

The Purpose for Christ

Luke 2:11; Matthew 1:20-23

Purpose has been simply defined as the reason something exists or why it was created/made. It has also been defined as the intention or objective of a person or business. The most basic question behind purpose is why.

Why does a company, church, school, etc. exist?

We have a purpose statement. It reads: **“Fellowship Bible Church is organized specifically for the God-honoring purpose of the edification of believers from God’s Holy Word, the Bible, the evangelism of non-believers through the Gospel of God’s saving grace, and the fellowship of its members through worship, preaching/teaching, and Christ-centered activities.”**

McDonald’s purpose is to feed and foster communities.

The purpose of Walmart is to save people money so they can live better.

The purpose of the Ford Motor Company is to help build a better world, where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams.

Every business or church must answer that fundamental question of who they are and why they exist. Without that foundation, there is aimlessness and, well, purposelessness.

But purpose isn’t just limited to businesses or charities or churches or schools. People have for centuries bantered about the age-old question, why am I here? Or what’s my purpose? The answer to which has puzzled philosophers, sociologists, and scientists alike. They have looked at it from every conceivable angle considering any biological, sociological, or philosophical reason. They have looked at it through the lenses of a microscope and the telescope.

They have plumbed the depths of the sea and searched the ruins of ancient civilizations. They have pondered the length and breadth of the universe searching, combing through distant galaxies and the composition of stars trying to

discover man’s purpose and while they have waxed on about theories, they have neglected to satisfactorily answer the question of why I am here.

In their search to discover our purpose, they have rejected the one source for which their inquisitive minds could finally be at rest in answer to that single yet profoundly simple question.

While many dismiss it as utter nonsense, refusing to accept its truth as a viable answer to their question, the Bible makes it profoundly clear that mankind was created by God for the express purpose of giving Him glory. Glorifying God begins with knowing God. If mankind is to glorify God, **Psalm 100:2-3** tells us that begins with knowing God. **“Worship (glorify) the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs (to glorify Him). KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD. It is He who made us, and we are His...”**

Many people today don’t know their real purpose in life because they don’t know God. If they don’t know God, they can’t give Him glory. And that even goes for the believer. If we don’t get to know God as we should, we cannot glorify Him as He deserves.

It stands to reason then that if we were created in His image, according to **Genesis 1:26-27**, our purpose can’t be fulfilled if we don’t know Him. After pursuing his own bucket list of desires, Solomon concluded in **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** that the only thing that makes life worthwhile is honoring and obeying God. So, a second way to glorify God is living a life in relationship with Him and faithfully serving and obeying Him. **I Samuel 12:24 “Be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you.”**

Even Jesus talked about the glory He gave the Father when He said, **“I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do” (John 17:4).**

But the sad reality is that in our fallen state, as sinners separated from God because of sin, we

cannot, nor will we ever desire to glorify God apart from being saved. That's why God sent Jesus, who had been promised as early as **Genesis 3:15** when He revealed that a redeemer would come and provide a covering for sin, making it possible to return to the purpose for which we were created.

We have so far in this series looked at the prophecy around Christ and the people before Christ. This morning we will consider the purpose for Christ. It is the message of the angels that provide us with why He came. His purpose is disclosed by the angel to Mary, when she is told that His name will be Jesus. In speaking to Joseph, the angel revealed the same to him. And then of course, it is proclaimed by the angel to the shepherds.

If there is a foundational passage I would use to underscore the purpose of Jesus in coming to earth, I would give you two. We'll touch on both.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost."

The Message says "He came to find and restore the lost."

The second passage I would highlight is **Mark 10:45** "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

These two passages, coupled with the passages from the Gospel accounts of His birth that we will also look at this morning, seem abundantly clear to me as to why Jesus left the glory of heaven and came to earth to be born. Let me suggest to you this morning that the purpose of Jesus in coming to earth is threefold:

Jesus came to seek the lost

Jesus came to serve the lost

Jesus came to save the lost

I. JESUS CAME TO SEEK THE LOST –

Luke 19:10

We are at times overwhelmed, even distraught when we can't find something, especially when we think we know where we put it last.

We can't find our keys.

We can't find our wallet.

We can't find our reading glasses.

We can't find our car in the parking lot.

And let's be clear, the more we value an item, the greater our effort in trying to find it. That's one of the reasons two years ago we spent a couple hours walking and driving around the neighborhood in the dark looking for our dog or why I was so frantic at a Detroit Tiger game when I got separated from David when he was about 5 years old.

The more we value something, the more time and energy we will spend seeking it.

We understand the word seek to mean searching for what is missing. Another definition adds that it is something out of reach or not yet found.

We are told in **Luke 15** that one day sinners and tax collectors had assembled to listen to Jesus speak. Never wanting a good crisis to go to waste, the religious leaders complained about Jesus hanging out and eating with sinners, something in their own self-righteousness they would never do. In that time and culture, to eat with someone meant you accepted them and condoned their behavior.

Whatever Jesus had prepared to share with these sinners and tax collectors that day He put away and changed His topic to help illustrate why He hung out with the disreputable crowd telling three stories to underscore why He did what He did.

The first story was about a lost sheep. An unnamed shepherd had 100 sheep. One day while tending them, one of the sheep wandered off and got lost. We aren't told whether this sheep had the habit of wandering away from the flock or if this was the first time. Whatever the case, the passage says that the shepherd left the 99 other sheep in the open country and went out in search of that one lost sheep. He apparently didn't worry that any of the other sheep would wander off as he struck out to find that one sheep.

Now in the scheme of things let me put it into financial perspective. In today's market the average adult ewe is worth \$250, and an adult ram is worth

\$500. A young sheep or lamb is worth between \$75-\$150. From the economic side of things, one sheep seems hardly worth the risk of losing others. Yet that one sheep was worth far more than just a financial loss. So he went out to find it and when he did Jesus said he took that one sheep home and threw a party. He was so excited to have found that one sheep, that he called or texted his friends and neighbors inviting them to a party.

We don't know what kind of party he had, but let's just say it's pizza and pop with some chips. Maybe they had cheesecake for dessert. After all, what's a party without dessert. Again, from an economic standpoint, that party probably cost more than the value of the sheep, yet he was so overjoyed, the cost of the party was of no concern to him.

Jesus then connected the dots for the religious leaders who questioned His character and motive for hanging out with sinners. He said that there would be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repented than over 99 self-righteous people who didn't feel the need to repent, smug in their own self-worth.

To further hit home the point, Jesus told another story about a woman who had 10 coins. Some scholars suggest it was part of her dowry given at marriage. One day a coin came up missing. How, we aren't told, but we know it didn't just get up and move itself. Maybe one of the kids was playing with it. The type of coin she lost was worth a day's wages. That meant she had 10 days of wages. In the scheme of things, it didn't have a lot of monetary value, but to her it was priceless. Again, Jesus said that she searched by cleaning the entire house until she found that lost coin.

Now, men, take note. If your wife says she lost something, it may be a ploy to get you to help clean the house when she knows where that item really is. Like the shepherd, she too invited her friends and neighbors to enjoy a celebration because she found her lost coin. Once more, we see that the cost of the party was probably more than the value of the coin, yet the sentimental value was priceless and worth celebrating its discovery. Jesus drew the same

conclusion that great rejoicing would occur over one sinner repenting.

You might say, well, even if the lost sheep and lost coin were never recovered, although it would have been distressing to the owner, at the end of the day they would have moved on. Greatly disappointed, yes, but they would have recovered. He could buy another sheep. She could work to recoup the money.

So Jesus told a third story. It's about a man who had two sons. If there is anything of inestimable value, it is the worth of a person. We would and should consider them priceless. For some unknown reason, the son had had enough. Tired of living under the rules and roof of his father, he decided it was time to move out. He wanted to be on his own. So he went to his father and asked for his inheritance.

Please understand that in that culture getting one's inheritance meant the person had died. In effect, the son was saying to the father "I wish you were dead." When it says the father divided the property, probably means that all his assets were tied up in land. He would have had to sell off the portion belonging to the younger son to get the cash from the land. After all, property wasn't mobile and couldn't be taken where he was going.

In the story Jesus only tells us that the son left. We don't know where he went other than it was to a far country. We don't know for how long he was gone other than that it was long enough to spend every dime he had on loose living. You can make a lot of friends fast with a lot of money, but as soon as it's gone so are they. Hungry and shamed he took a job feeding pigs, something no self-respecting Jew would ever do, but in desperation he took what he could get. Misery often drives people to do things that are otherwise beneath them, even though it brings a large measure of disgrace to them.

