

“A Man with Purpose”

Summary

This powerful message confronts us with a challenging truth: God isn't just interested in helping us up when we fall—He's calling us up to our full potential. Through the story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4, we discover that Jesus was a man living with divine purpose, and this same purposeful living is meant to define our lives as well. The disciples marveled at Jesus sleeping peacefully in the storm, asking 'What manner of man is this?' But the deeper question becomes: What manner of men and women are we becoming as we're conformed to His image? Jesus could rest in the storm because He knew His identity and destiny. He understood He wasn't going to drown in a boat when His purpose was to die on a cross for humanity's sins. This message challenges us to move beyond settling for mediocrity and spiritual comfort. Like Peter who stepped out of the boat, we're called to embrace our God-given purpose even when circumstances are difficult. The hard truth is that our culture excuses us while the Kingdom calls us to grow up. When we truly see Jesus as He is—not the religious version but the real Jesus—we're transformed into His likeness. This isn't about religious performance but about discovering who God created us to be from our mother's womb. Each of us was crafted uniquely, with specific gifts, talents, and a divine calling. The question isn't whether we have purpose, but whether we'll awaken to it and live accordingly.

Main Points – A Man with Purpose

What Manner of Man is This? Part 5

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the nature of Jesus Christ as a man who lived with divine purpose and destiny, using the account of Jesus calming the storm as a foundation. Pastor Rob emphasizes that God is not just interested in helping us up when we're down, but in calling us up to our full potential in Him. Jesus knew His identity and purpose, which enabled Him to sleep peacefully in the storm while His disciples panicked. Similarly, believers are called to discover and walk in their God-given purpose, which provides peace amid life's storms. The message challenges Christians to move beyond mediocrity and religious comfort, embracing the transformation that comes from truly seeing Jesus as He is. When we understand our purpose as Jesus understood His, we can overcome fear, make decisions based on God's timing rather than convenience, and fulfill our destiny regardless of circumstances or others' choices.

Key Points:

- God wants to call us up to our full potential, not just help us up from our struggles
- Jesus lived as a man with clear purpose and destiny, knowing who He was and where He was going
- Understanding our God-given purpose enables us to have peace in storms and overcome fear
- We are conformed into Jesus' image when we see Him as He truly is
- Right plans with wrong timing can lead to disaster; we must follow God's timing, not convenience
- Self-preservation and seeking comfort often conflict with God's purposes
- Where we choose to lay our thoughts (our "pillow") determines our peace and direction
- God's grace marks our place—what comes naturally to us often indicates our calling
- Everyone "tithes" to something; the question is who or what is our God
- God is preparing a people who will voluntarily obey Him and display His glory to the world

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:35-41 (Primary text: Jesus calming the storm)
- Matthew 4:37 (boat filling with water)
- Philippians 3 (Paul's desire to know Christ)
- Romans 8 (creation groaning for manifestation of sons of God)
- John 13:1-5 (Jesus washing disciples' feet, knowing where He came from and where He was going)
- Acts 27:10-44 (Paul's shipwreck journey to Rome)
- Genesis 28:10-22 (Jacob's dream at Bethel with stone pillow)

Small Group Study Guide – A Man with Purpose

Small Group Guide: "What Manner of Man Is This?" Part 5

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt like you were "bailing water" in your life—working hard to fix a problem that seemed overwhelming. What was that season like?

Key Scripture Passages

- Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm
- Acts 27:10-44 - Paul's shipwreck journey
- Genesis 28:10-22 - Jacob's dream at Bethel

Main Themes & Takeaways

1. God Calls Us Up, Not Just Helps Us Up

Jesus didn't just rescue Peter from drowning—He challenged Peter's faith. God wants to grow us, not just comfort us.

Key Quote: "If I just patted you on the back, you'd go back to the boat and never reach your full potential."

2. Jesus Was a Man Living with Purpose

Jesus knew who He was, where He came from, and where He was going. This gave Him peace in the storm.

Key Quote: "Long-range purpose and destiny are more important to God than the immediate crisis."

3. We Were Born for Purpose

Like Jesus, we are called to live with intentional purpose, not driven by circumstances or convenience.

Key Quote: "What manner of man is Jesus? He's a man who knew his purpose. What manner of man or woman should we be? People who know our purpose."

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message (15 minutes)

1. What stood out most to you from this sermon? Was there a particular story or point that resonated with you?
2. In Mark 4, Jesus was sleeping during the storm while the disciples panicked. What does Jesus' ability to sleep reveal about His trust in God's purpose for His life?
3. Pastor Rob mentioned that Jesus was sleeping near the rudder (the steering mechanism). How does this detail speak to how God steers our future versus how we try to steer it ourselves?

