For God's Glory

Isaiah 43:6–7

Read **Isaiah 43:6–7** — I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

PRAY

We are living in an amazing time when space exploration is being revived, and one of the leaders is Elon Musk. He hired some of the smartest people in the world, and they are doing amazing things. Mars is the goal, and he hopes to have a colony there at some point. But that's only a short to medium term goal. If he's successful, the next thing he'll want is Saturn. But that won't be the end. I'm sure he's already thinking about leaving the solar system.
In all his rocket wizardry, you've no doubt seen this almost science fiction launch tower that not only sends the SpaceX rocket up but also has arms that come out and catch the rocket as it returns to earth. I saw that and thought it was the craziest thing — frankly, I didn't believe it. I thought it was an AI generated video. But it is reality. I've been captivated by the image of arms coming out — they call them chopsticks — catching that carefully maneuvered rocket. I'd love to see it in person.

As spectacular as that recovery system is, it is not the endgame — it is not the Telios. The endgame is space exploration. What a distracted and frivolous waste of time it would be to keep focusing on a spent rocket being caught by the launchpad rather than understanding the goal.

It is the goal of our lives primarily that I want us to focus on this morning, and secondarily the endgame of this building. What is the goal, or the endgame, of your life? Is that ***your*** call, or is there one greater who gave you life, who has a goal for it that leads to life and blessing? Let's look at the passage. We just read it in Isaiah 43.

We could ask some questions about this passage from probably fourth or fifth graders and get some pretty solid answers from just looking at the text. If we asked them the first question — how did you get here? Did you randomly show up from primordial sludge? — verse seven answers: no, I was created by God. He formed and made me. And we could even ask the great question of life. What is your chief end? Where are you headed? That same fourth or fifth grader could say, again verse

seven: God created me for his glory. And so we have the famous question from the catechism: What is the chief end of man? Answer: man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

My purpose in life is not to live for my own glory, my own desires, my own goals — but to live for the One who made me, for his glory, for his stated goals. Now, if there was no Creator, no one who formed and made me — if there was no ultimate accountability to the ultimate God — I could fritter away my life doing whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted, with little consequence. But we are reminded over and over that accountability is coming: we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

It doesn't surprise anyone that millions live with no reference to their Creator, no understanding of accountability to God, and no grasp of an ultimate endgame that is the glory of God. They are captivated by shiny launchpads and waste their lives focusing on tower chopsticks that catch a spent rocket, never understanding the endgame is space exploration. That is fundamental disorientation. And it is a tragic waste of life. The God who made us did so for a reason, an endgame: his glory. In living for his glory we not only fulfill our purpose, but we experience life and blessing.

We are so selfish and sinful that we think living for God's purposes leads to death and slavery and loss of good. It's actually the opposite. God is the only source of life and blessing — there is no other. Only he holds all things together by the power of his word. So when we live for his glory, according to his commands, he extends his life and his blessing. Those who seek the Lord rejoice!

Those who will not seek the Lord and his glory reject the only source of life and blessing. No life, no blessing. That leaves death and cursing — spiritual death and spiritual cursing, both of which work their way out in ultimate physical death and physical curses. Death comes as a wage, as a salary, if you will. The wages of sin, which is refusing to submit to God and his commands, is death.

Now, in God’s master plan that I live for his glory, where am I in that? Am I living all of life for all of Christ? Let’s look at the next section and let the Bible do a little GPS work on our hearts.

Where I actually am. In **Mark 7,** Jesus is engaging with religious leaders, of all people, who want to use the things of God to make themselves look good. But are actually living for their own glory and

purpose is not glory for God. *Religious leaders, mind you*. Let's read **Mark 7:6–8** — And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."

These religious leaders are going through the pretense of living for God's glory and worshiping him. But they have altered God's word and distorted it. God's commands revealed God's holiness and his glory. They define righteousness. The religious leaders used God's word as a sort of starting place for their religious functioning, if you will, but manage to distort it and alter it according to man's traditions so that it no longer glorified God. They actually used human commands to bring glory to themselves and justify themselves. Some of what they did may have looked pious in some way. They may have even been very sincere about it. But sincerity is not an acceptable standard. God's word is the standard, and they gave lip service to it. Jesus identifies the problem: These people honor me with their lips — they talk a good game. But their heart is far from me.

When the Bible talks about our heart, it is talking about what we love and desire right down at the core of who we are. It's our "wanter" — the seat of the will. The religious leaders thought they had the best of both worlds. They knew accountability to God was coming, but they thought they had a workaround that would allow them to seek their own glory. They could talk a good game and go through the motions of loving God, but form his word, like wet clay, around whatever they wanted. And what they wanted was to live according to their own standard, and have men think they were living by God's standard. They were the original virtue signalers. God had given them the Great Commandment that they were to love him with all their heart, but they love themselves with all their heart. That's why Jesus said their heart was far from him. Ephesians 4 describes their heart as being hard. And before we punch the Pharisees too hard, that hardness of heart— that love of self and refusal to love God— marks everyone who is outside of Christ.

