

Called According to Purpose

by Stephen Kaung

This sermon delves into the themes of God's purpose in creation, the fall of Lucifer, the importance of not looking into oneself but focusing on God, the significance of being conformed to the image of Christ, and the need to press on towards glorification. It emphasizes the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives and the urgency of being prepared for the Lord's return.

Scripture: Romans 8:28, Hebrews 12:2, 1 John 3:2, Romans 8:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Romans 8:30, Philippians 3:14, 1 Peter 1:16, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "God's Purpose in Creation", "Preparation for Christ's Return"

Description

This sermon delves into the themes of God's purpose in creation, the fall of Lucifer, the importance of not looking into oneself but focusing on God, the significance of being conformed to the image of Christ, and the need to press on towards glorification. It emphasizes the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives and the urgency of being prepared for the Lord's return.

Transcript

Good morning. Will you please turn to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 8. We will read from verse 28 to verse 30.

Romans chapter 8. Verse 28. But we do know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to a purpose, because whom he has foreknown, he is also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brethren, but whom he has predestinated, these also he has called, and whom he has called, these also he has justified, but whom he has justified, these also he has glorified. Let us have a short word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we thank thee for bringing us together this time. We believe that there is purpose in it. We want thy purpose to be fully realized.

So Lord, at the very beginning of this conference, we humbly commit it back to thee, and say Lord, take it in thy own hand, bless it, and use it for thy own glory. All that has purpose, even before the foundation of the world for this time, will be fulfilled for the glory of God. So Lord, at the very outset, we lay everything at thy feet, trusting thy Spirit to be in charge.

Move among us, touch our hearts, open our understanding, enable us to allow thee to work out thy full salvation in each and every one of us, and to thee be the glory. We ask in thy precious name, Amen.

Thank God for bringing us together again this time.

We believe God has a purpose in gathering us. So we look to the Lord, that in spite of all the weaknesses of man, God is able to fulfill all that is upon his heart. We know the Lord is coming soon.

If I'm not misunderstood, I sincerely believe that he will come in our time. We are living at the very last of this age. The Lord is coming soon.

Sooner than what we probably would expect. Should he come today, brothers and sisters, are we ready for him? Our Lord is ever ready to return. You remember the day before he left, he told his disciples, I'm coming back to bring you to myself.

Where I am, there thou shalt be. And this promise has been prolonged for two thousand years. It is not because the Lord does not want to return.

I suppose the Lord is very anxious to return, to receive his own to himself. But the problem lies with us. It is these people have not been ready.

But brothers and sisters, as time went on, and when it comes to today, I believe in our hearts, we do sense that probably our lifetime is the time of his return. Now if this is the case, the question is, are we ready? Have we been prepared for his return? If the Lord should come today, brothers and sisters, will this auditorium be empty? Or will there be some who will be left behind? And I believe this is a very serious question. So brothers and sisters, as we gather here this morning, our expectation is that the Lord will return in our time.

So may every one of us here be ready for him. Even before time, even before there was anything, there was God. In the beginning, God.

God alone exists. And God is a Trinity. He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

To use the human way of speaking, may we say that there was a consultation among the Godhead. God was going to create, and he created for the sake of his beloved Son. He wants to give everything to his beloved Son.

But being God, who knows the end from the beginning, he realized that there will be problems. And while God was thinking about it, the Son stepped forward and said, Father, if it is thy will to create, go ahead. I'm ready.

I'm willing to offer myself as the sacrifice so that thy will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. And it is on that basis that God began to create. In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the highest of his creation were the angels.

Man was not created yet. And among the angels, God created an archangel called Lucifer, the brilliant light. As we read in Ezekiel 28, we know that he was created.

He was created almost perfect. Not quite, but almost. He was talented, with talents from God.

He was the archangel over the throne of God. He was supposed to lead the other angels in worshipping God and fulfilling God's purpose. In the beginning, it was all right.

Everything seemed to run according. This archangel, Lucifer, the brilliant star, he was able to lead the other angels in worshipping God. But as his traffic began to increase, he began to look into himself.

