

The Purpose of God

by David Ravenhill

God's purpose is to have a vast family of sons and daughters, to bless all nations of the earth, and to reveal his kingdom to the world.

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Scripture: Luke 24:46, Acts 13:47, Romans 12:1, Romans 15:16

Topics: "Gods Purpose", "World Evangelism"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the core purpose of God, likening it to a jigsaw puzzle where each piece represents a different aspect of God's plan. It highlights the need for believers to understand and align with God's purpose, focusing on reaching all nations with the message of salvation through Christ. The sermon challenges listeners to offer themselves as living sacrifices, to proclaim the gospel, and to prioritize the salvation of the lost as a rare and crucial sacrifice in the New Testament.

Transcript

I want to talk to you tonight about the purpose of God. The purpose of God. I want you to imagine that when you came in at the door, somebody handed you a plastic bag.

And in that plastic bag, there is a jigsaw puzzle. Some of you got a big one, some of you got a medium-sized one, some of you got a small one, some of you got an extra large one. And I'm going to give you a little bit of time now, again, to put that jigsaw puzzle together.

And immediately, you have a problem. Because you've got all these little unrelated pieces, a green piece, a red piece, a blue piece, brown piece, purple piece. And you think, if only I had the cover of the box, then I could put it together.

I don't know if the blue is a Toyota, or the sea, or the sky. I don't know if the red is blood, or a rose, or a Ferrari. If I had the cover of the box, I would know exactly where all the pieces go.

That describes, I think, many, many Christians. You get saved, typically. You come to church, and the pastor is talking about the family.

And so you go away with a few puzzles, pieces. You come on Wednesday night, and there's a guest speaker, and he's speaking about Daniel's image or something. You've got another few pieces.

You come Sunday morning, and the pastor's finished his other series on the family, and now he begins a series on prayer. And so you've got some other pieces. You go to another church that weekend because you're on vacation, and you hear another message.

And over a period of time, you accumulate all these little facts and figures from the word of God. But nobody ever puts it all together for you. And depending on how long you've been saved, that's the size of your jigsaw puzzle.

If you've only been saved a few weeks or a few months, you've got a little tiny portion. If you've been saved for years, some of you could bring it in by the sack load. But tonight, we're going to try, at least, and put the puzzle together a little bit.

Because I find that we don't really understand the purpose of God. If I said to you, I belong to the local country club where I live, you would automatically assume I enjoy playing golf. The fact is, there is one directly across the road from where I live, and I am not tempted because I don't play golf.

It's actually for sale. It's a bit of a mess of a place right now. But anyway, if I said, I belong to the local chess club, you'd assume I enjoy playing chess.

If I said, I belong to the local rifle club, you assume I belong to the militia. But if I said, I belong to local swimming club, you assume that I enjoy swimming. If I say, I belong to the church club, can you fill in the blank? Does something sort of immediately come to mind? Let's face it, this is a club, if you like.

We have just got through singing our club songs. We turn around. We greet club members.

We have just taken the club fees. And we go to this club on a regular basis. But can you define it? If you saw me, let's say I lived here in Victoria, and some non-spiritual night, like a Tuesday night, and you saw me going up some steps into a building, and maybe three or four weeks in a row, you happened to catch me going up.

And you say to me, David, I've been downtown in Victoria the last few weeks, and was that you going up into that room up there? And I say, yeah. You say, well, what is that? I say, well, it's a club. Well, what sort of club is it? Well, I've never really thought much about it.

My parents started taking me when I was a little kid. I know a lot of club members. I mean, it's a great place.

You should come sometime. We have some great club dinners, and there's some wonderful people. We sing club songs.

It's just so great. Yeah, but what's the purpose of it? I've never really given it much thought. It's part of my routine.

I grew up going on Tuesday night. My grandparents used to take my parents, and that's the way it happens, isn't it? We go. It's part of our religious routine, if you like.

But we need to understand God has a purpose. Let me give you some scriptures here. Acts 13, verse 36, my favorite scripture.

It's got my name in it. But David served the purpose of God in his generation, and afterwards, he slept or he died. In other words, David understood that God was doing something, and he brought himself, if you like, into alignment with the will and the purpose of God.

He said, God, how can I get involved in what you're involved in? And so he served the purpose of God. You and I have a responsibility to serve the purpose of God in our generation. We're not responsible for the past generation because we didn't exist.

We're not responsible for the next generation apart from being good parents and pointing our children in a godly direction, but we are responsible for our generation. We have an invitation in the word of God to be laborers together with him. In other words, God is laboring.

God has got a purpose. He's doing something, and we have the privilege of working with him to accomplish that particular goal. Romans 8, 28, we all know that verse.

All things work together for good. To those that love God, to those that are called according to his purpose. 2 Timothy 1 and verse 9, it says, he has saved us and called us, not according to our own works, but according to his purpose.

If I said to you how many are saved here, chances are 99% of you would put up your hand. How many of you are called? Fine, shouldn't hesitate. He has saved us and called us.

If you're saved, you're called. We need to understand that. If you're saved, you're called.

He saved us and called us according to his purpose. Hebrews 6 and verse 17 talks about the unchangeableness of God's purpose. In other words, God's purpose has never changed.

The only reason he changes things is because we don't live forever. So every generation, he has to raise up somebody to work in that generation. That's why David served the purpose of God in his generation.

