

Sermon Title: “On Pursuing Your Purpose”

August 2, 2020

Biblical Passage: Luke 4:42-44

Passage Background and Summary

Luke 4 details the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. It includes his temptation in the wilderness, his rejection in Nazareth, and his time in Capernaum. In the time Jesus has been in Capernaum, he has healed people, delivered people from demons and more. In verses 42-44, Jesus is preparing to leave. He’d gone away to a “deserted place,” likely to pray, and the crowds, including Simon Peter, had been searching for him. When they find Jesus, they try to detain him in Capernaum, but he says to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.” These verses end with Jesus continuing to preach in Galilee, moving in his purpose.

Sermon Points

Jesus had a strong awareness of his own purpose and call and would not allow anyone to take him off course or distract him. In the same way, each of us has an assignment, a purpose. We were placed on this earth for a purpose, and it is up to us to discern what God would have us to do. Yet, sometimes it can be easy to get distracted. There are many voices and things competing for our attention. As such, we must always know who we are and whose we are. Jesus knew his purpose when he read the scroll from Isaiah 61 earlier in Luke 4. It was one that some found offensive, specifically those in Nazareth, to the point that they tried to run him out of town. Our purpose may be offensive to some people because if we know our purpose, they can’t tell us what to do. Despite his experience in Nazareth, Jesus continued because of his commitment to his purpose. We must also be cautious of people who love us, as they can limit us and prevent us from living out our purpose. This is what happened to Jesus in Capernaum. Neither those in Nazareth nor those in Capernaum understood the magnitude and mission of his vision. It was just the beginning of his ministry, and he was aware of the bigger vision which included his life, death on the cross, and his resurrection and ascension. He knew he had to leave so that the Holy Spirit could be sent to help guide us in living out our purpose.

There is power in:

1. **Knowing your purpose.** The only way to know your purpose is to “hook up” with the God who created you in the first place. You’ve got to recognize that God is the source of your strength. This entails going back to the original manufacturer, God, and giving your life over to Him. We must be willing to sit still long enough to hear what God is saying to us in our quiet places. This pandemic has forced many of us back into our homes, into our quiet places.

2. **Guarding your purpose.** We may have to fight for our purpose, as those with good intentions may at times work to pull us away, like the crowd in Capernaum. Whatever our purpose is, being a teacher, lawyer, activist, doctor, custodian, or other, we should lay it at God's feet and watch Him do amazing things in our lives.
3. **Living in your purpose.** We can see the power of this in the life of Representative John Lewis, whose funeral gathered three presidents. Nevertheless, we don't have to be a John Lewis or a Congress person or a TV personality to live our purpose. You don't have to be a "big shot" to make a big difference in somebody's life. When you embrace the power of the Holy Spirit, you will know your purpose and walk in the power thereof, doing what God would have you to do.

Reflection Questions

1. What is your purpose?
2. How did you come to know and understand your purpose?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where someone was offended or threatened by your purpose? What happened?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you were tempted to stay where you were when you knew your purpose required moving on or going to a different job?
5. What people, places, circumstances, etc. in your life may work against you living out your purpose? How can you guard your purpose?
6. What is the role of your faith in understanding your purpose? How does your purpose relate to the life and purpose of Jesus?