

With Purpose, on Purpose

Mark 8:27-38

When you have a purpose in life, you do things on purpose. If you have a goal, an aim in life, then you are going to purposefully do things to reach that goal.

So what do people have for goals? One might be to make money so they can do what they want, go where they want, buy what they want. They want to have enough money to have a nice house, a car to drive, or a comfortable retirement. So they get a job, they work, they purposefully do things in order to accomplish that goal of making money.

Some people might want power to be able to control their lives, to take charge of who they are, to feel like they matter. They want to speak and have other people take notice. So, they will do things to make that happen.

Other people want to be popular. They want to be liked. They want to be a part of the group. They want to be included. So they will purposefully do things to reach that goal.

When you have a purpose in life, you do things on purpose to reach it. So what is your purpose in life?

As you begin to think about that, let's take a look at Jesus. He's on the road to Caesarea Philippi, and He asks the disciples, *Who do people say that I am?* He gets the answers: *John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.*

Then Jesus asks them, *"But who do you say that I am?"* Peter answered him, *"You are the Christ."* Great answer. Wonderful answer. But he's got the wrong idea about what the Christ would do. Peter thinks Jesus is going to make Israel great again, provide free healthcare for all, free college for all, and appoint Peter to a cabinet position so he can help Jesus run the show. Peter has in mind the money, the power and popularity – the things of man.

But that's not the kind of Christ Jesus had to be. He quickly corrects this false understanding of His purpose. He says, *the Son of Man must....* The Greek word means "it is necessary." It has to happen. It must occur. The Son of Man must be rejected. He must suffer. He must be killed. Jesus has this purpose.

Now the question is, why does He have to do this? First, because the Old Testament says it's going to happen. Isaiah 53 describes the Christ as one who will be despised and rejected. He was esteemed not. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted. He bore our griefs. He carried our sorrows. With his stripes, we are healed. He was oppressed and afflicted, and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. The Old Testament spoke it, and so it must happen to Jesus for Him to be the Christ.

A second reason why this must happen is because God gave Him a mission. He has to live up to His name. His name is Jesus – the one who saves. He is to save His people, to forgive them, to reconcile them with God. We heard in the Epistle that *God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Why must Jesus be rejected? Why must He suffer? Why must He be

killed? Because He has this purpose in life: He has to do these things to pay the price for our sin.

It could seem to some that Jesus didn't do these things; they were done to Him. But Jesus is the one with the power. Jesus is the one doing everything on purpose.

When Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night when He is betrayed, a mob comes to arrest Him. Peter pulls out a sword and cuts off the ear of one of the bad guys. Jesus says, "Stop, don't you realize I can call down a dozen legions of angels to protect me?" Jesus allows Himself to be arrested. When He stood before Pilate, He could have talked His way out of it, but He stays silent. He is going to be crucified on purpose. He had a purpose. Everything He did was on purpose. He did all this for you. To forgive you. To save you.

Now, having heard Jesus' purpose, and what He did on purpose, let's go back to the question for you: "What is your purpose in life?" You may have several. But Jesus makes one of them clear near the end of our text: we are to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him.

What does this look like? Become a missionary and move to Africa? A few do that. But most are like the Good Samaritan – they see someone in need and do what they can to help. They, you, love and serve your neighbor.

Your neighbor might be helped by you becoming an organ or tissue donor. The next time you renew your driver's license you can check that little box.

Forty units of blood were donated at the last blood drive

we hosted. Some of it was your blood.

Your neighbor might be hungry. If you don't know anyone specific, you can volunteer at the Food Bank or make a donation.

Maybe your neighbor is lonely. A little bit of your time will mean so much to that person.

Mentors are always being sought to be a role model, help with school work, or encourage someone in their walk with Christ.

Maybe it is not helping our neighbor, but it is denying ourselves to get our butts out of bed on Sunday morning to get ourselves and our children to Sunday school and to the Divine Service.

To take up our cross and follow Jesus is to purposefully help others, to give of ourselves to meet the needs of those around us. Maybe it is time. Maybe it is money. Maybe it is something else. But instead of spending it on ourselves, we give it to others, and we do it on purpose. In doing this, we follow Jesus.

You do something on purpose because you have a purpose in life. As Christians, our purpose in life is to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Jesus.

Why? Because Jesus had a purpose. On purpose, He suffered. It was necessary for Him to die. He had to be killed and then rise again. He did all this on purpose for you for the forgiveness of your sins and to give you a place with Him for eternity. Jesus had a purpose, and He gives us one for the way we live each day of our lives. Amen.