

FIND YOUR PURPOSE

EPHESIANS 1:3-10

# GOD'S PURPOSE



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

DAVID MURRAY  
FEBRUARY 26, 2023 (PM)

# INTRODUCTION

We are living in uncertain and anxious times. The world has been and is being de-stabilized by moral confusion, natural disasters, the specter of World War III, and a global pandemic. Many feel disoriented, unsafe, fearful. It's hard to plan or have any sense that there is a bigger plan.

All of us crave both a sense of personal purpose for our lives, but also a sense that there is an overall purpose to this earth. But many have neither. This results in drift, laziness, a sense of meaninglessness and pointlessness and languishing. At every stage of life - kids, teens, young adults, middle-aged, and retirees - we hear the questions: "Why am I here?....What's the point?....Is there any purpose to all this?"

Cornell University Professor of Psychology Anthony Burrow is an expert on purpose. His research found that having a sense of purpose:

- Is essential to our well-being.
- Is a mood regulator and a de-stressor.
- Helps us overcome difficulties and persevere through hard times.
- Make us more attractive to others because people sense a directionality about us.
- Improves our health and increases longevity.
- Slows cognitive decline and lowers the risk of developing Alzheimers.
- Is associated with higher income and net worth.
- Less impulsive decisions and more self-discipline.

Purpose also energizes our daily life, calms us in stressful situations, simplifies decision-making, directs our career, and prepares us for eternity.

Do you see how important a sense of purpose is? It's worth pursuing, isn't it? But before we look at our personal purpose (which we'll do in the coming weeks), as Christians we must begin with the overall purpose, the big purpose, the most important purpose, which is God's purpose. **What is God's purpose?** We start with that because we will never find our personal purpose unless we discover and submit to God's big purpose.

## BACKGROUND

Paul references God's purpose three times in the first eleven verses.

- "...according to the purpose of his will" (5).
- "...according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ" (9).
- "...according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will" (11).



What is God's purpose?



# 1. GOD'S PURPOSE IS OUR SALVATION

God's purpose is a plan with three phases.

## Phase 1 (4-5): The Eternal Past (Pre-history)

**God chose his people for holiness (4).** Before the world was, before there was an atom of this world, God picked a people. Even knowing that they would fall into sin, he chose them so that they would one day be a separate and blameless people.

**God predestined his people for adoption (5).** God did not keep his people at arms length, but his salvation was all about bringing his people into his family as his adopted children through his eternal Son.

## Phase 2 (7-9): Time now (World History)

**Jesus blesses his people (6).** God's blessing is found in his beloved Son Jesus Christ, and nowhere else.

**Jesus redeems his people (7).** Jesus' blood paid the debt of all his people, buying them back from slavery.

**Jesus forgives our sins (7).** He releases us, loosens us, frees us from the guilt of sin.

**Jesus reveals his wisdom (8-9).** God lavishes his grace by blessing, redeeming, forgiving, and teaching us.

## Phase 3 (10-11): The Eternal Future (Post-History)

**We will have a united future (10).** When time has reached its end, when it's full-time for world history, God will unite his divided and separated people together forever.

**We will have a rich future (11).** God has planned a rich inheritance for us to enjoy that will never lose its value or run out.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Praise God because his purpose is unchangeable.** God only has a Plan A. His plan has never changed, is not changing, and will never change. Take security and strength from the unchangeable purpose of God (Col. 1:16; Rom. 11:36).

**Praise God for his purpose of grace.** His aim is our salvation. His love is available now in Christ. Get to Christ to participate in God's plan by faith. There we find God's blessing, redemption, forgiveness, and wisdom.

**Praise God that his purpose will be accomplished.** Unlike all our purposes and plans, God's purpose and plan will succeed in every single detail. No one can defeat his plan, thwart his plan, slow his plan. Trust God's wise plan and good purpose in every area of life so that you can fit your life-story into his bigger story.

PRAISE THE PLANNER BY  
SINGING TO THE SAVIOR



Why does God focus so much on our salvation?  
Because it's the way to display his greatest glory.

## 2. GOD'S PURPOSE IS HIS GLORY

"...to the praise of his glorious grace" (6). "...so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory" (12).

In the Bible, the word "glory" means literally "heavy" or "weighty". Glory is something that makes a joyfully weighty impression on others. It leaves people awestruck and amazed. That's why we speak of "a glorious sunset," or "a glorious view." It's a sight that impresses us with its beauty, power, size, rarity, etc. We are stopped in our tracks and stunned into silence or into praise of the sight or sound. It's one of those rare moments or experiences that we never forget. We feel fulfilled, completed, satisfied. It's the peak of human existence, what we sense we were made for.

God's aim is his glory in our salvation by grace. His ultimate purpose in our salvation is his glory both here on earth and hereafter in heaven. He has designed our salvation in such a way that it results in a joyfully weighty impression sometimes in the present and all the time in the eternal future. As we see his salvation more and more, we see, feel, and experience his beautiful weighty glory more and more, we are stunned into silence and awed into praise more and more. We feel more and more fulfilled completed, and satisfied. We realize this is the peak of being human, it's what we were made for, it's what fits who God is and what we are so perfectly. Our salvation is to the praise of his glorious grace and for the praise of his glory (6, 12).

Some have said that God's pursuit of his glory shows that God is egotistical and selfish. However, although human pursuit of personal glory is always egotistical and selfish, that's not the case with God's glory. How so? First, because his glory is the result of our salvation (and so benefitting others), and, second, his glory is the reward of our salvation (and so benefitting others). God has so designed his glory that it is advanced in his being other-centered, and it is seen and displayed in a way that satisfies and completes us.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Be saved to give God's glory.** The most important priority in our lives is to fulfill God's plan of his glory. Nothing is more vital than that we cooperate with that, support that, and advance that plan. There's only one way to do that and that's the salvation we spoke about earlier in this sermon. That's not a one-off event, but it can grow and increase the more we are saved from sin and to holiness, and the more we understand, appreciate, and communicate our salvation.

**Be saved to enjoy God's glory.** Your salvation will give God glory, and that glory of God will satisfy and complete you. Seeing and savoring God's glory will be your finest moments in life. That's why worship is so wonderful. When we join our voices in praise of God's gracious glory and glorious grace, we are operating at our highest human level of existence. It's what makes us what God intended us to be.

WE ARE SAVED FOR GOD'S GLORY  
WE ARE SATISFIED WITH GOD'S GLORY



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories

# SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

**Remind yourself of God's purpose every day.** Keep God's overall purpose before you in good times and bad, in exciting times and boring times, in making decisions about how to allocate your resources, in moral and relational choices. Go back to the benefits of purpose in Burrows research and feel that in real life as you confidently trust in God's purpose.

**Admire Christ's embrace of God's purpose.** Jesus believed in God's purpose, embraced God's purpose, pursued God's purpose, loved God's purpose (Ps. 21: 5-7; Lk. 22:42; John 17). His salvation of sinners brought the greatest possible glory to God and his grace.

**Prayer.** Glorious God, help me to believe in your purpose, embrace your purpose, pursue your purpose, and love your purpose through your salvation of me and through me.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your experience of having a sense of purpose or not having one?
2. What are the spiritual benefits of having a sense of purpose?
3. What biblical characters showed a sense of purpose and how?
4. What do you love about God's purpose?
5. How will this sermon change the way you live?
6. You have the choice between a sense of purpose and a million dollars. Your choice is...?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church  
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315  
Phone: (616) 878-9768  
[www.firstbyroncrc.org](http://www.firstbyroncrc.org)

Pastor David Murray  
[www.thestorychanger.life](http://www.thestorychanger.life)