

WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

Good morning! This church was started 14 years ago. Ever since, it has followed the purpose driven paradigm which was popularized by Saddleback Church of Rick Warren. As such, it adopted the slogan, "A great commitment to the great commandment and a great commission will grow a great church." You see, the great commandment and the great commission are two of the most famous sentences of Jesus, and in those passages, Matthew 28:19-20 and Matthew 22:37-39, there are five verbs and they represent the five purposes why God made you. Today we're going to do a review of the most fundamental message of this church.

We're on the second part of our series called, "We are Family". Today, my message is entitled, "What on Earth Am I Here for?"

Mark Twain once said, "The two most important days in a person's life are one, the day you're born, and two, the day you figure out why." Unfortunately, most people go through life never knowing why they were born. They miss God's purpose for their lives.

You see, God has never created anything without a purpose. God is a God of purpose. Every plant has a purpose. Every animal has a purpose. If you're alive, God has a purpose for your life. If your heart is beating right now and you're breathing air, it means God still has a purpose for you. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here. So, God has never made anything without a purpose.

If you want to know the purpose for your life, you've got to begin with God, cause he's the only one who can tell you. You can't tell you what your purpose is because you didn't create you. Others can't tell you because they didn't create you. That's kind of logical. Only the God who made you can tell you the reason he made you, and that's what the Bible tells us all about.

Now, up here on the screen, Ephesians 1:11 in the Bible says this: *"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will."* This verse tells us that God has a purpose for your life because he chose you in Jesus and he's working out that purpose.

You see, history is moving toward a climax. And even physics will tell you that we know the universe had a beginning and it's going to have an end at some point. We know this from the laws of physics today. We didn't know this even 100 years ago, but we know -- well, the Bible had said it, but scientists will now back it up.

So, what we're going to do is look at God's overall purpose for all of us, but God's unique purpose for you. Colossians 1:16 (MSG) says this: *"Everything, absolutely everything, got started in Christ and finds its purpose in him."* In him. So let me summarize. You were made by God and you were made for God. Till you figure that out, life's never going to make sense.

Now, today, what we're going to do is review *God's five purposes for your life*. This whole church for 28 years has been built on this message. God's five purposes for your life. This church is even organized around these five purposes.

So, now, let's look at these five purposes.

1. First, *God planned me for his pleasure.*

Many, many scriptures deal with this. Let me show you something. Ephesians 1:4a-5, *"Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children—this was his pleasure and purpose."* You were made so God could love you. You were made for his pleasure. If God hadn't wanted to love you, you would not exist. You were made for God's pleasure. Psalm 149:4, *"The Lord takes pleasure in his people."*

How many of you are parents? Let me see your hands. You're parents. Okay. Do you take pleasure in your kids? You say sometimes. Yeah, sometimes, but the truth is, when they're sleeping at night, they may have been devils all day, they're angels while they're asleep. And I used to walk in and sit down and watch my kids sleep, and I would sit there and watch my kids breathe, and I would watch their little chest rise and fall, rise and fall. I got so much pleasure out of watching my kids breathe as little kids. Why? Because I am their father. I created them, so to speak. They didn't have to be doing anything spiritual. They didn't have to be memorizing Bible verses, winning people to Christ, studying scripture. They were just sleeping.

This is the way God feels about you. God gets pleasure in watching you be you. All the time. When he sees you do art or music or math or mechanics or whatever. It's not all the spiritual stuff. God just enjoys watching you be you, because he made you.

So, you were planned for God's pleasure. You've heard me say these many times. You can't make God stop loving you. Because God's love isn't based on your perfection; it's based on who he is. It's based on his character. Ephesians 1:4a (MSG), on the screen, *"Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind."* God thought of us and he settled on us, not horses, not cows, not ants. He settled on us, human beings, as the focus of his love. You were planned for God's pleasure. How many times over 14 years have you heard me say God doesn't just have love; he is love. The Bible says God is love and it is his character, it is his essence, it is his nature. It was his love that wanted to create you.

Now, the difference between us and animals is unlike animals, we are made in God's image, which means you have the ability to love back. Cows don't love. Ants don't love. Slugs don't love. Fish don't love. Only human beings love because only humans are made in the image of God. Your first job is to let God love you,

and your second part of that job is you to learn to love him back. And the more you understand how much God loves you, the more you're going to love him.

One day Jesus was walking down the street and a guy walks up to him and says, "Lord, what's the most important commandment in the whole Bible?" Jesus says, "That's not a big deal. I can answer that in two sentences. I can summarize the whole Bible, all the law and all the prophets, in just two sentences. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, oh, and by the way, love your neighbor as yourself."

It's all about love. Why? Because the first purpose of your life was you were planned for God's pleasure. He made you to love you. And he wants you to learn to accept his love and to love him back. Jesus says "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.**" (Matt. 22:37-38) This is the first purpose of your life: to let God love you and to learn to love him back in response. The most important thing in your life is to know God. To know that he loves you. And the most important thing to do in your life is to learn to love him back.

