

What is My Purpose

by Jim Cymbala

This sermon delves into the fundamental question of why God created human beings, emphasizing that our primary purpose is to glorify God and enjoy His presence. The speaker highlights the importance of abiding in Christ to bear fruit, the significance of being pruned by God for spiritual growth, and the transformation that occurs when we truly abide in Him. The message underscores the need for genuine repentance, confession of sins, and a focus on abiding in Christ rather than mere outward success or church growth.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:7, John 15:1, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Galatians 2:20, John 15:5, Romans 12:2, James 4:8, 1 John 2:6, John 14:15, Matthew 7:16

Topics: "Purpose of Creation", "Abiding in Christ"

Description

This sermon delves into the fundamental question of why God created human beings, emphasizing that our primary purpose is to glorify God and enjoy His presence. The speaker highlights the importance of abiding in Christ to bear fruit, the significance of being pruned by God for spiritual growth, and the transformation that occurs when we truly abide in Him. The message underscores the need for genuine repentance, confession of sins, and a focus on abiding in Christ rather than mere outward success or church growth.

Transcript

So if you get any book on theology, thank you, get any book on theology, it's the study of God, the understanding better of God, and so on and so forth. But in any systematic theology and any book like that, there will be a section inevitably about the doctrine of man because of our relationship with God. And one of the first questions that theologians have been asking since the beginning is this question, why did God create human beings, man and woman? Why did God create men and women? He didn't need to create us.

If he needed to do anything, he wouldn't be God. So God doesn't need anything. So he could have gone throughout eternity before time existed.

He could have been happy God, bless God. So the question is, why did he create man and woman? Why am I here? What's my real purpose? Is it just to have a job, raise a family, go on vacation, have children, have grandchildren, make a living, get an education? What is the reason for our existence? So the Bible tells us in both Old and New Testament verses along these lines, which has been brought in to the Westminster Catechism and statement of faith that you'll find historically, which is this, man, and I mean

man, humans were created to glorify God and enjoy him forever. You're existing today to glorify God.

That's your initial primary purpose for all of us, to glorify God and to enjoy his presence and commune with him forever. That's why we're here. We're not here to make a living.

Got to make a living, got to pay the bills. All those things are subsidiary to the main purpose, which many of us, because it's so simple, we miss it. We are on earth right now to glorify God.

When you and I are glorifying God in whatever way God helps us to do it, we are now fulfilling the purpose of our existence. This is why so many people who even go to church are lacking peace and joy and vitality because they don't even know what to aim at every day. Every morning we wake up, our main goal should be understanding the purposes of God for our life.

How can I glorify God? Let me tell you how Paul put it in the end of the 10th chapter of 1 Corinthians. He says this, whether you eat or whether you drink, in whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. Whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.

So when we have a meal, we can glorify God. God, thank you for this food. See how so few of us think of it.

We just take life as a series of just inconsequential actions, and we're not realizing I was created. I'm happiest. God is glorified, and it's best for me because I was made to do this to glorify God.

You have good barbecue, glorify God. How many say amen? Corky says good one, doesn't he? If you have a bad meal, well, thank God for Jesus. We can always praise him for our Savior.

And then we're alive, and we can have another meal. Whatever we eat, whatever we drink, think how little we take that to heart. Whatever we do, you're doing it for the glory of God.

That's where not only is God praised, but now all of his fulfilling power and grace and blessing begins to flow in us. Why? We're moving in the purpose for our existence to glorify God and enjoy him forever. So sad to see people in the world trying to be happy without God, and even people who come to church on Sunday trying to be happy outside of glorifying God.

It is, as they say in Spanish, imposible. It is impossible. It is impossible.

God has made us humans so that the more you try to be happy, the less happy you are. The more you make happiness your goal, the more it escapes you. And when you don't try to be happy and just glorify God, happiness is chasing you all over the place.

You have a joy. You have a zest in living. Why? Because you want to know because you're glorifying God.

Brothers and sisters, let's take that to heart today. So many people are aiming at the pleasure principle, but none of those things—money, sex, vacations, educational achievement, a great career, even children and a family—none of them can bring the joy and the fulfillment that glorifying God with our lives does. And now Paul says, now whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.

Ah, but now the question comes, obviously. How do you glorify God? It's a song my wife recorded a long years ago, a lot of years ago. Give God the glory.

Give God the glory. But how do we glorify God? It's got to be more than coming to church and singing. By the way, choir, you're excellent.

Orchestra, you're off the chart. Excellent. Can we put our hands together for the choir and the orchestra? So good.

