

Purpose

by Jim Cymbala

Jesus' food is to do the will of God and to finish his work, and we must surrender ourselves to his will and do his work to experience joy, fulfillment, strength, and energy.

Duration: 23:09

Scripture: John 4:27

Topics: "Purpose"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of actively doing God's work rather than sitting idly by. He encourages listeners to pray and wait on the Lord to discover His plan for their lives. The speaker highlights Jesus as an example of someone who found fulfillment in doing the will of God and finishing His work. He reminds the audience that they are all messengers of Jesus Christ and have a role to play in building up His church and bringing others to Him.

Transcript

We're going to go to the passage in John 4. I know the verses are fairly familiar, let's look at them. Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him, Jesus, talking with a woman. But no one asked, what do you want? Or why are you talking with her? Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Could this be the Messiah? They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile, his disciples, who by the way had gone into town to get him some food, his disciples urged him, they had returned, Rabbi, eat something. What does rabbi mean everyone? Who knows? Teacher.

But he said to them, I have food to eat that you know nothing about. Then his disciples, still thinking in the natural, said to each other, could someone have brought him food? In other words, have we been preempted by someone else who loves him and respects him and they went out and got him food? My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Let's say that last verse together, verse 34.

My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. So this is the aftermath of the famous Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at a well in Samaria. And why the disciples were so surprised when they came back, when they saw him talking to them, was for two reasons.

Rabbis, teachers, didn't talk to women. And number two, she was a Samaritan. And Jews, generally speaking, so despised the Samaritans who were half-breeds to them and false religionists.

They had nothing to do with them. The rabbis taught that the Samaritans were so unclean that if you walked in Samaria, you had to shake the dust off from your feet. Any contact with them was ritually unclean.

So they said to him, you better get something to eat. You know, we brought you food. And he said, I have food that you don't know about.

So they thought, oh, somebody went. We were a little slow coming back. Somebody else went and got him food.

And now he ate that food. And that's what he means. And then Jesus laid down this sentence, which I want us to all contemplate.

He said, my food, what does food do? Food does two things. It brings fulfillment. Your stomach is empty and you're hungry.

When you have food, you feel satisfied. Food also brings strength. If you go without food for a long period of time, your body gets weak.

So food, which Jesus is talking about, but in a different way, brings fulfillment, satisfaction, and it brings strength. So he said to the disciples, I have a food that you don't know about. Instead of ingesting, which is what you do when you have food, you take food in.

Jesus laid out this principle. Just like the body needs food to be satisfied, fulfilled, and to have strength, the spiritual man needs food. And one of the types of food that he was sustained by was, he said, not to take in anything, but to do.

Action and expenditure of energy actually brought fulfillment and more strength for the journey. So we should unpack this carefully. My food, he said, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Let's go in reverse order and take the end part first. My food is to do, to accomplish, to act, to talk, to carry out my part of something that's called the work of God, to finish his work. Remember now, as Jesus was in the world, so are we.

He's the one who said in the book of John, in a later part, as the Father has sent me, so send I you. Jesus is saying here that it's important as we start this year, that each of us individually, not just the pastor, the other pastors, but that all of us take account that we are part, if we're Christians, of the work that God is doing in the earth. God is working in this earth.

God is building a kingdom for his Son, Jesus Christ. He's building the church. Jesus is building his church.

There's work going on. Has nothing to do with the NBA or the Major League Baseball teams. Has nothing to do with Wall Street.

Has nothing to do with the United Nations. Has nothing to do with what most people are preoccupied with in the entertainment industry. Right now, Jesus is building, God is working in the earth.

He's building. He's calling people out. He's saving them.

He's changing their lives. He's cleaning them up. He's putting marriages back together.

He's bringing children back to their parents and back to God. God is doing a huge thing in the earth. The angels are rejoicing when one person, as part of this work, repents of their sin and comes to God.

So Jesus saw himself, not as just born in Bethlehem and living in Nazareth and a carpenter's son. He saw himself as part of a huge enterprise. Remember when he was 12 years old and he disappeared in the temple at a time of one of the festivals, holy days? And they went back, Mary and Joseph, he was 12.

