

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2016**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE TREE OF LIFE**

Message Eleven

**The Tree of Life and God's Eternal Purpose
(1)**

God's Purpose and the Way to Fulfill It

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 8:28-29; Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9

- I. The eternal purpose—the purpose of the ages—is the eternal plan that God made in eternity past—Eph. 3:11:**
- A. This plan is called the eternal purpose because it was planned in eternity past for eternity future.
 - B. God Himself is the initiation, the origination, and the sphere of His eternal purpose—1:9:
 - 1. Regarding His eternal purpose, God did not take counsel with anyone.
 - 2. Everything is working for God's purpose, and nothing can overthrow it.
 - C. In Romans 8:28 "His purpose" refers to the purposeful determination in God's plan; God's purpose is to produce many brothers of His firstborn Son; the many brothers are God's many sons whom He is bringing into glory—v. 29; Heb. 2:10-12.
 - D. God's purpose is to have the church, the Body of Christ, through which He can express Himself—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23:
 - 1. God's will, good pleasure, and eternal purpose are to have the church—3:9-11.
 - 2. God purposed to do one thing—to gain a group of people who would be the living Body of Christ for the expression of the Triune God—4:4-6.
 - E. The purpose of God in the universe is to produce a group of people who will be exactly the same as He; this is the unique subject of the Bible—John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:2:
 - 1. In life, nature, image, appearance, radiance, glory, and outward expression, they will be the same as God—Rev. 4:2-3; 21:10-11, 18.
 - 2. God's purpose is accomplished by the divine life dispensed into His chosen and redeemed people; as God's life is wrought into His people, a metabolic reaction takes place within them that causes them to be transformed and become the same as God—John 3:15; 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29.

3. God's eternal purpose is to work Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people as their life, nature, and everything so that they may be saturated with God—Eph. 3:17.
- F. We need to see God's purpose in creation and redemption:
1. God's purpose in creating man was that man would express Him and represent Him; the eternal purpose of God is to have a corporate man to express Him and represent Him—Gen. 1:26-27.
 2. Creation was a part of God's original purpose, whereas redemption was remedial; redemption brings us back to God's eternal purpose—Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.
 3. The divine purpose in creation and redemption is that God would have many sons—Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:26; 4:4-7.
- G. God saved us and called us with a holy calling “according to His own purpose and grace”—2 Tim. 1:9:
1. We need to view salvation from God's perspective; the purpose of God's salvation is for His created and redeemed ones to have the sonship, that is, to have the life of the Son and be conformed to the image of His Son so that the Son would be the Firstborn among many brothers—1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:29.
 2. God's purpose is His plan according to His own will to put us into Christ and make us one with Him to share His life and position so that we may be His testimony—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 John 5:11-12.
 3. Grace is God's provision in life given to us so that we may live out His testimony—John 1:14, 16-17.
 4. Salvation involves our being saved from a human life that is meaningless—Eccl. 1:2:
 - a. The gospel of God saves us out of human life that is without meaning into the meaning of the universe—Rev. 4:11.
 - b. God created a man who had great meaning and purpose, but man fell, and the meaning of human life was lost.
 - c. With His salvation, God rescues us and brings us back to our original purpose, which is the meaning of the universe—Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9.

II. The tree of life is the way to fulfill God's eternal purpose—Gen. 1:26-28; 2:9:

- A. In Genesis 1:26-27 there is the purpose of God, and in 2:9 there is the way to fulfill God's purpose—the tree of life.
- B. After the revelation of the words *image* and *dominion* in 1:26, there is the word *life* in 2:9:
1. For the two aspects of God's purpose—God's expression and God's representation—we need God to be life to us; we need the tree of life; that is, we need God in Christ as the Spirit to be our life.
 2. We need the Triune God to live in us so that we may be His expression and representation, fulfilling God's purpose—John 11:25.