Somebody said the purpose of God never changes, but the instruments do. In other words, the instruments may fail. God may put a call on your life.

You are disobedient to that call. And so he still wants his purpose to change. His purpose fulfilled and so he calls somebody else, really, to take your place.

Or you die and God has to raise up a replacement. Or you're using a, let's say my purpose for the next number of months is to build myself a house and I will use a variety of instruments. Let's say I'm using a hammer.

The shaft of that hammer breaks. I have to discard that instrument and get a replacement. God does the same thing because of disobedience, because of sin or whatever it is.

But his purpose remains the same. My purpose is still to build a house even though I may use a variety of instruments to accomplish it. So we have many, many scriptures.

Those are just a few of the fact that God has a purpose. God is working towards a goal. And the problem with most of us is we get so involved in the subject matter of Christianity, we lose sight of the object.

Let me give you an illustration. Here is a friend of mine. His name is Dr. John.

Dr. John is the world's leading authority on medicine. Dr. John has got 25 PhDs. Dr. John knows every facet of medicine.

I mean, you can ask him about any facet and he can tell you about the eyes, the ears, you know, the heart, the circulatory system. I mean, the brain and so on and so forth. He is an expert.

And then you happen to have a moment to talk to him and you say to him, Dr. John, how many open heart surgeries have you actually performed? And he says, I've never done one. Oh, well, I understand you know all about reproductive system and so on. How many babies have you delivered? Well, I've actually never delivered a baby.

How many appendix have you taken out? You know, I've never actually taken an appendix out. How many broken bones have you fixed or set? You know, I've never put a cast on anybody. By this time, you're thinking, hmm, you know, I hate to embarrass you, but have you ever put on a Band-Aid? You know what, I never have.

You see, he's become so engrossed in the subject matter, he's lost sight of the object. A lot of Christians like that. They can tell you, you know, who the Antichrist is and how many kids he's gonna have.

You know, they can tell you the significance of a robe on Aaron, you know, the tassel on Aaron's robe, and they've got notebooks full of, and then you say, have you ever given a prophetic word? No. Have you ever taught Sunday school? No. Have you ever gone on a missions trip? No.

Ever passed out a tract? No. In other words, we get so engrossed in the subject matter, we lose sight of the object. God has an objective.

He's got a purpose. Now, God's purpose originally, of course, was to have a vast family of sons and daughters, all in his likeness, all in his image. When he created man, he created man in the image of God, and he said, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with my image.

Fill the earth with my nature, my glory. The glory of God is the nature of God. It's the character of God.

And so he said, you know, get busy because I want the whole earth to be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, basically. But man sinned and came short of the glory of God. He did not measure up to the likeness and the image that God intended man to have.

But God was still intent on having a people. And so he was looking for somebody that would partnership with him, because he is a father, and he wanted every prodigal that went astray to come back. And he said, I need somebody that will go into the highways and hedges and so on, and somebody that will share my burden for my children that have gone astray, that have been deceived and held in bondage by the enemy, and so on and so forth.

And so he reaches into the life of a man by the name of Abraham. And we're gonna sort of pick it up here. If you have your Bible, in Genesis chapter 12.

And the Lord said to Abram, verse one, yep. That fits in with my message. Let your light so shine.

But not right now, okay, not right now. All right, Genesis chapter 12. And the Lord said to Abram, go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

And I will make you a great nation. And I'll bless you, and I'll make your name great. And you shall be a blessing, and I will bless the one that blesses you, and the one that curses you, I will curse.

And then this next little phrase, and in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Now God repeats that three times to Abraham. For sake of time tonight, we won't go to every scripture, but God repeats that same promise three separate times.

When God does something like that, obviously he is intent on getting the message through to Abraham. Abraham, through your seed, through your seed, through your seed, all the nations, all the families of the earth are gonna be blessed. Now Abraham had a son by the name of Jacob, and God comes to Jacob, and he gives the very same promise.

He says, because your father was obedient to me, therefore, my purpose can go forth, and then through you, all the nations, or through your seed, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed. And then of course, Jacob had a son by the name of Isaac. God comes to Isaac, and he gives the very same promise.

Isaac, through your seed, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed. Now what does that involve? What does that really mean? God wants us to be blessed. Does that mean he wants us all to drive gold-plated Cadillacs or whatever? We use the word blessing in a variety of ways, don't we? Somebody sneezes, somebody turns around and say, God bless you.

Pastor can't remember your name on the way out, God bless you, you know, on the tricks of the trade. So we use the word blessing in a variety of ways. But in Galatians chapter three, Paul explains exactly what the Lord was saying here to Abraham and Isaac and to Jacob.

And notice what he says, Galatians three, and verse eight, and the scriptures, or the scripture of foreseeing. In other words, God was looking ahead, foreseeing that God would justify, or if you like, save the Gentiles by faith, preach the gospel to Abraham, saying, all nations shall be blessed in you. In other words, way back there at the beginning, back in Genesis, God had a burden, a burden for all the nations of the earth to be saved, to be born again, to be justified.

And so way back in the Old Testament, he is preaching the gospel. You say, I thought the gospel came in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. No, the good news was even back then.

He was foreseeing something. He was proclaiming, I want all the nations of the earth to be blessed. Now go to the book of Acts for a moment, and let's see, again, this word blessing explained because in the mouth of two or three witnesses.

