

## God's Purpose for Our Life

Last week we were in **Ephesians 1:4** NLT Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be **holy** and **without fault** in His eyes.

Here Paul is laying out the purpose for why God offers us salvation, it is so that we might be Holy and blameless (without fault) before Him. Why? Because God wants us to be prepared for a new life in Heaven. Remember Jesus saying, I go to prepare a place for you, so that you might be where I am?

While we might not be entirely clear about what heaven looks like, this much we can be assured of and that is, those who are to live in Heaven must be Holy and blameless or without fault. And God is preparing for Himself such a people.

### **1. God's purpose for ours lives on this earth is to be Holy and to be Righteous.**

What is Holiness and What is Righteousness or being right or being blameless?

Holy is defined as to be separate or to be dedicated or set apart.

What does this mean? I have a few pairs of footwear. The ones I am wearing right now are my only "dress shoes", these are different than my "lawnmowing shoes". I get to designate or set apart or consecrate or bestow on my shoes the label "dress shoes". My lawn mowing shoes cannot say, "you know what, I am going to practice hard to become dress shoes"...it does not work that way. I get to chose and designate which of my shoes gets to be set apart for which task!

Similarly, we cannot become Holy by our own efforts. Holiness is something that God does for us and in us. God designates us as Holy. God is inherently Holy, whereas we as sinful humans become holy ONLY in relationship to Christ.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The starting point for Holiness in our lives as God considers us Holy or set apart for Him is when we confess that we are sinners, accept His work on the cross for us and in return God cleanses our conscience of all unrighteousness, sets us apart as Holy. From the moment we become born again, we are set apart for God or we are made Holy by God.

But, we are still in human flesh and therefore prone to walking contrary to our calling.

Going back to my dress shoes, I can imagine a conversation my dress shoes might have in my closet. "It must be so much fun to jump into a mud puddle. Apparently the streets around downtown New Orleans are a blast .....at night and during Mardi Gras!". Next thing I know, my dress shoes are muddy, reek of urine and vomit because they have had the free will to choose where and how to walk!

Filthy, but they are still my designated dress shoes....so what do I do..I wait for them to come home, then I clean them and wash them, let them dry, polish them to get them shining again so that I can use them as intended.

Dear brother dear sister, we are those dress shoes, every time we come back to the Lord and confess our sins, He washes us with His blood, again and again. Yes He died only once...but we need to be washed frequently, the Bible says. And He does so every time we acknowledge our sin.

That is why it is a good practice to begin the day with prayer for the challenges that lie ahead and to take stock at the end of the day in prayer, asking God to search us and show us areas in our life that need forgiveness.

**2 Timothy 2:21** Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself (you know we can't clean ourselves; Paul is obviously talking about being washed in Jesus' blood) from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

Here Paul links Holiness as a qualifier for purpose to be used for work!

Our Master needs us to be Holy so that He can use us for His good work!

## 2. Holiness leads to usefulness

What use does God have for us? God is in the business of saving people and He chooses to use us in this process. To be clear HE is the Savior of the world but He chooses to use us as His mouthpieces and His witnesses and an extension of His arm in this world.

And it's our responsibility to figure out what these "works" are that God has already designated for us.

Paul talks about this in Ephesians 2 which we will be studying later.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

Talk about trash to treasure. We who are trash, have been re-purposed. He created us ANEW. Made us a NEW creation in Christ Jesus...for what purpose? So that we can now do the GOOD things that HE has ALREADY planned for us from beforehand or from before the foundations of the world itself!

**Psalms 139:16** You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

**John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing

Combine the contexts of these 2 verses and what do we get?

(1) God already knows how our day will turn out, He is all knowing (2) so He goes one step further and makes sure our day turns out to be useful for Him! How does God do that? By commanding us to be connected to Him

God is saying, regardless of how your day turns out, it is of no surprise to me, even though you might be unprepared for it. Therefore, stay close to me, as close as possible and together we will make it through.

Notice the DEFINITE QUALIFIED OUTCOME and predictability: Jesus says Abide in Me, Stay attached to Me or be Connected to me, indicates an ongoing relationship. As long as we are attached to Him, His power and resources flows into us. We are speaking of His Holy Spirit.

This is the condition. Now the outcome: Jesus did NOT say “so that you MIGHT bear fruit, or you CAN or you PERHAPS bear fruit”. NO. It is definitive. You WILL bear MUCH fruit because without Me you can do nothing.

The sandwich approach. The condition first, then the outcome and again the condition.

Be attached to ME in an ongoing relationship, You Will Bear Fruit, Without attachment you are a piece of waste!

### **3. Our usefulness to God depends on our relationship with Him**

Remember **Ephesians 1:4** even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

Holy and blameless or without fault or righteous before Him.

God set us apart, designated us as Holy at rebirth when we accepted Him as savior of our lives. Now He expects us to continue or practice a lifestyle different than what was before He came into our life!

The dress shoes need to stay out of the mud and vomit and must not reek of urine! Where does it say that in the bible?

**1 Peter 1:15-16** but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

This is not a New Testament concept. Peter is referencing Leviticus 11:44 in our practice of being set apart for our God.

God is Holy, God called us to Himself. We responded. He made us a new life, washed our conscience clean with His blood. Gave us Free will to chose to do whatever we want. But expects us to chose wisely!

**1 John 3:9-10** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him (Seed=Jesus; Holy Spirit abides in us); and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God (elsewhere Rom 8:14; for as many as are led by the Spirit are the children of God), and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not **practice** righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

So the exhortation and encouragement here is for US to continue what God has started in our life. God rebirthed us and now we are expected to nurture and tend to the seed planted in our hearts. We do so by practicing a different lifestyle than what we were used to in our former life.

Dress shoes must stay out of the mud! God is always there to wash us and to cleanse us of our unrighteousness, but He is also wanting us to mature in our Christian walk. Remember the parable of the lost sheep?

We even sing about it:

"Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God  
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the 99"

Who do you think God wants us to be? Part of the 99 that He has LEFT...why did He leave them to go find the lost one? Because He was confident that those 99 sheep would be safe on their own, those 99 sheep practice righteousness even when it might seem as though the Shepherd is away; these 99 sheep are NOT stupid to be led astray; these 99 sheep are not gullible with ever heretic teaching promising the world's riches, these 99 are longing for and waiting for the Return of their King (are you? 2 Tim 4:8 And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing).

These 99 sheep are abiding in the Shepherd's love and care even when He is out of sight momentarily.

#### **4. Our relationship with God helps our practice of righteousness**

Lastly we are going to look at the opposition in our Christian walk. God never promises a problem free life. In fact biologically speaking, if we want a muscle or body to grow, opposition is a necessity. Ask any weight trainer and we will find that increasing weight or opposition, strengthens muscle

helps it to grow, increasing the frequency of repetition (set weight; more reps) helps keep the muscle in tone without losing any mass.

Intensity of opposition and frequency of opposition. Both of these God says He will use in our favor!

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

To be clear God has a purpose for our lives, He wants us to be Holy and Righteous in His sight. We already saw in depth what both these words mean and how they relate to each other in Christ Jesus. God bestows on us His Holiness and Righteousness through the work of Jesus on the cross. We are then expected to practice righteousness through our relationship with God.

## **5. Practicing righteousness leads to Christian maturity**

**John 10:10** NLT The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

Jesus is warning His followers of the pitfalls and dangers that we will encounter in our walk with Him.

There is a character introduced here with 3 strategies and Jesus counters these 3 strategies with promises of His own.

Who is this "thief" that Jesus is talking about? And what can this thief do? Are there limitations to the thief's ability?

Within context here in John 10, Jesus is speaking of anyone who opposes what He is doing. Therefore the list is short, and will include Satan and Satan's workers that include both demons and humans (the list of humans can become long and exhaustive).

What can Satan do? And what can't he do?

Can satan take away our salvation? The Bible is quite clear that salvation is Gift from God, satan has no control over that. No one can pluck us out of God's hand says Jesus. (John 10:28)

Can Satan take my life? The Bible is clear on that as well. It is appointed once for man to die after that comes judgement. (Hebrews 9:27).

