

A Purpose Driven Life

Jeremiah 29:11-13

One of the most depressing things that I hear people say so often is, “I just don't see the purpose. What's the point?” It might be in their marriage. It might be in their finances. It might be spiritually. When it comes to the church, they'll say, “What's the purpose? I just don't see the purpose. I'm exhausted. Why should I keep trying? Why do I try to do what's right when it doesn't seem to make any difference at all? It just doesn't seem to matter. I don't see the purpose.”

Why do you think you are here?

- Random

Some people say, “I don't know – I'm an accident. My parents didn't intend to have me.”

- Routine

If you ask some people what it's all about, they would say grow up, breathe, eat, sleep, go to work, pay taxes, and die. Others may say, “I don't know, I've never thought about it.”

- Reckless

We live to have a good time. Experience things. Have adventure. Pleasure becomes our main pursuit. Have fun.

Your life is a gift from God, and it is worth living. You are loved more than you realize. You're loved by God. *“He loves you with an everlasting love.”* Jeremiah 31:3 He loves you so intensely that He sent His own Son to suffer and die for your sins, for our sins, because of His love. You're loved by your family. Loved more than you may know. You're loved by the church, God's family. You might say, “Well, Bill, nobody even knows me here.” Okay, well let's fix that! How about this? Instead of coming late and leaving early, why don't you stick around a little bit? Get to know some of the people in this church. Also, instead of attending sporadically, be here every week and engage in a small group, learn the names of other people, and start developing friendships.

- God has a plan for your life.

God is speaking, *“I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”* Jeremiah 1:5

Jeremiah knew he was called by God, even before he was born. That's why we're so strong on our stand for unborn children because, at the moment of conception, that's a living soul made in the image of God, and it's such a tragedy in our culture where so many of these lives are taken that could have been someone to change our world, someone to find a cure for cancer, someone to make a significant impact on our culture.

You say may say, “That's nice, but I was born out of wedlock.” Welcome to the club. Me too. So I wasn't planned. Fantastic. But you know what? Even if my mother did not plan me, my life was planned by God. I know that. So is yours. Sometimes you'll see a child born out of wedlock. We use a terrible phrase. We say, it's an illegitimate child. There are no illegitimate children. Every child is legitimate. Every child is loved by God. Psalm 139 says, *“You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment*

was laid up before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts toward me, Lord! They're innumerable.” Psalm 139:16-17

Let's imagine a bullseye. There are different layers surrounding the center, but the goal is to hit the center space. We've got all these things that surround our life: friends, school, family, work, dreams, partying, or whatever you're into.

At the center of that target should be our relationship with God. What does it mean to live for God? One of the problems that we have today is that there are so many other things that capture our attention. It is difficult to focus on God.

“For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

“The Lord has made everything for his own purpose.” Proverbs 16:4

God has made everything for His own purpose. Think about a pencil. We do all kinds of things with a pencil. We try to use it as a screwdriver, sometimes ladies fix their hair with it. It is a weapon brothers and sisters use to hit each other with them, a makeshift back scratcher. That is not the purpose of a pencil. The purpose of a pencil is to write. And that is what it was created for and that is its best purpose. There are other things to smack your brother on the head with, there are other things to do your hair with. The purpose of a pencil is to be a pencil.

Let me give you three reasons why bullseye living is a big deal:

- Bullseye living gives me a reason to live.

If we focus on the purpose of God's plan for our life, it is like getting the answers to a test before you take it. How many of you would like that, to have the answers to a test before you take it?

- Bullseye living makes my decisions more clear.

When I have a purpose for my life and recognize God's plan for my life, it makes my decisions more clear.

- It gives my life meaning.

Paul says in Ephesians, *“Pay close attention to how you live. Make good use of every opportunity that you get... and find out what the Lord wants you to do.” Ephesians 5:15-17*

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

I want us to look at four powerful truths about this promise that I think are going to really encourage you.

1. God's Plan Transcends My Problems.

“For I know the plans I have for you.” Jeremiah 29:11

No matter what you're going through, God has a plan. No matter what storm you're facing, God still has a plan. God's people are in exile in Babylon, and so they're 900 miles from their homeland. They're in captivity, but a rumor starts going around that God is about to deliver them any day and they're going to be going back to their homeland, and this rumor takes hold. Everyone starts believing it as truth that any day they're going back to their homeland, and so some people start packing their bags. A lot of people start planning what they're going to do when they get back home. They start planning the rest of their lives, but then God says, "Wait a minute. That's not my plan. Your plan is not my plan. My plan is bigger and greater than your plan because My plan is to bless you right where you are if you'll trust Me. I want to bless you in the middle of this storm right where you are if you'll trust Me. If you'll turn to Me, then eventually I'm going to bring you back to your homeland and bless you even more. That's My plan. You don't have to be delivered from your pain to be blessed."

