

Sermon: *What on Earth Am I here For?*
Text: *Ephesians 1:11*
Date: *October 12, 2008 AM*
Place: *Jesup First UMC*

Last Sunday, we looked at a few questions together. What does God want from me? He wants everything! What's it going to take? It's going to take discipline. And why should I do it? Because He has done so much for you. And nearly 100 people committed themselves to God through the 40 Days of Purpose Campaign. And so, here we are, seeking to know and understand God's purpose for our lives. And today, we're going to look at three fundamental questions that we all wrestle with from time to time!

1. The Question of Existence: Why am I here?

Now, this isn't a new question; Jeremiah asked it; he said: "*Why was I born? Was it only to have trouble and sorrow, to end my life in disgrace?*" A lot of people ask that same question. In fact, one man said: "*My life is a superb cast, but I can't figure out the plot.*" Someone else said: "*I hope life isn't a joke, because I just don't get it.*"

A professor at Northeastern University wrote to 250 professionals around the country and asked them: "*What is the purpose of life?*" and you wouldn't believe the answers he got. Some people guessed; others made something up; and still others admitted they didn't know. But one man said: "*I don't see any purpose to life.*"

Now, that's sad, because a life without purpose isn't really worth living. Maybe that's why people commit suicide, because when you take God out of

the equation, life doesn't make sense. And let's face it, everybody wants life to have meaning; we're just seeking for it in many different ways.

Some people try the mystical approach. They say: "*Just look within yourself and find your purpose,*" but if that worked, we'd all know the purpose of life. Oprah says we just need to get in touch with our inner spirituality, but what if your inner spirituality is rotten to the core? It just doesn't work.

Well, some try the philosophical approach. Everybody seems to have a different philosophy. The survivalist says we're here to stay alive. The naturalist says we're here to perpetuate the race. The hedonist says we're here to have a good time. The materialist says we're here to acquire more stuff. But none of these seem to answer life's deepest question.

So, some try the self-help approach and they rush out to buy the latest book to tell them how to improve their lives, because they believe self-improvement is the path to real joy, peace, and purpose. But that doesn't work, because in reality you can't help yourself.

In fact, none of these approaches work. You see, your purpose is bigger than any of these. You were created by God for God with a special purpose in mind. And until you get to know God, you're not going to understand the purpose of your life.

Proverbs 16:4 says: "*The Lord has made everything for His own purpose.*" Everything has a purpose! Ephesians 1:4 says: "*Long before He laid down Earth's foundations, He had us in mind and settled on us as the focus of His love to be made whole and holy*

by His love.” God says I was created to be loved by God. You see, God didn’t need us; He wasn’t lonely! He didn’t need servants; He already had the angels! He just made you to love you.

That’s the question of existence: why am I here? I am here to be loved by God!

Now, there’s a second question that we need to consider this morning. It is ...

2. The question of Significance: Does my life matter?

Even Isaiah wondered if his life really mattered; he said: “My work all seems useless. I’ve spent my strength for nothing and for no purpose at all.” You see, the thing that gives life meaning is that we were created by God for a purpose.

During World War II, the Germans kept the Jews in Concentration Camps and each prisoner had a job. Then one day, the Concentration Camp was bombed. So, to keep the prisoners busy, they made them move the rubble from one pile to another, day after day. Guess what happened? The prisoners began losing their minds. You see, they had no purpose, just a series of meaningless tasks.

Now, you’re going to live your life at one of three levels. The first level is survival. That’s where a lot of us live. We’re just trying to survive. We’re not really living; just existing.

The second level is success. A lot of us live here too. By the world’s standards, we’ve got it made. We have a comfortable salary; we have money; we have possessions; we have good health. But there’s still

something missing because success doesn't bring fulfillment. It takes more than status to bring satisfaction.

The third level is significance. That's when you're really living. And significance only comes when you understand the purpose of your life and when you realize how much you really matter to God!

Now, listen how much you matter to God. God told Isaiah: **"I am your Creator. You were in my care, even before you were born."** And Isaiah said: **"You scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book."** You see, God isn't playing games with us. He really loves us and He has a purpose for our lives, a purpose that is eternal. Psalm 33 says: **"His plans endure forever; His purposes last eternally."**

And so, over the next few weeks, we're going to look at God's five eternal purposes for our lives. Now, we're going to live 60, 70, maybe 100 years here, but when this life is over, we're going to spend eternity with God. God says: I was made to live forever. And so, everything we do is preparing us for eternity.

II Corinthians 5:1 says: **"When this tent we live in – our body here on earth – is torn down. God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home He Himself made, which will last forever."** So King Solomon invites us: **"Leave your impoverished confusion and live and walk up the street to a life with meaning."**

That's the question of significance: does my life matter? And God says: Yes, your life matters to me.

And then, there's a third question to consider this morning; it is ...

3. The Question of Intention: What is my purpose?

King David asked God: "*Why did you create us? For nothing?*" Someone said: "*Unless you assume the existence of God, the question of life's meaning and purpose is irrelevant.*" If there is no God, you're just a freak of nature and life doesn't matter. But the Bible says there is a God and He has a purpose for your life. And if you're going to know your purpose, you need get to know Him better.

If I want to know how this projector works, I need to read the instruction manual or call the company that made it. If I want to know how the computer in my office works, I need to read the instruction manual or call Dell.

Now, here's the point: if you want to know your purpose, you've got to read the owner's manual. God created you; God loves you; and God has a purpose for your life. Philosophy won't tell you what it is looking inside won't help you find it; and self-help books won't help you find it. Listen to your Creator and read the book!

Colossians 1 says: "*For everything – absolutely everything – above and below, visible and invisible ... everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.*" The Bible says: "*It is in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for ... part of the overall purpose He is working out in everything and everyone.*"

And so, we've set aside these 40 Days, to get to know God better, because we know that if we submit our lives to Him, if we read our Bible and devotional readings every day, if we listen to His word in the sermons and through those in our small groups, then God is going to speak to us and confirm His purposes for our lives. Because God doesn't just have one purpose for our lives; He has five purposes. We were planned for God's pleasure; we were formed for God's family; we were created to become like Jesus; we were shaped to serve God; and we were made for a mission.

That's what we're here for!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.