And so Paul, or not Paul, but Acts, it says this. The end of chapter three, verse 26. For you first, God raised up his servant, speaking of Jesus, and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.

In other words, the ultimate blessing is the blessing of salvation, the blessing of repentance, the blessing of responding to the good news. He sent him to bless you by turning you from your wicked ways. And so God was preaching way back there to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through you, through you, through you, through your seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

Now what was he doing? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are called in the Bible the fathers of all those that believe. They are referred to repeatedly as the fathers. Abraham is referred to as the father, not the

ultimate father.

That's reserved for God, obviously. But Abraham is the father of all those that believe. But the fathers, when it's plural, refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Who were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? They were the original patriarchs. They were the founders, if you like, of the nation of Israel. In other words, God is about to conceive a people.

And in the DNA of that people group, he is putting his purpose through your seed, through your seed, through your seed. I want all the nations of the earth to be blessed. In other words, God was raising up a people that would partnership with him in the spread of the gospel, in reaching the nations of the earth.

That's what it was all about. Now, let me give you a little, let me read you something here, because I think this is, I don't like reading long portions of statements. One disadvantage is about holding a microphone.

Okay, this is a statement by G. Campbell Morgan, some of you may know that name. And this is how he summarizes the nation of Israel, the purpose behind God raising up the nation of Israel. He says, it cannot be too often emphasized that it was not the election of a nation from among others in order that God might lavish his love upon them while he abandoned the other nations.

The purpose of God was far wider than that of the creation of this nation. It was the creation of a testimony through this nation for the sake of the other nations. The divine intention or the divine purpose was for a people who under his divine government should reveal to the world the breadth and the beauty and the goodness of that government.

A people who gathered in their national life about his throne and his altar, obeying his commands and worshiping him should reveal to outside nations the meaning of the kingdom of God. And then he summarizes it this way, it was not the selection of a pet but the creation of a pattern. It was not the selection of a pet.

There's a lot of misunderstanding of people that think, you know, if you represent all the nations of the earth and I'm God and Caleb here represents Israel, that Israel is my little pet and the rest of you are all sort of second rate. No, I was establishing a pattern, I was establishing a light so that you could measure up to everything that he has. And so God, you know, you ladies, if you have a pattern, don't do it too much anymore, but you know, you could make a zillion dresses out of one pattern.

Guys, we call it a jig. You know, if you work in a woodshop or something, you've got some sort of a jig. You can make a thousand, whatever they are.

You know, if you've got a router and so on, you've got a pattern. Israel was to be a pattern for all the rest of the nations. They were to look at Israel and say, we want what you've got.

You've got something special. Now, there were people all the way through Israel's history that understood God's purpose. The tragedy was the bulk of the children of Israel failed to measure up to what God intended them to do.

But I want you, first of all, to look at some scriptures here and we'll look at a couple of individuals, two or three, that had an understanding. David, of course, is one of them. Psalm 67, little short psalm here.

Verse one, God be gracious to us and bless us. Cause your face to shine upon us. Now, if we put a period there, that sounds very self-serving.

God bless me. I want you to smile upon me. I want your divine approval.

But then he goes on, verse two, through that, thy way may be known on the earth. Thy salvation among all nations. Let the people praise thee.

Let the people praise thee, O God. Let all the nations be glad and sing for joy. And then he goes on in verse six, the earth has yielded its produce.

In other words, this is an agricultural country. They weren't belching out factories everywhere and turning out Toyotas and Hondas and so on. They were farming.

And God promised them that he would bless them and that they would have plenty. And he would give them rain in their season and so on. So what David is saying here, the earth has yielded its produce.

We've got another bumper year now. God, our God, has blessed us. God blesses us that all the ends of the earth may fear him.

In other words, God is setting us up as an appetizer, if you like, so that the nations will look on, and here's the way it was supposed to work. Here was this little tiny nation, and yet every time they went to war, this is all contingent now upon their obedience. But every time they went to war, even though they were outgunned, they would win the battle.

And people would marvel and say, what is it about you people? You know, another thing is they didn't get the same diseases that all the other nations got. They didn't have the same divorce rate. They didn't have the same rebellion with their children.

As if you had a rebellious child, you took him to the gates of the city and rocked him to sleep. Just making sure you're awake here. And so the nations would look on and say, what is it about you people? You're blessed.

I mean, you know, you don't have the same problems that we have. You know, you don't have the same divorce rate. You don't have the same rebellion.

Your crops have never seemed to fail. You don't get the diseases that we get. You know, every time you go to war, you seem to win, blah, blah, blah, you know.

And Israel was supposed to say, we are no different than you are, but our God is different than your God, you know. And then the nations were supposed to say, well, can your God be our God? I mean, what do we have to do to have all of these blessings? Well, you've got to turn from idolatry, turn from your God, because your gods really are not real gods. You make them with your own hands anyway.

And our God is the creator of heaven and earth. And you, if you're willing to turn from your wicked ways, you can come. You mean that's all there is to it? Well, not exactly.

Men have got to be circumcised, and women get in free. That was it. I mean, that was the way it's supposed to work.

Now let's look at some other scriptures. Trying to keep you awake here tonight. Isaiah 42.

Isaiah 42. Isaiah, obviously the prophets all understood the mind of God and the purpose of God. Verse six.

