

# God's Purpose for Us

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] needs absolutely nothing, want worship from us, want trust from us, want fear from us. Because on the surface, it seems like something that's quite hard to figure out. If God doesn't need it, then why does he want it?

And that's what we need to understand if we're going to understand what is happening with King Ahaz here and the promise of Emmanuel. Now, when Jesus begins his ministry and Jesus is with us, God is with us in the presence of Jesus, Jesus has to deal with the same type of situation. He comes into the world and the world, you know, they don't quite recognize who he is. They don't understand what he has come to do. But Jesus is effectively saying, look, don't miss what I'm doing. Don't miss what's happening here. And the trouble is, that's exactly what people do. The wise men who come to visit Jesus, the first thing they do, they bring their gifts.

You know, I was out and about the other day and I saw this nativity scene and there are three wise men. And I always feel like writing a little note, how do you know there were three? But I thought, well, it would spoil the nativity.

[ 1 : 1 4 ] Where does it say that? You know. Anyway, they come and what's their response? Their response is, is that they worship him. They worship him.

Why do they do that? Well, there's a number of reasons why they do that. It is because they recognize who he is. They begin to understand at least in part who he is. But more importantly, I think they understand that Jesus didn't come into the world for us.

And I think, as Christians, we forget that. We still think that Jesus came into the world for us. When actually, the promise here quite clearly states that Jesus is coming into the world for God.

Okay? That God said, I'm going to send my son. Jesus is coming into the world for God. Now, I'm going to try and explain this a slightly different way and perhaps you'll get it.

In the very, very beginning, God created the world and he put us in it. Okay? So, God didn't come into the world for us. We came into the world for God. That make sense?

[ 2 : 2 6 ] God created the world and he put us in it. So, it's that way around. The trouble is, however, the moment the world fell into sin, God then did have to come into the world, Emmanuel, God with us.

But when Jesus came into the world, he came into the world for God, not for us. Because he came to restore back to God what God originally created. Now, it is true that he came for us.

But the motivation is that he came into the world for God to bring us back to him. And that's really quite important. Or else you'll end up with some kind of Christianity that thinks that Jesus is here simply to fulfill what you want.

But actually, Emmanuel means that Jesus is here to fulfill what God wants through us. And that's really quite different. But why?

Why bother? You know, I often say to myself, if I were God, you know, but I wouldn't bother. And I realized, well, that's, you know, just because you're not God, you wouldn't bother.

[ 3 : 2 8 ] So, but why does God bother? I mean, why does God bother when he doesn't need anything? And yet, he wants this. And then it began to dawn on me as I looked at myself and I looked at other people and I looked at the way they were with their own children.

And have you ever wanted something for your child? Even now, do you want something for them? And you go, yeah, of course I do. I would like this. So, now you're beginning to understand how you can want something for someone else, even though you yourself don't need it.

Now you're beginning to see that God, who doesn't need anything, wants an awful lot. But he doesn't want it for himself. He wants it for you. Right?

Now you're beginning to see it, that God doesn't need any of this, but he wants it for his children. So, why does he want this for his children? Well, because he wants to restore his creation back to the way that he made it originally.

And so, when children are created, they are, believe it or not, created in the image of their dad, Genesis 5. We are created in the image of God, but we're also created in the image of fallen people.

[ 4 : 41 ] That means we grow up and we're sinful. But even I would expect my children to talk to me in the right kind of way. I'd expect them to converse with me.

I'd expect them to sort of share fellowship with me. I'd expect them to have some kind of relationship with me that grows and gets better rather than becomes tense. But, of course, we live in a fallen world.

But not only that, I expect my children to respond to me in a particular way, not just any old way. So, there is such a thing as being disrespectful. There is such a thing as taking no notice.

There is such a thing as being naughty. And in much the same way, the picture is no different when God comes into the world. We are, in one respect, God's children.

And God wants from us those same things that we would want from our own children. The relationship as it ought to be. The conversation as it ought to be.

[ 5 : 39 ] The respect that should be there. Again, we go back to this idea that it's all about positioning. Understanding where you fit in in the whole scheme of what it means for God to be with us.

So, I want to go back to this idea just for a moment of how God created us. So that we don't rob him. I can remember growing up in the home.