Now, the **first purpose of life is to know and love God. He planned me for his pleasure, so the first purpose of my life is to know God and to love God. The Bible word for knowing and love God is called worship.** Worship is letting God love you and loving him back. Any time you're expressing love to God, you're worshiping. Worshiping, a lot of people think, is music. But music is just one way to worship. You can worship in silence. You can worship in giving. You can worship while gardening. You can worship in a hundred different ways. Worship is simply expressing my love to God. You could be building something for the glory of God, and that's worship. It's expressing your love for God in any different way.

Number two, second purpose in your life. God not only planned me for his pleasure;

2. God formed me for his family.

You were made to be a part of his family. Now last week we spent an entire message on this. God's family is called the church. So, I'm going to zoom through this because we spent an entire week looking at how God formed you for his family.

Now, when you're born physically, you automatically become a part of the human race. You don't have any choice. But you're not part of a local family until somebody makes a decision to bring you home. It's a choice. The same is true spiritually. When you are spiritually born again, you're born into God's universal family, but you're not a part of his physical family, called the local church, until you choose to say, "That's going to be my family. That's going to be my home. That's going to be my spiritual base."

What is God's family? We looked at it last week. 1 Timothy 3:15 (NCV), *"That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth."* The church isn't an institution; it's a family. Now, God's purpose for your life includes not just believing in him, but belonging in his family. So you can say, "I'm a believer," but you can also say "I'm a believer."

Now notice it said there that family is the church's support and foundation of truth. What happens when a building has no foundation and support? It collapses. You need a spiritual support of God's family and you need a small group to support you when you go through the earthquakes of life.

What's the support structure for your life? The church. God's spiritual family. 1 Peter 2:17, *"Love the family of believers."* That's what it says. Love. That's about as clear as you can get it. You are commanded by God to love your spiritual family. If you don't love this family, just find one. Choose a church family that that's the church family I'm going to love.

You know, when you get to heaven one day, you're going to do two things in heaven. You're going to love God and you're going to love his family. What does God want you to do while you're here on earth? You practice loving God and loving other believers in his family. Why? So when you get to heaven you're not in one corner by yourself.

Now here's the second purpose. **The second purpose of life is to learn to love others and that's called fellowship**, like two fellows on a ship, you've got to get along. Because you're headed in the same direction, you may as well get along.

Now, purpose number three.

3. **God created me to become like Christ.**

Now, once you understand this third purpose, a whole lot of life is going to make a lot more sense, particularly all the problems and the trials and the troubles you go through, because God wants you to grow up spiritually. His goal isn't to make life comfortable for you here on earth. You'll be comfortable in heaven. And that's coming someday.

But, here, right here, this is the school. This is where you're learning. This is where you want to grow in character, and he sent Jesus Christ to be the model of what he wants every woman and what he wants every man to become. He wants us to learn to think like Christ, to act like Christ, to feel like Christ, to treat other people like Christ, to be like Christ in our attitudes and in our actions and in our thoughts.

You see, Jesus Christ was the perfect human being. As you know, we're never going to achieve perfection here on earth, but he's our model. Starting now, here on earth. And when you get into heaven, God's going to finish it in heaven and you're going to be completely transformed into perfection.

Now as I said, once you understand this, a lot of life is going to make sense. God is far more interested in what you are becoming than what you are doing. He's

much more interested in what you are in life than in what you do in life. People always wonder, "Does God want me to do this job or that job that other job? Does God want me to have this career, that career, or that other career?" God would probably say, "Really, your choice. What I'm more interested in is the kind of person you become when you're in that job. Are you becoming more godly like me?" Realizing this fact takes out a lot of guesswork and stresses when praying about your career, your job, house location, etc. But, of course, sometimes God can give you specific directions. But you don't have to sweat it. God will even correct your mistakes.

So why is God more interested in your character than your career? Because you're not taking your career into eternity, but you are taking your character. You're taking the kind of person you became on this planet into eternity. So what you become is far more important than what you do in your life. You could do a lot of different things, but the key issue is are you growing spiritually? Are you becoming like Christ?

Romans 8:29 says this: *"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."* This is the third purpose in life, to become like Christ. And then, Col:15 says, *"The Son is the image of the invisible God."* The goal is for you to become godly, not to become like God. There's a huge difference. Unlike in Mormonism or New Age religions, you don't become a god, you become godly.

Now, the question I've been asked for 20 years more than any other question is this: Why is this happening to me? Or version two, why is this happening to me now? The answer to both of those is what I just said, the third purpose, in order to make you like Christ. That's the goal. God's goal is not to make you comfortable. God's goal is to make you like Christ.