The Lord said, I've called you in righteousness. I'll hold you by the hand, watch over you. I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring prisoners from the dungeon, those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

I am the Lord, that is my name. I will not give my glory to anyone. I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images.

In other words, they were to be witnesses to the nations, bring, remove the blindness, bring the captives out of captivity, and so on. Let me go over to chapter 49 for a moment. Verse four, or verse three.

And he said to me, you are my servant Israel. Now what does a servant do? A servant obviously is there to fulfill his master's desire, fulfill his master's purpose. So God says, Israel, you are simply my servant in whom I will show my glory.

My intention is that through you, I will express my life, my glory, my nature, my character, and so on. Verse six, he says, it's a too small a thing that you should be my servant. To raise up the tribes of Jacob, to restore the preserved ones of Israel.

I will also make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. So God says, you are my servant, and the job that I have, the task that I have, the purpose I have is that my salvation might reach to the ends of the earth. But I need your help.

You are supposed to be the one that helps me in this. Let's go to 2 Chronicles. Again, I'm just touching on a few individuals that understood, again, the mind of God during this particular season.

This is an exciting one, at least it is to me. It's Solomon. It is the opening day of the temple, and Solomon has got his arms spread out, and he is praying a prayer of dedication for the house of God.

But I want you to see what is also in the mind of Solomon. This is a time when Solomon, in a way, has reached the pinnacle of his revelation, understanding, and so on. And verse 32, let's pick it up there.

Also, notice in the middle of his prayer, oh, sorry, 2 Chronicles 6, and verse 32. Also concerning the foreigner, we could say also concerning the unsaved, who is not from thy people Israel. We could say also concerning the unsaved, who are not a part of the body of Christ, if we were to put it in a New Testament context.

When he comes, or when they come, from a far country, for your great namesake, and your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm, when he comes and he prays towards this house. In other words, Solomon is anticipating that God is gonna manifest himself, his glory, in this house. And God's right hand, God's mighty arm, God's outstretched arm, is going to be revealed, and people are gonna hear about it in distant countries, and they're gonna come to this house.

Verse 33, he says, "Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, "and do according to all that the foreigner calls to thee, "in order that all the people of the earth "may know thy name." Now, Solomon is not just interested in his own people, he is interested in the nations of the earth. And he says, God, what

I'm anticipating here is that this beautiful temple that we've built, your glory will come in, you will be manifest, it will be noised abroad, if I can use a New Testament expression, it will be noised abroad that you are in the house, that Jesus is in the house. And people are gonna hear about it from different countries.

Let me paint this scenario. Here is a couple, maybe 100 miles away. They have a little baby.

That baby is born with some sort of maladies, deficiencies, or deformities, and they go like any parents, they're concerned, they go to their little grotto at the end of the garden, they bring their bowl of rice or whatever, and they cry out to their God, heal my baby, heal our baby, heal our child. Nothing happens, a week goes by, two weeks go by, so then they go morning and evening, they bring bigger offerings, hoping that somehow they can appease their God, and somehow God will help this poor mother and father with this child. Nothing happens.

And one day, somebody comes to town, and they say, have you heard about the God of Israel? They say, well, what God is their God? I mean, we've got gods too. Oh no, they claim their God is the God of all gods. They claim that their God is the God that made everything, the heavens and the earth.

In fact, they say that their God has a challenge, and it's this, there is nothing too hard for me. That's what they say their God claims. They also say that their God says, call unto me, and I'll answer you.

Not only that, but they say that their God dwells in a temple, and it is a temple for all nations, a house of prayer for all nations. Anybody can pray to their God. The guy turns to his wife, honey, what if that's true? You know, our God hasn't done anything, we've been praying for six months.

And so they pack up their bags, and they go. And they get into the house of God, and they begin to pray. He says that when the foreigner comes and he prays, answer him.

And so they say, God, if you really are the God you claim to be, if you really are the God that created the heavens and the earth, if you really do mean it when you say there is nothing too hard for me, heal our baby. And all of a sudden, that baby's head turns for the first time, he can hear, and baby, the eyes begin to track, and whatever else. And suddenly they see God manifest his presence.

You think when they get back to their village, they go to the end of the garden and give thanks? No, they're gonna go around that village and say, listen, we've been fooled, you know. The real God, look, you remember the little Johnny, look at him now, you know. I mean, this is the revelation that Solomon had concerning the house of God.

God, you are gonna come in here, and your arm is gonna be laid bare. Your mighty name, your outstretched arm, and so on. And when that happens, answer, you know.

Now, the tragedy is, of course, as we know, that the old covenant was far greater than the new. The latter house will not be nearly as good as the former house. Okay, we've got a long way to go, don't we? That was the old covenant.

How much more, the new? Okay, let me give you a couple more. The book of Jonah, of course, in the Old Testament is the, well, it's the missionary book of the Bible. And I believe it was a prophetic sign to the nation of Israel.

It is a true story. I know people put it down as a myth and so on. It really did happen.

But it was also prophetic in the sense that God was saying, every Israelite is supposed to be a Jonah. In other words, every Israelite is supposed to have a Nineveh of some sort. All of you are called to go and reach the nation, so to speak.

You have a mandate that through you, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And so Jonah is a prototype, if you like, a microcosm, if you like, of what the entire nation should be like. And Israel failed, just like Jonah failed initially, and God had to get his attention by bringing him into captivity.

Isn't that right? And after three days of being in the belly of whatever it was, a whale or something, Brother Andrew calls it three days on a foam blubber mattress. But anyway, here he is in the belly of this thing, and all of a sudden, he spewed out, and he goes, and we have the greatest revival in the Bible, even greater than the day of Pentecost. An entire city, 100 plus thousand people turned to God.

Now, what is interesting, if you turn to the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 51, I think it is, it is verse 34. God has got the ability to swallow not only an individual, he can create a monster big enough to swallow an entire nation. Now, notice what happens, verse 34.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has devoured me. He has crushed me. He has set me down like an empty vessel.

He has swallowed me like a monster. He has filled his stomach with my delicacies. He has washed me away.

In other words, God said, listen, just as I can discipline one man because of his sin and his disobedience, I can do that to a nation. Israel was constantly going into idolatry, constantly blowing and missing the purpose of God, time after time after time. Prophet after prophet came, trying to get them to quit their idolatry, trying to get them back on track like Isaiah.

Is it too small a thing that I've raised you up to be a deliverer? You know, is it too small a thing? Are you despising that? You're my servant, Israel. I want to demonstrate my glory. I don't want to demonstrate your glory.

I just want you for myself, basically. And then when they wanted to, they go off into idolatry and so on. So God has a way of disciplining a nation just as he can discipline a man.

And so here he brings Babylon along. Babylon opens his mouth, so to speak, and gulp. The nation of Israel goes down into the belly of Babylon.

Not for three days, but for what? 70 years. Verse 44, and I will punish Baal in Babylon, and I will make what he has swallowed come out of his mouth. Just the same way God can tickle the belly of a whale, God can tickle the belly of Babylon.

And out spewed the nation of Israel. Now, they never quite fulfilled their mandate, but they never went back into idolatry after that, that we know of. At least it was part of the discipline that worked.

And so we have these individuals, again, all the way through Israel's history, the prophets especially, that understood what God wanted to do. That, listen, we are not just here by chance. God raised us up as a nation to reach the nations of the earth.

We have a purpose to fulfill. And many of them never, ever fulfilled it. Let's go now to Matthew 21.

Let me give you the setting for this in verse 23. And when he, speaking of Jesus, had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, by what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority? So Jesus comes into the temple. We need to understand the temple, of course, was, you know, that was the core of Israel's life.

I mean, that was the Supreme Court, that was the Senate, the Congress, you know, Parliament or whatever, all sort of rolled into one. This is the place. And not only that, but in the temple, we have the chief priests, not a bunch of, you know, priests in training, but the chief priests and the elders of the people.

In other words, the spiritual hierarchy, leadership of Israel is here in the temple. Jesus walks in. And he tells them a story, a parable, verse 33.

Listen to this story or listen to another parable. There was a landowner, speaking of God, who planted a vineyard, speaking of Israel, and he put a wall around it and he dug a wine press in it and he built a tower and he rented it out to vine growers and he went on a journey. Now, Jesus is quoting directly from Isaiah chapter five.

Psalms 80 and verse eight says that God went into Egypt and he removed a vine from Egypt and he transplanted that vine in the promised land. And then he built a wall round about Israel, meaning obviously not a literal wall, but he protected his own. Not only that, but he built a tower.

He watched over his people. But he also built a wine press because he was looking for a harvest. He was looking for fruitfulness.

You don't make cricket bats out of vines. Not the best, you know. But you do get wine or you do get grapes.

And so it says here, he rented it out to vine growers, that means Israel, and he went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine growers to receive his produce. So the whole purpose of this vineyard was to bring forth vintage, was to be fruitful.

And God in his patience waits until it's harvest time. He's not demanding his pound of flesh, so to speak, before a particular time. He waits until the harvest time.

He gives them time. Isaiah said he did everything he could. He removed the stones and so on and so forth so that there was nothing to impede the success of that vineyard.

You can read all the details in Isaiah 5. And so the harvest time comes and he sent his slaves to receive the produce. And the vine growers took the slaves. They beat one, killed another, stoned a third.

Again, he sent another group, larger than the first, and they did the same to them. Now what does that mean? The slaves here are the prophets. God sent prophet after prophet after prophet to Israel to try and get them on track, to denounce idolatry, to denounce sin, to get them back restored to God's purpose.

But they didn't wanna hear it, and so every prophet they came across, they stoned him to death. And God sent another one. They stoned that one.

God sent another. They stoned that. And finally, it says he sends another group, larger than the first.

Talk about God's incredible patience with his people, year after year after year after year after year after year after year. Finally, it says, I'll send my son, verse 37. But afterwards, he sent his son to them, saying, they'll respect my son.

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir. Come, let us kill him. Seize his inheritance.

They took him, they threw him out of the vineyard, and they killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers? And they said to him, he'll bring those wretches to a wretched end. In other words, they're so caught up in the story now, Jesus, the master storyteller, they forget that he's talking about them momentarily, and they say, boy, if that was my vineyard, I wouldn't be nearly that patient.

If that was my vineyard, I'd have ripped it out of those people's hands long ago, and I would give it to somebody so I eventually get some fruit. And so they said, he'll bring those wretches to a wretched end and will rent out the vineyard to other vine growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper season. Verse 43, Jesus said, therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation, notice, producing the fruit of it.

Israel, time out. My patience has run out. You have not responded.