They would travel in those days in caravans to ward off thieves and robbers and highwaymen easier. And they thought he was among the large group and he wasn't. And now they're gone a whole day or so and they go, where's our son Jesus? He's not here.

They haul all the way back to Jerusalem and they find him in the temple asking questions and giving answers at 12 years old with the religious leaders. And he said, didn't you know? They said, son, where are you? We were frightened for you. We were scared to death.

Didn't you know I would have to be about my father's business? I would be learning, getting prepared for my father's business. You know, there's business on Wall Street, then there's other business, then there's God's business, God's work. And Jesus said, first of all, I am an aware and I am a part of the biggest work that is going on in the earth, the work of my father.

And for you and I to start this year right, what we have to do is say to God, God, I surrender to be a part, a soldier. I want to be a part of God's work in the earth. If you want to know this food that Jesus is talking about, if you want to know a new sustaining power in your life, you want to go to bed happy, listen, listen to me good on this one.

I know how to go to bed happy. I've gone to bed happy, oh, how many nights? And the happiest you can go to bed is when you're tired from doing God's work. You're part of God's enterprise.

What we have here is he realized that there's a work going on. May God open our eyes tonight so that we realize the real thing that's going on is what the world mocks and laughs at. Y'all, you're really holy rollers and religious fanatics, but God is working in the earth.

Like the song we sing, God is moving by his spirit, moving in all the earth right now in Africa, in Asia, God is saving people, building his church. That's where the real action is. Jesus was a part of that, but in a way that obviously none of us could ever be because he's the savior.

Notice what else he said. My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Jesus lived with a consciousness that he was sent on a mission.

This is something the Holy Spirit has to give us tonight as we wait before him and as we pray. You can't see yourself as a victim. You can't see yourself as an accident.

You can't see yourself as too uneducated to be used by God, too old, too young, too poor, too rich. Everyone has to get a new sense this year. God has his hand on my life.

When he saved me, he now has a purpose for me. I'm his messenger. Where am I going to go? Where Billy Graham and other well-known preachers could never go? Into parts of your life and neighborhood, your environment, your circle, your posse, your family.

You're their scent. If you go make a trip to Trinidad, you're not just going to Trinidad. You're going as a messenger of Jesus Christ to Trinidad, even if it's a vacation because he saw purpose in everything he did as he was thrust out.

So what we have to pray for tonight is this year no sitting around and no saying, what can I do? There's something we all can do. Maybe it's making a phone call to someone tomorrow and saying, you know what? The Holy Spirit laid you on my heart. I offered myself to God as a messenger to be sent and used, and I think he laid you on my heart.

May I pray for you? Oh, you can't believe I don't believe you're calling me because I was just ready to just give it all up. And then you're going to know God is alive. God is going to use us.

But whether it's to speak, to pray a prayer, to go on a mission trip, big or small, every day we're sent ones. We're people that are supposed to do something for the Lord, not just sit in church on Sunday and call that Christianity. My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

God's doing a work. Jesus said, I was sent, and remember what he said later? As the Father has sent me, so send I you. So one year in the 80s, I baptized a woman named Elsie Larrison on election night, new Christian.

Four years later, election night, four years later, presidential election, we laid hands on her and sent her off to Haiti where God called her to do what the Lord has called her to do. But whether you never leave New York or whether you go to the uttermost parts of the earth, we're all messengers of Jesus Christ. Are you with me on this here? We're all to do our work for the Lord, represent him, building up his church, bringing others in, but we all have a function.

Everybody here, you have a function. Lastly, my food is to do the will of him who sent me. We all have a function, but none of them are the same.

My function is what God called me to do years ago, and I'm trying to do it better this year. The Lord's going to help me to do it better, be a better minister, better pastor, better preacher. God called Todd Cruz to end up being the leader of movement.

God called Pastor Park to what he does. Now God got ahold of Bethsaida, and she's doing something now in something that I've never even heard of a ministry in a local church for against the sex trade. Some are in the prayer band.

Some sing in the choir. But there's a will of God for your life. In the general sense, you're a messenger.

In the general sense, you're part of doing the work of the Lord. But in a specific sense, you got to pray and wait on the Lord tonight. If you're not doing something, please submit yourself to God and say, God, I want to do something for you.

After what Christ did on the cross for us, we're going to do nothing for him while we're here on earth? That would be horrible. Are you with me? That would be horrible. We're going to sit around and wait till he

comes again, let the world pass us by.

But what to do? Ah, see, my meat is to do, my food is to do the will of him who sent me. So there's a plan for your life, and maybe no one's brought this to you like this, but you need to pray tonight and wait before the Lord and listen. Don't do all the talking.

Say, God, I'm going to wait. I'm going to listen. What's your plan for my life? Sometimes it changes.

Some of you in one season, God wants to bring you in now to a new season of doing something different for him. Some of you might be kind of reticent and backward and shy, and you're not really involved. You never even asked the Lord, like, why did you save me? What am I to do? You got to pray the prayer of Samuel in the Old Testament.

Lord, speak, Lord, your servant is listening. Tell me what you want me to do. This is why Jesus was so strong and happy, even though he was facing the cross, because he said, my food, where I get my fulfillment, where I get my strength, is not sitting around criticizing people, watching other people work themselves to the bone.

My food is to do the will of the person who sent me and to finish his work. For three and a half years, he ministered. He moved certain places.

Then he didn't go back there. Then he was led by God. And then when time came, he knew, uh-oh, ministry time is over.

Now it's sacrifice time. Ultimate, he gave his life for us. Even now the Bible says he has a purpose.

He sits at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us. He's praying for us. Is that amazing? In other words, brothers and sisters, it's the opposite of what the world says.

No, but the world even knows this. If you sit around and just hold a remote and watch TV for six hours, you're not going to have more energy. You'll be more tired than if you would have done something.

When does energy come? Actually, when you expend energy. And here Jesus is teaching us a spiritual principle. When you do for God what he's called you to do, when you speak, when you go, when you sacrifice, when you go on the mission trip, when you go to the prayer meeting, when you help the person get to church, when you follow up on a person that God has laid in your heart, when you do that, you don't have less strength.

You have more strength. You have more joy, more fulfillment. People walk around going, oh, I'm doing the work of the Lord.

That's sad. You have more joy. You feel the best.

Your body might be tired, but my happiest moments have been when I've been exhausted, just pouring myself out, trying to minister to people in the thing that God called me to do. Francis Asbury was a Methodist bishop. He became a mission, a circuit rider, preacher, then he became a bishop, famous, a leader within the Methodist church.

When? Oh, when all the best way you could travel was on a horse. The only way you could travel was on a horse. So he was in the formative days of our country, and John Wesley and others had sent him over to

spread the gospel as part of the Methodist movement.

So his life, which has greatly impressed me, I have two or three biographies about him. So Asbury, there's a school named after him in Kentucky, Francis Asbury College. So Asbury, like, was thrown off of horses seven times, almost drowned in rivers because, where was he going? He was going to some little hamlet where 40 people lived, but he had to get them the gospel.

You know, new settlers had come into whatever part of the country he was in. He didn't have big crowds. He was gone fighting the devil to bring people into the kingdom.

Well, he became like a legend in a good sense. So he said this, and I found it so true. If you want to hear something from Pastor Simba's heart through the lips of someone else, I know it's true.

I found it true. Before he died, when he was just a revered leader in the Methodist church, he stood before a couple hundred or whatever Methodist preachers, young guys ready to go, people ready to just do for Jesus. And he said to them, giving them instruction, caution, mistakes he made, and all that.

And he said, gentlemen, though the devil attacks you in a thousand ways, and though there's trouble on every hand, you will never be happier than when you're doing the work of the Lord. Can you receive that tonight from me? Listen, when you do the work of the Lord, when you find his will, if you wait tonight and pray, then you get with it. Remember, if you wait and get his will, he'll also give you the spirit to energize you, not expecting you to do it in your own strength.

