

Jason Smith - Renewed

Part 2: Renewed Purpose

Scripture: Ephesians 2:10// Acts 9:1-18

Last week we learned that God wants to renew our spirit. We are more than just physical beings.

We have soul and spirit that often can become weary by the circumstances we face. We need to allow God to forgive us as we repent and walk in new life.

If we are honest, we are all in need of some kind of renewal from time to time.

Sometimes we have to renew a driver's license, sometimes we have to renew our passports if we want to travel, and sometimes we even renew our marriage vows.

When something is renewed, it gets new life. It is freshened up. But life has a way of making us feel stuck. We can feel like life is happening to us rather than us living the full life that Jesus offers.

We can sometimes feel like we are just going through the motions. If you are there or have ever been there, then you need to be renewed.

The truth is, there is nothing more frustrating than trying to use an electronic item in my home, only to find that the batteries are dead and cannot provide power to make it work.

It might be a remote control, a flashlight, or a kid's toy that presents us with this frustrating scenario.

You search through the junk drawer in your kitchen or try to steal batteries from something else, but there is nothing like realizing you have a fresh pack of the right size to help renew whatever it is you are trying to use.

Many of us have felt like this. We have felt like our very lives have run low on batteries and need a fresh kick of some kind. Often, we can feel this way because we have lost our sense of purpose.

Without true purpose for our lives, we run the risk of feeling exhausted by the same office cubicle, the same daily routine, the rat race, the sense that we live each day with nothing to show for it and no meaning.

This past year, in 2025, has sucked the life right out of a lot of us. It has left us looking for something more out of life. That is no way to live.

Whenever we feel like we are running low on batteries, low on steam, and needing to be renewed, there is only one source that will suffice.

We have to go back to the source of all life, and that is to the God of the universe.

This is where we must receive our God given purpose that can give us new life right in the middle of our search for meaning.

The scriptures speak to this purpose as Paul writes to the Christians living in Ephesus.

It turns out that the struggle with needing a fresh purpose and meaning in life is not a new struggle; Paul was addressing it in the first century.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Paul calls us God's handiwork. Some translations say we are God's workmanship. The Greek word used here is *poiema*.

It means creation or that which is made. It is where we get our English word poem. We are God's handiwork.

We are his creation. He dreamed us up. He is the author of our lives. He is where our purpose comes from.

1. GOD MADE YOU ON PURPOSE AND FOR A PURPOSE

Whenever we create anything ourselves, we take great pride in that object.

Illustration: Like a child who comes home from school and has painted a picture, molded a clay sculpture or written a great story, they are so proud to show their parent. Their excitement comes from one reason and one reason only: they created it.

There is a reason that the creation story in the book of Genesis speaks of God creating each day and ending each day by saying, “it is GOOD.” God takes pride in his creation.

He loves his creation. When he thinks about each and every one of you, he calls you good, because you are his creation and he had made you on purpose and for a purpose.

Because he made us, then he has the right to give us our meaning for our lives. In fact, Paul reminds us that we were created for good works that God has prepared for us to take part in.

Though you may feel like you have no purpose in life, God desires to remind you of the desires he has always had in mind for you.

Maybe God wants to remind you today that though you have existed so far in your life only for yourself, to show up at work, to build a social media following, to eat, breathe, and sleep. He has a new, renewed, and greater purpose for your life.

Paul, the author of the book of Ephesians and most of the New Testament, is the perfect Biblical character to look to for a renewed purpose.

Before Paul was Paul, he was a man named Saul. Saul was a Pharisee, which was a Jewish religious sect of men who were dedicated to enforcing Jewish law and customs.

The Pharisees were not very kind to people in the early church, because the new movement of Christians was seen as a threat to the Jewish establishment.

Saul was incredibly zealous for his Jewish faith and was even recorded in the book of Acts as overseeing the stoning of the first Christian martyr: Stephen.

If you had asked Saul for the purpose of his life, he would have told you it was to stomp out the Christian movement and to ensure the survival of the Jewish religious elite.

However, Saul was the handiwork of God, and God had better plans for him than the destruction of the early Christians. The scriptures tell us that one day his life was transformed forever and he was renewed.

READ Acts 9:1-2

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Saul was given direction to persecute anyone he found who was a part of the Way.

“The Way” was the first century means of saying followers of Jesus. Saul had a misplaced purpose. He had a misplaced meaning.

He was missing the good work that God had planned for him. He was not living up to his God given potential. Some of us may have the sense that we aren’t either.