Personal Reflection (20 minutes)

1. The Rock Pillow: Jacob had to lay his head on a rock during a difficult season, yet God met him there. What "hard place" are you currently laying your head on? How might God be trying to speak to you in this season?
2. Purpose vs. Panic: The sermon contrasted making decisions from a place of purpose versus making decisions from a place of crisis. Can you share a time when you made a decision out of panic rather than purpose? What was the outcome?
3. Your Grace Marks Your Place: Pastor Rob said, "What comes easy to you? What just clicks?" What has God graced you to do? What gifts, talents, or passions do you have that might point to your purpose?

Challenging Questions (15 minutes)

1. Staying in the Boat: In Acts 27, Paul warned that everyone needed to stay in the boat to be saved. The sailors tried to escape under the guise of helping. In what ways might we be tempted to "lower our own lifeboats" when things get difficult in our church, relationships, or callings?
2. Who's Your God?: The sermon suggested that everyone tithes—the question is, who is your God? Where does your "tithe" (your best resources, time, energy, devotion) actually go? What does that reveal about what you truly worship?
3. Pastor Rob said, "God is not here just to help you up. God is here to call you up." How does this challenge the way you've approached your relationship with God? Are you seeking comfort or transformation?

Application & Action (15 minutes)

1. Choosing Where You Lay Your Head: The sermon emphasized that we choose where to rest our thoughts. What thought patterns or worries do you need to surrender? Where do you need to "lay your head" differently?
2. The Vow of Jacob: Jacob made a vow to God after his encounter. What commitment or "vow" might God be calling you to make in this season? (This could be about obedience, generosity, service, etc.)
3. Living on Purpose This Week: What is one specific, practical step you can take this week to live more aligned with God's purpose for your life?

Practical Applications

Individual Actions:

- Identify Your Purpose: Spend 30 minutes this week in prayer asking God, "What did You create me to do?" Journal what comes to mind.
- Examine Your "Tithe": Do an honest assessment of where your time, money, and energy go. Does it reflect that God is truly your God?
- Create a Memorial: Like Jacob's pillar, identify a "hard place" where God has met you and create some reminder (journal entry, photo, object) to remember His faithfulness.

Group Challenge:

- Accountability Partners: Pair up with someone in the group. Share one area where you feel God is "calling you up" and commit to checking in with each other weekly.
- Purpose Declarations: Have each person write down (or share aloud) a statement of purpose: "I believe God created me to _____." Pray over each person's declaration.

Closing Reflection

Read together: Philippians 3:10-14

"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Reflection Question: Paul's singular ambition was to know Christ. How can we cultivate that same singular focus in our daily lives?

Prayer Time (10 minutes)

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for each person to discover and walk in their God-given purpose
- Pray for courage to stay "in the boat" when circumstances tempt us to self-preserve
- Pray for grace to lay our heads (thoughts and anxieties) on God's promises rather than our circumstances
- Pray for the church to become a people who obey God, displaying His glory to a watching world

Optional: Allow time for individuals to share specific prayer needs related to "hard places" they're currently facing.

For Next Week

Homework:

1. Read the three main passages (Mark 4:35-41, Acts 27:10-44, Genesis 28:10-22) daily this week
2. Journal your thoughts on this question: "What would my life look like if I truly lived with the purpose God has for me?"
3. Come prepared to share one insight from your journaling

Discussion Questions – A Man with Purpose

When have you found yourself bailing water from a sinking boat in your own strength, rather than waking Jesus who was already in the boat with you?

How does knowing your God-given purpose change the way you respond to immediate crises versus long-term direction in your life?

In what areas of your life are you making decisions based on convenience or comfort rather than God's timing and direction?

What does it mean practically for you to choose where you lay your head or rest your thoughts, especially during seasons of grief, anxiety, or uncertainty?

How might God be using other people's poor choices that have affected you to actually work for your welfare if you remain submitted to Him?

Are you settling for just being helped up by God, or are you willing to be called up to your full potential even when it requires being stretched?

What are the grace marks in your life—the things that come naturally or easily to you—that might indicate your God-given purpose and calling?

Like the sailors who tried to escape in lifeboats under the guise of helping everyone, where might you be operating in self-preservation rather than trusting God's plan for the whole body?

If you're waiting for God to prove Himself more before fully surrendering to Him as your God, what has He already done that should be sufficient?

Who or what is truly your God, as evidenced by where your time, treasure, and devotion actually go rather than where you say they should go?

Scriptures – A Man with Purpose

Explicitly Mentioned or Directly Referenced:

1. Matthew 14:22-33 - Peter walking on water (alluded to in introduction)
2. Mark 4:35-41- Jesus calms the storm (primary text, read in full)
3. Philippians 3:8-10 - Paul counting all as rubbish to know Christ
4. 1 John 3:2 - "When we see him as he is, we shall be like him"
5. Romans 8:19-22 - Creation groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God
6. John 13:1-5 - Jesus washing the disciples' feet
7. Acts 27:10-44 - Paul's shipwreck journey to Rome (extensively discussed)
8. Genesis 28:10-22 - Jacob's dream at Bethel (read and discussed in detail)
9. Psalm 22 - Bulls of Bashan (alluded to regarding Jesus' crucifixion)
10. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 - "I have finished my course" (Paul's statement)

Alluded to or Thematically Referenced:

11. Ephesians 2:10 - Predestined for good works
12. Jeremiah 1:5 - Formed in mother's womb
13. Psalm 139:13-16 - Knit together in mother's womb
14. Matthew 11:28-30 - Jesus' yoke is easy
15. Romans 8:29 - Conformed to the image of Christ
16. Colossians 1:15, 18 - Jesus as firstborn
17. Romans 8:31 - "If God is for us, who can be against us?"
18. Matthew 26:39 - "Not my will but yours be done" (Gethsemane)
19. Acts 14:22 - "Through much tribulation we enter the kingdom"
20. Hebrews 4:15 - Jesus tempted in all ways
21. Malachi 3:10 - Tithing principle (implied in discussion)
22. Proverbs 3:9-10 - Honor the Lord with firstfruits (thematic)

Devotional – A Man with Purpose

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: Called Up, Not Just Helped Up

Reading: Matthew 14:22-33

Devotional: When Peter began to sink while walking on water, Jesus didn't just rescue him—He challenged him. "Why did you doubt?" Jesus asked, calling Peter to a higher level of faith. God's grace isn't merely about survival; it's about transformation. He sees your full potential even when you're struggling. Today, recognize that God isn't content with simply keeping you afloat. He's calling you upward into everything He designed you to be. The storms you face aren't meant to destroy you but to reveal what you're truly capable of in Christ. Don't settle for mediocrity when you were born for greatness. Let Jesus call you higher today.

Day 2: Steering from the Place of Rest

Reading: Mark 4:35-41

Devotional: Jesus slept in the stern of the boat—the very place where the rudder controlled their direction. While the disciples panicked about their immediate crisis, Jesus rested in the knowledge of His purpose and destiny. He knew He wouldn't die in a storm because His mission was to die on a cross for humanity's salvation. Where are you steering from today? Are you making decisions based on momentary crises or eternal purpose? God invites you to steer your life from a place of rest, trusting that He sees your future clearly. Your long-range destiny matters more to God than your immediate discomfort. Choose today to lay your anxious thoughts down and rest in His sovereign plan for your life.

Day 3: The Pillow of Purpose

Reading: Genesis 28:10-22

Devotional: Jacob laid his head on a rock while fleeing for his life, yet in that hard place, God revealed His purpose. The stone that served as Jacob's pillow became an altar—a memorial of God's faithfulness. Where you choose to lay your head—your thought life—determines your peace. Are your thoughts landing on God's promises or on your circumstances? Even in hard seasons, God is present, reminding you of your destiny. Your difficult situation doesn't mean God's plan is over; it may be the very place where He confirms His purpose for you. Today, make a conscious choice about where you rest your thoughts. Let your hard places become altars of remembrance of God's unwavering commitment to fulfill what He's promised you.

Day 4: Purpose Preserves You

Reading: Acts 27:13-44

Devotional: Paul survived a shipwreck not because of perfect circumstances, but because he walked in divine purpose. Even when others made poor decisions that affected him, God's plan prevailed. The angel told Paul, "You must stand before Caesar," confirming that his destiny would be fulfilled. Your purpose in God provides supernatural protection. When you know why you were born and walk in obedience to that calling, no storm can sink you before your assignment is complete. Others' choices may create turbulence in your journey, but God will turn even their mistakes for your good. Today, ask God to clarify your purpose. Let that revelation anchor you through every storm. Your life isn't finished until God says it's finished.

Day 5: Obedience That Is Tried

Reading: Philippians 3:7-14

Devotional: Paul counted everything as loss compared to knowing Christ. His singular ambition was to know Jesus as He truly is—not through religious performance but through intimate relationship. Obedience untested is not true obedience. When the sailors tried to abandon ship, they were operating in self-preservation rather than covenant obedience. God calls us to cut the ropes of our backup plans and trust Him completely. What manner of person are you becoming? You were created to reflect the image of Jesus—a person living with purpose, walking in obedience, and trusting God's faithfulness. Today, examine where you're still holding onto plan B. Release your self-preservation strategies and fully surrender to God's plan. He will not leave you until He completes what He promised.