

Sermon followed by Service

October 9, 2022

Ephesians 2:10

“I’m here for a reason.” You’re here for a reason. More than that, “God has me here to live a life of purpose.” And God has you here to live a life of purpose.

Has anyone told you the real-life story of Joseph this week? In kindergarten and preschool, we just learned the real-life story of Joseph. Growing up, Joseph had it good - his dad loved him and took care of him. And growing up, Joseph had it ugly. His family was a mess; his parents didn’t get along right; his brothers hated him and made his life miserable. But Joseph didn’t settle for living miserably. Joseph knew: “I’m here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose - and it’s not to goof off like my brothers.” Did I tell you that Joseph’s brothers didn’t like Joseph? In fact, they hated him so much they wanted to kill him; they hated him so much they sold him to slave traders who took him to Egypt and sold him as a slave to Potiphar.

As a slave, Joseph could have grouched and grumbled about his work and his life. Instead he lived: “I’m here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose.”

So when Potiphar’s wife offered Joseph some laughs and giggles, some naughty laughs and giggles, Joseph refused to go along: “I’m here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose, and God’s purpose for me isn’t naughty laughs and giggles.”

So Joseph does the right thing, and what does he get for doing the right thing? He gets thrown into prison. But Joseph doesn’t mope

and whine and grouse and grumble. He knows: "I'm here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose."

If you know the life of Joseph, you know the reason, the purpose God had for Joseph. A famine was coming when the farmers and the grocers wouldn't have any food to sell. But God worked through Joseph so Egypt would have food. So when Joseph's dad ran out of food for his family, he sent Joseph's brothers to Egypt to buy food. Now, when Joseph saw them, he could have been angry and bitter and made their lives miserable. But Joseph remembered: "I'm here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose, and it's not to live bitter and angry." Joseph knew: "I'm here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose."

What if Joseph didn't know that? Can you imagine how miserable, how impossible life could have been for Joseph? Can you imagine how much trouble Joseph could have gotten himself into if he didn't know: "God has me here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose." Can you imagine how dark life would have been for Joseph if he didn't know: "God has me"?

I imagine most of you know people who don't know. They don't know, or they don't think about it - that they're here for a reason. They don't know, or they don't think about what that reason is. And because they don't know why they're here, because they don't think about why they're here - they always seem to be getting into trouble, living on the dark side of life. I imagine many of you have seen the faces - I'm thinking of a teen-age girl - crying out: "I'm no good; why am I even here?" Or the older faces, sad because they're stuck in the chair, stuck in bed. They can't do what they used to do, what they want to do; and they feel useless, worthless, and miserable. I imagine most all of us feel that way some days. I

googled “I’m here for a reason.” Do you know what I found? Some nasty, angry hurt. And a whole lot of stuff for sale - coffee mugs and t-shirts and art for your walls - all saying in one way or another - “I’m here for a reason.” There must be a good market, a lot of people needing to hear: “I’m here for a reason.”

Now I’m thinking of some smiling faces. I don’t know how they can smile. The pain their bodies are in. The pain, the hurt, the heartache their hearts have seen and felt. What they have gone through - the bullets, the beatings, the scars, and now their bodies so terribly sick. And yet somehow they smile: “I’m here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose.” What’s behind their smiles? They’ve all told me: “I shouldn’t be here. I should be dead by now. I should be dead, I don’t know how many times over. But God has me here. He has me here for a reason. God has me here to live a life of purpose.”

That same thing is true for you and for me. We should be dead. Dead how many times, dead how many ways. Dead, but God and his angels saved us from that accident. Dead, but God and his angels saved us from our foolishness, or some sickness. We should all be dead. Dead how many times, dead how many ways. Dead and damned for what we have thought about God. Dead and damned for what we have done against God. Dead and damned for what we have said and done against people God loves. We should be dead, dead and damned for how many reasons. Dead and damned, but God and his Jesus saved us, saved us from being dead in our sin.

Living dead in sin. That’s a strange picture, isn’t it? There’s a part of us that sees living God’s life as dreary, darkness and death; a part of us that sees doing our own thing, that sees sinning the sin we want to sin as light and life. But God sees beyond right here and right

now. He sees what doing our own thing does to us; he sees where doing our own thing takes us. He sees how living a life of sin is a walking deadness, a walking death.

But God saved us. He saved us from our walking, talking death. He saved us from his anger and judgment. He saved us to live together with Jesus here; he saved us for life in heaven. He saved us. Why? There are two ways I want to answer that question. First, why did God save us? Not because of any good we have done, but because of his mercy. Paul put it this way: **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”** Before that, Paul said: **“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”**

To save us, to make you alive with him - that is the reason Jesus left the comfort of heaven to be born into this world of sin and death. To save us, to make you alive with him, that is the reason Jesus lived every day with his heart and his mind looking out to care for others. To save us, to make you alive with him, that’s the reason Jesus lived his life and gave his life on the cross. To save us, to make you alive with him, that’s the reason Jesus paid for our sin and forgives you. To save us, to make you alive with him - that’s the reason for Jesus.

To make us alive with him. That’s the second “why?” The first “why?” - why did God save you? - is because he loves you! The second “why?” - is “to make you alive with him.” Not just alive with him in heaven, but alive with him here and now. Here is the reason we’re here - **“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to**

do.” Yes, here is our reason for being here. Here is God’s purpose for your being here. “To do good.”

Fun and games can be fun, but it’s not the reason we’re here. Sitting back and enjoying life, getting up and out to see things, do things, and enjoy life, that can all be fine, but it’s not the reason we’re here. We’re not here for ourselves. We’re not here to please ourselves. We’re not here to make ourselves happy and comfortable. We’re not here for ourselves.

God has us here for a reason. God has us here to live a life of purpose. To do good. To be kind and helpful. To pray for each other and do for each other. On our bad days, to show the world how good it is to live with Jesus. On their bad days, to share the goodness of Jesus. Yes, God has us here for a reason. God has us here to live a life of purpose. What purpose? To show the goodness of God. How? By the way we do good for each other. Amen.

October 8 & 9, 2022

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we see some people adrift with no purpose in life. We see others ardent, bold, committed, determined in their purpose, but, sadly, a purpose of no lasting value.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we are given a purpose that matters, not just to my navel-gazing mind, and not just for the here and now, but we get to live with a purpose that blesses for time and for eternity, and is blessed by God.

OPENING HYMN

"Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus"

Hymn 704

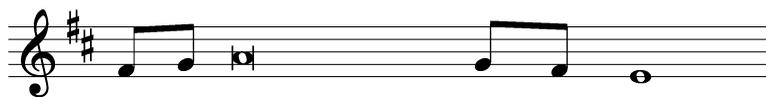
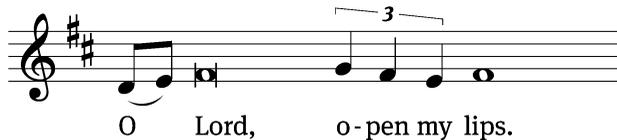
Let us ever walk with Jesus, follow his example pure,
flee the world which would deceive us and to sin our souls allure.
Ever in his footsteps treading, body here, yet soul above,
full of faith and hope and love, let us do the Father's bidding.
Faithful Lord, abide with me; Savior, lead; I follow thee.

Let us suffer here with Jesus, to his image e'er conform;
heaven's glory soon will please us, sunshine follow on the storm.
Though we sow in tears of sorrow, we shall reap in heav'nly joy,
and the fears that now annoy shall be laughter on the morrow.
Christ, I suffer here with thee; there, O share thy joy with me.

Let us also die with Jesus; his death from the second death,
from our soul's destruction, frees us, quickens us with life's glad breath.
Let us mortify, while living, flesh and blood and die to sin,
and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate to heaven.
Jesus, here I die to thee, there to live eternally.

Let us gladly live with Jesus; since he's risen from the dead,
 death and grave must soon release us. Jesus, thou art now our head.
 We are truly thine own members, where thou livest, there live we;
 take and own us constantly, faithful Friend, as thy dear brethren.
 Jesus, here I live to thee, also there eternally.

OPENING SENTENCES



And my mouth shall de - clare your praise.



Hasten to save me, O God.



O Lord, come quickly to help me.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.



Give glory to God, our light and our life.



Come, O come, let us wor - ship.

COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD

Refrain

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,
let us shout with joy to our saving Rock;
come, enter in with our songs of praise,
come, enter in with thanksgiving.

You are a great and a wondrous God,
cupping in your hands all the depths of earth.
You made the hills and the mountains high,
you made the seas and the dry land. *Refrain*

Come, let us worship and, bowing low,
kneel before the One who has made us all.
You are the God whom we call our own,
we are the flock that you shepherd. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Grant, O merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind and a purposeful heart; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (PREK-2ND GRADE)

"This Little Light of Mine"

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel No! I'm gonna let it shine;
Hide it under a bushel No! I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Don't let Satan blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine.
Don't let Satan blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Let it shine 'til Jesus comes, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine 'til Jesus comes, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

"Go into the World"

Go ye, go ye into the world And make disciples of all nations.
Go ye, go ye into the world, And I will be with you there! *Repeat*

I am the vine; you are the branches, ever the fruit to bear.
I am the light, you, the reflection ev'rywhere.

Go ye, go ye into the world And make disciples of all nations.
Go ye, go ye into the world, And I will be with you there! *Repeat*

FIRST READING*Ephesians 2:1-10*

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

VERSE OF THE DAY*Ephesians 2:10*

Alleluia. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Alleluia.