Now, brothers and sisters, it is always a problem if we look into ourselves. Because if you look into yourself, what will you see? Either you look into yourself and see you're so brilliant, so good, that you begin to be proud of yourself. Or you look into yourself and see yourself as nothing.

Then you become despondent. That's the way it always is. So when the archangel looks into God himself and fulfills his purpose, in leading the angels in seeing praises to God and fulfilling God's purposes, he was all right.

But unfortunately, he began to look off God and to himself. Brothers and sisters, it is always a danger if we look off God and into ourselves. Because what will you see if you do that? You will see either yourself as so good, so complete, that you begin to be proud of yourself.

That's one result. And the other result is if you look into yourself, you will see you are nothing. And you become despondent, despair, negative.

That's always the case. So when this archangel Lucifer was serving God, in leading the angels, in worshipping God, he was all right. But unfortunately, he began to look into himself.

Brothers and sisters, be careful if you look into yourself. Instead of look away from yourself and look into God. That's the way it should be.

We should always look away from ourselves and look into God. May our eyes be fixed upon God and not upon ourselves. For the moment we turn our eyes upon ourselves, there can be only one of the two results.

One result is we become proud of ourselves. Look, how wonderful I am, how gifted I am, how high I am. And because of pride, we fall.

Or we look into ourselves and see there is nothing within us. In comparison with God, we become despaired. So brothers and sisters, do not look into yourself outside of God.

Look often to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. That's the right thing to do. Unfortunately, Lucifer, the archangel, we do not know how he faithfully served God.

But we do know that one day he turned his eyes away from God and unto himself. And that is his downfall. So brothers and sisters, let us beware.

Never look into yourself outside of Christ. If you do, there can be only two results. One is you get proud of yourself and pride is the beginning of fall.

Or you may look into yourself and be despair of yourself and fail to fulfill the purpose of God in creating you. So, unfortunately, one day Lucifer, the archangel, began to turn his eyes away from God and began to turn to look at himself. See how wonderful I am how gifted I am how high I am and that begins the downfall of Lucifer.

Because of what he did he was driven out of the throne of God and all that was under his rule came into ruin. And that's what we find where the earth was. For most likely this planet earth was in the beginning

given by God to Lucifer to rule over it for God.

So when he fell all that were with him fell with him. Not only a third of the angels followed him and fell with him but even the earth over which he had dominion fell into ruin. And he was covered with water.

That is to say he was under curse under judgment and that's what we find in the beginning of the Bible. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. At the very beginning.

Because when God created he always fulfilled it. He never does anything half way. Undone.

So when we read the Bible in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. They were done. The heavens and the earth were complete.

It was filled with the glory of God. The angels were glorifying God in history. And Lucifer was to lead in worship and in service.

A very high position God has given to him. But unfortunately he became dissatisfied. So brothers and sisters we need to be careful not to be dissatisfied with what God has provided for us.

Where he has put you what he has made you is the best for you. Let us be contented. Let us give ourselves to God and let him work out all that he has ordained that God may be glorified.

That will keep us safe and sound. But as soon as we begin to be dissatisfied we disgrorify God. Lucifer began to look within himself instead of unto God.

And that was the beginning of his downfall. So dear brothers and sisters be careful never to look within yourself without looking fully to God. Because once you do that you will either be proud or be unsatisfied, dissatisfied.

And that's what happened to Lucifer. Now God knows everything. He knows the ending from the very beginning.

So when you see any thinking of creation and brothers and sisters again we must remember that God created for his beloved son. That is the only reason for creation. God loves his beloved son.

He wants to give everything to his son. But God being God who knows the end from the beginning he knows what will happen in between. And it was during that time if we may use human way of speaking the stone step forward and father go ahead.

If you plan to do that go ahead. I'm willing to be the land offer myself for the salvation of man. And it was on that basis that God began to create.

So when you read the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now God never did anything half done. When he created he created complete.

So the first verse in the Bible when he said God created the heavens and the earth now do not think what follows is the description of that creation. No. What follows is what he had created had fallen.

