



**Building God's People**

# Purpose

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May**

Daily Devotions



## GOD'S PURPOSE

### Read Exodus 9

*But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. (Exodus 9:16)*

Everyone has a purpose.

A reason for living, a reason for getting up in the morning. Everyone has a motivation. Sometimes it's not a good one, but it's there.

What motivates God? What is His purpose?

There is a very simple answer, but it chafes us. Here it is - God's purpose is to glorify Himself. That is His "primary goal". That's what He lives for. That is His number one priority.

We don't like hearing this. After all, if person "glorifies" themselves, we find that pretty unpleasant. But we cannot apply the same expectations to God as to man. What is inappropriate for a human may be wholly appropriate for God.

If you think about it, what else could God's purpose be? For if He existed to glorify something else (like man, or creation) He would be making that thing greater than Himself.

No, God's purpose is to glorify Himself. And you will not understand the Scriptures unless you understand that. Everything He does has this end in mind. And everything that happens, whether good or bad, God turns around to this purpose. All creation and history are the theatre of God's glory.



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## **HIS PURPOSE FOR YOU**

### **Read Psalm 138**

*The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever— do not abandon the works of your hands. (Psalm 138:8)*

What is the meaning of life?

Do you have a purpose? What motivates you to get out of bed every morning? Is there any meaning to it all?

Yesterday we saw that God's purpose was to glorify Himself. We are part of God's creation, and that is His purpose for us as well. We exist to bring glory to God. That is why we were created. And that is why we were redeemed by Christ - for the glory of God.

This is a great comfort - it means your life has a plan and purpose. God is working in your life, and He is using you to achieve His purpose! Life is not meaningless - the opposite in fact. It is full of richness and meaning and purpose. And all of this is found in our relationship with God.

This may be a little difficult for some of you to swallow. We are used to living for ourselves. We are used to thinking we are the centre of the universe. Learning that we are to live for God rather than living for ourselves - that is difficult.

But here is the really wonderful thing. God is a loving God, and His intention is for us to enjoy Him forever as we glorify Him. Indeed, the service of God is the *only* place that mankind can find true and lasting happiness, delight and joy. It is there, and there alone, that we find the meaning of life.

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May – Purpose**



## **THE BEST LAID PLANS**

### **Read Proverbs 19**

*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:21)*

Are you planning for the future?

For us, the future is a blank page. It is a great unknown. We really do not know what tomorrow will bring. The future is a mystery.

A plan is an attempt to control the future. To remove the uncertainty. Planning is a constant part of human existence. We do more of it than we may realise.

For example, we plan to get up at a certain time, we plan to catch a certain bus to work, we plan to go to lunch at a certain time, and perhaps we plan to meet someone for lunch. We cannot escape planning - and nor should we try. The Scripture endorses careful planning. It commends those who have an eye for the future. Planning is good.

However, as Christians, our attitude to planning should be different to that of the world. While planning is good and right and we have to do it, we also recognise that God has a purpose, and it is His purpose that will prevail. In His grace He often chooses to bless our plans and bring them to fruition. But sometimes He thwarts them for His own good reasons.

How should we feel about this? Some might feel frustrated. But instead, we should feel enormous liberation. No longer do we plan to control the future - now we can plan because it is pleasing to God that we do. The future is still unknown, but now we can face it with confidence, because we know the One for whom the future is not a mystery. Indeed, the One who holds the future in His hands.



## CROSS PURPOSE

### Read Acts 2:1-40

*This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. (Acts 2:23)*

Was Jesus a failure?

It would be tempting to think so. Look at His life - at his peak He had many followers and thousands were influenced by His teaching. He was a success in the making.

But look where He ends up. Imprisoned, brutally flogged and executed as a criminal. The thousands who were hanging on His words have now turned against Him. His few remaining disciples have abandoned Him and are in hiding. Only a few women are left to watch Him die.

Surely this is failure? Surely this is an example of a plan gone badly wrong? But no - we are told that all this happened according to God's set purpose and foreknowledge. The cross was always part of the plan. God did not "lose control"!

The cross was not an accident. It was not an after thought. It was not "plan B". The cross was always part of God's plan - His amazing plan to call us back into right relationship with Him.



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## **YOUR SECRET STRUGGLES**

### **Read Romans 8:18-39**

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

No-one is completely happy.

That person, whose life you envy, who you think "has it all"? They have a secret pain. They have struggles and difficulties that you know nothing about. The nature of this world is that we are beset by troubles at every step. There is no denying that some seem to get an easier ride than others through life. But oftentimes that is an illusion.

Should Christians expect to be immune? Once we come into relationship with God, are all our troubles over? Sadly, that is not the case. Christians are part of this world, and this world is full of grief and strife. Christians get sick, and have money troubles, and have relationship difficulties and whatever else just as much as anyone else.

Are we no different to the world then? There is this difference - and it is a crucial one. God has promised that He is working through all the trials of life for our good. God has a purpose in the universe, He has a purpose for you, and He has a purpose for the difficulty you are suffering at this moment.

Sometimes it is a little hard to see it. Sometimes it is really hard – it's hard to believe that a loving Father would let us suffer so much. But God is trustworthy and He will bring good out of your pain.

When life is full of trouble, hold on to that promise - hold on as tightly as you can.



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## **A REAL FUTURE**

### **Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

*For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (2 Corinthians 5:4-5)*

"You have a real future here."

These are nice words to hear after you start a new job, don't you think? They affirm you, and they give you some stability and hope. The future is not uncertain - you have a future \*here\* in this job. And the unspoken implication is "We value you, we will look after you."

When people dream about the future, it usually involves career, money, possessions or relationships. Those are the areas where they seek stability and meaning. "If only I had a better job...", "If only I was married...", "If only I had that car...". These are the things people long for and dream about.

But this is not the sort of future that a Christian should long for. There is no future in worldly things. Literally no future - they will all come to end. Got a great job? One day you will retire. Got a great house? One day it will be demolished. Got a great wife? One day she will die. Harsh I know - but it's true!

The hope of a Christian is not caught up in this world. Our hope is in the next world. If our heart is right, we will be longing and yearning for this. That is the purpose that God has for us - that is where our future is.



## WHY ME?

### Read 2 Timothy 1

*God has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. (2 Timothy 1:9)*

Why did God save you?

Why did God call you? Why you? There are lots of other people around who are not in relationship with Him. Why is that? What's so special about you?

Is it maybe because you are smarter than the others? Or is it because you're a better looking? Is it because you are nicer than other people? Or is it maybe because you are more "spiritual" (whatever that means)?

You know that's not the case. You know there are lots of smart, good looking, nice, spiritual people who don't have a relationship with God through Christ. It can't be because of any of those things.

The Bible tells us that God called us "not because of anything we had done" but "because of His own purpose and grace." That is why God called you, and not another person - because of His purpose and grace.

Now maybe that doesn't clear things up as much as you would like. After all, God hasn't revealed all His plans to us. There is a bit of a mystery there. What we can say is that God called you, and He called you deliberately. God chose you, and He chose you deliberately.

God is working out His purpose in this world. As part of that He has called *you* into relationship with Him. How will you respond? Are you going to be part of His great plan?