Don't you hate it when God messes with your plan? I hate it when God messes with my plan. I'll make out these plans, and they're good plans. They're Godly plans, and then I pray and I say: "God, I need Your power to fulfill this plan. I've got a really good plan here, and I need Your strength. I need Your stamp of approval on this plan so would you come over and bless my plan, strengthen me to do this plan, and stamp Your approval on my plan?" Many times God says, "It's not My plan." Sometimes He allows a storm to come in to blow my plan away. Sometimes storms come into our lives, and they mess up our plan because God has a bigger and greater plan.

Sometimes it's the storms that shove us out of our comfort zone into our calling. God is a good God. He doesn't cause evil. He doesn't cause terrible storms and tragedies and trials to come into our lives. He doesn't cause evil. Insurance companies always call it an act of God, but really it's an act of Satan because God doesn't cause the evil. He doesn't cause the terrible storms that can come into our lives; but let's face it, God is sovereign. God is in control. He's God, isn't He? That means every problem that comes into my life, God didn't cause it but God allowed it, and we will never understand this side of Heaven all the reasons why God allows the trials, the difficulties, the tragedies, the problems, or the pain in our lives. We'll never understand it completely until we get to Heaven. But we do know this, God's purpose transcends our problems. There is no storm that can come into your life that can blow away God's plan for your life, that can change God's plan for your life because so many times when God allows a storm to come into our lives and it blows away our little plan and our plan ends up in pieces, dashed on the rocks, just blown apart, it's because God is moving us in another direction because storms never leave you where they find you. They always move you in another direction, and we would never ask for a storm.

Sometimes God allows the storms. But we know this. God's plan always transcends any problem. God has a purpose for every single problem Romans 8:28, one of the most quoted promises of scripture says,

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

It doesn't say that all things are good. Some things are really bad. Cancer is not good. Divorce is not good. Bankruptcy is not good. Some things aren't good. Some things are very bad, but God tells us this "*we know*." Paul doesn't say we wish or we think or maybe. He says we know that God takes everything, even the bad, and He causes all of it to come together to bring good. God can take the worst and bring it all together to bring good out of the bad. It's amazing how God does that. God can take everything that comes into your life and bring good out of it.

Can God bring good out of evil? The greatest act of evil the world has ever seen is the crucifixion of the Son of God, but God took that greatest act of evil and He brought about the greatest gift of love the world had ever seen, the gift of forgiveness, salvation and Heaven one day.

God can take crucifixions and turn them into resurrections. For those who are called according to His purpose, for those who love God. This promise is only for those who allow God to be the captain of their life, who allow God to be at the helm of their ship to guide them, to be the bullseye at the center of their life.

2. God's Plan Supplies My Needs.

"plans to prosper you." Jeremiah 29:11

The word "*prosper*" in the Hebrew means "the ability to make wise decisions." Prosperity is the ability to make wise financial decisions, wise relationship decisions, wise decisions at your workplace, in your career, and in your family that produces real blessing in your life. And God says, "I have a plan for you that if you follow My plan, I'm going to meet your needs. It's a good plan for your life."

"My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

God wants to meet your needs in good times and in bad times, through sunny days and through stormy days. God wants to meet your needs, but a lot of people never get to see God's divine provision in their life. They never get to see God meeting their needs and God coming through because they don't trust God with their finances. Do you trust God to meet your needs? Do you trust God with your finances? There's an easy test for that. It's tithing. The Bible says give back the first ten percent of all you make to put God first in your finances.

3. God's Plan Overcomes My Anxiety.

"not to harm you." Jeremiah 29:11

What is your greatest fear today? Is it the fear of rejection? Is it the fear of failure? Is it the fear of loss? Is it the fear of losing a loved one? What is your greatest fear? God says, "My plan can overcome your greatest fear. I want to fill you with My peace."

"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

Maybe you feel like the odds are against you. In God's math, one plus God equals a majority. Sometimes when we go down the wrong path and pursue the wrong plan, then we're hit with all kinds of problems and pain that we caused ourselves. Even in that, God is for us. He loves us, and He uses the pain to change our path because He loves us. God says, "I'm for you. I want the best for you."

4. God's Plan Secures My Future.

"plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

It doesn't matter what it looks like right now. Your future is as bright as the promises of God. We don't know what the future holds or what's coming next. We don't know what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future, and He's the one that holds you in His arms. If you're a Christ follower, then you're held, and He'll never let you go. The Bible says that nothing can snatch you out of His hands. You'll go through storms, difficulties, and trials, but He'll be right there with you. He'll be holding you, and the wind and the waves will never loosen His grip on your heart and your life. He'll never let you go. No matter what storm you go through, He'll go through it with you. Your future is secure.