And because it had fallen so he had to restore it to be inhabited. And in that case he created man. Brothers and sisters we have no idea how long that harmonious condition in heaven continues.

But unfortunately one day when Lucifer began to look into himself tragedy began. Brothers and sisters is that a great lesson for us? We are told never to look into yourself outside of Jesus. If you look into yourself outside of Jesus there can be only one of two results.

And both are tragic. One is you get proud of yourself. And the other is you debase yourself more than what God has created you for.

But thank God even what Lucifer did God did not give up. Indeed there was judgment. And the judgment was swift and complete.

Lucifer and a third of the angels followed him. They were driven out from heaven. And the dominion that was under his rule went into ruin.

So that's where we find the earth was. But thank God God did not give up. What he had purposed he will fulfill.

In spite of all problems. So here we thank God. In Genesis chapter 2 it begins.

The spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep. Now remember this is not the beginning of creation. This is the beginning of re-creation.

The spirit of God brooded in love over the face of the deep. Over judgment. And out of that the earth was restored in six days to be habitable.

And there on the sixth day God created man. Brothers and sisters this is something very special. God never created anything according to his own image in his own likeness.

He created out of his power and skill but not according to himself. But here God is something very special. He created man in his own image according to his likeness.

The image here I call does not refer to outward features. The image here refers to the inward reality. So you see that when God created man he created man according to what he inwardly is.

As he is a tripod God the Father God the Son and God the Spirit he created man in three parts. We have the spirit we have the soul we have the body and that makes us man. The spirit is the faculty to commune with the spiritual world.

The soul is the power to communicate with oneself and the body is the ability to commune with the world around him. So that's the way we were created. We were created with a spirit and the purpose of God's creating us with a spirit is because God is spirit and he wants us to commune with him.

That is God's purpose. I always remember when the Russian cosmonaut went to the air he came back and he said I look around but I didn't see any God. Therefore there is no God.

Nonsense. God is spirit. How can a human being try to see God with his naked eyes? Of course he couldn't see God but God saw him.

Man is created with a spirit. Brothers and sisters that is very special because God is spirit and the reason why he created us with a spirit is because he wants to commune with man. Only the spirit can communicate with the spirit.

You cannot communicate with God with your soul. You cannot communicate God with your body. You can only communicate with God with your spirit because God is spirit and God created man with a spirit.

He wants man to communicate with him but he also communicates also created man with a soul. That is man is to know his own self. We know what we are because we have a soul and he creates us with a body so that we can be in touch with the world around us.

So as the order of God's creation of man is concerned the spirit is the highest in man because it has the ability to communicate with God. The soul comes next. It communicates with yourself and the body comes last.

It communicates with the world around it. That is the order but unfortunately because of sin you remember when God created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden and God came to the Garden and communicated with them. We do not know how long it happened but after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit when God came to the Garden they hid themselves.

They knew they were naked before God and on the one hand God judged them but on the other hand God provided for them a redemption. God closed them but they were driven out of the Garden of Eden and that is the story of man. Brothers and sisters man as it was was driven out of the presence of God because we are sinful unfit for God but then God God did not give up.

You know God never gives up. Once he made a plan he always fulfilled it. So God began to work and he sent his beloved son into this world.

So the Bible tells us whom he has foreknown he has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son so that he should be the firstborn among many brothers. One day God his own son he sent into this world to become a man. Then we find in Philippians chapter 2 he who was one with God emptied himself to become a man.

Now brothers and sisters he cannot empty himself of his Godhead. Why? Because that's impossible. That's what he is.

He is God. But he can empty himself by laying aside all the rights of his being God and take up the form of a man in obedience to God his Father in all things. There is the life of our Lord Jesus.

And when you read the Bible you find the temptations to Jesus came here. Satan tried to tempt Jesus to act on his own. After he had fasted 40 days he was naturally hungry.

Then he came in and said if you are the son of God you can make that stone food to eat. But our Lord said man do not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Satan took him to the height of the temple and he said jump down because God has promised to support you and will not allow you feet to touch the stone.

