

Faith Stealers: Purposeless living 17.4.2016. Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Today looking at our theme of Faith Stealers.... and about purpose and purposeless living.

Does your life have purpose, are you living your life with a sense of purpose – no matter who you are, where life has brought you, what you fill your days with – are you living with purpose?

Lots of people search for something to fill the hole in their lives, scratching an itch that won't be satisfied by filling up their lives – filling our lives up with things, possessions and acquisitions, with trophies of who we think we are, things we think will identify us by what we earn or possess, our things that mark us out as successful perhaps – our roles in life, our jobs, the titles we put on ourselves... some of those things are things that drive us in life. That become our focus.

We try and fill the void. We drift to things that may satisfy us – but don't in the end.

“A man without purpose is like a ship without a rudder – a waif, a nothing, a no man...”
(Thomas Carlyle)

I am convinced that our itch in life is only answered when we know who we are made to be, by being confident and aware of who made us and why. Our purpose.

What is purpose:

- **The reason for which something is done or created for, for which something exists.**
- **A person's sense of resolve or determination**
- **Have as one's intention or objective.**

What's your purpose?

Knowing your purpose gives meaning to your life:

Knowing your purpose simplifies your life.

Knowing your purpose focuses your life.

Knowing your purpose motivates your life:

Knowing your purpose prepares you for eternity.

Are you living with purpose today?

Our bible reading today tells us the problem of having no purpose. It comes from Ecclesiastes chapter 1. Everything is meaningless, all things are wearisome... says the teacher.

Some context might help. Ecclesiastes is the journal about Solomon's journey through life. The man's name is King Solomon, - the man who had everything, wisdom, power, riches, honour and God's favour. He started out well, but there came a time when he went from doing things God's way to doing his own thing. He tried it all and each time came up empty.

At the end of his life Solomon is in reflective mood and is asking himself the question that many of us ask ourselves, what is life for? What is the point? What have I gained from my time here on earth? What am I going to leave behind? He's reflecting on where his life has taken him.

He asks big questions and comes to a conclusion in the last chapters of the book where he realises that nothing he has accomplished in life, pleasure, wisdom, work, riches – mean anything outside of them being placed in the purposes of God. Solomon's conclusion can best be summed up in one sentence: Life without God is meaningless.

I find my purpose in a life in love with Jesus Christ.

I think each one of us have three purposes in life and faith. Three before anything else.

The Westminster catechism asks about the purpose of life.

The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

You are made to be known and loved by God.
¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,' declares the Lord ...

God says that He made you to know and love Him.

Jesus replied, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. (Matthew 22:37-38 NIV)

He says this is top priority. He says if you don't do anything else in life, you need to learn to know God and love God.

God the Father has called you to Himself. So that's the first thing **to love God and be loved by Him, to be God's friend** and then that love spills out to others...

To Help Others

Ephesians 2:10 says

¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

So our purpose is to be a friend of God, to help others and thirdly and lastly, I believe, it is **to influence our world.**

Mark 16:15. *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*

We heard a quote earlier by Thomas Carlyle...

A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder--a waif, a nothing, a no man. Have a purpose in life, and, having it, throw such strength of mind and muscle into your work as God has given you.