2. MISPLACED PURPOSE

Some of you this morning can relate to Saul in that your life is marked by negative aspirations or even evil intentions. The way you have lived thus far has resulted in harm and pain to those around you.

Others of you may relate to the young man in my yard. Your life has been marked by responsibility and hard work.

You have provided for yourself and your family, but you get the sense there is something more that God wants for you to do. I want to be clear today that I am not talking about jobs or careers.

I am talking about things you give yourself to with passion. This may have to do with your job.

This may have to do with a certain cause that is worth fighting for, a person you want to invest in or a mission that could use your gifts and talents.

Remember, God has planned good things for you to do, and he has placed talent, skills, resources, and influence within you to cause you to be effective.

The scriptures do not speak to whether Paul was at some kind of crossroads within his life's purpose, but God was wanting to use him for something great.

It was going to take God's intervention to help him discover a better reason for living and a renewed purpose for his life. Paul is on his way to continue his persecution when something amazing happens.

In **Acts 9:1-9** we see a:

3. DIVINE DISRUPTION

The very spirit of Jesus, whom Saul was persecuting, confronts Saul. He is knocked to the ground and he is blinded by a great light.

God steps in to renew Saul's life by changing his plans and reorienting Saul around a brand-new mission.

What the scriptures speak to is disruption. It often takes disruption to get our attention and reorient our lives.

For Saul it was a bright light, a voice from heaven, and blinded eyes. For us, it can happen in all kinds of ways.

Illustration: I'm going to use 4 balloons: **Partying, Money, Popularity, Relationships.**

Have each balloon in a row and talk about each one.

If you want to know what your current purpose in life is, then just look at where all your time, energy, attention, and affection go.

Many people invest their entire lives in purposes that do not really matter in the end. Sometimes God offers us disruption that can help us find renewal.

We spend our time partying until it starts to affect our school, family, etc. (disruption - pop).

We spend all of our time trying to make money. We work constantly until we realize that we have neglected our family (disruption – pop).

We spend all of our time trying to become popular. Then one day, we realize that we have worked so hard for people who do not really care about us (disruption – pop).

We have worked so hard to secure that boyfriend or girlfriend to the neglect of more important matters. Then, without warning, they call it off (disruption – pop).

Saul's life was completely altered by Jesus' intervention in his life. Jesus got in the way of Saul's old purpose.

Jesus had different plans for Saul. Jesus cares about us enough to intervene in our lives as well. God will use anything to help us discover our God-given purpose in life.

In Acts 9:10-19

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

11 And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying

God uses a man named Ananias to help restore Saul's physical sight. God tells him to go to where Saul is and lay his hands on him to restore him. This restoration is more than just physical.

This restoration is spiritual in nature as well. In verse 15, the Bible says that Saul is God's “chosen instrument” to proclaim the good news of Jesus to the gentiles.

How would it feel to know you were a chosen instrument of God for doing good in the world?

God has a plan for Saul, but that plan cannot happen if Saul is still focused on killing Christians.

God uses many different agents to help us discover the renewed purpose for our lives as well. Sometimes God uses people to help get us on track. Sometimes he uses circumstances.

Sometimes he uses hardship. Sometimes he uses the Bible. Sometimes he uses opportunity.

Either way, we have to keep our eyes and ears open to find our purpose for which we were made.

There are some indicators that the Bible points to help us determine when God is speaking to us.

4. THE PATH TO PURPOSE

First, a renewed purpose given to us from God will always align with what God has already stated in the Bible.

God will not contradict His Word as he gives us instruction. Does the thing you believe God is leading you to sound like something God would want?

Second, a renewed purpose for our lives is almost always something that we cannot do on our own.

God's plan for us requires his involvement and empowerment for us to be successful. The Holy Spirit in our lives will guide us as we move into new endeavors.

Third, renewed purpose is often confirmed through obedience. Rarely does God give us the entire picture at once.

Living out God's purpose for our lives requires faith and means we must step out in order to find out.

After Saul is visited by Ananias, he receives his sight and his entire life's purpose changes. He goes from trying to destroy the Christian movement to being a main contributor to the spread of it.

You may feel like you are too far-gone. You may feel like God could not use you. You may feel like you do not have much to contribute.

However, the life of Saul would suggest that God is never done with us, and he will use anyone for his Kingdom Purposes.

I would invite you today to place your hands out before you with hands open and palms up. I want to pray that God will speak to you about your God-given purpose.

I would invite you to tell God your hands are open and you are willing to do whatever he asks you to do. I believe God will use each of us for a powerful purpose.

Prayer