

The Purpose of the Father

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36 NASB)

From Him, through Him, and to Him. All ministry begins “from Jesus”; He is the source. All ministry is through Him; it is through the Holy Spirit that all ministry occurs. All ministry is to Him; all ministry returns something to Jesus.

The Greek word that is translated as ministry is *diakonia* and it means *service*. We use the word in a different manner than the scriptures. Today, when we say ministry we usually associate it with the preacher or pastor of the church. However, the Bible means service. You can always substitute the word “service” for ministry in any scripture.

Who performs service? A servant. Service (ministry) should be the natural work of a servant. For whom does a servant perform service? The master. Who is our Master? Jesus. If we call Him Lord and Master then all that we do in the earth is service to Him. Are we doing that? Who do we really try to please? Is it the Master or ourselves?

God had a goal, a purpose, before the foundation of the world. Before man existed, God already had a plan (Ephesians 1:3-12). In Revelation 13:8, it says that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. That means the Redemption Plan wasn't an emergency add-on for God. He had already made provision for Redemption so that His purpose would not be thwarted.

Adam did not fulfill the purpose of God. We have so concentrated on the plan of redemption that we forget that God's plan was before redemption and God's plan was after. Adam's sin did not change God's purpose. If we place our perspective with the fall and start there, all we see is man's need of redemption. While it is wonderful that God provided redemption for us, it is not the end-all of God's purpose. If we start with creation, which is before the fall, and move forward from there, all we see in the Bible is the history of man. God's purposes are greater than the history of man. His purpose was before man and continues after the end of Revelation. We have to begin in God. What was God's purpose? Ephesians tells us—to gather together all things in Christ, both in heaven and in earth; to sum up all things in Christ; literally to “head it up”.

God created Adam and placed him in a garden with two trees. He was told not to eat of one of the trees. The natural, logical implication then is that he should eat of the other tree. He didn't. So, after eating of the wrong tree, he had to be put out of the garden to keep him from eating of the Tree of Life and living forever in his fallen state.

The New Testament tells us that the First Adam was made a living soul, but the Last Adam was made a quickening (lively) spirit. While Adam's spirit was in contact with God and Life flowed, he didn't have a "quickened" spirit in the same sense as the Last Adam because he had never eaten of the Tree of Life. He had not fulfilled God's purpose. The redemption plan is to bring us to the place that we can eat of the Tree of Life and realize God's purpose in the New Heaven and the New Earth spoken of in Revelation.

Our goal is not heaven! Neither is that God's goal for us! Jesus never said believe in me so that you can go to heaven when you die. He spoke instead of being a part of His Kingdom and of the work to be done. Any evangelistic message that focuses on heaven as the goal is missing the purposes of God. If we minister with the wrong goals we are ineffective in accomplishing God's purpose.

The Father had purposed something in Himself. He made man. Man sinned. Man became excluded from the purposes of God. Man could no longer participate in God's purpose of summing up all things in Christ. Not only that, but God had given Title Deed to the earth to man. He was to have dominion over it and all that it contained. Satan came and seduced Eve and Adam traded the Deed for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the supposed opportunity to become as God. Man then became a slave to Satan and Satan became the God of this world, the Prince of the power of the air with full legal right to the earth and all that it contains. (That is why the whole creation groans and waits for the revealing of the Sons of God.)

God needed a savior. One who could fulfill the righteousness and justice of God. God by His nature cannot be unjust. He can't be unjust to man; He can't be unjust to Satan. His savior would have to be born of man in order to pay the penalty for man, yet the savior could not be under the dominion of Satan.

Jesus came to do the will of the Father, that is, to fulfill His purpose. He did what Adam was unable to do by resisting the temptation of the devil in the wilderness. Jesus refused to do anything *for Himself* (turn stones to bread); refused to do anything *of Himself* (jump off the pinnacle); refused to do anything *in Himself* (worship the enemy). That is why He could say that the God of this world had come and had nothing in Him. Many believe that the scroll given to Jesus in the book of Revelation is the Title Deed to the earth that was taken back from Satan.

Therefore Jesus redeemed man and restored him to a place where he could participate in the purpose of God. Man is now in a position where he can be summed up in Christ.

Jesus told us that He had to go away but He would send another Comforter (the Holy Spirit). Jesus came to glorify the Father; the Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus. The Holy Spirit is now the active agent in summing us up in Christ. It is not by accident that the evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. We are brought into the unity of a new

language to praise God. This is in direct contrast to the splitting asunder and the confusion of language at the Tower of Babel.

God's purpose then is one new man—the Body of Christ—the Church. Again, this is a word that we use in a way that is not meant by the scriptures. When we say Church, we usually mean a building. The scriptures never mean a building when the word Church is used. It always means people. We are to be people built together into one new body. From miniature to magnitude—from the physical body of Christ to the mystical body, revealing the mystery of God's will to the heavens. We become a habitation of God through the Spirit. You see, God intends to inhabit His Church!

It is not by accident that we are called living stones (1 Peter 2:5). In order to fulfill God's purpose we have to find our place, our "fit" in the Body. Stones have to be fitted together. You can't just pick up any old stone and stick it in any old place in a building.

In order to be fitted together, there are some secondary purposes that must be accomplished. The stones have to be "dug up", "cut up", "shaped up", etc. before they can become "fitted together". If we put this into the context of "harvest" instead of "stones" it might be clearer. I grew up on a farm; therefore, the idea of the field being ripe for harvest makes sense to me. When harvest season comes, it has to be done then or much of the harvest will be lost.

Example: harvesting corn. On our farm corn was a staple. We canned a lot of it for our use. We fed it to the pigs, chickens, cows, and saved the best for seed for the next year. When the corn was ready for general harvest (we pulled "roasting ears" while it was young and tender for canning), we pulled the ears and gathered them into a wagon. Then, they were taken to the barn. In the barn they were prepared for their intended use. The "nubbins" (the ears of corn that didn't fully develop) were separated into their own "crib" (bin) to be used as pig feed. The largest and fully developed ears were run through the corn sheller. After shelling, the best was saved for future seed—the rest was used to feed the chickens. The average corn ears were usually ground and mixed with other ingredients to become feed for the cattle. All of the corn was used according to its intended purpose.

Can you see how this applies to the Church. Jesus said the world is the field. We (the workers) go to the field (the world) and gather the harvest (the converts, new births, etc.) that is ready and bring it back to the storehouse (barn, Church). There it is separated (placed, fitted, shaped, etc.) for its intended purpose (call, use, etc).

Back to the stone analogy—the stones are found in the field or a stone quarry. They are dug up and taken to a stonemason for cutting and shaping for use. The stones that can't be shaped go to the scrap heap.

How does this apply to us? Who is God's stonemason? The Holy Spirit! We are stones that are in the shaping process. The Holy Spirit is working on us. He places us with people and in circumstances that create friction to rub off the rough spots and polish the flat surfaces. But, we don't like that. We seek to escape the shaping process (or refuse to yield to it to begin with) and because God gave us free will, many times we will escape. One, who repeatedly does this, refusing to embrace God's purposes, ends up on the scrap heap. As a matter of fact, we use the word Gehenna for the Lake of Fire at the end of time because of the valley of Gehenna outside the walls of Jerusalem that people used for a garbage dump. Fires burned there continually to burn the garbage. So, we've taken this concept and applied it to the Lake of Fire—the final place for the universes' scrap heap—those that would not yield to the purposes of God (human and devil).

2 Peter 1:4-8 gives us the shaping process to produce the qualities necessary for us to not be unfruitful, useless, idle in the things of God. If we do these things we will never fall. If we don't we become useless to the purposes of God.

After shaping, God places us in His Body—in the place where we fit. This brings us into fulfilling the purposes of the Father in our life because we can't function fully as God intends until we have been placed.

We are called to fulfill God's purpose. If god's purpose is to sum up all things in Christ, then what are we called to? Evangelism. This is always the primary focus—to reach others so that they may be summed up in Christ.

What then is the second aspect of our call? First is to reach others; second is body ministry—service to those who are being summed up—ministry one to another.

God's goal focuses on producing One—all things summed up in One. If we desire to serve God, then our goal should be to further God's purposes—to be a help in the summing up of all things. That means that our life, our ministry, is to help bring others into the One and to help the ones who are a part of the One.