I've sent prophet after prophet after prophet. I've even sent another group of prophets even larger than the first. And finally, I sent my son.

And you still refuse to get involved. I'm going to find the people that will produce the fruit. You see, the heart of God, I've got to find somebody that will partnership with me.

I've got to find somebody that will share the vision that I have, that all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Now, Romans chapter 15. One of the reasons that Jesus came, among others, and there were a number of reasons that Jesus came.

Obviously, the ultimate reason he came was to give his life and ransom for many. But he also came that those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage would be set free. For this reason was the Son of God manifest and he might destroy the works of the devil.

There's a number of reasons. But here's another reason in Romans 15. And verse, where am I? Verse eight.

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers. Just that little phrase that Christ has come to confirm the promises given to the fathers. One of the things that Jesus did as he said there, I'll finally, I'll send my son.

In other words, Jesus came to remind the Jew of one last chance and to confirm, to revalidate. Listen, I have not forgotten Israel. I've got a purpose.

I've got a purpose for you, Israel. I haven't forgotten. I'm gonna send my son.

I've sent prophet after prophet after prophet. But I want to validate this is still my burden. And so he sends his son.

Now notice what it goes on to say. Verse eight. To confirm the promises given to the fathers and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy as it is written.

Therefore, I'll give praise to thee among the Gentiles. I'll also sing to thy name. Again, he says, rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.

And again, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles. Isaiah says, there shall come the root of Jesse. He will arise, he will rule over the Gentiles.

In him, the Gentiles. It's all about the Gentiles. In other words, not just Gentiles, but the unsaved.

So the Gentiles can rejoice. So the unsaved, it's about the unsaved, the unsaved, the unsaved. You can substitute the word Gentiles at the unsaved.

Jesus came because he had this burden. And he wants the unsaved to be saying for the Gentiles to trust, for the Gentiles to rejoice, and so on. Now, let's go to, let me see, let's go to the book of Galatians again.

Galatians chapter three. Verse 16. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.

He does not say, and to seeds, as referring to many, but rather to one. And to your seed, that is Christ. So Paul now gives us insight into this repeated message to Abraham three times, Isaac to Jacob.

Through your seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Through your seed, through your seed, through your seed. Paul says he does not say through your seeds, but through your seed, and that seed is Christ.

And some of you are going, whew, thank God for that. Well, buckle your seatbelt. Verse 26, Galatians three.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. All of you who are baptized in Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There's neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female.

You are all one in Christ. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed. Heirs according to the promise.

If you belong to Christ, you're Abraham's seed. And if you're Abraham's seed, you inherit the promise. Because when somebody dies, you get their inheritance, right? Now we have a branch of Christendom, prosperity crowd, if you like, that have got this down pat, at least the first part of the Abrahamic blessing.

I'm of the seed of Abraham, and his blessings rest on me. And just as God made Abraham a rich man and so on and so forth, God is gonna bless me. And I don't dispute that, and I'm not saying that's wrong, but you cannot divide up the inheritance.

In other words, let's say my father was a nice rich guy, Steve Jobs, he had a few pennies. And Steve's on his deathbed, my brother and I are there, and he sighs his last, and I say to the lawyer, got the will? He said, yes, sir. Would you read it, please? He find out that my dad is worth, you know, 40 million, he was in the billions, I think.

But anyway, \$40 million, let's say. And then the lawyer says, but he made a couple of bad investments here a few years ago. He put three million into Enron, you know, he did.

So there's actually, there's some indebtedness that needs to be paid off. There's about, in fact, there's about 10 million that needs to be paid off, and that leaves, you know, another, whatever, 20 million. And I say to the lawyer, that's fine.

I'm the oldest son, give me the 20 million, give my brother the indebtedness. You can't do that. It'd be nice if you could.

But what we do with the promise of Abraham is, make me rich, bless me, bless me, bless me, because you promised you would, but that's it. No, the Bible says, and through you, there is a mandate, through you, all the nations of the earth have to be blessed. If I inherit the blessing of Abraham, I inherit a responsibility.

Not just blessing, a responsibility. And it is my responsibility to do that. Now, let's go to the Gospel of Luke for a moment.

I know some of you are saying my jigsaw's getting bigger by the minute. We're gonna tie it all together here in a little while, at least. Hopefully.

Luke chapter 24. Well, you know, keep your finger there. Let me backtrack for a moment.

First of all, in 1 Peter, I'll do it this way. 1 Peter chapter two, and verse four. And coming to him, as to living stones rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God.

You also, as living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Verse nine, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. Now, that is a quote directly from the Old Testament concerning the nation of Israel.

But God is now applying it to the Gentiles. You now are a chosen race. You now are a royal priesthood.

You now are a holy nation. Remember, God says, I'm gonna raise up a nation that will produce the fruit of it. I'm gonna raise up a nation.

Now it says who that nation is. A people for God's own possession. The vineyard was God's.

We are God's. You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

And then that you may proclaim the excellences or the goodness of him that called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. For you were once not a people, but now you are the people of God. You had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In other words, we have a mandate, and that is we are to proclaim the goodness of God. Just as Israel was supposed to say, listen, we were in bondage. We were in captivity in Egypt.

There was no way. We were slaves. We had no control over our situation.

It was only by the blood of the Lamb that we were set free. And we're supposed to say the same thing. Listen, I was a druggie.

I was this, I was that. But the grace of God. And I want you to know that what God did for me, he can do.

We are to proclaim the goodness, the excellences. We are a spiritual temple now. And we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

I'll get to that in a little moment. Let's also go to Acts chapter 13 for a minute. And verse 44, the next Sabbath, nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God.

But when the Jews saw the crowd, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and they were blaspheming. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first. He's addressing the Jews.

But since you repudiated it or rejected it and judge yourself unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For thus the Lord has commanded us. I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Now, I want you to see this. Paul is addressing his own people. And he said, we are going to turn to the Gentiles.

You obviously don't want to hear the message. You've rejected the message that we're bringing. Because God concentrated, first of all, on Israel when he came, Jesus did.

And there's some strange understanding, but he says, I'm not sent to the dogs and the Gentiles and so on. Initially, I've come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I want to give you one more chance.

And so he concentrated his message. And then after Pentecost, of course, we've got Paul who became an apostle to the Gentiles. But he's addressing the Jews now and he says, you guys obviously don't want the message.

You're rejecting it, this message of salvation. Notice what he says. You judge yourself unworthy of eternal life.

Of eternal life. You don't want to be born again, in other words. You don't want that.

And we are going to turn to the Gentiles, Barnabas and I. We are turning to Gentiles because God has commanded us, not just Barnabas and I, us, but God has commanded us as Jews to go to the Gentiles. But even if you don't go, we're going to go anyway. It doesn't let me off the hook.

If you won't go, we're going to go. So let's read it that way. Behold, we are turning to the Gentiles for thus the Lord has commanded us, meaning the collective nation of Israel.

I have placed you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the ends of the earth. When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing, glorifying the word of God, and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed, and the word of the Lord was spreading through the whole region. So we see here how there were always Jews, if you like, that understood God's mandate.

Paul understood, as a Jew, I have a calling. My calling is to reach the nations of the earth. And just because you aren't going to do it, I have to do it anyway.

And so we've decided we're going to fulfill the mission with or without you. You obviously don't want to be saved, you don't want to get it with the program, but we do. Now, let's go back to Luke for a moment.

And what we're going to look at here now is, if I were to tell you, this is the most important portion of scripture anywhere in the word of God. And I mean that. So pay attention, because if you don't get anything else tonight, this is a true revelation.

This is after the resurrection, Jesus gathers one last time with his disciples, the end of Luke's gospel, Luke chapter 24, and verse 44, and he said to them, these are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things that are written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Now, there's no New Testament right now. And so Jesus is saying, listen, everything in the Old Testament is about me.

The Bible says in the volume of the book, it is written of me, Jesus said. And so he says, the law of Moses, that's the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The prophets, that's the bulk of the rest of the Bible, apart from the Psalms.

And when we talk about the Psalms, we're talking about Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, sort of the poetic books. Verse 45, and then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. Now, this is where it gets exciting, because here you have the world's greatest teacher, Barnabas.

He is the word that became flesh. This is the Son of God. There's no bias here.

And he is about to open their minds to understand the entire Bible up to this time. There's no New Testament. I'm gonna give you revelation understanding.

Now, I'm sure how many of you have ever read a Reader's Digest here? In every Reader's Digest, there is a condensed book. And what they do, they go to the New York Times bestselling list, they find a book that's Bill O'Reilly's whatever, and they'll take a four or 500-page book, and they'll whittle it down to maybe 10 pages. And you have a 400-page book that is summarized in 10 pages.

In other words, they spit out all the bones, and they give you the gist of the story. Jesus now is the master condenser. He is gonna take a 1,200-page book, thereabouts, depending what your Bible is, and he's gonna reduce it down to two verses.

That's why I say, this is the most important portion of Scripture, because it gives the true essence of the entire Bible. So, with that in mind, he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he said to them, thus it is written. In other words, this is what it's all about.

Verse 46, that the Christ, or if you like, the seed, should suffer, rise again from the dead the third day, and the repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem. That is not my summary of the Bible. That is the word himself.

When you spit out all the bones, you're left with the very heart of God. It's about providing salvation to the nations. And the only way they can be saved is if there is a sacrifice.

And he said, I am the seed that is gonna die, but I'm gonna be raised again, and then the gospel is gonna be proclaimed to all nations beginning right now in Jerusalem. Amazing. Oh, I thought it was all about the tabernacle.

I thought it was all about Moses' tabernacle. I thought it was all about the feast. I thought it was all about, you know.

Spit out all the bones. Again, this is not a biased opinion. This is not somebody saying, well, it's a missions conference, I need to, you know, no.

And then he says this, and you are gonna do the job. You are the witnesses. You see, just when he formed the nation of Israel, he put in the spiritual DNA of that nation, his purpose.

Now he has got 11 men. One has forsaken him, obviously. And he is now leaving them, but he's putting in the DNA of this little core group, his purpose.

I want you, through your seed, so to speak, all the nations of the earth are gonna be raised. I want you to get this. I'm leaving, but I'm leaving you with a job.

I'm leaving you with a task. And then he says, well, listen, you can't do it alone. So hang around until the day of Pentecost.

Because you can't do it without the power that I'm gonna give you. And when you receive power, you shall be the witnesses. In Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, are the most part of you.

That's what this club is all about. That's the whole purpose for this club. In fact, in one sense, it's the only purpose for this club.

