



GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

by

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“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

—Genesis 1:28

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

— Matthew 28:19–20

I have a question for you—a very, very important question—and that is this: What are you living for? What is the purpose of your life?

Socrates said that an unexamined life is not worth living, but I'm afraid the situation is more serious than that. An unexamined life might bring us into disastrous conflict with God who calls us to examine ourselves. What is *your* purpose for living?

The famed preacher, Dr. Louis Evans of the great Hollywood Presbyterian Church, some years ago was invited to a frat house at UCLA to speak. A large number of young men had gathered there to hear him, for he was a fascinating speaker. They were sitting on couches, every chair was occupied, and some were sitting on the floor or just leaning against the wall. He asked them, “Gentlemen, what is your purpose for living?”

One of the young men raised his hand and said, “Well, I'm studying business. I plan to go on and get an M.B.A. and want to have a successful business one day.”

He said, “That’s very commendable. However, that is how you are going to make your living. What are you living for?”

“Oh.”

Another raised his hand and said, “Well, you see, pastor, I’m looking for the girl of my dreams. When I find her I’m going to get married, and we’re going to have six kids, because I love kids and I’m going to live for my family.”

He said, “That’s wonderful. Those are the people you are going to be living with, but what are you living for?”

Another said, “I want a big beautiful home in the suburbs with a swimming pool and all of the modern conveniences.”

He said, “That’s nice, but that’s where you are going to be living. But what are you living *for*?”

Now I have a feeling that Dr. Evans just shot down some of your reasons for living as well as those of the fraternity students. What are you living for? What is the purpose, really, of your life?

IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSE

Now purpose is very important. There are eight different Greek words in the New Testament that are translated “purpose.” In its various forms, “purpose” is used sixty-two times in the Bible. God acts by purpose. He is fulfilling His purposes. The angels of God act according to His purpose. We are senescent and rational creatures. We live by purpose, whereas animals live by instinct. We have reason and purpose. Everything we do we do on purpose.

When you ask somebody, “Why did you do that?” and they say, “I don’t know,” they’re pulling your leg, because we all do whatever we do on purpose. Now some of those purposes may be low and mean and base, or they may be high and exalted, but we do everything we do by purpose, but most of us don’t ever examine our purposes very carefully.

The Founding Fathers of this country, however, had [a purpose] and did [examine that purpose], and left for us a very clear record of what their purpose was. I’d like for you to hear it, because I think they had it exactly right. When all of the colonies had been established over here, they got together for the first time in 1643 and wrote what is known as the New England Confederation. In that compact they stated these words. Listen to them carefully: “Whereas we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I guarantee you that you will never hear that in any public school in this country today, but that is why they came.

Now notice something. The Founding Fathers were farmers and builders and blacksmiths and teachers and doctors and many other things. They had many ancillary purposes, but one overriding main purpose toward which all of the other purposes were merely tributary was that no matter what they did, they were doing all to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Can you say: We all came into this part of America for one and the same end and aim—to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is that why you are here? I want you to know something. That is why I am here. That is why I came to Fort Lauderdale. I hope it is why you are here. No matter what other minor purposes we have, we have to have a central purpose. I would like for you to see how important that is.

By the way, I would like to tell those frat students that all of those Founders made a living. I suppose most all of them reared families. And all of them built houses and lived in them—but those were not the reasons for their living. That was not the purpose for which they were living. They were living to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Purpose—something given to us by God, who is the God that is working out in everything His own purpose for this world.

If you were ever to examine the garbage heap with seeing eyes, you would discover that what is there are things that no longer fulfill their purpose—the purpose for which they were made or the purpose for which they were bought. Having ceased to fulfill that purpose, they are cast out into the garbage heap. A broken plate no longer serves the purpose of holding food and is thrown away. You have a T-bone steak. You bought it to provide a meal. It did. Now what's left of it no longer serves the purpose and you throw the bone away, along with grapefruit rinds and egg shells and stale bread—that and a thousand other things that no longer serve the purpose for which they were made or for which you bought them.

When the pagans dwelt in Jerusalem before David conquered that city, outside the wall of the city was the valley of one of the pagan gods. In it was a great metal image of the god. It was hollow. They would build huge fires inside of it until the image glowed red hot. Then, in the extended hands they would place their babies as they offered them as sacrifices to this bloodthirsty god.

