

12 November 2020

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

Ephesians 1:15-23

Today I find myself asking; 'What's life about?' 'What's important?' If I asked you; 'What's the purpose of your life?' how would you respond? Or more importantly, what does the way you live reveal?

I could give a whole lot of nice words, but it's how I live that is the real answer? I could say that Christmas is all about family, and then get so busy preparing that I ignore the people around me so I get the job done.

What's the purpose of my life? What gives me value? Where do I find my identity?

All three readings for today point in the same direction as they answer these vital questions.

The prophet Ezekiel wrote "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says; I myself will search for my sheep and look after them." (Ezek. 34:11) Do you notice at the heart of this is a personal relationship.

God is promising to come in person, to save his sheep. They are his sheep, the sheep he's committed to. It's personal.

Paul writing to the community of faith in Ephesus; "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." (Eph. 1:16,17)

Notice the goal is personal. Paul's prayer is that you get to know God, through Jesus, better. That your

relationship of love and affection with him grows and matures.

Paul continued; "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." (Eph. 1:17) The heart, not your intellect; but that your heart might be enlightened. That is relational language, for Jesus the goal is relational.

That also came out in the Gospel reading. In the parable that Jesus tells his final words to each group of people is the same; "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matt. 25:40) Importantly the focus is on Jesus. It is Jesus I'm ignoring or sharing life with. 'You did for ME'.

For Jesus the focus of life is relational.

That's also true of his identity, it isn't found in what he does, but in his relationship with his Father. At Jesus baptism the Father said; 'You are my son, whom I live, in you I delight'. It is in this relationship that Jesus lives and breathes. It's who he is. Jesus relationship with his Father gives him his identity. It's this relationship that shapes how Jesus lives.

I love it when Jesus says; 'I say what I hear Father saying. I do what I see Father doing.' His life is a living expression of this relationship.

And in Jesus, the Good News is that our lives also become living expressions of this relationship of love and affection we have with Father, through Jesus, in the Spirit.

So I pray today that Jesus gives you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that you know him better. That you know Jesus

personally in that wonderful relationship of love and affection that he's given his life for.

Isn't that amazingly personal, Jesus gave his life, personally, so that you could share a heart to heart relationship with him, and Father. Jesus invites you to talk to

What does the way you live reveal?

him heart to heart. Sharing with him your greatest pains, knowing you can trust him. Talking with Jesus about your hopes and dreams, being open to hear his hopes and dreams.

The goal of life is a person. The goal of life is sharing life with this person in an intimate relationship of love and affection.

I must admit over the years, at times, I've lost focus and got busy planning and doing. But

outside of this relationship, all my planning and doing comes to nothing.

I hope you notice in Jesus parable the focus wasn't on what you were to do, but that you did it to Jesus. I could get all excited by this parable and seek to clothe the poor, feed the hungry, visit the sick, I could get really, really busy, busy doing things, but missing the person. Missing Jesus.

The goal of life is a person, not a good resume!

I pray that Jesus gives us, as a community, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we know him better, and that we go out and introduce other people to Jesus, that they get to know him, personally.

We're not about forms. We're not about meetings and ritual, and feeling comfortable. We are a community of faith in Jesus. We know him

personally. Our desire is to share life with him, to be walking and talking with Jesus as the brothers and sisters he's given his life for us to be.

So it doesn't matter if you read a King James translation or the Message Paraphrase, or any other translation. What matters is that we have God's word so that we can be living a personal relationship with him. There he reveals his identity, his character, his personality, so we can be living in an intimate relationship with him.

It doesn't matter if we use a formal or informal style, or if we have hymns or songs, what matters is that Jesus is known for who he is. And in that relationship we discover who we are, and become free in Jesus to love others from the heart, as we are loved by Jesus.

I know it is stating the obvious but loving another person is a relational act, a

personal act. That's how Jesus has done it; coming in person – so we celebrate Christmas – Jesus coming in person. Jesus has given his life, personally – so we celebrate

Jesus crucifixion, we celebrate Easter. We celebrate Jesus being raised from the dead, in person. That means we can live in a personal

Is the goal of your life Jesus?

relationship with him, for he is alive. And Jesus has promised to return, in person, that we might live life face to face with him.

Is the goal of your life Jesus?

That's why at the start of the year Peter Steicke was invited to prep us to 'Move Forward as Family'. The hope was that we would each be in a small group, personally caring for each other, giving living expression to Jesus love for us.

For those in a small group; well done. I pray you continue to grow and mature in that personal relationship Jesus has given his life for you to live in.

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That's why at the start of the year Pastor Michael Dutschke came and lead us in prayer; listening to God. Prayer is a communication tool, because that's how you live out a personal

relationship. You talk with each other; you listen and share. Then you go and do life together. I was enthused by this time of teaching; listening to God – he's alive! Sharing with each other what God placed on our hearts. Being open to the Spirit's lead, as he gave a thought, a picture, an impression, a feeling, a name. Letting Jesus, through the Spirit lead.

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That's why over the last ten years I've disciplined myself to the 'SOAP' way of reading the bible. I start the day seeking to hear and be led by Jesus, as I open his word; his revelation. I'm not after head knowledge, I am after Jesus, knowing him personally.

I pray, in whatever way Jesus leads you by the Spirit, that you passionately live with Jesus as your goal. Everything else can wait.

That's one reason I entered the ministry. I dabbled with accounting, but had no passion for it; in the end it didn't really matter if you had money. If you died outside of a personal relationship with Jesus, that really matters. I hate the thought of anyone existing outside of that relationship of love and affection with God the Father that Jesus has

created. An eternity without love, without purpose, with no value, existing totally insecure; fearful, regretting all those missed opportunities.

That's what I wanted to be about; passionate about; people coming to know Jesus, personally. People entering into that wonderful relationship of love and affection in Jesus, lived out in a conversational atmosphere, sharing heart to heart with Jesus. Joining Jesus in that wonderful exploration of life, of love, of risking everything in him.

Thankfully over my ministry Jesus allowed me to be part of two people coming to faith.

That's my highlight. I pray that Jesus fills you with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you know him better, so that you have a burning passion to share life with him and to share Jesus with everyone you meet. Then your life won't have been a glorious waste of time!

Today, make time to talk with Jesus about what he wants you to do. Ask him, take that first thought and do it. Take that first thought and respond. Why wouldn't it be Jesus?

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Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples