

OUR PURPOSE: WHY ARE WE HERE?

Discipleship Message #1

Scripture Reading & Prayer

- Psalm 73.1-15: The iniquity and injustice of the world affects us.
- Psalm 73.16-17: We need to understand our *duty* in this world.
- Psalm 73.18-28, esp. vv25-28) When we do that (v16-17), we will find our greatest joy and delight in the Lord (and God joys and delights in that).

Message Introduction:

Why are we here? That's a good question and a question I think we can answer, biblically, this morning.

- Why are we here as a group of believers trying to start a new church in a city where there are already hundreds of churches, in a time when most people could care less (or get aggravated with us)?
 - ✓ Why? What's the point? What's the purpose in it?
- We could ask the same question about our existence: Why are we here on this earth at this time?

Today is our first Sunday meeting as Harvest Baptist Church.

- I believe that one of the most important things we can do, being a brand new church, is to clarify our purpose: Why are we doing this? Why are we here?
- By defining our *purpose* and always keeping that purpose in the forefront of everything we do, we can (hopefully) avoid the many pitfalls that get ministries side-tracked today.

Our purpose (as a church and as individuals) is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

- This is what we are going to talk about this morning. Next Sunday this *purpose* will lead us into defining our *mission* (i.e., what are we to *do* while we are here—how do we glorify God and enjoy Him forever?).
- But today we want to focus specifically on what the Bible says about our purpose:
 - ✓ We are here, first and foremost, to glorify God (we're not here to please men, but rather God).
 - ✓ But also, because God is Omnibenevolent (all good always), part of our purpose in life is to enjoy God forever. That's how He designed creation and that's how He designed us, His creatures.
 - It's not drudgery to serve God (to live in and for Christ). God is not some slave driver.
 - God is good. God is love. He desires the best for Himself (glory) and also for us (to enjoy Him).
 - ✓ The two work together: When we are glorifying God we will be enjoying Him forever (i.e., the way to enjoy God is to do that which glorifies Him).
- To glorify God and enjoy Him forever is the purpose of our existence (as a church and as individuals).

I. Our Purpose: We Exist to Glorify God

- We're going to work from the general (all of creation) to the specific (us: church and individuals).

A. (Rev 4.11) All things were created for God's glory.

1. There are two ways to glorify God: Declaring & Doing

a) First, a person or a thing can glorify God by *declaring* God's existence and attributes.

(1) Creation glorifies the Creator because its mere *existence declares* God's existence, and it also declares many of His attributes (e.g., His infinite intelligence in creation's design).

(2) God is also glorified when we *verbally* (speaking) declare His existence and attributes. For lack of a better term, think of it as “bragging” on God (magnifying Him, exalting Him).

b) Second, a person or a thing can glorify God by doing that which pleases God.

(1) That which displeases God does not glorify (magnify, exalt) Him. But, when a person or a thing does what God wants (what pleases Him), God is glorified.

(2) (Rev 4.11) All things were created to glorify God because all things were created for His pleasure. That's the original design (purpose) in everything.

2. There are two general groups that can glorify God: Matter & Moral Creatures

a) **Matter:** (Ps 19.1) All of creation (rocks, animals; everything) glorifies God simply because it's there—because it exists.

(1) All the “stuff” in creation does exactly what God wants it to do, and by thus functioning according to God's purpose, will, and design, it all glorifies Him and pleases Him.

(2) God is the designer and when His creation functions according to His design, He is exalted, magnified, and glorified (creation “brags” about the Creator).

b) **Moral Creatures:** We are different because we can either choose to glorify God or not (God has given us that choice for now; in eternity it will be different).

(1) Moral creatures are basically angels and men—creatures that can discern between good and evil, and who have the free will to choose between the two.

(2) When we choose to do that which is right (that which God desires), then we glorify Him and please Him.

(3) But, when we choose to do that which is wrong (that which God does not desire), then we do not glorify Him and we do not please Him.

3. Conclusion: (Rom 11.36) All creation exists to glorify God because God made everything for His glory (to declare His existence and attributes, and to be pleasing to Himself).

B. We, therefore, (as a church and as individuals) have been made to glorify God.

1. (Isa 43.7) God's people in the Old Testament were call out by God to glorify Him.

2. (Eph 3.21) God's people in the New Testament, during the Church Age, have been call out for the same reason: to glorify God.

3. For this reason...

a) (1Cor 10.31) Whatever we do as a church has this same purpose: We are to do all to the glory of God—to please Him, to exalt Him, to magnify Him.

b) (1Pet 4.11) Whatever we do as individuals has the same purpose: To glorify God in all things.

c) In Summary: The purpose of our existence (the reason for which we were created) is to glorify God—to magnify Him and exalt Him in all we say and in all we do.