When the people of God conquered that city, they destroyed that altar and that image and covered it with garbage. It was found in the Valley of Hinnom outside the wall of Jerusalem. They set it on fire and continued thereafter to put the rest of their garbage on top of it until it became the garbage dump of Jerusalem, always burning, always consuming the garbage. And what was there? Things that no longer fulfilled their purpose.

The Valley of Hinnom in Hebrew is *gê hinnom*; *gê hinnom* is one of the words in the Bible that means “Hell.” What is Hell? It is a place where those things are cast which do not fulfill the purpose for which they were created. Think about that. Do you? Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched”—*gê hinnom*, [Gehenna, in English] the garbage dump of the universe.

Well, what is that purpose God has given us? One person said to me, “I just don't know what my purpose in life should be. I haven't chosen a purpose yet.” Wonderful!! I'm glad to hear it, because you shouldn't. You see, we have been sold the humanistic bill of goods that says that we are autonomous. Now the word “autonomous” comes from two Greek words: *autos*, which means self, and *nomos* which means law. The autonomous man is a law unto himself. He would be “god,” and he will have whatever purpose *he* decides to have. “I did it *my way!*” That concept has overspread this nation like a sticky glue, and many, many people have bought into it.

We are not gods; we are not autonomous. We are creatures made in the image of the almighty God, and we have been created for *His purpose!* Not yours and not mine. I hope all of you get a good hold on that because it can certainly change your life. Our Founding Fathers had it right. They all, from all of these colonies, came together to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is your purpose.

THE CULTURAL MANDATE

How do we do that? It is spelled out in the first and last commands God has given: the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of God's mandates for the human race. The first one, The Cultural Mandate, is given in Genesis 1:28, and the second, the Great Commission is in Matthew 28:19–20. God created us in His image that we should subdue the earth and have dominion over all things in it. As the vice-regents of God, we are in His place to bring to pass His will in all of the various spheres of life. The Founders of this country went about fulfilling what is known as the Cultural Mandate by establishing godly and righteous institutions. Whether they were schools or colleges or governments or whatever, they were established according to the righteous principles of God.

In God's mandate known as the Great Commission we are told to go and make disciples of all nations "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Alas, we have withdrawn from that today and have for almost a hundred years. The result is that into that vacuum left by Christians, unbelievers have flocked and we now have godless schools and godless colleges and godless governments—as much as they have been able to—and godless entertainment, and godless everything.

I read that in 1850, virtually every newspaper in America was owned and operated by Christians who published sermons every Sunday in their papers. They included commentary with Scripture quotations and argued from Christian principles. Can you name one daily newspaper today run by Christians? There may be some, but I don't know of them. We have left the field of battle, and so the unbelievers have come.

We sing "This Is My Father's World" and "To God Be the Glory," yet we've turned it over to Satan. We look at what is taught in our schools, what is found in our libraries, what is found on our computers on the web, what is found in our theaters and television, and it is the Devil that gets the glory for this world all too often, I am afraid.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

The last commandment Christ gave right before being taken up was that we were to go and make disciples of all nations. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." The command is repeated four times, four slightly different ways, but it is that we are to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and needy world. Ah, my friends, that is something that so desperately needs to be done. I thank God there are so many of you that eagerly and joyfully are doing it through the witnessing training offered in this church. I rejoice in that. But I know there are others of you that have not and do not. If I ask the question, "How many people did you share the Gospel with this summer?" I'm afraid that many of you would have to say, "None." This year? This decade? Ever? No. Alas, never. Someday that will be known to all.

The next point that I would like to make clear is that church is in some ways like a college. In a college there are two kinds of courses. There are required courses and there are electives. You can take all of the electives you would like to take, depending upon your talents and interests and the time that you have available. But there are some required courses that you must take if you have any hopes of graduating.

Imagine a student who, after having spent four years in college, comes to the dean two weeks before graduation and says, “Dean, I’ve just been reading over the catalog. I never really looked at it very much before—a glance once or twice. I noticed you have all of these ‘required’ courses. Ah, you know, I, I, I said I was majoring in engineering, and this says something about needing all of these mathematics courses. Well, I didn’t take any mathematics . . . I took basket weaving, Chinese art, modern dance, rock and roll in the ’60s. But I never got around to this math. And then all of these science courses . . . I mean, really! But Dean, I want you to know that it’s really very, very important to me that I get that engineering degree, because I’ve told everybody that I’m going to be an engineer. I understand that is a very lucrative profession and I want to be an engineer, so I do want that certificate. I will get it, won’t I?”

Shall we take a vote on that? Is there anybody here who would suppose that the college was going to grant that student an engineering degree? And how would you like to drive across a bridge that he designed? Of course not.

Now, in the church there are many electives. You can become involved in as many of them as your talents and interests and time allow. You can sing in the choir, you can be an usher, you can work in the nursery, you can help with the youth. You can do a hundred different things. They’re electives. But, dear friends, the Great Commission is not an elective. Nobody is commanded to do any of those electives I just mentioned a moment ago. They are all good. They are all needed. They are all proper. They are all wonderful. But they are not necessary for graduation.

But the central command is repeated in many different ways. We are to be salt and light. Salt in that we keep the culture from utterly corrupting; light in that we bring into the darkness of men’s mind the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. We are told to seek first the kingdom of God. How do we do that? By fulfilling the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission. That is exactly how the Founding Fathers did it. We prayed today and even sang today, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” And so we are to build the kingdom of Jesus Christ here on earth while we are here, and then in Heaven forever.

It is amazing how many people don’t take a long look at life. Little Johnnie was twelve years old and he lived near the ocean. His great joy was to play on the beach and in the water in the summer. One Saturday morning he decided to build the greatest castle in the sand that had ever been built. He brought pails and buckets and shovels of every size, and all of the various other implements and accouterments that he might need. He had little soldiers and little cannons to put on the walls. He began to work on his plan. There was a marvelous moat and there were Babylon-like walls. There were tall towers and turrets and spires and even little flags on the top.

He worked for five or six hours without even thinking about lunch or the fact that the sun was westering. Since he was facing the castle, he didn't notice that the tide was coming in, until the waves got bigger and closer! At length one particularly large wave crashed right behind his ankles and over the moat, leveling the walls and turning his castles and spires into a big puddle of sand. He stood with water and sand dripping from his hands, looking at his life's work (almost), in utter dismay. We say, "What a foolish little kid. Didn't he know the tides came in and out? Is he that stupid?"

Well, before we too harshly condemn him, we are adults, for the most part here. Do we not know that the tide is coming in? Do we not know that the crashing wave of God's judgment is soon going to come upon every one of us? Have you been building on nothing but sand? A thousand years from now, what will that which you have done in this life amount to? A million years? a hundred years? For most people it would be nothing. You have wasted your life because you have had your own autonomous purposes and you have not yielded yourself to the purpose of God for your life, and that's what the garbage heap is for.

When we realize that we have failed to do what God put us on this earth to do, we realize the results of that. Not only has the magnificent patrimony that has been given to us by the Founders—a godly Christian nation—been allowed to slip through our fingers like sand and become this godless monstrosity that we see around us today, but more than that, innumerable millions of souls in America have and are and will perish eternally in the Gehenna of God, because the Church has failed to heed the purpose for which it was created.

REPENT

What do we do? My friends, the answer is very simple. The word is singular. It is simply this. Repent! That is the first thing Jesus said when he began His ministry. Repent. He had had all eternity to think about what He would say to the human race when He finally got here, and He came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel**" (Mark 1:15).

The Great Commission is not an elective, and without the core course, no one graduates from God's college. To willfully disobey the commander in chief is rank insubordination and results inevitably in a court marshal. On a ship it is mutiny. There was a time when you would have walked the plank. That was their garbage heap—the ocean.

Dear friend, what is your purpose for life? We are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. Everything is to be brought into that great purpose. We all came into these parts of America in 1999 to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you don't know how to witness, be here Wednesday morning or Thursday night. I'll teach you how. You have no excuse. I hope I've been very clear that when a life is unexamined and the purposes that God had for making us in the first place are ignored, denied, and refused, there can only be one outcome.

Ah, but dear friend, if they are obeyed, the results can be glorious. This nation could be revived, and we could see righteousness again prevail in America as millions of people come to know the wonder of the Savior and their lives are changed. Can you imagine how different this

country would be if suddenly those Founders who met together in New England to sign that Confederation were suddenly multiplied into two hundred and some million people, and they all could say, "We have come into these parts of America for one and the same end and aim, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." May it be. May it be.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, O God, forgive us for our sins, for they are so many. Cleanse us by the blood of Jesus Christ. Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Give us a heart that delights to please Thee, to do your will, to fulfill your purpose for this world and to bring glory to your name. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Sermon delivered by Dr. D. James Kennedy on September 12, 1999, at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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