Ephesians 4:18 — [Those outside of Christ] are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their **hardness of heart**. In other words, the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. We are created to glorify God by loving him and walking in obedience to him, which leads to blessing. But our hard heart loves and pursues our own glory and our own ways, not God's. That leaves us in a deadly place. It leaves us facing our Creator,

who made us for his glory, on the day of judgment with nothing but defiance and self-glory to show for it.

But the Lord Jesus, who has come to save us from our disoriented loves and worthless focus on chopsticks and launch pads, has a redemptive plan. The prophet Ezekiel told us God's plan to solve our heart problem almost 600 years before the Savior came in human form.

The heart of the problem.

Ezekiel 11:17–21 — Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.' And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

That is the fix we must have. If the problem is the heart, and the heart does not love the things that it was made to love, but instead loves the opposite, and brings death, and cursing, the solution must be to have a new heart. It doesn't do any good to put a new coat of paint on a heart that loves the wrong thing. It doesn't do any good to try and improve my moral actions or behavior to earn some divine bonus points, because in the end I still don't love God or glorify him. I just look like the religious leaders who talk a good game and put on a nice look, but still love living for myself and my goal.

What does it look like to be right with God?

John 3:3 — says, "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Being born again is the spiritual language Jesus used with Nicodemus. It's not another physical birth, but God intervening to make the soul alive, giving a new heart that has the capacity to glorify and love God as he is worthy of. It's a new heart that can do what it was made for. What does that look like?

Mark and Matthew tell us at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in **Mark 1:14–15** he began to proclaim the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Repent means a change of mind accompanied by a change of direction. I used to think driving in the ditch was a good idea, now I realize driving on the road is a good idea, so I pull out of the ditch. I repent of ditch-driving. It's the practical outworking of what it means to be given a new heart. When what I want, what I love changes, then my mind is changed about what is truly valuable. When I have a new heart that loves God and his ways, I change my mind about chasing what is ungodly and worthless. I change my mind about focusing on launchpad chopsticks, and instead lay hold of the ultimate goal of loving and glorifying God and experiencing his life and blessing. That is what repentance does. I stop drinking sewer water and go drink from the springs that well up to eternal life that Christ gives. That's repentance.

Repent and believe the Gospel. What is the gospel, and what is it that I am to believe about it? The gospel is this: though God made us for his glory and to enjoy his life, we defied him and sinned against him. And as he warned us at the beginning, sin brings death. Always has; always will. But the gospel means ***good news***. There's no good news there in defiance and death. The good news is that Christ, out of his great love, came on a rescue mission to pay the price for sin. The wages of sin is death, and Christ paid that wage, that penalty, by giving his own righteous life when he was nailed to a cross to pay the sin debt that he did not owe for those who would trust that his atoning sacrifice paid the price for their sin. That is the gospel, the good news, and that is what we are to believe. Our belief in the gospel means that we stop trying to play religious games, or clean ourselves up, or simply create some new moral standard apart from a holy God that we think is better than what God commands. We stop trying to pursue our own glory and our own agendas, and trust Christ. It is humble acknowledgment that I have no way to fix myself, I have no way to achieve moral righteousness on my own — I must have the righteousness of Jesus applied to my account. I'm simply a sinner and must have God's mercy, else I perish.

This is the gateway to life in Christ. This is the way we discover the joy of seeking God and living for his glory. And it is the escape from the domain of darkness and death. This is the only way of escape that God has made, but it is sufficient. No one comes to God other than through the saving, redeeming work of Jesus, the Son of God, for no one else lived a perfect life, died for sin, or was raised to life so that he can give life to those who trust him. Being given a new heart, believing the good news of salvation in Christ, gets us to the goal of living for God's glory. It transfers us into God's kingdom with a new heart. It changes everything.

How do you get there? In **John 6**, Jesus said that, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. Come to Christ. Turn from the worthless focus and pursuit of launch pads that miss the point, sin that produces death, and disorientation that heaps up judgment rather than joy. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.

To close the loop, dedication day is a day where we set aside a building to be used for God's glory. Infinitely greater and infinitely more important is the dedication, the setting aside of your life for the glory of God, which is what you were made for. The longing of your soul, the satisfaction of your soul will be found in Christ, whom you were made for. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart, but come to him, turning from what is worthless, and discover him as the treasure of greatest price.

Believer, revel in the glory of God! Push against the old nature that still tempts with chopsticks that are not the main thing. RGC members, with a renewed spirit and seeking the empowering of the Holy Spirit, let's understand this place as a launching pad, and then *let's launch* for God's glory, proclaiming his gospel, and the great Redeemer's Grace.