

“BEGINNINGS”
PASSION FIRES UP PURPOSE
**(UNCHARTERED WATERS,
UNHALLOWED HEARTS,
DEFINING MOMENT)**
Joshua 3:1-5
August 27, 2017

INTRODUCTION: Can God use me? Is it possible for me to live in such a way as to be missed? Can my life contribution make a difference (difference maker)?

In my Bible, I have noticed a pattern in the life of those the Lord uses.

1. They Came Out of Obscurity.
2. They Experienced Adversity.
3. They Enjoyed Prosperity of Soul.

Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Joshua, Peter, Paul, Epaphroditus.

Peter- rough start; In **Luke 4** the Lord he followed called him Satan. **(Luke 4:8)**.

Paul-

1 Timothy 1:12-16

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”

Paul The Least:

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

Paul's Struggles:

Romans 7:8

“But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.”

Romans 7:15

“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.”

Romans 7:18

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.”

Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth.

Remember, ***“PASSION FIRES UP PURPOSE”***

When Saul was converted to Christ in **Acts 9** Ananias was commissioned to go help him. Listen to the Lord's purpose.

Acts 9:15

“But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.””

Again, remember, all God's converted children have a past.

Acts 9:13-14

"Then Ananias answered, "'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.'"

Each time Paul would stand before leaders; Felix, Festus, or Agrippa he would recall his past. But, he didn't stay there.

ILLUSTRATE: 6-D

PROJECT PICTURE

- Lumbee – Spoke in Lumberton Wednesday night.
- Here I developed my work ethic.
- I have come to realize that the Lord was preparing me to bring His glory with my life: **TIME, TALENTS, TREASURES.**

Colossians 1:13-16

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

You were made for Him (Christ).

Ephesians 1:10-13

“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

*“**He** is for us! Note, **He** is also for Himself. God is the One Being in all the universe for whom seeking His own praise is the ultimate loving act. For Him, self-exaltation is the highest virtue. When He does all things **“to praise of His glory,”** He preserves for us and offers to us the only thing in all the world that can satisfy our longings.”*

John Piper

C. S. Lewis:

*“Just as man spontaneously praises **whatever they value**, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it.”*

Psalms 67:3

**“Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.”**

Psalms 67:5

**“Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.”**

This life is a dress rehearsal for eternity.

C. S. Lewis:

*“My earth you aim and you miss heaven.
My heaven you aim and you get earth
thrown in.”*

It seems that when the Lord brings us to a Jordan River experience (a time of counting the cost), there is always a review of the past.

- It's a time of **Reflection** (where we have been).
- It's a time of **Contemplation** (how have we lived and responded thus far?)
- It's a time of **Anticipation.** (Where do I go from here? What will be different in the next new phase of my life?)

Once the lord begins to unveil **His purpose**, we need **His passion** to pursue His next.

Titus 2:14

“who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Romans 12:11

“not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;”

“Man is so made that whenever anything fires his soul, impossibilities vanish. Passion may be the only thing that I've got going for me.”

Everyone has **passion** for **something** or **someone**.
For me its Jesus, Janet, my calling, this church (you the people), leadership, etc.

Things – the beach, cars, music, ice cream, food, etc.

5 REASONS WHY PEOPLE LACK PASSION:

- 1. They have allowed something precious to become familiar. After a while, things become just common.**
- 2. Because we want acceptance and approval.**
- 3. Our society is passive.**
- 4. Apathy tends to increase with age.**
- 5. We have no purpose beyond ourselves.**
 - *“People who live for themselves are in a mighty small business.”*
 - Gallop Poll: The #1 factor for credibility in the church is the **passion** of the pastor.

6 TRUTHS:

1. **Passion** is the first step to achievement.
 - Desire determines destiny. If you find yourself lacking in persistence, this weakness may be remedied by building a stronger fire under your desires (fire in the belly).
 - **QUESTION:** How do you feed my passion?
 - When I sensed that God wanted me to be a pastor/preacher I made my mind up that I wanted to be the best. Inspired by other's stories, God can do it here too.
2. **Passion** increases willpower.
 - The key to willpower is “*want-power.*”
 - People who want something badly enough can usually find the willpower to achieve it.
3. **Passion** changes lives.

4. **Passion** changes me.

- A passion for souls will change your priority.
- A passion for growth will change your methods.
- A passion for pastors will change your ministry.
- A passion for discipling will change your goals.
- **ILLUSTRATE:** in my early pastorates, I used to personally write down every name of every person that joined our church.

5. **Passion** makes impossibilities possible.

“Man is so made that whenever anything fires his soul, impossibilities vanish.” Passion may be the only thing that I’ve got going for me.”

- **PASSION STATEMENTS:**
 - Every great accomplishment was fueled with passion.

- We need to always follow our passion and not other's perception.
- Passion has always set me apart from others.
- Your passion has more influence than your personality.

6. Your **passion** for God protects you from wrong.

- It will be shown by a great desire for personal holiness. In other words, anything will be sacrificed that prevents a Christian's growth.