

Living Life on Purpose – To Believe | 1/27/19

- Introduction
 - Overall series focus: Living Life on Purpose
 - 1 – To Believe
 - 2 – To Become
 - 3 – To Belong
 - 4 – To Be a Blessing
 - 5 – To Be on a Mission
 - Purpose 1: To Believe
 - Overall focus is geared towards what it means to believe in Christ using Paul's interaction with King Agrippa as the background.
 - That God desires that everyone would have a personal relationship with Him.
 - To examine what it truly means to believe, to have faith for salvation.
- Background on Paul's placement before King Agrippa
 - Paul as we know was imprisoned many times throughout his life, all because he was proclaiming the Gospel. This was at odds with the Jewish leaders and the world, therefore he was imprisoned for this on several occasions.
 - We might tend to think that these imprisonments were a serious detriment to the spreading of the Gospel. **But what we find is that it was God's will, as God used the evil intentions of man for good.**
 - **Many of the New Testament letters that Paul wrote were during his time in prison.**
 - Paul's journey to Rome was the divine will of God and this was done under imprisonment.
 - **These actions all had a Godly and divine purpose.**
 - Every action that Paul went through, all his imprisonments, his beatings and sufferings was all for the purpose to spread and share the Gospel to others.
 - **God intended for this moment (between Paul and King Agrippa) to be used for Paul to share his testimony and proclaim the Gospel.**
 - Not only to just King Agrippa, but to those who were present and so that they could be recorded in the very Scriptures we are reading today.
 - **God desired for Paul's predicament to be used as an opportunity to bring others to him, because by hearing the Word is how we obtain faith for salvation.**
 - **Romans 10:17**
 - **"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."**
 - **He did this so that WE could also believe and have faith.**
- Paul's declaration that we must turn to God | Acts 26:19-29
 - **Read Acts 26:19-29**
 - In these verses we come into the midst of Paul having passionately given his testimony, and his proclamation of the Gospel message.
 - **If we wanted to summarize everything that Paul is conveying in his testimony and witness, it is that we must "turn to God".**
 - **How would you describe what it means to "turn to God"?**
 - To turn to God perfectly summarizes what it means to be a Christian.
 - This is the end result of one who has answered the call upon their lives by the Holy Spirit.
 - One who has now turned their lives from living for themselves, to living for Christ.
 - **This can be clearly seen when we look at God's purpose for of Paul.**

- Acts 26:18
 - “to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”
- **To turn from darkness to light, to turn from the power of Satan to God.**
 - Our lives are meant to be lived for Christ, walking in the light and being obedient to His desires for us.
 - Not being obedient to the desires of our sinful nature which is under the power of Satan.
- **The single most important thing that we can do in our lives is to come to Christ. To respond to the call upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit.**
 - **This is where it begins. If we are going to live the life that God has for us, we must first have faith and believe in Him.**
 - **Paul desired for King Agrippa and all who heard him, to become a Christian.**
 - Acts 26:28-29
 - “And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian? And Paul said, Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am - except for these chains.”
 - It is this event that allows us to have the Holy Spirit living within us to guide and direct our lives according to the will of God.
 - **Because of this event we then see the true purpose for our lives.**
 - It is this event that allows us to spend an eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ.
- **To turn to God is to turn away from living a life that has us at the center.**
 - Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus was him turning his life to God.
 - Previously he had persecuted Christians and fought against God. He was fulfilling the sinful desires of his heart.
 - Then after an encounter with Jesus, he believed and had faith in Him. He then turned from a life that was fighting God, to one that served Him all the way until he died.
 - Your life before Christ.
 - Without Christ your purpose and focus in life is primarily yourself.
 - This may certainly include the desire to love and do good things for others, but ultimately your life is about you.
 - It’s to fulfill the desires of your sinful nature.
 - Your life after Christ.
 - Your purpose in life has now shifted from pleasing and satisfying yourself, to glorifying and serving Christ.
 - **It is turning away from your old life and to now serve God.**
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:9b
 - “...and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,”
 - Salvation is only the beginning. To live our lives for Christ is a life long journey and ongoing sanctification.
- **Does the concept of “turning to God” leave any room to believe that Christianity is nothing more than a check box?**
- **Do you think to turn to God requires commitment and a change in one’s life?**
- **We must believe, we must have faith that Jesus is the Christ.**

- When we turn to God, we do this because of our belief and faith in Jesus Christ.
 - **This is where our Christian walk and life begins.**
 - **Belief/faith is foundational.**
- We must have faith in Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross to be justified.
 - John 3:16
 - “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”
 - Ephesians 2:8
 - “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,”
 - We are saved by God’s grace through faith. Faith is our “belief in Him”.
- **While Jesus died on the cross for the whole world, this does not mean that everyone immediately (without faith) will receive salvation.**
 - Without faith in who Christ is what He did, we cannot be justified.
 - Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross paid the price and took down the barriers between God and man and made salvation possible.
- What does it mean then to believe or have faith?
 - **What belief or true faith is NOT**
 - Faith is NOT purely intellectual knowledge.
 - Just intellectual knowledge alone is not true faith.
 - Just because you are an expert in biblical trivia or have the entire Bible memorized, this will not save you.
 - King Herod is a perfect example.
 - **Herod was significant knowledge of the Jewish people and of the works of Christ.**
 - He was the custodian of the temple treasury and could appoint the Jewish high priest.
 - Acts 26:3a
 - “especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews...”
 - **Yet he didn’t TRULY believe or have faith.**
 - Acts 26:26-27
 - “For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.
 - Faith is NOT purely an emotional experience
 - While emotions can certainly be involved, we need to be sure that we are not seeking solely an “emotional experience” as assurance of our salvation.
 - **True Faith is our belief, trust and confidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on the cross for our sins. Was buried and resurrected from the dead and he is our Savior and Lord of our lives.**
 - **True faith is belief**
 - Intellectual

- How would you describe how it is that you trust God?
- **True faith is confidence**
 - Confidence is the feeling of being certain that something will happen or that something is true.
 - It's not enough to be 25% or even 50% confident that Jesus is who He says He is.
 - We need to have 100% confidence.
 - **We are confident that we WILL spend an eternity in heaven with Jesus.**
 - We are confident that Jesus is the Christ.
 - David expressed his confidence in God.
 - Psalm 108:1
 - "My heart is confident, God; I will sing; I will sing praises with the whole of my being."
 - Psalm 62:5-8
 - "Rest in God alone, my soul, for my hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will not be shaken. May salvation and glory depend on God, my strong rock. My refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people pour out your hearts before Him. God is our refuge."
 - If you are confident in something is your mind easily changed?
- Summary
 - Belief
 - We believe intellectually and in our hearts the truth of Christ.
 - Trust
 - We fully affirm that what the Bible says about Christ is true and we put our trust in its truth.
 - Confidence
 - We are confident in what Christ did for us on the cross. We are confident that he is the Son of God. We are not deterred.
 - True faith is belief, trust and confidence in this:
 - John 3:16
 - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."
- **With faith we also repent.**
 - When we have true saving faith, and when we truly believe who Jesus is. This leads to repentance.
 - **Repentance is not optional when it comes to salvation. If we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins then we MUST acknowledge them.**
 - Faith/belief with repentance, brings forgiveness of sins.
 - Acts 10:43
 - "All the prophets testify about Him that through His name everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins."
 - 1 John 1:9
 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - **To repent means much more than just saying we are "sorry".**

- **If we are to truly confess our sins to God, it cannot be a weak or shallow confession where we are simply saying the words out of obligation or because we “got caught”.**
- **To truly confess our sins to God is because we feel the desire within our hearts, because God is showing us where we have sinned.**
- We MUST acknowledge that we have sinned against God
 - 1 John 1:10
 - “If we say, we don’t have any sin, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”
- **To repent means that we acknowledge and confess our sins and that we actually desire to turn away from those sins.**
- That these sins are contrary to God.
- We can have great joy knowing that God desires for all to come to repentance.
 - The question “does God desire for us to come to faith?” is made pretty clear in Scriptures.
 - 2 Peter 3:9
 - “The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is **patient with you**, not wanting any to perish **but all to come to repentance.**”
 - God does not just throw the book at us the first time we sin, He is patience and desires that we come to Him.
 - Romans 10:13
 - “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
 - This is a promise made by God that we should never forget.
- **Explain the difference between one who asks for forgiveness because its forced or they were “caught” as opposed to one who truly repents.**
- **Do you think people are “offended” when they hear that they NEED to repent? If so why?**