(1) We are moral creatures and we should choose (as individuals and as a church)...

(2) ...to declare God's existence and God's attributes to the world, and

(3) ...to do always those things that please Him.

4. But, there is one more element that we need to add to this purpose statement (because God is good, God is love, and God desires only the best for us, His creatures).

- God desires for us to glorify Him, yes; but He also wants us to enjoy Him forever...

II. Our Purpose: We Exist to Enjoy God Forever

- It seems to me that this part of our purpose is often overlooked. But we need to understand this because here is where we see just how *good* and *kind* God is. He wants us to *enjoy* Him *forever*!

A. We know that God is love and that He is Omnibenevolent (all good always).

1. (1Jn 4.8-10) God is love and the greatest manifestation of His love toward us is the work of Jesus Christ in saving us—God gave His Son for our benefit and well-being (our salvation).
2. God's love is perfect, infinite, and (in Christ) unconditional.

B. Because God is love, He delights in those who delight in Him.

1. Because of God's love for us and toward us, God *delights* in us when we enjoy Him. God *enjoys* it when we *enjoy* Him; He *delights* in the fact that we *delight* in Him.
 - Psalm 86.4-5; 144.15
2. Think of the example of an earthly father.
 - a) For a father that loves his son, what will bring the greatest joy and delight to his heart, more than anything else?
 - b) His greatest joy and delight is when his son simply *loves* him and *enjoys* being with him because he is his father. That is priceless.

C. God is glorified (and pleased) when we *enjoy* Him in our salvation.

1. God is glorified when we enjoy Him because our joy proclaims to the world His faithfulness, His goodness, and His loving-kindness.
2. We know (because Scripture says) that there will be joy unspeakable in eternity.
 - (Rev 21.1-5, esp. v4) When all is good, right, just, and perfect, we will enjoy God forever.
3. That is why to joy in God *today* (to enjoy Him and delight in Him today), in this sin-cursed world and in these bodies of death, is a *glory* to God.
 - a) We're not talking about some superficial, silly happiness, but rather a profound *joy* in Christ.
 - b) Our joy in God today glorifies Him because it is a *faith-based* joy and delight. It is a joy that is based on God's existence and attributes—that He is there, and that He is faithful!
 - c) We believe God. We believe His Word. And because of that, we believe that *all is well in Jesus Christ*, and therefore we have joy—we *enjoy* God—even though we suffer trials, tribulation, difficulties, and pain in this life.
 - (1) We *know* what we have and we *know* Who it is that gave it to us. We *know* what awaits us in eternity: no more sin, suffering, or death.
 - (2) (1Pet 1.8) Therefore, “believing” we can *rejoice today* with joy unspeakable (a profound joy that is so *deep* that it alters the course of our lives).
 - (3) That kind of joy in God *declares* that God is good and that He is faithful—it glorifies Him.
4. We (the saints) *will* enjoy God forever, in eternity. Therefore, we *can* enjoy God *today* because we already have “eternal” life.
 - a) Eternal life does not begin at death; it does not begin after the Millennium. It began when God saved us. The life we received at salvation is eternal life.
 - b) Therefore, we *have* eternal life today (and Jesus said it was abundant life with all spiritual blessing). Therefore, we *can* live with joy; we don't have to wait for eternity. But, it will be a faith-based joy because it will be a joy based upon what the Bible says and God's faithfulness.
 - c) If we enjoy God (based on His Word, His promises), He is pleased and He is glorified (exalted and magnified as worthy of our love, trust, and joy).

Conclusion:

Here's the point in all this: If we are living in a way that glorifies God, we will be enjoying Him.

- If we are not enjoying God, chances are we're not living in a way that pleases and glorifies Him.
- That's because God has designed a purpose into our existence (it's the way God has made this place and how He has made us): We are designed by God to glorify Him and to enjoy Him forever.
 - ✓ We're not here to glorify and please men. We're not here to enjoy the world and all it has to offer.
 - ✓ We are here to glorify God and please Him (that is where our focus needs to be always).
 - ✓ We are here to enjoy God (because He is best, there is none greater; no one loves us like God).
- The way to enjoy God forever is to live in such a way that glorifies Him. That's our life's purpose.

And that begs the question: How do we glorify God?

- What is it that we can do to glorify God and thereby enjoy Him? How do we fulfill our life's purpose?
- That will be our theme for next Sunday: Our life's "mission" (what we are to do in order to fulfill our purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever).