

Your Purpose in Life

by Alan Ives

The sermon emphasizes finding personal peace through continuous praise to God, rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Duration: 44:10

Scripture: Psalm 89:16, Psalm 139:14, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 6:33, Colossians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Hebrews 13:15

Topics: "Purpose"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of praising God. He contrasts the worship of false gods with the privilege of singing a new song to the one true God. The preacher highlights the example of David, who purposed in his heart to praise the Lord as long as he lived. The sermon also emphasizes the need to continually praise Jesus, as he is always worthy of our praise. The preacher encourages believers to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, as it is the fruit of our lips.

Transcript

We'll sing a couple and then we're going to turn, I believe, to Hebrews 13 for a Sunday school message, but waiting for more of that music that is a blessed thing. We'll talk about that a little bit in Sunday school, our offering of praise to the Lord, but, and then in the morning service might even be a surprise to me today, but again, thinking of our country, people always have said we want peace, we want peace, and nobody likes war, but we shouldn't want to be in slavery either. And the Lord allows those things like wars and terrible upsets around the world because we have to learn to find our peace in God and settle things with the Lord, settle our sin problem with him, but this is a song called Personal Peace.

Peace on earth the angels sang so long ago, have you wondered can such peace really be so? For the world is full of troubles, wars never cease, yet with it all God gives to me his personal peace. Personal peace, that's what God gives to me. Personal peace, so deep, so full and free.

In a world of war and strife, I have peace and I have life. If you believe, you too can receive this personal peace. Soon the Prince of Peace will come to earth again.

For a thousand years of peace my Lord shall reign. Till he comes there'll be no peace on earth I know. Only the personal peace God promised long ago, that's what God gives to me.

Personal peace, so deep, so full and free. In a world of war and strife, I have peace and I have life. If you believe, you too can receive this personal peace.

In a world of war and strife, I have peace and I have life. If you believe, you too can receive this personal peace. We see now through what the Bible calls a glass darkly.

It's not clear, a lot of things are not clear, but it says then face to face. And I'm glad Fanny Crosby wrote the poem Face to Face with Christ my Savior. We'll sing that song and then Hebrews 13.

Face to face I shall behold Him, very far beyond most of the stars. Face to face in all His glory I shall watch, rejoicing in His presence. When our manner things shall be plain.

Face to face I shall behold Him, always to face in all His glory. Face to face in all His glory I shall watch, rejoicing in His presence. Face to face I shall behold Him, very far beyond the starry sky.

Face to face in all His glory I shall watch, rejoicing in His presence. Face to face in all His glory I shall watch, rejoicing in His presence. Then we will.

It's good to be in the house of God with the people of God. And even after a long Saturday. Hebrews 13 and verse 15.

The verse that we want to look at. Let's read it. You can stay seated, but let's read the verse together.

And we'll see what it has to say about our praises to God. And if we can have a little less on it somewhere. As far as the amplification.

Let's read Hebrews 13 and verse 15 together. By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

We're going to break the verse apart and have a word of prayer. And look at all that that one verse tells us about praising the Lord. Dear Father, bless this Sunday school hour.

Bless our time in the word of God. May it do some real work in our lives today. Lord, we thank You for this group of young people.

And their parents that have worked and spent so much time. To put the vocal and the instrumental music together. What a refreshing to the soul it is.

And Lord, may they know the power, the impact, the blessing, the help. That that kind of praise is to the saints. And Lord, we know it does bring glory to Thee.

May we throw our whole heart into this kind of ministry. Lord, it's soothing, it's healing, it's helping. And we live in such a day and age where people are full of troubles.

And Lord, the only answers come from Thee. And may our singing and praise turn people's hearts and thoughts to Thee. Bless now this time we spend in this particular verse in Hebrews.

So, guide my thoughts and the Holy Spirit have Thy way in all of this. Be our teacher. Guide us into all truth.

And we thank Thee, Lord, that we belong to Thee. If there's anyone who's gathered with us that's not certain that they're saved. May they see their need to trust Thee today, Lord.

Draw them to Thyself. May they be gloriously and wonderfully saved. Bless the folks at this church.

And bless them, Lord, with a wonderful testimony in this community. And pray that many, many, many would be brought to Thee. And we'll thank Thee and praise Thee in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're to offer our praise to God. I think the verse is pretty plain and obvious.

But there are seven things that the verse does actually tell us. And we're going to break them up into those seven points. And that's what we're going to talk about for this hour.

And, of course, our verse simply begins with, By Him. By Him. Maybe you have never thought of it.

But everything that you have done in the way of picking up the horns to praise the Lord. Everything we do in the way of singing from the hymn book. All of the songs that you've sung.

It's all because of Jesus Christ. And it's really by Him and through Him. For Him, even, we would have to say.

That it is done. It is done in His strength. It's done with the help of His Spirit.

The Lord is more desirous of getting glory to His name. And getting the gospel out to lost sinners. Than we are.

And so it is all by Him. Without salvation, we'd have nothing to sing and play. There would be nothing to rejoice in.

There would be no message to give to anyone. There would be no comfort when we did play for others. And so it's all by Him.

That's an amazing truth, really. That everything that we are is of God. Everything we have is from God.

Everything that goes on in life, it's all of grace. That's what another man said. It is by Him that we're able to do these things.

Do you realize if you don't spend your life praising the Lord, you will spend your life lauding and extolling and praising something else. Did you ever stop and think about people that want to save spotted owls and grey wolves and whales and who knows how many other creatures they're going to find. The amazing thing about that is man thinks that somehow we're responsible to take care of all those animals that God put on the earth.

And so they try to tag them all and trace them all. And then just about the time they tell us, well this animal's almost extinct and we better be careful. You know, a whole herd will wander out of a forest somewhere.

Where did they come from? Well, God knew where they were. And you know, people will throw their life. We know of two brothers.

One is our Christian friend. The other one is a movie star. Unbelievable.

They are night and day. They are so different from each other they make my wife and I seem like we're alike. But these two brothers, the one is a military man.

He is serious about serving the Lord and he is making sure that he lives for God and raises his family under the preaching of the Word of God. Wonderful, marvelous Christian. His brother is the movie star.

And that movie star, you know, looks at his body and sees if all his muscles are still rippling the way he wants them to. And that's all he cares about, is how he looks on screen. And he has to find a purpose for living, right? Besides his beautiful self.

And so he sends things to his nephews and nieces. You know, we're going to care about these animals that are becoming extinct. Sometimes the Christian brother has to send them back and say, we really can't support this crazy scheme that you have.

And thank you for thinking of my children but they're not going to get this gift. And some of the things are rather too strange to be involved in. But that's what happens to people.

When they say no to Jesus and they say no to the Gospel, they have to pick up on something. And they think it's important. And they live like it's important.

And they rally like it's important. And they make their efforts toward it. But those are really false causes for the most part.

God knows what he's doing. And, you know, there are those that worry about global warming. And yet God promised that there would be seed time and harvest, there would be winter and summer, as long as the earth remained.

And I paraphrased the verse. But somehow they've missed that truth. And so they'll get all wrapped up about those things.

And that's such a sad thing. It's wonderful. If you have found the Lord, that's a wonderful thing.

I told my children, perhaps 95, 96% of the world has not found the Savior. In our generation. That's a marvelous thing, just to be able to say, I know the Lord and he knows me.

I'm his and he is mine. And then to realize that if I'm putting my effort into it, you and I will spend our life on something. It ought to be the Lord.

As a matter of fact, when you get to be my age, you realize that I'm so tired, I don't want to do anything. And so I will do it for the Lord Jesus Christ. I won't do it for anyone else or anything less.

It isn't worth it. But I would do it for the Lord. If you have found your joy in the Lord, you have found the right cause.

You have found the purpose, the reason for living. And that's what we're being told in Hebrews. By him we offer our praises.

I'm glad he gives us that strength to praise him. Do you know something, if you haven't learned it? Let's turn there. Psalm 22 and verse 3. Very, very important verse.

It's only in the Bible one time that I know of. But this is a truth to latch on to whenever we sing and whenever we praise the Lord. And it's just a short verse.

Psalm 22 and verse 3. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. To inhabit means to live in. To dwell in.

God promised that He inhabits His praises. The praises of His people. We ought always to pray, Lord, when I sing, Lord, when I lift up the horn, may it be Thy Spirit sing with me, sing through me, Lord.

May it not be in vain. It is by Him. Jesus said in John 15 and verse 5, without me, you probably know the verse, without me ye can do nothing.

Nothing. And often we think, what do you mean? I got up this morning and I... But the very breath we have comes from God. When people die, did they vote to do so? When it stops, when life stops, it just stops.

That's up to God, isn't it? You don't know that you're going to take one more breath. I don't know that I'm going to take one more breath. It's nice when we do, but we don't know that.

That's all by Him. Even the grace of life that we live is from God. So when we take every breath we have, we ought to use it to praise Him.

You can be glad that every minute you have spent in practicing to praise the Lord, every moment you've spent in learning about music so you can sing the Gospel, sing the praises of God, is not wasted. Every minute you live for the Lord, to honor Him and glorify Him is not wasted. And I think again of all the others who live for other purposes and other reasons.

What a waste. They waste their life away by Him, by Him. The second thing we find in our verse here, it says, By Him, therefore, let us offer.

Let us offer. Do you know music is an offering? And we often play music when a financial offering is taken. But the music part is also an offering.

We offer our music, we offer our praise to God. It is a giving. It is not taking.

Never, never fall into that trap. We know, well I want to say a young man, but he's getting up in years now, just like the rest of us. But anyway, this young man wanted to play the grand piano.

And we had one at church. We had one rule, very simple rule. You may practice any time the piano is open if you will promise to play for the Lord somewhere in a service.

Now you would think, most of the time the problem is, you know, everybody wants to play and everybody wants to sing, you know, every one of you had the psalm, every one of you had, and that's the problem. But not with this boy. He was such a perfectionist and really so proud that he didn't want to play or promise he would play for an offering, even in church, because it might not be perfect and then everyone wouldn't think highly enough of him.

I would, we all had that kind of a desire for the Lord that he would be honored just with the best of what we have all the time. But this fellow wouldn't do it. He said, I can't do that.

And he could have. I heard him play and he could have played anytime. But anyway, he wanted to play the piano so badly for himself that he found a way to break into the church.

Here he is, a member of the church, breaking into the church at midnight and playing with the lights off so that no one would suspect that anyone was there and parking his car out of the way so it could not be seen. How ridiculous. To date, I mean, we're talking about 20 years ago.

To date, this young man has never played the piano publicly for the glory of God. He plays it because he enjoys it. It's for him.

But music is an offering. Music is a giving. Sometimes it will be a struggle.

Whoever has to arrange the music may struggle at certain measures and go, I can't make this measure just sound like it ought to sound. You're offering your energy for the glory of God. There are some days your lip may just not feel right, may not work right.

There may be some days you say, I don't want to blow all the air I've got to blow into that horn to make it go. Or, my voice doesn't work. It's gravelly and scratchy today and it's giving, not taking.

Music director's nightmare. He gets the schedule, the church schedule, done sometimes a month in advance. And you know when people call up and tell you that they have a sore throat and they can't sing? If they're very nice, they call you up on Saturday night before they're supposed to sing and tell you they can't.

Or that Sunday morning, right before choir practice. Oh boy. As musicians, we need to learn that it's giving.

You may have a headache. Who wants to blow a horn when you have a headache? But if it's time to play and you have that opportunity, you need to take it. It's giving.

It will cost something. And I'm going to get ahead of myself if I'm not careful. It is not for your acclaim and my fame.

That's not what it's about. It's not about getting a name again for yourself. It's about giving.

It's about giving glory to God. It's about taking time to practice, not for your glory, but for the glory of God. It's taking care of the instrument and making sure that it's in good working form and studying and listening and training and thinking.

And all of that takes time. Working with notes. And then you try to talk to a normal human being and they don't understand what you're saying.

Because you're in a different plane. It's like a pilot. He's in a different plane.

They talk about flying in the sky. They think that's wonderful. I think planes are too heavy to fly.

I go in them, but not too. Music will give back to you as you minister in music. But it's for the glory of God and it's to help others and direct them always to the help that the Savior can give.

And so it's an offering. It's by Him. The third thing we find is it's called the sacrifice of praise.

And we've already hinted at it. But what is a sacrifice? A sacrifice is something that costs you or something that costs me. You invest in an instrument.

You invest in music. You invest in a music program. You used to be a music typewriter.

Music tools of different kinds. You invest in others as you rehearse with them. It is a sacrifice.

I think always of David at the threshing floor of Ornan. Ornan was going to give him the whole thing when the ark was being brought back and David wanted to worship and praise the Lord. Ornan said, you can have it.

And David said that he would not worship God with that which cost him nothing. And so he paid Ornan for the threshing floor. That's very important of course.

When you talk about a sacrifice, what is that song that we sing? Is you're all on the altar of sacrifice laid. You and I are a living sacrifice. We present our bodies to the Lord.

A living sacrifice. Holy, acceptable unto God which is our reasonable service. You say, well I don't know if I want to be a living sacrifice.

As we said again, we will spend our life on something. You will give in the end. Your life will be given to something.

It will become a sacrifice to somebody or something or some business or some entity on this earth. And we ought to on purpose say, I am going to sacrifice my life for the Lord and to the Lord. I will not let my life be spent for anything less or anyone else.

Why waste it away? Your time. Isn't that a strange thing? We have a moment and then it's spent and it's gone and you cannot get it back. It doesn't matter how many movies tell you that you can travel through time, you can't do it.

Now God can do something like that if he wants to. He set the sundial back once. Time just keeps moving forward.

The energy of your life, once you spend it, you have to rest again. That's what the night's for. You rest and then you have more energy and you spend it that day and then it's gone.

Your life ticks by a day at a time. You ever walk through cemeteries? I know there's at least one girl here that does besides me. And I noticed something about all those gravestones.

They have a birth date and they have a death date. And sometimes that's all we know about a person. They were born one year and they died another year.

Their whole life is spent and gone. And I wonder often, what did they spend their life on? It's gone. You live for the Lord, you'll pour out your heart over all kinds of things and so you should.

But give your life to the Lord on purpose. Be a sacrifice for him. Don't let someone else take you as their sacrifice.

Number four. Number four. It's praise to God.

While the rest of this world sings to their gods, and we talked about it yesterday, we have the wonderful privilege of singing a new song, even praise to our God. And you know what? There's not enough of it in this world. Most of the people sing to their worthless false gods, tin gods, gods of money, gods of wooden stone, gods of gold and silver, gods that have mouths but they cannot speak and ears but they cannot hear and eyes but they cannot see, deaf and dumb gods, false gods.

You know, David purposed in his heart and it's not presumptuous. David purposed in his heart to praise the Lord as long as he was alive. Let me find that verse for you and you can turn to it.

Psalm 146. Psalm 146 and verse 2. David said, While I live, will I praise the Lord. I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

He said, If there's anything left of me at all, if I'm still breathing, God is going to get praise from my lips. Did you ever promise God you would live like that? That you would praise Him until your last breath? You know there's a lot of people that don't make those kind of promises. Let me read Psalm 104 verse 33.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. There's a lot of people who quit on God too.

If you've never made a promise like that, you ought to. David did. That's how we were able to read it.

David promised, I'm going to praise you Lord no matter what. No matter what. I always told my children and I tell everybody, I'm not a very good Christian, but I'm glad that I'm saved.

And I did promise the Lord that I would praise Him. Remember what Francis Ridley Haverhill wrote in her song? And she could play Beethoven on the piano like nobody in her day. All of her friends wanted her to play Beethoven on the piano.

And she reached the day and she said, No, Jesus gets everything that I am and that I have. And then she wrote, Take my voice and let me sing always only for my King. Ever promise that to God? I read her book.

She wrote a book on that song. A devotion that was good as any preacher that ever preached. And I said, Here's this skinny little lady.

She was sickly all of her life. She only lived to be 35. But she promised God he got everything that she wasn't had.

She also wrote, Take my silver and my gold not a mite would I withhold. She had some jewelry that was worth a lot. She dumped it all in a plate, folks.

When she didn't have anything else to give. And I thought if that skinny little unmarried gal can live a life not feeling well. Who am I to withhold what I have from God? Who am I to say, Well, this is for me and I want to spend it the way I want to spend it.

When Jesus spent his life for me. We ought to be like David. Be like Francis Ridley Haverhill and say, Lord, I'll praise you while I have any being.

He's worthy of our praise. What are the rest of the people doing in Psalm 144? It talks about those people that are complaining in the streets. We mentioned that the beatniks and the hippies and all the other groups, the rock and rollers, they're always complaining about what didn't go right.

People need to hear about what goes right when we trust the Savior. What goes right when we follow Bible admonitions. What goes right when we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, like the song says.

What a glory he sheds on our way. Not complaining. Oh, listen, all of us could come up with enough reasons to complain about all kinds of things that don't go right.

That's not the way we're supposed to look at things. We're supposed to look at what does go right and thank God for it. And if everything seems like it goes wrong, I still belong to Jesus and I'm still going to heaven.

If I mess up everything because I'm stupid and sinful, I still go to heaven because I'm saved by grace. At least you can rejoice in that if everything else goes wrong. But complaining, no.

You know that goes in a long list of other sins that we think are terrible, that the children of Israel were guilty of. We don't think complaining is as bad as the Bible teaches that it is. What a blessed privilege to bring praise to God.

When you sing, Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul, you can't be complaining. When you sing, Count your many blessings, see what God has done, you can't be complaining. And that's what God wants.

And there are people who are worse off, way worse off than you and I ever thought about being. That are able to lift their heart and praise to God and lift their lips and praise to God. And you don't find them complaining, you find them thanking God and praising God.

We just saw a boy the other day, he doesn't have any arms, he's got like one foot and he uses that for a hand. The first thing he said when he stood up in front of everybody, he presented himself and there we saw him and not normal by what we think his name is Johnny. And Johnny quoted a Bible verse, he said, I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

He didn't even need to preach the rest of the sermon. Here's a guy that was praising God, he said, God made me wonderful. Those kind of things shame us.

Well, I better move on, we're already out of time here. Five, six and seven, let's take a look at what they are. Number five, it says, this is to be done continually because Jesus is always worthy to be praised.

We praise Him, what does the psalmist say, all the day long. In Psalm 89 and verse 16, if we tire out, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. You get weary, you get tired, yeah, you will.

Most of you playing the instruments are pretty young, but you get a little bit further along, you might get tired, but you know what, God can renew your strength. I don't know what the world does, but God restrengthens us. We just go to Him and say, Lord, I need help, I need strength, I need to minister again.

Renew my strength. Others still need to hear the praises of God. Others still need help.

Number six, by Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. That is the fruit of our lips. You know what fruit is? Fruit is something that tastes good.

Fruit is a result of a tree that's growing the way it's supposed to grow. It's real. You can take a bite out of fruit and go, that's good, that's a good tree.

It's got good fruit on it. When we talk about the fruit of our lips, we're talking about something that's real in our lives. Oh, when you read about something in a song that some Christian is thanking God for, you say, Lord, make it real in my life so it's personal in my life.

Make it real for me so what I'm singing, I know that it's true. The fruit of our lips. The real result.

Others can taste it and see that it's good and praise God for it. Not just leaves. Not just a good show.

I'm a pretty tree. Uh-uh. Not barren or unfruitful in the work of God.

Not empty. The fruit of our lips. Real praise because God's really done something in our life.

We can all, those of us that trusted the Lord, we can all sing a salvation song with our whole heart. But then all those other things, we want to experience them and be able to thank God for them and understand what we're saying there. But we need to finish.

Number seven says, giving thanks to His name. Giving thanks to His name. You and I should have a grateful heart.

You ever find yourself going, I gotta play again. I gotta sing again. They wanna do that song again.

We gotta practice again. Oh boy. There's a whole lot of things we gotta do again and again and again.

That's the way life is. I got really tired of writing checks and paying bills when I got the number 10,000. The bank was real nice.

They issued me new checks and they started at 1,000 again. But I'll tell you what, I was tired of signing checks when I realized I'd signed 10,000 of them. I try to make money and what I do, I write checks and get rid of it.

It's faster than I make it. But anyway, we should be giving thanks and we should have a grateful heart. I used to think, I'd look at some of the neighbors and I don't wanna grow up to be a crabby old man shaking a cane at all the kids and get out of my garden and get off my yard.

Boy, that's what I would be. But God teaches us how to look at those things that He's done for us and gives us a sweetness of heart. His word is sweet.

And I'm glad for that. We'd all grow up to be crabby old men and women and be like all the other little kids think they didn't wanna grow up to be either. By Him, He offered, let us, it says by Him, therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually a whole life full.

That is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. Wonderful verse, wonderful reminder, good place to turn when you need to remember what you're doing with music, ministering and bringing praise to God. We're out of time.

Pastor Hardy.

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