But our Lord said you only do the work of God. Satan showed him the whole world and he said if you bow to me I gave all to you. And our Lord said catch you behind.

You worship God alone. Brothers and sisters throughout our life his life as you read the anything on his own. He never said anything by his own.

He never go anywhere through his own. His whole life is my Father's will. That is the life of our Lord Jesus.

So Satan was defeated on Calvary's cross. And there our Lord saved those who believed in him. So what the Bible says here all things work together for good to those who love and How can a sinner seek God? That's impossible.

A sinner can only flee from God. He cannot seek God and get saved. That is the wonderful mercy of God.

So brothers and sisters, as we review our own story, how we came to the Lord Jesus, it was a miracle. You know, before I believed in God, I came from a Christian family. I knew the Bible.

I knew salvation. But I always had the feeling Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but I'm not a sinner. I'm good.

So let him serve them, but I don't need him. There was my feeling before I believed in the Lord Jesus. Then, when I was 14 years old, I got sick.

Sick until death. There was no medicine at that time. It was time for fever.

So, at that time, the only way is to see if you can pull through. I was in bed for four months, almost dying. My pulse became irregular, but God had mercy on me and healed me.

When I was healed, it was a natural thought. Because of my background, I was grateful to God. I wanted to do something to repay God's mercy.

Now, that's a foolish thought. But that was my thought at the time. And that was the beginning of my seeking God.

And then, God, it was not me who seeked him, but it was God who was seeking me. So, finally, by the grace of God, I was saved. So, brothers and sisters, here we will find that whom he has foreknown, he has destined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he shall be firstborn among brethren.

Now, what is the dear will of God for us who believe in the Lord Jesus? Probably, we think that just to be saved is enough. But that is God's mind, not God's mind. In God's mind, just to be saved is not enough.

He has to save us to the uttermost. He has to conform us to the image of his beloved son. And that is the will of God.

Brothers and sisters, did you ever thought of that? When you first got saved, were you satisfied because you were saved? Probably you were. But God never did. Once he saved you, he must save you to the uttermost, that you will be conformed to the image of his beloved son.

So, dear brothers and sisters, how far yet away we are to be conformed to the image of his beloved son? Think of that. If that is the case, how much we must seek God while there is time? Can we just sit back and say, thank God I'm saved. That's all.

Now I can do whatever I like because I'm saved after all. But that's your thought, not God's thought. God thought that he was saving to be like his son.

Anything that is not of his son, he will get rid of in your life. And everything that is of his son will be added unto you because his beloved son is to be the firstborn among many brothers. That is the purpose of God.

So dear brothers and sisters, do not be content by being saved. Très bien. There is much to do yet.

The Holy Spirit who dwells within you is pressing you on that you may be conformed in everything to Christ. That is the purpose of God because he wants to many sons, to bring many sons into glory. So the Bible says whom he has called, he has justified.

That has happened to us. And whom he has justified, he also has glorified. This has not yet been happened.

So brothers and sisters, do not be content with just being justified. You have to be glorified. That is God's purpose.

He wants you to be like his beloved son because he wants his beloved son to be the firstborn among his many brothers. How much more in our lives that we still need to be purified? Brothers and sisters, can we just sit back and wait? No. As long as he allows us to live in this world, let us press on.

As the Spirit of God within us is leading us, let us all cooperate. No matter what sacrifice as you think you have to make, it's worth it. So, brothers and sisters, my last plea is let us not sit back and just wait.

Let us positively press on. As the Holy Spirit within us leads us, let us cooperate. No matter what sacrifice we have to pay, it's worth it.

The Lord is coming. Let us be ready. Dear Lord, we want to thank you for saving us.

We thank you because you want to save us to the uttermost. Lord, if you are not satisfied with us yet, do not allow us to be satisfied. Allow us to really give ourselves in such a way as to allow the Holy Spirit to do his perfect work in us.

So, when I shall see your face, there will be nothing to regret. Oh, dear Lord, bless thy people this morning. Prepare each and every one of us for yourself.

That when thou shalt come, we shall gladly join with thee and glorify you because your purpose is fulfilled. In your name.

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