And I don't ever remember my mom saying it to me. But, you know, selective memory and all that. But I certainly remember it saying it to my brothers often. You treat this place like a hotel. And I realized that she couldn't have said it to me because I was around all the times that she said it to them.

So I thought, I'm feeling quite good about myself now. But you treat this place like a hotel. Well, we understand what's being meant there.

Well, God doesn't want us to treat him like a hotel where we take him up when we need him, when we need a bit of shelter, when we need a bit of food, need a bit of comfort. And then when our belly is full and our mind is right and our heart is okay, we then go in again, right?

[ 6 : 49 ] There's a problem there. So imagine it like this. When God created you, he created you with certain things that you were meant to give back to him. Okay? That's worship.

When God created you, he created you in such a way that you were meant to give back to him certain things that he gave to you in his creation. Some of those things are like fear and trust. And you've heard me say this before. Never tell a person, don't fear. Because the Bible actually tells you to fear. The Bible actually says to fear God.

Well, you say, well, that's a different type of fear. No, it isn't. It's actually the same type of fear directed towards God rather than man. Right? Now we begin to understand what it means to worship God, to respond to God properly.

It means to give to him that which he has given to us to give back to him. Okay? So when we fear God, we're doing the right thing. We're operating properly.

[ 7 : 48 ] We are responding as we should as God created us. It's not a different type of fear. It's just fear directed in the right kind of way to the right person. It's exactly the same with trust. King Ahaz trusted in a king and not God.

He took the very thing that God had given him and he directed it towards other people. And the reason why God makes this promise is that I'm going to be with you.

Don't do that. The promise of Emmanuel comes to a person who is deciding to put his trust in somebody else. And God is saying, no, Emmanuel, a virgin will conceive and bear a son and I'll be with you.

You're beginning to see the picture. The promise is made to a person who is deciding not to put their trust in God but in other people. And God's saying, no, I'm going to turn you back towards me. And the way that I'm going to do it is I'm going to come myself. So that you don't have to go and put your trust in a fellow king. I'm going to be right here with you. Just to show you that you can trust me.

[ 8 : 58 ] That I am a trustworthy God. The issue is, is that when we do the same. You know that we turn away from God and we trust in other things.

We're falling into the same trap that King Ahaz is. We begin to rob God. In other words, we're not beginning to fulfill the purpose for which God has made us.

And so when God makes this promise to King Ahaz of Emmanuel, God with us, we begin to understand what Emmanuel is going to do. Why God made the promise. The manual means that God will be with us in order to bring us back to him.

That God is going to be with us in such a way to take our hearts that are trusting in other things, that are fearing in other things, and redirect it back towards God.

That's what Emmanuel means in the context of King Ahaz. That's what Emmanuel means. He's not focusing on the birth. He's focusing on the fact of this birth is unlike this child is going to come about in a way that no other child has come.

[ 10 : 05 ] And more importantly, the child is going to be God himself. And the reason he's coming is to turn you back to him. That's the purpose of Emmanuel.

That's the purpose behind God making this promise, Emmanuel. And here's the point. If you fail to understand your purpose in life, you will lose, use your life for all the wrong reasons.

Let me explain it this way. If you give me a watch, and let's just say for a moment that I had no idea what a watch was. And then in the back garden, there's a broken fence.

And so I take that watch, and I take the six-inch nail, and I think, I can fix this. And I start bashing this nail in with the watch. Are you going to buy me a new one? Well, not likely, unless you point out to me that that's not what it's for.

Now, that may be a silly illustration, but it gets the point across that until you understand the purpose for which something is made, you will not know how to use it. You may be able to guess.

[ 11 : 12 ] You may be able to get it right partly. But you will not be able to get it right fully. The trouble is, when children are born and they grow up, they naturally assume that they know what their life and their purpose is all about.

And they don't. None of us really do. And even Christians who know have to be reminded that we're here to glorify God in the highest. That's the purpose that we have.

And the moment we begin to take those things that we are meant to give back to God and we start directing it here, there, and everywhere, then we become broken just like the watch trying to hidden nails because we're not fulfilling the purpose for which God has given us, made us.

And so Emmanuel is basically saying that I'll be with you. And I'll be with you so that you don't have to put your trust in a fellow king, so that you don't have to fear these things.

I'll be with you. That as I gain the victory, you'll gain the victory in me. Let me give you a couple of illustrations as we sort of draw this towards the end.

[ 12 : 19 ] When Jesus came, towards his death on the cross, just before that happened, he entered into the temple.

And you know that he spent the time of looking around. Then he comes in and he sees all these money changers, changing money, and with their tables set up in the temple. And we're not told explicitly that Jesus got angry, but it certainly seems to give that impression.

And he throws the tables over, and he drives out the money changers, and then he gives the explanation. And the explanation is this, that my house, okay, we have the right at the table, but we don't have the right to sit in the head of the table.

Okay, Jesus wants us to be at his table of fellowship, but he doesn't want to sit in his chair. Okay, so this is my house. My father's house is to be a house of prayer, but you have made it, what, a den of robbers.

So what's the issue? What are they stealing from God? What are they taking out of the temple away with them? Nothing. But they are stopping prayer from happening.

[ 13 : 32 ] And they're stopping prayer from happening, and so they're robbing God from what should be happening in the place that God created for that purpose. My house should be called a house of prayer.

That's the purpose. That's the reason why I have made it. That's the reason why I have given it. But you have made it a den of robbers. We assume that if they're changing money, that they're robbing each other. That's not the point that Jesus is making.

The point that Jesus is making is that by doing something else in the temple other than what you are meant to be doing, means that you're robbing God of the prayer that he deserves. And that's the reason why Jesus throws them out and overturns the tables. That's why he pushes them out of the space.

Because they're robbing God. They're not taking something from him, but they're not giving to God what belongs to God. Exactly the same thing that King Ahaz was doing. And so as God makes his promise to King Ahaz, I'll be with you, when God actually is with us in the temple, suddenly we begin to see what this means.

[ 14 : 39 ] It is massive disruption. That Emmanuel means my life is going to be disrupted. That Jesus has actually come to sort things out the way that they ought to be sorted out.

That Jesus has come to rearrange things in the temple. But more importantly, he has come to rearrange things in my life as well.

And here's why. Here's the challenge. In 1 Peter, Peter says, you're the temple. You're the temple of God.

You are now the people of God. And now God dwells in you, Emmanuel. God dwells in this temple. And you are that temple.

We become the place that God dwells in. 1 Corinthians 3 verse 16. We are the temple in which God dwells in. So what are we for?

[ 15 : 41 ] What are we created for? Now, if we are a temple, do you think that we run the risk of being tempted to set up a marketplace within our own heart?

Do you think we are going to be tempted just like King Ahaz was tempted? To start doing things within our own life that we shouldn't be doing, just like they were doing in the temple, exchanging money, bartering, and all of that rather than praying.

Just like King Ahaz was doing, rather than trusting in God, he decided to trust in men. Do you think we, who are the temple of the living God, Emmanuel, God with us, are going to have the temptation to set up tables within our own heart?

Have we set up tables within our own heart? Are we actually using our life for the purposes of God? Or are we using them for other purposes? And if we are, what do you think Jesus is going to be doing in your life?

Well, he's going to be throwing tables over, isn't he? He's going to cause massive disruption. And why is he going to cause massive disruption? Because that's not what you're for.

[ 16 : 49 ] You weren't built for that. You were built to give glory to God in the highest. You were built to trust God. You were built to fear God. You were built for all these reasons for God.

And the moment you begin to set up your own marketplace in your own temple, which is the temple of God that God dwells in, what do you think Jesus is going to be doing? It's going to be overturning your life.

But why does he do it? To cause disruption? No. Does it cause disruption? Yes. But why? Because that's not what you're for. Emmanuel means that God is going to be with us.

But God is going to be with us in such a way that he dwells in his own temple, and you are his own temple. And the moment we begin to establish things that really don't belong there, the owner comes in and throws them out.

It doesn't belong. That's not the kind of decor that God wants in his temple. That's not the kind of thing that he wants happening within the place where he dwells.

[ 17 : 53 ] So he starts turning over tables. But understand why he's doing it. He's doing it because in the same way he was restoring the temple to its proper purpose, he overturns tables in your life for exactly the same reason.

He is simply restoring you to your proper purpose. That's what you're for. And so to go back and answer the question, why does God, who is in need of nothing, want us to worship him?

He wants us to worship him because that's what it means to be fully restored. That's what it means for God to be with us. Why does God, who needs nothing, want us to worship him?

Because that's what it means for us to be fully restored. And that's what it means to know Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Amen.