After a while, Jesus tells us that the young man came to his senses. In other words, he realized that he had really messed up. He admitted how wrong he had been. At the lowest point of his life, he didn't value himself worth anything. As a matter of fact, Jesus says he was willing to go back home and sell

himself to his father as a slave, that's how little regard he had of himself. Notice what he says about himself **"I have sinned...I am no longer worthy."** (Luke 15:21) However long it took him to travel back home, he rehearsed his lines hoping his father wouldn't turn his back on him.

The father saw him a long way off and ran to him and embraced him. Before the son could finish his speech about how worthless he was, the father said "nonsense" or something like that. Every day since the son had left, the father sought after the son by going out to the end of the driveway to look for his son returning home. Jesus said that the father was filled with compassion. In the eyes of the father, the son had great value and demonstrated his worth by giving him a robe, shoes, and a ring. And then he told his servants to prepare a feast.

The point Jesus is making is obvious. Sinners matter to Him. They are worth more than those who don't believe they need any help. Jesus came to seek the lost, people who don't feel they are worth anything at all.

Friend, is that how you feel? Do you feel like you don't matter to God, that somehow what you have done has put you out of God's reach or that He doesn't care? Have you become convinced that your worth is of no concern to Him? Jesus came to seek each and every one of us no matter how slimy the pig pen is we may have found ourselves in. With compassion, He looks for the lost until they are found. We can stay in the pig pen, or we can come to our senses and realize that He is seeking us. He is welcoming us with a robe of righteousness, shoes fit for the preparation of the gospel, a ring of belonging topped off with a lavish feast. You are of inestimable value demonstrated by the cost to buy you from the slave market of sin. He gave His life.

The gospels give us compelling accounts of Jesus seeking others and finding them. Stopping under a Sycamore tree, Jesus sought a notorious crook under the guise of being a tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus. Jesus exclaimed to the crowd that salvation had come to his home that day.

On their way to Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples passed through a northern part of the region. They stopped in a village to rest and be refreshed with a meal. Sitting by a well He began a conversation with a woman. She was a woman with a reputation. She had been married five times and was living with a man who was not her husband. He sought her out and offered her living water, which over the course of conversation she drank from freely and was given new life.

Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!"

Jesus came to seek sinners to offer them eternal life. When I was a counselor, we sang this little chorus:
**Jesus is the friend of sinners, Friend of sinners,
 Friend of sinners.**

Jesus is the friend of sinners, He can set you free.

CCLI1292471

Throughout the gospels we see Jesus' purpose being fulfilled by seeking the lost.

Scripture gives us a second purpose for the coming of Jesus. Turn to **Mark 10:45** where we see Jesus comes to serve the lost.

II. JESUS CAME TO SERVE THE LOST – Mark 10:45

I want to point out three ways in which Jesus served the lost and in those three ways people met Jesus. The first is through His miracles.

A. Jesus Served People Through His Miracles

"A miracle is an extraordinary or unnatural event that reveals or confirms a specific message through a mighty work." In other words, they can't be explained rationally or scientifically. They defy reason and physics. And Jesus performed plenty of miracles during His three years of ministry.

Every miracle serves three purposes. The first is to glorify God. Everything Jesus did served to bring honor to the Father. Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He told the disciples that his sickness and subsequent resurrection was to glorify God.

The second is to help others. Whether healing the lame, the deaf, the blind, the mute, the demon possessed; restoring shriveled hands; curing lepers, raising the dead; or feeding multitudes, all of them were helped by Jesus' miraculous touch.

We read in **Acts 10:37-38** **“You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.”**

A third reason for His miracles was to show others that He was really who He claimed to be, the Son of God, so that they might believe and through believing have eternal life.

John 20:30-31 **“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”** (Emphasis added)

When Jesus calmed the storm in **Matthew 8**, His disciples were astonished and asked **“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and waves obey Him!”** (**Matthew 8:27**)

At the end of his gospel, John admits that **“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”** (**John 21:25**)

One would think that because of all the miracles Jesus did that more people would have believed Him to be the Messiah. Yet that's not the case. Instead of receiving Him for eternal life, they forcibly tried to make Him king or expected Him to cure all their physical and social ills. In spite of their opinion and persistence, Jesus served them through His miracles.

