

REMNANT

Sermon - Living on Purpose

We studied the first few events of the early church this week. We saw the actions of the apostles and the others who gathered and waited in Jerusalem for the promise made by Christ to be fulfilled. They gathered expectantly, and God delivered incredibly. The day of Pentecost came and the Gospel went forth with power. Thousands were saved. They were from all across the world. It was an incredible awakening of His people. They saw His power, they experienced His love. They spent time in fellowship, in the study and contemplation of His word and they took care of those around them. An amazing time.

Then, most of them had to go home. A few were called to be evangelists and a few to be itinerant pastors. Most, however, were simply to return to their homes after this experience. They were to begin the rest of their lives as changed people. Of people saved from their sins and of people saved to a purpose. They were not simply rescued so that they could resume living as they had before, but redeemed for the work of the Kingdom which was (and is) at hand.

They returned, for the most part, to the people, places and work that they had before their experience in Jerusalem. Does this should familiar to anyone? Falls Creek is a contemporary version of Pentecost for many. While the sleep deprivation, close quarters and the sheer pace of the week would be difficult to maintain for very long, it was certainly a powerful time of focus and communication with our God. As you have seen from just a few testimonies is that He worked in our lives and in the lives of so many others who were there. All summer long, this will be the case. For one week at a time, the debris and dust of the world will fall off of those who go to Falls Creek, and the clarity that comes to those who seek Him in truth will come to thousands.

This is the very realization of Matthew 7:7-8

Matthew 7:7-8

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

For those who have returned from this incredible and formative experience, we ask the question:

For the youth, now what?

This morning, I would also pose the question:

For the rest of the believers here - now what?

I am speaking now to what we refer to this week as the Remnant. The comparatively few people who will have heard the clear call of the Lord, understood the condition of their souls before the perfect King, and accepted the free gift of God through the victory of Jesus. The people chosen, who have responded. Those who are in the fight. Those who want to be in the game. The warriors, the performers, the leaders, the creators, the thinkers. We know that we are here, in this place and at this time, for the work of the One who made us.

We are not, in any way, random or accidental. We have not surprised God with our appearing on the scene. We have been placed here, in this manner, equipped by Him for the work of our lives. How exciting! This is the case whether we are brand new believers or the physically oldest person in this room. We are to be people of purpose. Specific purpose. We are given our marching orders in the final words of Christ recorded in Matthew:

Matthew 28:18-20

18 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."

Meaningful versus Purposeful

As believers, we often live with intention, but not so much with the clear purpose of accomplishing a particular work. As students, we have this lined out for us, with school, grades, curriculum, etc. As athletes, we have this prepared by our coaches. As workers, our employer often has very clear plans, designs and goals.

What happens to our specificity as we graduate from college, for example? We become more focused on short-term accomplishment, than long-term impact. Getting married, getting a job, getting a promotion, etc. All good, but not usually a part of a long-term plan or with a clear strategy to reach toward an articulated goal.

What we often find is that we generally careen through life with attention paid to the detail, but not to the overall mission at hand. We move from day to day, looking to follow the guidelines for living, but not so aware of the work for which we are living. Our day to day process is fairly easy to see, but specific goals and accomplishments for the Kingdom

(Mustang wreck story, and show the front emblem.) I had an overwhelming feeling that my work was not done. That I had so much more that I was supposed to do. I did not, at that time, have any idea what that really meant, but it is much clearer with hind-sight.

We often move through life in a meaningful way, but lack direct articulation of the mission of our lives. This can lead us to spend our finite resources of time, talent and treasure in ways that are not as effective or efficient as we can and should be.

We can find our path by considering:

Our design (the essentials, minus the extraneous. Shark's jaw)

Our directions (my calendar, the Word of God)

Our future destiny (we are destined, quite clearly, to be with Him forever!)

A word of warning

This may not be for many. Most, in fact, seem to chose a life of nominal Christianity. This is the temptation present for all of us, especially in the affluence of America. Comfortable Christianity is the norm and readily available to most. This may, in fact, be no kind of Christianity at all. We often quote Jeremiah 29:11 but the context of this verse is certainly more sobering.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

10 This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity.[a] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Babylonian exile ain't no church camp.

Purposeful Follow-through

Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life - 32 million copies sold to date. More translations than any book with the exception of the Bible. Really struck a chord with the followers of God, apparently.

What on Earth Am I Here For?

Purpose #1: You Were Planned for God's Pleasure (Worship)

Purpose #2: You Were Formed for God's Family (Fellowship)

Purpose #3: You Were Created to Become Like Christ (Discipleship)

Purpose #4: You Were Shaped for Serving God (Ministry)

Purpose #5: You Were Made for a Mission (Mission)

Each of these ideas are fairly simple to determine a set of goals around. Pretty good starting point!

My challenge to each of you, both individually and as families, is to sit down and consider what specific goals you will set to accomplish within the Kingdom, with specific timelines attached. Working backward from the following idea - that we are designed and intended to

1. **Pray and specifically seek His guidance in this way. As a couple, as an individual, as a family.**
2. **Discuss and identify what has been revealed or is already clearly expressed in Scripture.**
3. **Write down goals**
4. **Develop plans to accomplish the goals**
5. **Work backward from the stated goals with specific action steps.**

At the end of our one, precious life, how will we have spent our days, effort, resources and opportunity? Will we have run the race, unencumbered, effectively and to win? Will He say to us:

Matthew 25:21

21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

Today, set your hearts and minds on ways in which you and your family can be family of intention, purpose, direction and results for Him. Set aside part-time or haphazard efforts to follow your Lord.

Let's move forward with intention, His intention.