head of the church." There is no doubt as to the meaning of this phrase. Though some would try to interpret this word, "head" to mean that "Christ is the source of the church," (which is certainly true), the abundance of evidence points to an interpretation of this word, "head" to mean that "Christ is the authority over the church." This is why verse 24 says that the church "is subject to Christ." He is our authority. (For more details, see *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Appendix 2, online at <http://www.cbmw.org/rbmw>).

In other words, Christ rules and reigns His church. We are the subjects of Christ's rule in the church. As a king has His servants, so Christ has His servants in the church.

Though we are an independent church, we view ourselves as under the authority, rule, and guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our head. Jesus is guiding the church as well as each of us in building His church. The leaders of this church will always exercise their "leadership," not their "lordship" over the congregation. We don't have to wield a heavy club to keep others involved. We don't have to use high pressure tactics to see work done. Jesus will motivate others.

Other places in scripture describe Jesus in similar terms. In Ephesians 1:22-23 it says, "He [the Father] put all things in subjection under His [Jesus'] feet, and gave Him [Jesus] as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." In Colossians 1:17-18 we read, "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything."

One of the things that we (as Americans) have lost in our church today is this very concept that Jesus is ruling and reigning over His church. We need to take our marching orders from Him and depend upon Him to use us in whatever way He seems fit to use us. Too often it is easy to give simple lip-service to this. "Yeah, yeah, Jesus is governing our church. We all know that."

Many of you may not see it, but it is visibly evident in church leadership meetings. The attitude of many churches is, "let's give our token prayer, so that the real people in charge can make the decisions."

Whether it is Men's Equippers or other leadership meetings, it is good for us to extend our time in prayer before we begin. Men, there is a reason why we often get to our knees in our praying together -- it physically reminds us of our submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ to rule His church. The day we think that we can rule the church by ourselves and begin to give mere lip-service to God, is the day that Rock Valley Bible Church will begin to falter.

This week, I read 1st Samuel, I often saw David, "inquiring of the LORD." David often prayed, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" (1 Sam. 23:2). "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" (1 Sam. 30:8). "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah? ... Where shall I go up?" (2 Sam. 2:1). "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt Thou give them into my hand?" (2 Sam. 5:19). In each case, God answered David audibly and instructed David in the way he should go.

So ought we to make constant inquiry of the LORD! Such praying is merely a recognition of Jesus' Lordship over the church. Our prayers will demonstrate our belief in His lordship. This is why we have made great efforts here at Rock Valley Bible Church to elevate the place of prayer within our own congregation. We need to be constantly reminded that Jesus is Lord of our church. Furthermore, we need to actively submit all of our plans to Him.

Think with me about the titles which Jesus is given:

Jesus is head of the church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23; Col. 1:17-18).
Jesus is Lord of the church (Phil. 2:11)
Jesus is King of the church (Acts 17:7; Rev. 19:16).
Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).
Jesus is Prince (Acts 5:31).

Furthermore, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet (Ps. 110; Acts 2:34; 1 Cor. 15:27).

All of this gives us a picture of Jesus' role with the church. Jesus is actively involved in every matter of the church.

Before he was miraculously saved, the apostle Paul was persecuting the church of Jesus Christ. Luke described him as "ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison" (Acts 8:3). You remember what Jesus said to him? "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4). To attack the church is to attack the people of the church? No. To attack the church is to attack the Ruler of the church.

The events of last week have given demonstration to this. On September 11, attack was made upon our nation, by felling the two Trade Center buildings in New York city. To attack the members of our nation was to attack the leaders of our nation, who have appropriately responded.

To attack the church is to attack the ruler of the church. This is how intimately involved Jesus is in the church. Similarly, to neglect the church is to neglect the ruler of the church.

Church family, my exhortation to you all is simply this. As followers of Jesus Christ, we need to see the Sovereign hand of the Lord in all of our activities. If Jesus so rules the church, we ought we to submit ourselves to the work of the church.

Do you find it difficult to commit to serving the church?

- Perhaps you don't see the One whom you serve. No task is too meaningless and no effort is too small when we serve the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Do you find yourself resisting the plan of the church?

- Perhaps you don't see the overall working of God on the earth. The child is stubborn and obstinate until he sees his parents walk into the room. Then, he is as sweet as can be. Realize that our labor is continually before the eyes of the ruler of the church.

May I ask you to reflect upon the glorious leader whom God has given to lead and guide us.

Rock Valley Bible Church isn't merely the gathering of those in Rockford.

Rock Valley Bible Church wasn't merely an idea of something that we wanted to do.

Rock Valley Bible Church is bigger than we are.

Rock Valley Bible Church is part of God's program for the world.

Rock Valley Bible Church is in subjection to the plans of our Master.

3. Jesus Builds the Church (Matt. 16:18)

Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 16, verse 18.

We have come back to this verse often, because it so succinctly describes our trust. Jesus had taken His disciples north of Galilee where He was ministering. It was here that Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples in ways greater than ever before.

He began by asking them a public opinion question. What does the latest Barna survey suggest? "Who do people say that I am?" (verse 13). After receiving a few answers, ...

Jesus said to them, "But who do you say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:15-19).

Our focus here this evening is not around all of the details pertaining to this passage, but is focused upon one statement of Jesus. He says, "I will build My church."

