

Summary

In this sermon, the pastor explores the idea that God has planted a divine sense of purpose and dreams within every person's heart. Drawing from Ecclesiastes 3:11, he reminds the congregation that God's plans for each individual are real and intentional, and that Christ came to set people free so they could fully step into those God-given dreams. Freedom, he explains, is not simply the absence of pain or sin, but is defined by the presence of God in a person's life. The pastor walks through a cycle of hurt that begins with traumatic events, leads to believing lies about oneself, and results in self-condemnation and broken patterns of behavior. He calls this 'kakos' (wrong thinking and wrong feelings) that gets rooted in the mind and emotions through things either taught or caught. The solution, he argues, is not to focus on removing sin by willpower, but to be filled with the presence of God. Just as water displaces air in a glass, God's presence drives out wrong thinking, lies, and bondage, freeing people to become who He has called them to be.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hearts and willing spirits. As we gather together, we ask that You would quiet the noise of our daily lives and help us to truly hear what You want to speak to us. Remove any distractions, any pride, or any walls we have built around our hearts. Holy Spirit, be present in this room and in each of us. Give us the courage to be honest with ourselves and with one another. May this time together draw us closer to You and to the freedom You have already purchased for us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is something you wanted to be or do when you were a child, and how does that compare to where your life has actually taken you?

Key Verses

- Ecclesiastes 3:11
- Galatians 5:1
- Luke 4:18

- John 16:33
- Romans 8:1
- John 8:32
- 2 Corinthians 3:17

Questions

- The pastor opened by talking about 'God dreams,' the sense of divine purpose God has planted in each of us. Have you ever felt a strong sense of calling or purpose from God? What did that feel like, and where are you with it today?
- Galatians 5:1 (ESV) says, 'For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.' What does it mean to you personally that Christ set you free specifically so you could be free? Are there areas of your life where you feel like you are still wearing a yoke?
- The pastor described a cycle of hurt: a traumatic event leads to believing a lie, which leads to self-defense, which shapes how we relate to others and God, which reinforces the original lie. Can you identify a time in your own life when you recognized this cycle at work? How did it affect your relationships?
- The pastor made a distinction between the omnipresence of God and the manifested presence of God, saying that freedom comes when we experience His manifested presence. What practices or habits help you personally experience the manifested presence of God in your daily life?
- The pastor said, 'Freedom is not defined by what is absent, such as pain or sin. It is defined by who is present.' How does this reframe the way you think about spiritual growth and overcoming struggles?
- Romans 8:1 (ESV) says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' Yet many believers still struggle with self-condemnation. Why do you think it is so hard to fully receive this truth, and what has helped you (or could help you) move away from self-condemnation?
- The pastor used the illustration of pouring water into a glass to displace air, saying that freedom comes not from removing sin by effort but from being filled with God's presence. How does this change the way you approach areas of your life where you feel stuck or bound?
- The pastor said that some people in the room are 'foundational pieces to what God wants to do in this church,' but that the enemy has convinced them they are too broken to be used. How can we as a small group encourage one another to step into the God dreams and purposes He has placed in each of us?

Life Application

This week, identify one lie you have believed about yourself, whether it was something you were taught or something you caught through a painful experience. Write it down. Then find at least one Bible verse that speaks the truth of what God says about you in that area. Spend time each day this week reading that verse out loud, inviting the Holy Spirit to replace the lie with His truth. Make it a point to get into God's presence daily, whether through worship, prayer, or reading Scripture, and ask Him to fill that space where the lie has lived.

Key Takeaways

- God has planted a divinely inspired sense of purpose and God dreams in every person's heart, and He wants each of us to be free enough to step into them.
- Freedom in Christ is not defined by the absence of pain or sin but by the presence of God. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17, ESV).
- Bondage often begins with a traumatic event (something taught or caught) that leads to believing a lie, which creates a cycle of self-condemnation and broken patterns of thinking and behavior.
- The solution to bondage is not willpower or sin management but being filled with the presence of God. Just as water displaces air in a glass, God's presence drives out wrong thinking and lies.
- Self-condemnation is not from God. Romans 8:1 (ESV) declares there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, and believing what God says about us is the foundation for true freedom and purpose.

Ending Prayer

Lord, we thank You for the truth that You have spoken over us today. We thank You that You have not forgotten us, that You are not disappointed in us, and that You have planted real purpose and real dreams inside each one of us. We ask that You would continue to pour Your Holy Spirit into every heart represented in this group. Where there are lies that have taken root, we ask You to lay an axe to those roots. Where there is self-condemnation, remind us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Help us to change our source of truth from the voice of the enemy to the voice of Your Spirit. May we leave here more convinced of who You say we are than of what our past or our pain has told us. We choose Your presence. We choose Your peace. And we trust You to lead us into the freedom and the purpose You have always had for us. In Jesus' name, amen.