So what then can Satan do? Glad you asked.

These is a progressive nature in the 3 strategies employed by the devil and his workers. Think of the parable of the sower. And link it to the strategies listed here and it works out more clearly.

The sower is God who sowed the seed. Some of these were quickly stolen or eaten away by the birds. The seed never had the chance to even sprout! Therefore in our Christian walk, we will see this happening all around us. Thieves who steal away the Word of God. Either prevent it from being cast or by turning it into something else. Promising earthly riches, when God promises salvation through Jesus! Stealing God's seed.

In contrast, Jesus promises to GIVE life. When the seed/Word of God is allowed to germinate and grow, it produces new life in the individual.

The second strategy used by satan and his minions is if they cant steal the Word of God, then they will try to kill its potential and effect.

In the parable of the sower, we find some of the seed did sprout but were quickly overwhelmed by the cares of the world. Killing the potential of the seed to change lives.

When I was a teenager in high school, I used to think it cool to have a potty mouth. Mind you, I was already a Christian! The Cursing Christian.

Sunday I go to church and sing songs. Monday to Friday at school, I wanted to be the cool guy who could curse.

What happened? The cares of the world started to kill the effect of the sprouted seed. At that stage in life, being accepted among my peers was my "care and worry" and the devil was very effective in planting those thoughts in my head to mislead me. Killing the seed's potential in changing a person's life.

But what did Jesus promise, I came that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. When Jesus did leave His 99 and come looking for me, I was already in the mud pile. I couldn't get out by myself. He picked me up, He washed me clean (yet again) and set me loose to walk my Christian life. I had to have a transformation of my mind. The old cares were no longer there. My words were different. I didn't go after the things that choked the Spiritual life out of me.

When stealing and killing the seed doesn't work, Satan takes a completely different approach. He tries to destroy our relationship with Jesus.

This strategy comes in various forms. Satan can use the affections of people in our life to draw us away from our relationship with God. He can use existential threats, such as the potential loss of a job or health or social standing or some other comfort to sever our ties with God.

In my earlier Christian walk, every time God picked me out of a dung hill and cleaned me up and set me on my feet and the moment I made a decision take on 'righteous lifestyle practices', immediately chaos would appear from out of nowhere! Satan's goal was to kill my relationship with God. Why? Because it's the relationship that produces fruit.

And at times satan would succeed.

But God used these circumstances to prune and purge my life. Get rid of dead or diseased branches in my life that never produce fruit. Attitudes, addictions, appetites. Every cycle always consisted of repentance, cleansing and renewal. And this is the basis for our Christian maturity. To be able to trust God more with our life, and to be able to ask God to use the worst of circumstances for His glory. Some of the most abundant experiences of the Holy Spirit in my life have been during circumstances of major calamity in my life. I have come that they may have life and life more abundant. More richer more satisfying.

After a while you begin to recognize strength training and repetition.

2008 trip to UK. Plane tix.



The more serious disaster builds faith the more frequent disaster builds trust in the One who has our life in the palm of His hands.

The remaining plant grows strong to provide much fruit. Some 10 fold, some 50 fold and some 100 fold. I do believe the more mature we are the more fruit we bear because of His grace, mercy and strength that flows in us due to our relationship of abiding in Him.

## **6. Christian maturity produces fruit for the Master**

### **Review:**

**1. God's purpose for ours lives on this earth is to be Holy and to be Righteous.**

**2. Holiness leads to usefulness**

**3. Our usefulness to God depends on our relationship with Him**

**4. Our relationship with God helps our practice of righteousness**

**5. Practicing righteousness leads to Christian maturity**

**6. Christian maturity produces fruit for the Master**

May the Lord help us bear much fruit for His Kingdom.

	Satan and his workers	Jesus
1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	Steal (the seed)	Seed gives life
2 <sup>nd</sup> strategy	Kill (the growing plant)	Rich life
3 <sup>rd</sup> strategy	Destroy (relationship - branch and vine)	Satisfying life