You see, the greatest lessons in your life, you will learn out of pain. I have learned nothing from success. Zero. Zip. Nada. I have learned nothing from fame. Everything I've learned in life, I learned through pain, conflict, and suffering. It's the greater teacher. When things go your way, you don't learn anything. You just think, "I'm just really lucky." Or, "I'm just really smart." And you get on a big ego trip. The greatest lessons, the greatest ministry of your life, the greatest lessons of your life, will often come out of your deepest pain. God speaks to us, whispers to us in our pleasure, he shouts to us in our pain.

Now, becoming like Christ is a journey. It's going to take your entire life. You're not going to become like Christ overnight. I'm still not there. But I can say, like Paul, thank God I'm not what I used to be. Thank God I am what I am right now. And that's true with you. It is a journey. This is the third purpose of your life.

Now, **the third purpose of your life is to grow up spiritually. And that is called discipleship. The Bible says in Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity."** This is God's goal for your third purpose.

All right, number four. Fourth purpose.

4. **God shaped me to serve him.**

You weren't just put on this earth to take up space, use resources, breed, use water, retire, and die. No, no, no. You were put here to make a difference. You were put here to make a contribution. You were put here to make an impact with your life. God planned for you to do certain things with your life to make the world a better place. God shaped me to serve him. Say, "How can I serve God? God's invisible." We serve God by serving others. One day you'll serve God directly in heaven, but here on earth, the only way you can serve God is by serving others. God put you on this planet to make a contribution, and he has uniquely shaped you, uniquely shaped you, for the service or the ministry that he has.

Now, here's what the Bible says. Psalm 138:13 (VOICE), "*For You shaped me, inside and out.*" God wired your personality before he wired your body. The NIV says "*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*"

We have a whole class on this. We call this Class 301. Discovering My Ministry in Life. In this class, we talk about your Shape, **S-H-A-P-E**, your spiritual gifts, your heart, your abilities, your personality, and your experiences. God wired all these things in you. We don't have time to dwell on each letter, but I encourage you to take this class when it is offered.

So **this is the fourth purpose of your life: to serve God by serving others. Which is Ministry.**

You see, not everybody's a pastor, not a teach, not a singer, but everybody has a ministry. It's the way you serve God, by serving others. It's the way you make your contribution to the world. It's the way you leave the world a better place. It's the way you use -- any time you use your talents to help other people, that's called ministry.

Finally, we come to the fifth purpose why God created you.

5. **God made me for a mission.**

In John 17:18, Jesus says, "*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*" Why did God the father send his Son Jesus into the world? To tell everyone the good news about God's salvation. That was his mission. And Jesus commissioned us to do the same mission. In Acts 20:24, Paul says this: "*However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*" His task or his mission was to tell everyone the good news about God's grace.

I want you to write this down. **The fifth purpose of my life is to pass on the good news. That's called Witnessing or Evangelism.** Somebody passed it on to you. Who are you passing it on to? The fifth purpose of your life is once you know the purposes of life, you need to pass them on to others. Once you know Christ's forgiveness, you need to pass it on to others. Btw, the Greek word, evangelism, literally means to share good news. When you think of evangelism, you think of some loud preacher on TV. No, no, no, no. Evangelism is a good word. It just means to share good news in Greek.

You see, a witness is an authority on one thing: themselves. Nobody can be a witness for you. Only you can be a witness for what God has done in your life. I can't. He's called you to be a witness, which means, this is what I saw. This is what happened to me. This is how bad things were in my life. This is how they got better. This is what Christ has done in my life, in my family, in my job, in my health, in my finances. That's called witnessing. And the Bible says that the fifth purpose of life is that God made you for that mission.

Look at these verses on the screen. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul says, **" And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."** Somebody passed on the good news to you. Did it end with you? Are you a dead end? Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you? Are you just going to accept the good news and not share it with anybody else? Have you told anybody the good news about what Christ could do? That's part of your mission. Somebody passed it on to you; it's your responsibility.

Now, at Fil-Am Church, our model for everything we do is the Bible. We don't make this stuff up. We get it out of God's word. And in this series we're looking at why we have church. Why do we have church? The purpose of the church is the same as the five purposes for your life. God has five purposes for

your life: worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and witness, or know Christ, grow in Christ, love his family, serve Christ, share Christ.

Now what's the purpose of the church? Help you to do the five things for your life. That's a purpose driven church helping you live a purpose driven life. The purpose of the church is simply to help you do what God put you on earth to do. Nothing more and nothing less. Now, this isn't something we just made up. This is what they did in the Bible.

Let me show you the very first church. We'll end with this. On the screen. Acts 2:42-47. This is the very first church in Jerusalem. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

So the purposes have been done by the church for over 2,000 years. This is not something new. This is not something Fil-Am invented. We just came up with the term purpose driven. But the church has always been a church for worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism.