

Youth Sunday

May 18, 2014

God's purpose for your life is less about where you are and more about who you are

- At the beginning of this semester I asked the students to write down questions they would like to ask God or ask about Christianity. So during our Sunday Night Youth Services we have been investigating and answering questions about God. Here are a few of the questions students have posed to God:
 - **Is the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit the same?**
 - **What is your favorite color?**
 - **Why do bad things happen?**
 - **Why did you make mosquitoes?**
 - **Why is there a God if He only hurts us?**
 - **If you grew up in a country that Christianity was illegal and you never heard the Gospel, would you go to heaven?**
- As you can see the students asked both silly, simple questions and deep, meaningful questions.
- Yet, there was one question that came up more than any other. The question revolved around the theme: does God have a purpose for my life. What does my future hold? What is God's plan for me? Or the latest way this question was phrased was, **"I know I'm here to serve God, but what is my true purpose in life?"**
- This is a question that is probably on the mind of our seniors as well. As believers, we have a big idea of serving God, but what we really want to know is the specific purpose or plan God has for us.

- They are pondering what major is right for me? What job or career do I want to go into? Should I even go to college? If not, what will I do in life? We wish or long that God would make it clear to us what we should do?
- This is also a question that we might ask of God throughout our life.

- This is a great question to ask, whether you are a senior in high school or a senior adult.
- I'm glad to share that God is not silent on this subject.
- But, His answer might not be as satisfying to our ears as we wish.
- Listen again to how the student phrased the question: "I know I'm here to serve God, but what is my true purpose in life?"
- As we look in God's Word this morning we are going to see he flips this question on its head...
- **Ecclesiastes 2:22-25**
 - I start here because it provides a foundational principle for understanding God's purpose for us.
 - **Ecclesiastes teaches us that the only way we will enjoy and be satisfied in our work or relationships or talents is by the hand of God.**
 - True, lasting joy or satisfaction is found through the hand of God.
 - Solomon found out the hard way that if you seek out pleasure, work, possessions, or knowledge apart from God or in competition with God, it will not satisfy.
 - **Our purpose will not be found in a spouse, children, career, possessions, vacations or fame.**
 - God can and will grant us joy in our spouse, children, career, and the possessions we steward. But this joy is found through a relationship with God and by living for Him as a spouse or parent, or within our job.
 - Usually when people speak about God's purpose they want to know what to do with their life: what type of career or relationship will give their life direction and meaning.

- We usually want a clear direction...we really wish God would speak to us like this...
- **Illustration: video—Field of Dreams**
- Ray heard a voice that set him on a mission and gave him purpose that changes his life
- I want you to notice that Ecclesiastes teaches us we can find joy in our work, but it never tells what specific work that will be.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:12-13**
- Again, Ecclesiastes never tells us what specific career or relationship God will grant us joy in.
- Turn with me now to a second passage that gives us insight into God's purpose for our life
- **1 Thessalonians 4:1-3a**
 - **This is God's will and purpose for your life: to be sanctified!**
 - God's great purpose is that you would grow in holiness. Grow in likeness to Jesus Christ.
 - Grow in passion, obedience and submission to God!
 - Remember the question by the student: I know I'm here to serve God, but what is my true purpose in life?
 - God's answer flips the question and tells us we know that we here to serve him and bring him glory—so go out and live. He doesn't tell us the specifics, because what is most important is our growth in godliness.
 - This theme continues at the end of this passage in **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**
 - God calls us to provide for our self, provide for our family, and live a life of blessing to others.
 - Again, God's purpose for our life is not tied to a particular career he will reveal to us, but his purpose is tied to living a life of godliness.
 - One more verse to drive this point home:
- **Matthew 6:33**
 - Yes this verse comes at the end of a passage dealing with anxiety and worry, but it is a principle that extends to other areas of our life.
 - God's will and purpose for our life is to passionately pursue Him and His kingdom.

- Hear God's Word this morning as you wonder about your purpose and what God has for you: **God's purpose for your life is less about where you are and more about who you are!**
 - We long for direction on finding a spouse, job, house, or community to live in.
 - God longs for us to be people who will give him glory in our jobs, relationships, homes and communities.
 - We long for a map of what to do and when to do
 - God longs for people with trust and faith that overcomes their anxiety and need for control.
 - God's concern is for our direction or destination. Are we seeking to live for his glory and grow in his likeness?
 - We often lose sight of the destination and want to be shown what to wear on the journey. Or what mode of transportation we should use for the travel. Where should we stop for rest on the journey?
 - Illustration: Imagine if someone gifted you with a dream vacation. Mine would be like Hawaii or Tahiti because I loved the ocean. What if you spent all your energy working on the detail that took you to destination and not on the joy that awaited you at the destination?
 - How many of us are wasting our energy, anxiety or resources on rest stops instead of living with joy as we approach our amazing destination!
 - **The fact of the matter is, we want a purpose (specific plan for what to do in life) that if given to us will undermine our faith, trust, dependence and growth in holiness.**
 - How can we walk by faith, if everything is revealed to us before it happens?
 - How can we develop perseverance if we don't endure trials, difficulty and doubt?
- Some of you are still thinking: I get the point, but I still have to pick a major? I still have to find a job.

- **For those of you agonizing over an important decision: consider how you can best honor God, live for His glory and grow in godliness—then make the decision.**
 - God has given us Scripture, prayer, wisdom, and godly council as means to guide us in decision making. Use all the resources God has granted us as believers, choose to walk in holiness and make a decision.
 - Some of us might have to retrain our self in how we make decisions. Some of us might be so prone to over analyze and worry about all the what if's, that we lack courage or conviction in our decisions. By all means take things into account as you accept a job or choose who to marry, but don't be paralyzed by a million factors and trying to figure out the perfect solution.
 - Illustration—I faced this type of decision as I came to the end of my time in seminary and was ready to send out resumes.
- My prayer this morning for everyone wondering about their true purpose in life, is that you would be free from searching for something God has not promised to grant us.
 - I pray we would be free from worry and anxiety over making the perfect decision or feeling immense regret second guessing a decision already made.
 - **My hope is that as we understand God's purpose for our life we would endeavor to pursue a life of godliness.**
 - Then out of this journey toward godliness, we would find joy from the hand of God in whatever stage or circumstance of life we find our self.

In all these stages and situations, may we know with confidence our true purpose is not found in pursuing a specific career or relationship, but in pursuing a specific person—Jesus!