

10-30-16 Message **OUR GREATEST PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE?**

This is missions month, and all month we have various guest missionaries scheduled to give us an opportunity to consider our obligation to obey our Lord's command to preach the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. **It is for this purpose that we are left on this planet.** If this book is true and the descriptions of Heaven are true, then the Bible says the eternal Heaven that God has prepared for every believer is a far better place than what we have here on Earth. What do we have to look forward to here on earth? Can a car last forever? Can you buy a house and expect it to be maintenance free your whole life? Cars rust, houses deteriorate, clothes get moth eaten and worn. Our bodies get old and sickness sets in, and we deteriorate to someday die.

Psalms 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

I was just talking to Ray Taylor over the phone. Brother Ray has been in terrible pain as he is recuperating from a terrible accident. Fell off a ladder and can't put any pressure on his leg. Came to church a week ago and has suffered a great setback just trying to put his leg down to come to church. As we talked he said it seems like every time he picks up a paper there is someone dying that he has known. The older we get the more funerals we attend.

Imagine Moses as he wandered in the wilderness for 40 years with that rebellious nation. He wrote..

Psalms 90:7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

Psalms 90:8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

Psalms 90:9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

Psalms 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Psalms 90:11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

Psalms 90:12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Now what is our greatest purpose in this short life that the Lord has given us?

Do we really believe what the Bible says about eternity?

Do we believe that the Lord has something better for us in the next life?

Can we say with Paul the Apostle:

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Philippians 1:24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

If it is true that heaven is a far better place than earth, then why are we so afraid of going there?

We are all like a little child that once attended one of our Bible schools. At the Bible school I encouraged all the teachers to personally talk to every child about their need to be saved. There was this one little child that came to me after being talked to by one of our workers. This little child came to me with a Bible tract in his hand with tears in his eyes. He handed me the tract and said, "here." I said what's the matter son? He said, "Mister, I don't want to die and go to heaven."

You see, the worker must have asked the child if he would like to go to heaven when he died and the child said yes. Then as he came out of the counseling room it must have dawned on him that maybe God was going to make him die right away and take him to heaven. And as much as he wanted to go to heaven he didn't want to die.

Most of us cannot say with Paul the Apostle, "to die is gain." We want to go to Heaven but we do not see death as gain!

One person said that it is not Heaven I am afraid of, it is the journey between there and here that I fear. There is no painless or easy way to die! And we fight death because the Bible calls death an enemy.

But we need to remember that the Bible tells us that what God has prepared for those who love Him is far better than any of us could imagine:

I believe in the book of Acts it is recorded that Paul actually died and in his spirit was taken to heaven. He records what happened in II Cor. 12:4 and said he saw and heard things that were unspeakable and not even permitted to talk about. For Paul, Heaven ceased to be faith. It was something he knew about because he experienced it!

I Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But I say all this to ask this important question. DO WE REALLY BELIEVE THAT HEAVEN IS REAL? DO WE BELIEVE HELL IS REAL? DO WE BELIEVE WE HAVE THE MESSAGE OF ETERNAL LIFE? IF THAT BE THE CASE THAN WHAT WOULD BE THE GREATEST PURPOSE WE CAN HAVE IN THIS LIFE?

OUR GREATEST PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE:

- I. WHAT IS OUR GREATEST PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE?***
- II. HOW CAN WE FULFILL THAT GREATEST PURPOSE?***
- III. WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING TO FULFILL THAT PURPOSE?***

I. WHAT IS OUR GREATEST PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE?

Acts 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

Acts 26:14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Acts 26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Acts 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,
Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

The Lord told Paul I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a witness and a minister.

The Lord gave Paul his purpose in Acts 26:16

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

This is the same commission the Lord gave to his disciples:

THEY WANTED TO KNOW THE FUTURE.

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

But the Lord told them this is more important:

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

If you are a born again believer?

If you are a child of God?

God has left you here to serve him.

It is amazing how side tracked we become in other things.

How we forget our main purpose.

A preacher once told me about a restaurant in his area. This restaurant was packed every day of the week. It had been in business since 1948.

The Father died and his Son in law & Daughter took over the business. They decided they were going to make it better. Instead they destroyed it. You see, it was a country Restaurant and people went there because they had good food, lots of it, and great prices. But the atmosphere

was just typical country. They decided to renovate the restaurant, raise prices to pay for the renovations, and cut down on the portions they gave customers figuring they were not making enough profit. Soon the restaurant went out of business. They forgot the reason people came to their family restaurant.

The Farmer's purpose is to raise crops.
The Soldier's purpose is to win a war.

As a Christian our purpose should be to be a witness and Serve God.

For this purpose the Lord saves us.
For this purpose God has left us on this planet.

Not to have a successful business.
Not to be popular.
Not to make money.
Not to have a great job in the world.
Not to have a fun life, etc.

But for this purpose the Lord has saved each and every one of us.

It should be our great purpose in this life, just like it was Paul's commission and great purpose in his life.

It is not just the Job of the Pastor.
It is not just the job of the missionary.
It is not just the job of the Evangelist.
It is not just the job of a gifted few.

It is our great purpose in this life.

Think about it is there any greater purpose.
Is there any greater calling?

After the Martyrdom of Stephen we read this:

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 8:2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Let us remember this is our grand purpose in life.
Birds fly.
Cows moo.
Dogs bark.

Christians ought to witness, it should be a natural by product of our existence.

II. HOW CAN WE FULFILL THAT GREATEST PURPOSE?

1. YOU CANNOT DO IT ALONE. YOU NEED A LOCAL CHURCH.

Paul worked throughout the church of Antioch and established churches.

To do this you need a local church because the local church is where people should be baptized and discipled and even sent out for Christ.

A. The Local Church provides fellowship and comaradary in this endeavor.

Paul did not go out alone.. he went out with Barnabas.
Paul did not send himself.

As he ministered in at the Church of Antioch we read this:

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

For so many Christians, they would change the words to that song so send I you. They should sing so send I me. They are self called, self sent, self anointed.

Paul and Barnabas were faithfully ministering in the local church when the Holy Spirit called them to a greater work.

How is it some cannot be faithful in the little things? What makes them think they will be faithful in the greater?

Jesus sent out his disciples two by two.

Jesus sent Paul out of Antioch with Barnabas.

B. The Local Church provides a place of training and teaching.

The Job of the church is to train and teach the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

C. The Local Church is God's sending agent.

Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

As people minister faithfully in the local church, the Lord will direct the leadership of the church to recognize gifts in a person and direct them and send them out as witnesses.

2. You need to wisely invest your talents for this goal through the local church.

Paul was trained to be a tent maker.. and when it was helpful to further the goal of being a witness for the Lord he made tents and sold them.

Luke was a Physician and I am sure that at times he utilized that when he went out in the missions fields with Paul. Colossians 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

If you are a businessman you are to be a Christian businessman.
If you are a carpenter, electrician, or whatever, utilize it for the Lord.

It is amazing how much liberty Christ gives us to serve Him and what He will do for us if we have a heart to serve Him.

I believe many of the great promises in the Bible concerning answer to prayer were given so we can fulfill this great purpose of being witnesses for the Lord. Not just so we can have a blank check to have anything we want in this world.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE..)

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. (Talking to the disciples who needed great power to be witnesses..)

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. (Here is a condition given to the fulfillment of these promises.)

III. WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING TO FULFILL THE GREAT PURPOSE OF BEING A WITNESS FOR THE LORD?

1. Are you being a personal witness to family and friends and neighbors?

Our very life is a witness. People are watching.
People are looking.
People are checking us out.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Ecclesiastes 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

Paul's life was a witness and a testimony.

He said.

Il Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Il Thessalonians 3:7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Il Thessalonians 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Il Thessalonians 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Il Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Il Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Il Thessalonians 3:12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Il Thessalonians 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

Il Thessalonians 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

We have a lot of free loader Christians who are bad witnesses.

Our whole life should be a witness.

Sometimes it takes years of consistency for people to see you have something that is worth while.

I wish it was a simple as just getting people to repeat a prayer to make them witnesses for the Lord. Many years ago I decided I would quit my job and spend 2 days a week just going door to door and getting people saved and bringing them into the church. We got a lot of people to come but sometimes their negative witness was detrimental to the spiritual testimony of the church. I was out visiting one day and a fellow said I met one of your members at the local bar the other day. We were shooting pool together and he said he went to your church.

Folks being a witness involves more than just saying a bunch of words. It involves an orderly life. When your life is out of order you are a bad witness.

This is what Paul meant. He not only preached the word he lived the word.

What a church needs is not only people who share tracts and verbally tell about Jesus, we need a church where people see people who walk the walk as well as talk the talk.

This is your purpose to be a witness at work.
To be a witness at School.
To be a witness in the community at large.

2 *Are you strengthening and supporting the Local Church God has placed you in? Is it God that directs and leads, or is it we who choose?*

We are living in a day where we believe we have a right to pick and choose.

Yet did you choose the day you were born?
Will you choose the day you die?

Most of our choices are wrong choices.

In the garden of Eden Adam and Eve made their choice and it has led all of us into death.

3 *Finally, you can be fruitful by way of proxy or missions giving.*

The Bible commands us:

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

One way or another God's word will get out. If we do not do it willingly sometimes He has other means of getting it done.

The Moslem world is not open to missionaries. It may be that the Lord is sending missionaries through war.

Either you can go, or we can support others who are called to go.
I believe we have an obligation to support missionaries.

Matthew 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Matthew 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Matthew 25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

If you say you cannot go, the least you can do is support those who are willing to go.

This is the purpose of faith promise missions giving.
This gives you an opportunity to be fruitful for the Lord.

This is an opportunity to, by way of substitution, be a witness around the world.

Missions giving.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO FULFILL THE GREATEST PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE?

1. Personal life and witness is your responsibility.
2. Tithe & Labour - commanded to support local Church to help.
3. Faith promise missions is to support others doing work you cannot do.

CONSIDER THIS IS YOUR GREAT PURPOSE IN LIFE. ARE YOU FULFILLING IT AS YOU SHOULD?