So good. So, how do we glorify God? It can't be going to church on Sunday because then we'd only be glorifying God one day out of seven. That makes no sense.

So, as we look at the Scripture, I want to take you to the deepest thing of all. There's nothing deeper than what I'm going to read to you. Nothing in the Bible.

Nothing, nothing, nothing. Truth about God is very unusual. It's made up of concentric circles.

You see it? They're overlapping. There's truths about this, truths about salvation, truths about the Spirit, truths about peace, truths about justification. They're all meshing together.

And then, look, there's levels of truth. You go down deeper and deeper. In other words, in one way, God is our Creator and we're all His children.

In one way, all creation belong to God. He's the Father of everything. But then there's other depths that once you become saved, you become one of His sheep.

I am the good shepherd. Another one is here, wait a minute, I'm a living stone. He's building a temple.

So, there's another truth. There's another identity we have. Oh, you're a holy nation.

You're not American first, you belong to God first. You're not nationalistic, you belong to the Lord. And in the very bottom of it all, of course, now we're getting down to you're the Father, He's our Father, and we're sons and daughters of God to as many as received Him.

He gave them the power to be sons and daughters. Now we're getting deeper. Now He's a parent, but here's the deepest of them all.

You can't go deeper than this. There is no further depth found in Scripture. And we read it this way.

You're familiar with it, but I want to read it from the NIV. I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit.

While every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes, so that it'll be even more fruitful. So notice there, no fruit, cast away. You bear fruit, He prunes you, so you can bear even more fruit.

No fruit, fruit, even more fruit. You are already clean or pruned because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you.

Now that word remain in me, and I will remain in you. That's a very deep word. The King James has it, abide in me, and I will abide in you.

Some have stay connected to me, stay with me, be close and with me, be in union with me, and I will be in union with you. It's a very complex word in the Greek that different translations bring out with different renderings. We have in our NIV that I'm reading from tonight, remain in me, in me.

And I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Now there's a new thought. I am the vine, you are the branches.

If a man or woman remains in me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Oh here we go now. Bearing much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not remain in me, he's like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. Whatever the meaning and application of that is, I don't want to get near it.

How many are with me? Say amen. If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, here's a great promise for prayer. You ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Now let's get back to our first thought. This is to my father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples. So what brings the father much glory besides singing to him? That's wonderful, giving God glory, verbally worshiping God like we did tonight.

Jesus says, now this is what brings great glory to my father, that you bear much fruit. By you bearing fruit, you prove to be my disciples, and my father is glorified. And the fruit bearing is not on Sunday, the fruit bearing is 24-7-365.

As you bear fruit, my father is glorified. What kind of fruit? When you're kind, and bear that fruit of kindness, and love, and mercy. When you love people who are different than you, different color, different background.

When you're patient with people who are trying your nerves, ooh, my father is glorified. When you spread the good news of Jesus Christ with boldness, that's good fruit. And converts are made like this church does, and you're baptizing people every week, I understand.

Oh, my father is glorified when you bear fruit of souls getting saved. When you're filled with patience, and you're filled with kindness, and you're forgiving, and dropping grudges. Oh, my father is glorified when you bear good fruit like that.

That's how my father is glorified. Just think, is it different here in Tennessee than it is in New York? When you talk to most Christians in other parts of the world, and you say, so how are you doing with the Lord? Oh, I go to the Brooklyn Tabernacle. What would that have to do with anything? Am I correct or not? Where you go and sit for an hour or so on a Sunday has nothing to do with bearing fruit.

But just think what we've reduced Christianity to. Where do you go on Sunday? That's so sad. Must make the angels weep.

Here Jesus said, I'm the vine, you're the branches, and we're talking about where we go and sit in a church. And that's good, we should go, forsake not the assembling of yourselves. We should gather all the time and pray together, worship together.

But just think what this verse is saying. My father is glorified when you bear much fruit. I am the vine, you are the branches.

Now, the commentators differ on what kind of vine he was talking about. Some think it was a grapevine somewhere that would make wine. And he saw it, and then he wanted to bring this truth to the disciples.

This is happening during the last supper, that last time together that he had with them. Others think it could have been a fig tree somewhere. And he was referring to the fruit that comes when a fig tree is growing and producing fruit.

We don't know what that vine was. Where did I buy this thing, Phil? I went to Home Depot in Memphis, Tennessee today, and here I am. I want you to notice what the Lord is saying.

He's saying, I'm the whole vine. I'm not some part of it. I'm not the root structure.