And you'll feel the need of it when he shows you what to do. But when you go out to do God's will, and you want to serve others, you don't get attacked less, you get attacked more. Though the devil attacks you on a thousand sides, and there's trouble everywhere, think of the life that the apostle Paul lived.

Think of Christians now in certain parts of the world where it's illegal to be a Christian. Think what they go through, the risk, and all of that. The enemy will attack you, demons will attack you, there's trouble, difficulties, shortage of money, how are we going to pay the mortgage on the church? There's trouble everywhere, but you're never happier than when you found what God wants you to do, and you say, God, help me to do it.

That's not just for me, it's not just for the pastors, it's for everyone here today. So I want to challenge you, where are you now as the year begins? Where are you in terms of, are you part of the enterprise? Are you part of what God is doing in the earth? Are you a foot soldier? Are you operating in some gift, some ministry calling? Or are you sitting on the sidelines watching? Anybody can criticize. All my life growing up, I saw people who would sit on the sidelines in the back of a church and have an opinion about everything.

But what do they do? Zero. Anybody can criticize. Do I get a witness here? It's another thing to step out.

So some of you need to step out. Some of you, maybe the Lord is changing your work assignment. Some of you pastors, deacons, it's something new now God wants you to do.

But it's all my food. My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and finish His work. But now He's sending you to do something different.

And others of you, maybe, listen, you're a little tired, you're doing what God calls you to do. God's going to strengthen you today. Don't quit.

Don't quit. Keep doing it. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing this, that your work of the Lord is not in vain.

The crowns and the rewards don't go to the people who sit around and loiter in the center of town and criticize. The reward, the crowns go to those who Jesus says, well done, my good and faithful servant. Every eye closed.

It's nice and early. You can stay as long, short as you like. I want you to come back tomorrow, Thursday, Friday.

We're going to build. God's going to build on this. But we got to start the right way, humbling ourselves, surrendering ourselves.

If you're here today and the Lord has spoken to you, that you need to offer yourself in a new way to do His will, do His work. I know you're going through things. I know you want us to pray for you.

Listen, there's a time for everything under the sun. But my brothers and sisters, I love you. Don't some of you need to say, Lord, here am I, send me? Isn't there somebody here? Who knows what God could do through us if we just offer ourselves? And some of you maybe are feeling, wait a minute, I think there's some change here that God has for me.

There's something He wants me to do that I haven't grasped yet. I'm doing what's in front of me the best I know, but I feel there's something else now that's eluding me. I want to find His will and I want to do it.

And it starts by just saying, Jesus, here am I. Send me, use me, talk through me, pray through me, do something through me. But use me after saving me, giving your life for me. I want to be available to you.

If you feel something along those lines that I just said, get out of your seat and just come up and stand here in the front. I want to offer myself, Pastor, in a new way. I'm here tonight, but I know there's something God has for me to do.

I haven't yet captured it. I haven't gotten it yet. Or I am doing for the Lord, but I feel like there's a change now.

Something is on the horizon. I want to start the year waiting before Him, listening for Him. Anybody here doing the work of the Lord and you just flat out tired? Come out of your seat.

We will lift your hands. Come on, this is the biggest thing going on on planet earth. No one's going to write in the media about this prayer meeting tonight.

But trust me, heaven is interested in this prayer meeting. They're not interested what's going on on Broadway and all that other stuff on Wall Street. This is the work of the Lord.

What I'd like to do now before we just spend time waiting on the Lord, I want to just sit or kneel here on these steps. You can stand, you can go back to sitting in a second. But right now, if everyone could just woman with woman, man with man, turn and get somebody and just share with them, this is what I'm praying for tonight.

Express it out loud and let the person say what they want to pray about tonight, about what God's going to do in their life in 2016. We shouldn't be ashamed of that. Whatever our needs are, whatever our longings

are, he said that he would give us the desires of our heart.

Let's express those desires. Amen. Everybody turn now.

Woman with woman, you pray for a season, then you break free and do whatever you want to do. Every man find a man. Express it out loud, then pray out loud.

One for another.

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