Men can build buildings, only Christ can build the church. Men can attract great crowds, but only Jesus Christ can cause growth in the individuals among the crowds. Men can arrange programs, church affiliations, denominations, strategic initiatives, but only Jesus Christ can prosper such efforts.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Paul labored at building the church of Jesus Christ, yet he said, "not I, but the grace of God [labored] with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

Jesus promised to build His church and build it He will. The certainty of the church is based upon the unchanging, unwavering, absolute promise and power of the Christ, who said that he would build the church.

We realize how sure this promise is when we realize how powerful Jesus is. Remember, Jesus is the one who cannot lie. Jesus' name is "faithful and true." Revelation 1:5 describes Jesus as "the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." Jesus has promised and Jesus has all power to do it.

Jesus doesn't place the church into our hands and trust that we will see that it is build. As J. C. Ryle once wrote, "If the work depended on man, it would soon stand still. But, blessed be God, the work is in the hands of a Builder who never fails to accomplish His designs! Christ is the almighty Builder. He will carry on His work, though nations and visible churches may not know their duty. Christ will never fail. That which He has undertaken He will certainly accomplish" (Holiness, p. 214).

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones puts it in perspective when he said, "Do not waste too much of your time in worrying about the future of the Christian church" (The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors, p. xiii).

Jesus promised to build His church and build it He has. All you need to do is take a quick tour through the book of Acts to see how He started building His church....

"The Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

"The word of God kept on spreading" (Acts 6:7).

Jesus Himself appeared to Paul and miraculously saved him. Jesus called him "a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

God granted to the Gentiles the "repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18) through the means of several visions which came to Peter to convince him to preach to Cornelius in Caesarea.

Throughout all of Paul's missionary journeys, the Holy Spirit was actively directing them in their progress.

- He said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

- The Holy Spirit prohibited them from speaking the word in Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6,7).

In all of these verses (and there are many, many more), we see how actively involved the Holy Trinity is involved in building the church.

And the work that Jesus began in Acts has continued for nearly 2000 years. Despite the efforts of the early Roman Empire to torture and burn the early Christians, God strengthened the church to remain faithful during times of great struggle. As Philip Schaff said, the church gained its victory in the world, "without physical force, but by the moral power of patience and perseverance, of faith and love. [which] is one of the sublimest spectacles in history, and one of the strongest evidences of the divinity and indestructible life of our religion" (The History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, p. 8).

Throughout time, it has been Jesus who has been building His church. "Do not waste too much of your time in worrying about the future of the Christian church" (Lloyd-Jones, *ibid.*)

One of the reasons why Jesus is building His church is because of what we are.

We are God's household, which Jesus is building

In Ephesians we find that we are "God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19b-22).

The church can be viewed as a mammoth building, with Christ Jesus having the chief place among all of the other "living stones," of which we are (1 Peter 2:5). Just as you make efforts to build up your household and wouldn't do anything to tear it down, so also Jesus builds up His household.

We are the flock of God, which Jesus has promised to protect

Peter calls the church, "the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2). Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28,29). He is the good shepherd, who "lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). When enemies approach, He will protect the flock of God.

Think about the shepherd with me. The shepherd guides the sheep to good pasture. When wolves come, the shepherd guards the sheep. When one is lost, the shepherd will search high and low for it. The shepherd will care for the sick.

Why? The shepherd looks out for his sheep.

We are the bride of Christ, awaiting our marriage with Him.

Paul wrote that we are betrothed to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). John described the joy of this marriage celebration, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. ... Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7,9).

Jesus will do everything in His power to see that the bride is ready for the marriage. He will build His church, so that He will have a bride.

Men, remember back to your single days. Remember back to the days before you were married. As you were planning your wedding, were you going to let anything thwart your plans? How did you treat your fiancé at that time? Did you not do everything that it took to see your wedding take place as planned? So also will Jesus do everything in His power to see that the wedding takes place as planned. You know what? Jesus has all power to make sure that this happens.

Jesus builds the church. Jesus rules the church. Jesus loves the church. Is there any doubt?

One of the songs we sung earlier tonight was, "Rise Up, O Men of God." One phrase in there says, "Rise up, O men of God, have done with lesser things." What does this mean, "Have done with lesser things"? Doesn't this mean that the church is the greatest thing? This hymn calls men to rise up and make the church great, by focussing their efforts on the greatest thing, the church. Forsake the lesser things. Anything other than a full-fledged devotion to the church is lesser.

Let me ask you, of all the things that can capture your attention and occupy your time, is there anything as glorious and worthwhile as the church of Jesus Christ? Is anything within the church worth a mediocre effort? In all of our activities at Rock Valley Bible Church, can we do anything with anything less than a whole-hearted effort? Our singing, our serving, our evangelism, our loving, ... The church is glorious and demands all of us.

Do you find the church to be a burden to be involved in, like my duties as a sophomore class vice-president? Or, do you find the church to be valuable and precious, like the slip of paper that would redeem our child from the nursery?

I have sought to place before you a picture of the church in all her glory. I have sought to give you reasons in which you might see the big picture of what is happening here at Rock Valley Bible Church. If you see the end result, the labor is easy.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 23, 2001 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.