I'm the whole vine. Oh Lord, help us to understand that. I am the whole vine because the only thing that makes it a vine is my life.

And my life produces everything in the vine. I'm the seed. I'm the vine.

I'm everything. I am the vine. And you are the branches.

You're the branches. And when the life is flowing through the plant, fruit comes that's real pretty, like this, whatever this plant is. So I see an offshoot of this branch.

Here's another branch coming out. And this is a little baby flower starting to blossom. And he said, that's what you are.

You're just branches that are part of the vine of which I am the whole. Notice the truth in here for us. Because remember, by bearing beautiful fruit, that's the way we glorify God.

How many want to glorify God more from now on than ever before in your life? Lift your hand up high. Okay. So now let's learn how we do that.

So this flower, what's interesting about it, which will help us with some of us who have grown up under the wrong kind of Christian teaching, this flower is not straining to be anything. Listen, you won't hear a word. Listen, not a word.

No. Oh, I promise. No.

How does it get to be so beautiful? It just stays connected to the vine. That's all. See, there's sap running.

There's a liquid. There's sap running from the plant up through the roots. And this plant, this sap is running up.

And that's what the life of the plant is, the sap. And the fruit, the flower is produced not by anything it does. It can't do a thing.

But by remaining in the vine, the sap, the life of the plant flows up and it's an apple, a fig, a grape, and in this case, these pretty red flower. And that's what Jesus says to us. Don't try to do anything because you can't do anything.

You can't be kind. You can't be loving. You can't be patient.

You can't be what I want you to be. You can't have beautiful fruit on your own. For apart from me, you can do just abide in the vine.

Stay connected to the life of the spirit that I've put in you that is in the entire vine of which I am and you are just branches. Now, I don't have the heart to do it, but if I had scissors here, I could cut this one that's right here, this little offshoot. And the moment I cut that with scissors or if I just yanked it now, the moment I cut that, I don't care how it looks to you, it's dead.

It's only life is in the vine. This is what Satan always trying to do with us. Draw us away from abiding in Christ, stopping us from being connected to Christ, trusting Christ, leaning on Christ, staying connected and abiding in Christ.

Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing. Now, if I cut this thing off, you might say, no, it looks the same as the plant. But if I leave it here, you just come back in three days.

Tell me what you see. That's how Christians are. Many Christians are like that.

Ministers can be like that. Their sermons don't have the same ring. They're preaching and sometimes when they're not sure that they're really ready and they have the life of God flowing through them, they just, as one guy said in the 1800s, whenever I wasn't sure what to say, I just started yelling.

Preachers still do that today. Come on, you've heard some of them, right? Not sure what's going on, just start shouting in the microphone. Everybody gets blessed.

No one has any idea what's being said because the only life we have is from another. I have no life. This is what Paul said when he, look at me, everyone.

I no longer live. What in the world? What do you mean you no longer live? You're Paul. I see you.

Your body, your voice is the same. You're Paul. But he says, no, no, I have found the secret.

I no longer live. It is not I, but Christ lives in me. The life that I now live, I live by trusting in the life, the sap, the juice, the power that I have in Christ as I abide in him.

And by this is my father glorified that you bear much fruit. Now abide in me. Stay connected to me.

So I want to close by talking about that because abiding in Christ is a very high spiritual skill. Talk to your pastor. He's read church history like I have great men and women of God through the ages.

That's what they've longed for. They got to the bottom of the whole thing. And they said, we're not only saints and we're not only children of God, we are branches in the vine.

And he says, stay connected because you can't believe what I'll do in your life and through you if you just abide in me. You don't have to struggle. You don't have to worry.

You don't have to fret. You don't have to make promises. You got to abide.

If you don't abide, even if you read the Bible, it won't do you much good because the Pharisees were the ones quoting the verses, but they were not abiding in the life of God. They planned the murder of the son of God. You can sing in the choir.

You can do whatever you want to do in a religious outward observance, but unless you and I are abiding daily, there's not going to be fruit. I cannot produce fruit. Jim Cymbala is hopeless.

Come on, haven't you and I come to that place? I am hopeless. The only life I have, the only hope I have is in Jesus Christ and he is the life that's in the vine. He is the vine and I'm just a branch, an offshoot that can take his life and then without struggling produce all kinds of fruit, but apart from him, just cut that thing for one second.

You're chopped meat. It's over. So how do you abide in Christ? It's certainly something we have to pray for every morning, every day.

We have to ask God, teach me, Lord, how to abide in you. Let me tell you a couple of things about abiding in Christ. See if this resonates with you.

When you want to abide in Christ, you're close to Christ and you're staying connected to Christ, abiding in the vine. Oh man, it changes your life. First of all, you have new desires because his life is flowing in you, so you have a different thought pattern.

You're not even trying to. His life now is creating new desires and new thoughts. You feel like praying for someone.

He maybe wakes you up in the night to intercede for someone. He suggests acts of mercy and kindness that you never had before. He triggers something in you to get right with someone that you have a grudge with.

Oh, that's his life working in us, flowing. Notice if we're bearing fruit, like hopefully all of us are, he said that his father is the gardener and he comes and prunes us so that we can have more fruit. Now pruning is cutting.

It's not pleasant. But I bet if we could all talk privately, we all know what it is to be pruned by the father, don't we? He uses his word. You read something.

Ouch. That was for me. That was for me.

He's pruning us. I know you're bearing fruit, but you got stuff blocking the sap. See these branches? The minute they get something blocking the flow of the sap, the gardener has to come and cut it out, the debris, the blockage, whatever it might be.

He's got to cut it out. Why? Not to hurt us, that we might bear more fruit, have more peace, have more joy and give more glory to the father. Sometimes he uses circumstances in life to prune us so that we could bear more fruit.

So important to be in the word every day so that that word can speak to us and prune us. Oh, God, I want to bear fruit. And I know I can only do that by abiding in you.

So prune me wherever you see I need pruning. Sometimes he'll use your wife. Somebody say amen to that, all right, or your husband.

They'll prune you nice and real good. They'll say something corrective that you could take from anybody else. Why does this have to come from my wife? God, let angel Gabriel speak to me.

I can brag about that, but don't let Carol be the one to tell me that I need to be pruned. You know what I'm talking about, don't you? Here's another thing. When you're abiding in Christ, you become sensitive to things you're not sensitive to before.

I remember, I'll close with this, I remember years ago, I was in college, I was playing basketball, I think still, but I was reaching after God and I wanted more than church on Sunday. I knew there must be something more than man sitting in a pew for an hour. Come on, stop that.

Christ died on the cross so I would go to church. Stop that. That can't be it.

No, he wants to flow through me. He wants me to bear fruit. So I was reaching after God, calling on God, opening up to God.

God, teach me, show me. So there was a Sunday service at the church I was then going to. Oh, God's presence was there like it is here tonight.

And I wept and wept at the altar and prayed, oh God. Like the lady sang with the choir there, I don't want to know just the healing, I want to know the healer. I just don't want to know the saving, I want to know the savior.

That's what was in my heart. So I ended up going to someone's house, but my heart was abiding in Christ, as best I can tell you. I'm not bragging, I'm telling you the truth.

It doesn't happen enough that I abide like that. And I was abiding in Christ and walking in the spirit. There's another name for abiding, walking in the spirit.

So we were there after the service. We went and they had bagels. You all eat bagels here? Do you or no? That's not a southern thing though, right? Well, anyway, in New York we eat bagels.

They had bagels and butter and cream cheese. And we're over at this house and I'm there and I'm sitting at the table, but my heart was very just leaning on the Lord, you know. I just, Lord, you know, when you abide in Christ, you talk to people, but your heart is still abiding in him.

You're like talking to people and you're answering, you're not weird and all of that. But all the time you're like David, I have set the Lord always before me. He is at my right hand.

I will not be moved. I'm leaning on him, connected to him. So at the table, somebody threw out a name of someone in the church.

And three of the people there just pounced on that name and started tearing that name apart. Just gossiping, slander. The person wasn't there to defend themselves.

Do we like when people talk about us when we're not around? Anybody love that? No. So it's not a good thing to do. I've heard that before.

We've all been around and sometimes we've unfortunately joined in, in a malicious way. The effect that it had on me, I can't, as God is listening to me now, I'm not being melodramatic, I'm being sincere. The effect it had on me, my heart started to pound.

I put my head down. I wouldn't join in the conversation. And they were just bantering back and forth.

Oh, she ain't all bad. And she thinks she's this, whatever it was about. And suddenly I couldn't take it anymore.

After about 45 seconds, I got up. I see myself. I excused myself.

And I walked out of this little dining cove. It was a railroad apartment in Brooklyn near Coney Island Avenue. And I walked down that hallway into the living room where no one was.

Everyone was eating in the back next to the kitchen. And I burst out into tears. Because it so jarred me.

Because it jars Jesus. Things that jar Jesus start to jar us when we really abide in him. Anyone say amen to that? It affected me.