A second way in which Jesus served people was through His example.

B. Jesus Served People Through His Example

In his cantata *No Greater Love*, John W. Peterson underscores the good deeds of Jesus with these lyrics: **“Our example is He, and like Him we should be, Who went about doing good.”**

We would expect that being the Son of God He would embody the fruit of the Spirit, yet when we take into consideration the following passages, we see that in His humanity His example stands as our pattern of how to live a godly life.

Hebrews 4:15 **“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”**

I Peter 3:18 **“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous.”**

Through the foreshadowing pen of **Isaiah (53:7)**, the prophet provides us with a glimpse into His character at the end of His life when he writes: **“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.”**

In the gospels we witness the example of His compassion, His love, His tenderness, His forgiveness, His grace, His mercy, His patience, and His long-suffering. Jesus served others through His example. **“Our example is He, and like Him we should be, Who went about doing good.”**

A third way Jesus served people was through His teaching.

C. Jesus Served People Through His Teaching

Jesus taught through parables like the Sower and the four types of soil.

Jesus taught through visual observations like the poor woman putting in all her money at the Temple. Jesus taught through stories about the wheat and the tares.

Jesus taught through illustrations like when he referred to the birds being cared for, or the flowers being clothed.

Jesus taught through life experiences like the feeding of the five thousand and calming the storm. Jesus taught from the Old Testament like when He read from Isaiah telling the people in the synagogue that today that prophecy had been fulfilled in their presence.

Jesus came to serve people through His miracles, through His example, and through His teaching. I wonder today have you MET Him, the one who was born in a stable in the little town of Bethlehem?

Jesus had a purpose in coming.

He came to seek the lost.

He came to serve the lost.

They are both great reasons He came and people would be well served and content had they been the only reasons for His coming. But He would have fallen short of His ultimate purpose, for it is in the Christmas account of His birth, coupled with what we read in **Luke 19:10** that we see His primary reason for coming. Jesus came to save the lost.

III. JESUS CAME TO SAVE THE LOST –

Luke 19:10; Luke 2:11; Matthew 1:20-23; Mark 10:45

People have for centuries wondered if God exists. Is He out there somewhere, and if so why does He seem hidden? We can assume that if we read only the first part of **John 1:18** – “**No one has ever seen God**” that God is absent. To neglect reading the rest of the verse is like believing there is no sun after it has set for the night forgetting that the earth rotates.

That God became man in the form of baby Jesus who grew and lived and died is tantamount to revealing God as the rest of the verse attests. “**No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only (referring to the incarnate Jesus), who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.**”

In other words, Jesus reveals God. That’s why we call Him Emmanuel – God with us.

Meister Eckhardt wrote: “**God is like a person who clears his throat while hiding and so gives himself away.**”

In other words, when Jesus was born, God cleared

His throat and made Himself visible and said here I am, I have come to save. **Matthew 1:23** describes it well when he states that this child would be “**Emmanuel – God with us.**” God cleared His throat and made Himself known in this infant Jesus.

That Jesus came to save is evident in His name.

A. It’s Evident In His Name – He is Jesus

When Joseph considered what to do with his pregnant fiancé, an angel came to tell him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. He told the troubled carpenter that it was the doing of the Holy Spirit and not an impassioned one night stand of unfaithfulness on the part of Mary. In other words, it was a miracle. Joseph was told to give this child the name Jesus (**Matthew 1:21**). The angel told Mary the same thing in **Luke 1:31**.

Jesus is the Greek name for the Hebrew name Joshua. It means God saves or God is our salvation. Lots of boys had that name in both the Old and New Testaments, but it was simply a reminder to them that God was their deliverer. That this name was given to Jesus is significant because it meant that the Savior had finally come, the deliverer had arrived in person. This name wasn’t just another reminder, Jesus was the actual redeemer/Savior.

Testifying before the Sanhedrin, akin to going before our Supreme Court, Peter made this bold statement in **Acts 4:12**: “**Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.**”

That He is the Savior, means there was a need. The need was our sin, something we can never do anything about. We are all guilty of sin and therefore doomed to eternity separated from God. **John 3:16** in essence says that if we don’t believe in Christ, we will perish. That doesn’t mean we will cease to exist when we die, but that we will be forever banished to eternal punishment, judged for our refusal to believe in Jesus who offered Himself as our sacrifice. A person’s name was akin to their person, their character, their essence. Our flag is a symbol of our nation, it represents all that America

stands for. Pledging allegiance to the flag is the same as pledging allegiance to the country. When we say there is no other name by which we can be saved, we are saying there is no other person by which we can be saved.

Jesus is able to save those who call on His name because He paid the debt we owed for sin. The debt is sin and the payment requires the shedding of blood or death. Only one person could satisfy that debt owed and it was Jesus, whose perfect life became the perfect sacrifice required to satisfy the wrath and judgement of God. Jesus paid the penalty by dying on the cross, but three days later His resurrection affirmed that God had accepted His sacrifice.

The salvation He offers through His sacrifice is free to all who will agree with God and admit that they are a sinner in need of a Savior and accept the gift offered to them through His substitutionary sacrifice. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. (**John 3:16**)

All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. (**Romans 10:13**)

The name that Jesus was given when He was born is evidence that He came to save the lost.

These passages give us one more evidence that He saves the lost. It's evident in His title. He is Christ.

B. It's Evident In His Title – He is the Christ

Christ is the equivalent to the Hebrew word Messiah and means anointed one or chosen one. In the Old Testament, a person who was anointed was given a specific and special role. To call Jesus the anointed one, set Him apart with a God-ordained purpose.

People like Peter testified that Jesus was the Christ. On one occasion while with His disciples Jesus asked who people thought He was. What's the word on the street. People had various ideas: Elijah, Jeremiah or another great prophet. Some said John the Baptist. But then Jesus wanted to know who they, His disciples, thought He was. Peter was the first to chime in and say **“You are the Christ, the**

Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16) Jesus commended Peter saying that it was God who had revealed that to him, not man.

Over time the Jews thought the promised Messiah would deliver them from physical oppression related to governmental overreach by opposing nations or that the Messiah would deliver them from physical illnesses and disabilities. While Jesus could do that and to some degree did heal diseases, He came as the Christ specially anointed by God to save men spiritually.

In a discussion with a peasant, a Spanish religious man suggested that there was a God but no heaven. After pondering that a moment, the peasant then asked “So what is this God for?”

God came down in the form of an infant. He came to seek and save the lost. That is His purpose. Let me conclude with two stories, both of them true.

There was a 12-year-old boy who in anger over how demanding his father was got hold of a gun and killed him. One night as the guard roamed the halls of the detention center, he heard the boy sobbing repeatedly, “I want my father.” To him, his father was now absent.

In contrast to that Philip Yancey tells about a visit with his mother who showed him a picture that was worn and faded. It was a picture of he and his brother and their mother. He asked why she held onto that picture when there were so many others in much better condition. She went on to talk about his father whom he hardly knew, nor had any memories. When he was still an infant his father contracted polio and spent the remainder of his days in an iron lung. Children weren't allowed into the area where polio patients were kept, so he never got to know his father. She went on to explain that the picture was jammed between some knobs on the outside of the machine in such a way that by looking at a mirror he was able to see his family. Here was someone he barely knew, but who loved him, someone who was thinking about him all the time.

That, my friend, is God. Society has done all it can to erase God or to make Him out to be some fiend bent on meting out wrath or to push the narrative that there is no God, let alone someone who cares.

Society has, in a similar way to that 12-year-old boy, killed off the father. But there is the Father, who across the corridors of time, looked at our images through the tattered world created by sin and revealed to us that He exists and that He loves us by sending His Son whose purpose is to seek and serve and save the lost. When it comes right down to it, it's not a matter of disbelief that Jesus is the Savior, it's a matter of disobedience. All the evidence is there. **Will we accept or reject the truth that Jesus is who the angel said He was, He is who He came to be, He is who we need Him to be? So I wonder this morning as we come into the week in which we celebrate, have you MET the Jesus of Christmas?**

We often hear that Jesus is the reason for the season. I recently heard it put another way that is perhaps more sobering: We are the reason for the season. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to save you.