GOSPEL*Luke 12:13–21*

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’”

“Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” ’

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN

“Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness”

Hymn 754

Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness,
for dull content with warmth and sheltered care,
for songs of praise for worldly wealthiness,
while of your richer gifts we’re unaware:

Teach us to thank you, Lord, for love and grace,
for life and vision, for a purpose clear,
for Christ, your Son, and for each human face
that shows your message ever new and near.

Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise,
for words that speak at variance with deeds;
forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways,
unmindful of a broken brother's needs:

Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost,
that knows no barrier of "yours" and "mine,"
assured that only what's withheld is lost.

Forgive us, Lord, for feast that knows not fast,
for joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul,
for walls and wars that hide your mercies vast
and blur our vision of the kingdom goal:

Open our eyes to see your love's intent,
to know with mind and heart its depth and height;
let thankful days in loving labor spent
reflect the truly Christlike life and light.

SERMON

HYMN

"Church of God, Elect and Glorious"

Hymn 854

Church of God, elect and glorious, holy nation, chosen race,
called as God's own special people, royal priests and heirs of grace;
know the purpose of your calling, show to all his mighty deeds,
tell of love that knows no limits, grace that meets all human needs.

God has called you out of darkness into his most marvelous light,
brought his truth to life within you, turned your blindness into sight.
Let your light so shine around you that God's name is glorified
and all find fresh hope and purpose in Christ Jesus crucified.

Once you were an alien people, strangers to God's heart of love,
but he brought you home in mercy, citizens of heav'n above.
Let his love flow out to others, let them feel a Father's care,
that they too may know his welcome and his countless blessings share.

Church of God, elect and holy, be the people he intends,
strong in faith and swift to answer each command your master sends.
Royal priests, fulfill your calling through your sacrifice and prayer;
give your lives in joyful service, sing his praise, his love declare.

PRAYER

M: O Lord, our God, you are wise and powerful, good and gracious. Your mercies are new every morning. Each day you open your hand and provide for the needs of your children on earth.

C: **We praise you for every grace and blessing.**

M: Strengthen your Church in all the world. Let your comforting message of salvation in Christ Jesus be proclaimed to troubled souls everywhere.

C: **Use our ministries and offerings to extend your healing and your hope.**

M: We bring you our requests for the various structures of our society. Bless our national, state (provincial), and local governments.

C: **Grant us civil servants who are worthy of honor and respect.**

M: Grant prosperity to our businesses and industries. Give employers a sense of fairness toward their workers, and employees a feeling of joy and pride in their workmanship.

C: **Help us find satisfaction in all work well done.**

M: Invigorate the schools of our land. Give success to every effort that helps students read, think, and communicate in ways that will promote an informed and responsible citizenry. Arouse curious minds to discover the wonders of your created order.

C: Give us teachers and students who pursue excellence.

M: Strengthen the families of our country. Give fathers and mothers a renewed commitment to be good parents. Give children and young people the wisdom to regard their parents as your representatives.

C: Lead us to love one another as you have loved us.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Gracious Father, we pray boldly as Jesus taught, with the confidence that you will hear and with the faith that you will respond for our welfare.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING



The Lord bless and keep you.



A - men.



The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



A - men.



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



A - men.

CLOSING HYMN

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

Hymn 695

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing always, only for my King;
take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine, it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own, it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

OFFERING

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Special Voters' Meeting Agenda Items

On Wednesday, October 12, at 7pm, the Voters' Assembly will meet to act on the following items of ministry and business:

1. Call for Principal / Staff Minister of Outreach - The "Call Season" opens October 12, and we want to show that we're ready and eager to move forward.

2. Classroom Heating/Cooling Project - Through a special COVID-relief grant, our classrooms and office now have new air-quality improving, air filtration, heating/cooling units. They are incredibly quiet and early results show that they are highly energy efficient. Due to increased costs and additional costs and work beyond the parameters of the grant, we have exceeded the grant we received for the project. Therefore, we ask that we add the entire project to the Classroom Renovation Project to allow for these costs, landscaping upgrades, and future wall repair and window-well capping costs. Funding for the Renovation project continues to be: Special Gifts, Match from Facility Improvement Fund, 2020-2021 Dr Office Transfer (\$30k), and finally "Overage" from Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (about \$44k after special gifts to WELS and Shoreland).

3. Kitchen Project - Our Kitchen Renovation Committee is ready to move forward with the "Next Steps" they outlined for us on a recent Sunday. Therefore, we recommend that we authorize the Kitchen Renovation Committee to move forward with: 1) replacing the kitchen floor, 2) purchase and installation of a new range/oven, and 3) other lesser peripherals that may arise as they prepare project plans for MC and then Voter approval for a summer 2023 renovation project. Kitchen Renovation Committee members are Dale Villiard, Sheryl Linnemann, and Mark Hirons.