And I burst into tears. And I started praying for them. Like, Father, forgive them.

They don't, they just got carried away. Father, forgive them. I love them.

They just, they just, and I knew, oh wow. God, help me to live like that. I want to abide in you.

I want to be connected to you. I want to bear fruit. If you're here today and you're struggling with some besetting sin, and you're hooked up into some bitterness, rage, anger, pride, you can't humble yourself no matter what.

The only answer is abiding in Christ. When you abide in Christ, it's impossible to be proud. Because you get his humble spirit in you, flowing out to you.

Show me someone proud and boastful. I'll show you someone not abiding in Christ. It's as simple as that.

You're hooked into some immoral practice and some unclean thing or pornography. The way to defeat it is not to fight it and speak against it and try to stamp it out. Just abide in Christ.

Because when his life is flowing through you, oh, all the junk goes. Do I get a loud amen? His junk goes. It has to go.

It's his life. If you have racial prejudice in you, you have discrimination of some kind, white prejudice, black prejudice, whatever. There's all kinds of brands and kinds of that.

There's no way you can defeat that. Because some of us grew up, I didn't thankfully, but some of us grew up in bigoted homes. And we took it in with our mother's milk.

We heard stuff that was just so ungodly. But we didn't know at that time the only way to have a sweet smell coming out of our lives is to abide in Christ. And this is how we bear much fruit.

And by this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit. A very terrible thing happened years ago to me when the church growth movement began back in the 70s. And I was just a young minister, late 70s and early 80s.

And some people came by and were talking about, you know, your church is growing, but it doesn't obey the rules of church growth. You're an anomaly. I didn't know what anomaly meant at that point in my life, but they said, you're an anomaly.

And I said, why? They said, because Fuller Theological Seminary, wherever this drivel was coming out from, says that churches grow fastest when they're homogeneous. People like to be with their own kind. And I said to the minister, oh, you're right on that, but that's the most evil thing I've ever heard.

Well, of course, people in their bigotry like to be with their own kind, but that's not what God's love does in us, because in heaven every nation, every tribe, every tongue is going to be there. Can we put our hands together and say amen? And now, because America worships success, ministers, the bigger the audience, the bigger the crowd, the more successful they are. I used to have 250.

Now I'm running 2,100. You must be doing something great. So church growth is the goal instead of getting people saved and abiding in Christ.

So now you have people in the pew who are not even saved, much less abiding in Christ. And we're giving the gospel to people who are living in sin without the message of repentance. Confess your sins.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He'll save you. He'll change you.

But you can't stay in your lifestyle and have Jesus. How many are with me today on that? Say amen. That's spreading.

It'll never spread with this pastor and the leadership here, but it's spreading everywhere. Everywhere I go in America, that is like a cancer now. Just tell people who are shacking up, living in homosexuality or whatever they're doing, you just stay right where you are.

God understands your journey. You just believe in Jesus, and that's fine. Well, that is not fine.

We have to ask God to forgive us of our sins. Are you with me on that? No, that's judgmental. I thought you loved me.

That's hate speech. It's not hate speech. It's Bible speech.

The Bible says repent and confess your sins. The Savior... How are you going to hang on to the Savior if you don't know you're a sinner? How are you going to hang on to the lifeboat if you don't know you're sinking? So right now, we have a goal of filling seats instead of bringing people into the kingdom of heaven. We got to pray against that.

How many want to see a revival in America? I mean a real revival. People getting saved and then people not just getting saved and baptized, thank God for that, but abiding in Christ because I'm done. They say, you know, how many are you running? The question is not how many are you running, what are you running? What does it matter how many you have if they're not abiding in Christ or they're not even living for Jesus? You've learned the secret through clever marketing techniques to get them in for one hour every Sunday, but that's not the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church of Christ is that we come out of the world and we belong to Jesus and only Jesus and then we can learn to abide in Him and all He'll produce fruit in our lives that will bring such glory to the Father. I want to abide more. How about you? I want to learn how to abide.

Everyone who receives this word, clap your hands. Would you bow your heads with me? Close your eyes please. Pastor Steve Gaines is going to come, my friend, my brother in Christ.

He's going to pray a pastoral prayer over this church. My prayer, I'm giving it to you today, it's the same prayer for me. Oh God, teach me to abide in you.

Not stop by once a week and be with you. What plant, what branch could bear forth fruit if they just came once a week to the vine? No, it has to abide 24-7. Teach us, Lord, that wonderful skill.

Let's pray.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/vyIMq0kwnjM.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/what-is-my-purpose/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net