

"Live For A Purpose"

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's a pleasure to be with you all here this morning. Thank you for inviting me back once again. I must not have done too bad of a job last time.

No one told me to stay away. You're welcome to turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 1. If you're using the Pew Bible, you'll find it on page 1774.

As I was thinking about this passage and studying and preparation, it reminded me of how food can be a tricky issue in my household.

I often go three or four days in a row without eating lunch or dinner at my house due to my busy schedule and the time I spend being out and about.

And so I have to consider very carefully when I'm grocery shopping what I get so that I have to throw away as little of it as possible. I hate to throw away food without using it, to let it sit in the fridge until it gets too old or too bad to use and having to dispose of it.

[1 : 14] I would rather see it be put to good purpose before it is discarded. I think in a similar way our lives function.

That we will not be around forever and so we should consider very well what good use we can put our lives and our time to. If we're going to die eventually.

Yes sister? 2 Corinthians chapter 1, page 1774 in the Pew Bible. You're welcome. No problem.

I think we should consider what use we're putting our lives to. We know that it is appointed unto man to die. That no one lives forever in this life.

So we ought to consider carefully what use we're going to make of the time we're given. That we might not enter the grave like some food that sits in my fridge, having never been put to good use before being discarded.

[2 : 30] As we read this passage, I want you to look at and consider the way in which purpose is giving meaning to the suffering and circumstances that believers go through.

Follow along with me as we read verses 6 and 7 of 2 Corinthians chapter 1. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.

Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

Consider what is being explained here. Paul is talking about what the purpose behind the different circumstances he finds himself in is.

This purpose of laboring for the consolation and for the salvation of the Corinthian church. Paul writes, if we are being afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation.

[3 : 58] Paul here is laboring on the behalf of the Corinthian church. And as part of those labors, he is finding himself in afflictions and difficulties.

Yet his focus is not on himself and on the difficulties he finds himself in, but on the purpose for which he labors.

His tone here sets such a good example for us. So many of us, when we come through difficulties to help someone else, make a point of how hard we had to work to do that.

But rather, Paul's tone here is focusing on and rejoicing in the fact that he can provide consolation and to encourage the believers here in their faith that they might make it to the final day and receive salvation.

When Paul looks at his afflictions, he does not count them as great things that he should throw a pity party for, but rather rejoices that even if through affliction, he might be able to encourage the saints of God and build up the church of Christ.

[5 : 16] May the Lord help us when we serve to have this sort of heart, that afflictions would seem to us to be a little thing for the sake of caring for others and encouraging them in their faith.

Paul states here that he is laboring for their comfort in salvation. He highlights that sometimes he suffers for their good, that he might be able to bring them closer to the truth, which is the true comfort, and to encourage them in their faith that they might endure in believing in Christ and having trusted in Christ all the way to the end might make it to glory one day.

This is an example to us. Let us consider carefully how we might pursue encouraging one another, how we might set our lives with a good purpose of the edification of believers and the building up of the body of Christ.

Let us pursue the good things of God above all else, and let us be willing to suffer to build up each other's faith.

Let us join hands together that we might run with endurance. Paul continues on from this talk about the purposes of his affliction to discuss other ways and times in which he is bringing comfort to the saints at Corinth.

[6 : 58] He says, if we are comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation. He is saying that when he is encouraged in the midst of his labors, that because he is such a partner of the Corinthian church laboring for their good, and there is such an affection between them, that his comfort should comfort and encourage the saints here.

So that in every circumstance he finds himself in, whether in affliction or in comfort, the church he is laboring for might also be comforted and encouraged.

Having a purpose doesn't just outweigh the sufferings we might encounter. Having a good godly purpose for our lives outweighs even the ease and conveniences that we might find ourselves having.

Living for a purpose is better than living comfortably. Paul says, if we are comforted, and then he shifts his focus, the best thing that comes out of that is that it might comfort you and encourage you in your salvation.

Know this, that the comforts of easy living do not compare to the joys of serving God and laboring for his kingdom.

[8 : 31] And also be warned that if your purpose in this life is to secure whatever comforts and eases you can find, you will miss out on the greatest joys and pleasures that there are to be had, which are the pleasures of serving Christ, which are the pleasures that Paul knows here, that whether in affliction or in comfort, he rejoices because he is seeing the work of God be done.

The joys of this life are shallow and flimsy compared to the pleasures of God. It is amazing when we consider the two circumstances that Paul is writing about here.

His joy remains consistent whether he is in comfort or suffering. Oh, how much I would love to have this sort of joy that would be consistent no matter what my circumstances would be, whether it is an easy day or a hard day, that I might have a joy that goes beyond all of that.

Paul highlights this here. Normally our joy would fluctuate with each situation we find ourselves in. Normally this verse might read for us, if I am afflicted, then I am sad.

And if I am comforted, then I am happy. But rather, Paul is joyed by working good in every situation, whether in comfort or affliction.

[10 : 18] And Paul is overjoyed with his purposes that God has given him that comforts and afflictions mean little to him compared to the joy of the Lord.

The situations that we find ourselves in cannot hold a candle to the joy and pleasures of God.

So we ought to seek to live with godly purpose that situations won't push us here and there like a boat driven by the winds, but that we would have an anchor that would hold fast in Christ, that we would be secured to his joys and hopes which do not compare with the things of this life.

Paul speaks of this further when he writes in Philippians 4 verses 11 through 13. He speaks of the way in which he is satisfied in Christ above all his circumstances.

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am in to be content. I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound.

[11 : 36] In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Christ is the consolation that allows us to endure through every situation, through every trial that we might find ourselves in and yet still have great reason to rejoice.

if you find yourself in your mood swinging back and forth with each circumstance that you are in or maybe if you look out at your life and the difficulties that you feel mired in simply have you down all the time.

The answer is to look above your circumstance and look to that which is greater than the things you find yourself in. Look to him who is greater than the difficulties of this life and realize today that the word is calling you to set your hearts on a purpose that is greater than the things of this world and having been set on those purposes you will find that the troubles of this world grow strangely dim in comparison to the glories of God.

Let's consider more deeply what this good purpose is that we are to set ourselves to that we are to direct our lives towards because the point is not simply that you should find goals in life and when you find goals it makes life happier and better.

[13:19] This isn't just an instructional lesson that you might find a motivational speaker giving about how you need to set goals and purposes and you'll achieve your dreams.

It's that there is one purpose for mankind and there is one goal that stands above all else that is to glorify God.

This is what Paul understood that man was created for God's glory. This is the reason why we exist. Each and every one of us exists for this purpose above all else to glorify God.

Everything else we do in our life when we work when we talk when we relax when we gather together should all fall under the umbrella of this purpose.

to glorify our creator. The God who made you the God who gives you your every breath and the God who has even saved you has claim over you and everything you do.

[14:35] And with that claim and authority he declares that your purpose is to worship and glorify him. We are called to glorify him.

This is the great purpose of man. For some of us it will look like working excellently at our jobs in factories or trades. For others it will look like being called out into the missions field to preach the gospel to foreign nations.

To some it will look like being prayer warriors for the church laboring day and night before the throne of God for the sake of the saints. And we could go on and on with many examples of the ways in which the call of God to glorify him works out in our lives.

And our calling to live a life glorifying to God is not just something that we work out on a Sunday morning sitting in pews but it is real and specific and personal to all of our lives.

Paul recognizes that his calling is to glorify God and part of the way he is working out that purpose is for the sake of the saints at Corinth.

[15:54] And as he sits squarely in the thing that God has made him to do he finds that whether in comfort or in affliction he may rejoice.

And so he can look at his life count the sufferings and speak with a joyful tone about all of them knowing that they secure good for the people of God which is what he was made to do.

God calls us to in very real ways get down into the nitty gritty of loving and caring about each other. At multiple points in scripture he shows that to love his people is to love him.

Consider Matthew 10:24 which reads and whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple truly I say to you by no means he will lose his reward.

Jesus is proclaiming that if you love the little ones who are disciples of Christ that you will have a great reward. Or Matthew 25:37 through 39 the righteous will answer Jesus saying Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink and when did we see you a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you and when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you and the King Jesus Christ will say truly I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these you did it to me he wants us to think about the main way that we love him is that we work that love out in real ways among each other if you did it to one of these you have done it to me further more when when

[18:04] Jesus wants to call Peter to serve and build up the church he roots that call in love for Jesus John 21:15 and 17 when they had finished breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter Simon son of John do you love me more than these and Simon said to him yes Lord you know that I love you so what does Jesus draw out as the implication of this love Jesus says to Simon feed my lambs if you love me then do this thing care for my people and he said to him a second time Simon son of John do you love me and Simon said to him yes Lord you know that I love you so Jesus once again emphasizes that to love him is to love his people he said to him tend my sheep

Jesus said to Simon a third time Simon son of John do you love me and Simon Peter was grieved because Jesus had said to him a third time do you love me and so Simon said to Jesus Lord you know everything you know that I love you and Jesus finally drawing out the obvious way that loving him works out he says feed my sheep this is our calling to live lives with a purpose that purpose being to glorify God and that working out in loving each other in very real ways live your life loving people especially God's people finally let's consider how in this passage the purpose that the saints are being called to revolves around the gospel of

Christ Paul labors for their comfort and salvation whether that labor is easy or challenging and that comfort and salvation that he is working to bring them is the comfort and salvation that comes through the good news the gospel of Jesus the way that Paul loves them the way that Paul loves this church is by building up their faith in Jesus their confidence in Christ's work on the cross to pay for their sins he labors so that they may trust Christ as a sin bearer and as a substitute and he labors that they may be comforted and saved by believing the good news of Jesus all the way till their death that one day they wake up from the dead to eternal glory in

Christ so we ought to follow the same pattern when we set our lives to the purpose of glorifying God and loving each other we ought to center that around the gospel around the work of Jesus so when we love someone who doesn't believe we need to keep in mind that their biggest need is to repent and trust in Jesus that they might be turned from their sins so they may not perish in them and suffer for them but rather that they would repent and come to know the Savior who is our greatest consolation and salvation and when we are considering how to encourage other believers and love them we need to know that their chief encouragement is to be driven deeper into the gospel of Jesus that your salvation doesn't depend on your own goodness but on the goodness of Christ who takes your sins in their punishment Paul roots this comfort and salvation in the gospel and he shows that it is powerful for our lives he writes this comfort and salvation is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer the comfort that Christ offers in the gospel is more than enough to allow you to persist through every difficulty to keep going even when the winds of suffering buffet hard against you the gospel of Christ his comfort and salvation are effective to make you and each other endure all difficulties that we will face in this life and notice also that the gospel gives us great confidence that if we set our purposes on Christ it will be well worth it verse 7 and our hope for you is steadfast

[23 : 52] Paul is speaking about his hope in bringing goodness to them through the gospel is steadfast that his labors will not be in vain toppled over because the gospel is powerful and working in their midst if you're going to set your life to a purpose you want to know that that purpose will last that your labors won't be in vain you don't want your life to be like a man who spends his hours building a house of cards that is easily knocked over by wind but you want to spend your life building a house that will stand forever and Jesus says that the house that is built on the rock on him will endure so Paul's hope is steadfast it will never fail because his hope is not in the will of men or in a house of cards but in the gospel of christ which god will make stand forever and he explains that as the gospel works in our midst it is the promise of salvation christ first suffered and then entered into his glory so Paul explains that if we partake in the sufferings of christ we can have a promise that one day we will enter into his glory and our hope for you is steadfast because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings so also you will partake of the consolation if like christ you suffer on the path to goodness this is a gospel promise that like christ you will be raised to glory you can have every confidence that the gospel purpose will stand if you set your hope on these things and bet your life on it you will never be put to shame but on the final day you will be vindicated for every sacrifice every hardship that it was well worth it that the reward was worth all of the trouble that the comfort and the salvation that the consolation was worth everything that we chose to do we long for the resurrection of the of christ that it might be manifest in our lives we are called to set our hearts on the purpose of glorifying god by loving each other centered around the gospel may the lord help us to do these things please pray with me in closing lord help us to choose meaningful lives to choose you and your purposes above all others help us to be so dug in to the purpose of caring for others that the circumstances of our life no longer direct our happiness we declare to you lord this day that we shall live for your glory and that we shall set your glory as our deepest goal give us the boldness to live after these things and cleanse us from our failings when we fall short of these deep callings we thank you lord for your goodness and your salvation the consolation which is our hope in jesus name amen