

August 13 we will have a topical study based on I Peter 2:4-12. Discussion questions are:

1. How would you introduce yourself without mentioning: job, church, role in family, any town you've lived in, or your name?
2. If you introduced yourself by stating your God-given purpose in life what words would you use?
3. What are the phrases in I Peter 2:4-12 that speak of a Christian's purpose in life?
 - a. What do those phrases call you to do?
4. According to Romans 6:13 what does God want from you?
5. How does discipline fit into your achieving your God-given purpose?
6. How does Ephesians 1:4 make you feel? (*Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.*)
7. How would you describe a person who sees the purpose of life as...
 - a. Survival?
 - b. Success?
 - c. Significance?
8. What is your understanding of Psalm 33:11, "*His purposes last eternally.*"?
9. What is your God-given purpose in life?

Sermon: *Living with a Holy Purpose in an Unholy World*

Have you ever tried introducing yourself without mentioning your job, church, your role a family, any town you've lived in, or your name? What's left? If you define yourself by your job, your family, or your church role you will discover those things to be fragile. If you define yourself as being president of a large company what are you if the company goes bankrupt? If you define yourself as a championship coach what are you if you have a losing season? If you define yourself as a school teacher what are you after 65? If you define yourself as a mother what are you if your child dies? If you define yourself as a professional pianist what are you if you have 2 fingers severed? If you define yourself as a husband or wife what are you if a divorce happens?

All those scenarios go speak to the question "What is my purpose on earth?" If you don't understand your purpose life quickly becomes a series of mistakes. A preacher was taking a walk when he noticed a small boy trying ring a doorbell. The boy was too short to reach the bell so the preacher rang the bell for the boy. Then the preacher said, "And now what young man?" The boy replied, "We run like crazy!"

How many times have you responded to the news of a young person dying from drugs or alcohol by saying, "What a waste."? Obviously a life given to substance abuse is a wasted life but what of ordinary lives? How do you know if your life is worthwhile? Listen to this synopsis *I Peter 2:4-12* "*you are...his spiritual temple...you are a chosen people...you are*

royal priests...you are a holy nation...as a result, you can show others the goodness of God...
Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors."

May I ask you 3 questions?

What does God want from your life?

The answer is: God wants your whole life. He doesn't want 10%. Romans 6:13 – "Give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God."

C.S. Lewis said, "The only thing Christianity cannot be is moderately important." It is all or nothing. How much of your heart, soul, strength, and mind does God want? The Bible says in Proverbs 3: In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.

What does it take to put God 1st?

In a word, "discipline". Proverbs 10 - Whoever practices discipline is on the way to life. Do you hear the word discipline in the word disciple? You cannot be a disciple without discipline. The simplest definition of discipline is, "delayed gratification." It means doing the difficult now to enjoy the benefit later. Everybody is disciplined about something: work, sports, housework, eating, T.V. viewing (you never miss your show). The question is do you want to be disciplined in your spiritual life? I Timothy 4 challenges us, "Spend your time & energy in the exercise of keeping spiritually fit."

Why should I spend time & energy practicing sp. discipline?

Because of the cross.

The 3 greatest questions of life are:

1. Why am I alive?
2. Does my life matter?
3. What is my purpose?

1. Why am I alive?

Life without purpose isn't a life worth living. What is the purpose of life? A Survivalist would answer, "Live as long as you can." A Naturalist would answer, "Perpetuate itself." A Hedonist would answer, "Pleasure." A Materialist would answer, "Acquisition of things."

You were made by God. You were made for God. You were put here for His purposes. Until you understand that life isn't going to make sense.

So, why does God want us here? Ephesians 1 answers, "Long before He laid down the earth's foundation, He had us in His mind & settled on us as the focus of His love to be made whole & holy by His love." Did you hear the phrase, "the focus of His love"? God made you to love you. He wanted to create something to love so He created you. That is why you are here on earth, to be loved by God.

2. Does life matter?

During WWII prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp were processing human sewage in a factory. The allies bombed the factory leaving the prisoners with nothing to do. The Nazis had the prisoners move the rubble to another field. The next day they made them move it back. The next day they made them take it back to the field. Every day it was same routine, with no purpose, no meaning. Then something strange began to happen. The prisoners began to go crazy. They began to lose their will to live if there was no purpose in their work. Many of them threw themselves in front of the guards in an attempt to get shot.

You are going through life at one of 3 levels: Survival – just live for today (live for the week-end). Success – creature comforts and financial security. Significance – You know meaning of life. You know how much you matter to God. You know God's purposes for your life and you are living them out

As we talk about the purposes of life, there is an overriding point expressed clearly in Psalm 33:11- "His purposes last eternally." This life is a dress rehearsal for eternity. You are going spend far more time on other side of death, than you do on this side. Life is preparation for eternity. II Corinthians 5 describes the dress rehearsal this way, "When this tent we live in – our body here on earth – is torn down, God will have a house in Heaven for us to live in; a home He himself has made, which will last forever." You matter so much to God He wants to keep you with Him for rest of eternity.

"Why are you alive?" - God made you to love you. **"Does your life matter?"** – God says yes.

3. What is my purpose?

(Apple corer & John Deere object)

If you don't know something's purpose, it is likely to be abused. You find your purpose by getting to know your Creator. Proverbs 9 - "Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding."

You have a choice to live life like salmon or live life like a jellyfish. A salmon begin life in the fresh water rivers frigid northwest. It soon begins the long swim downstream to the ocean where it will spend the majority of its adult life. Then something strange happens. At some point the adult salmon begins to swim back home, even if its thousands miles away. One documentary filmed one salmon as it swam through a maze of pipes and even nudged open a grate to re-enter the hatchery where it was born.

On the other hand a jellyfish is born in the ocean and dies there. It has limited movement and never really uses that ability to go any particular direction. It just floats along moved primary by wind and waves and tide.

According to Jesus, God's purpose for your life comes down to 2 things: loving God and loving people. How are you doing with that? Does your life have a destination? Are you going in specific direction? Are you willing to face all obstacles to get there? Are you controlled by one overriding passion in life?

"You are...his spiritual temple...you are a chosen people...you are royal priests...you are a holy nation...as a result, you can show others the goodness of God... Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors."

Prayer –

God if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be alive.

I confess I've spent lot of my life focusing on my plans for my life rather than your plans.

Thank you that I was made to last forever.

We all want lives filled w/ meaning. Help us to find such a life.