Now you'll notice that in Peter it says, we are being built together into a temple to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Spiritual sacrifices. Thank God you don't have to come Sunday morning bringing a heifer or bringing a goat or bringing a, you know, come before the priest and there'll be blood everywhere.

And, you know, thank God all of that's over. But now we offer another kind of sacrifice. And the Bible has, in the New Testament, different sacrifices.

The one that we are most familiar with is the sacrifice of praise, right? And every meeting we offer God a sacrifice of praise, whether it's acceptable or not, that's up to Him. Because the Bible says the priest's job was to inspect every single sacrifice. And if it had the slightest blemish, it was rejected.

The slightest blemish, it was rejected. And there is a greater priest. That's why the psalmist says, let the words of my mouth, meditation of my heart, be acceptable.

Be acceptable. And so we have to give God the very best, the very, very, very, very, very best. So that's one sacrifice.

Before you can really give that sacrifice, there's a sacrifice that should precede it. Romans 12, verse one, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, you present your body, a living sacrifice. Because God can't do anything without a body, a body thou hast prepared me.

So we have to present our body, a living sacrifice. The Bible also talks about a sacrifice of giving. Paul says I receive from Epaphroditus the gift that you send, a sacrifice that is well pleasing to God.

In other words, when we give monetarily, our tithes, our offerings, those are a sacrifice, New Testament sacrifice. Paul talks about the sacrifice of your faith. And now I'm gonna show you the rarest sacrifice in

the New Testament.

Turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 15, this is the rarest sacrifice. And it is a tragedy that it is, but it is.

Verse 15, I have written to you very briefly, this is Paul, on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace of God that was given to me from God, to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Ministering as a priest. William Barclay said, this is the only reference, I believe, in the New Testament where Paul is alluding to an Old Testament type priest.

So Paul says, my calling by the grace of God, I've been called as a minister, or as a priest, the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. When is the last time you offered a Gentile? My Bible tells me when you do, all of heaven erupts in joy. All of heaven, over one sinner that repents.

It doesn't say that about our Sunday morning worship. I'm sure God gets some praise out of it. But the thing that excites heaven, and excites the throne of God, and the heart of God, is when one of those prodigals comes back.

And when you and I have the privilege of saying, God, here's my neighbor. I brought him to you today, I've been praying for him for months, or whatever, this is a person I work with, or whatever, Lord, here is a Gentile. Because that Gentile one day is gonna make up a choir that will go forever, and ever, and ever, worshiping, and praising, and magnifying God.

And we can add to that choir, we can add to the voices that are gonna say, worthy is the Lamb that was slain. And it is sadly the rarest sacrifice in the New Testament. We would rather give our money, we'd rather stand here for half an hour, raise our hands, and jump, and shout, and do all of those things.

But to go into the highways and hedges, we don't do it. And yet, that's what this club is all about. And we get so caught up, again, in the subject matter, we lose sight of the object.

We say, well, you haven't exactly put the puzzle together. Word is prayer for them. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Pray the Lord of the harvest, he sends forth labors. Pray for kings and rulers, because he would have all men to be saved. Ask of me, I'll give you the heathen for thine inheritance.

The uttermost part of the earth is thy possession. What about the gifts of the Spirit? Those are the tools of the trade. God gave them.

Jesus used them in the marketplace. Psyche has come down. Woman at the well, listen, you've had five husbands.

Oh wow, this guy knows something. I mean, these are the tools of trade. All these other pieces are sort of peripheral, if you like, but they all fit in for that overall purpose.

God is not willing that any should perish. And he says, I've called you to be laborers together with me. God has a purpose.

Let's close in prayer. Father, open our eyes to the need round about us. Father, this city, this nation, my own nation, America, other nations, Father, the longing of your heart is the reason why you so loved the world, you gave your only begotten Son.

Father, I pray for every individual here. Lord, they would catch that vision of reaching a lost and a dying world. Every club that is represented here, other clubs that have come tonight, but Lord, they too, again, would know what it is to say the reason that we exist, the reason we gather together is not just to build one another up, but it's to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house might be full, you said.

Lord, your house is not full. Your house is not full. Father, help us fill it.

Lord, we want to add to that eternal choir hundreds, thousands, millions that will sing worthy is the land. Lord, we'd have the joy again of offering the Gentiles as a sacrifice. God, give us that vision tonight.

Lord, we can't do it by ourselves. We thank you, Lord, for the baptism of the Spirit, not so we can just have a good time, but Lord, so we can go out and minister effectively. Have your way, we pray.

Let's just take a moment. Maybe some of you need to just write where you are. It begins, I believe, by saying, Lord, here am I, send me.

Present your body. Lord, I've got a fear of man. I don't know if I can do that.

I know I should, but then you need the filling of the Spirit. You need that Holy Ghost boldness. You need that power to witness.

Just take a moment, voice your prayer to Lord, not necessarily out loud. You can do that if you like, but at least make a prayer of surrender to me. We're not just here to be amused by some word.

There's souls, there's lives that are at stake. There are nations that are at stake. Our own nation, your own nation.

America's unraveling at a rate that we've never, ever seen before. And we need to rescue the perishing, as the old song says, and care for the dying. So, Lord, lay again a burden on us tonight.

Open our eyes to really, truly see the fields of white already unto harvest, that the laborers are few. We pray, Lord, send forth laborers, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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