8 – 4 – 2019 – Message – The Artist's Purpose

 Ephesians 2: 10 *For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.*

 Here are some famous artist's masterpieces, Monet, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Degas. The artist's purpose is sharing their perspective, their vision of how these different subjects affected them.

 Raise you hand if you think of yourself as God's Masterpiece, His handywork, His work of art.

 There is something inside of us that causes us to want to believe that life is not pointless and that we matter. When we lose our sense of purpose everything changes. All of us need purpose.

 During World War II tens of thousands of Jews were laboring and dying in Nazi concentration camps. To be exact, 6 million had died and another 11 million died during the war. The Jews struggled every day to find some kind of purpose in all of what was going on. Many were shot; many died in gas chambers-all of them lived in fear of losing their lives every single day.

 One group of Jewish men were assigned to carry stones from one end of the road to the other. They heard a rumor that the stones were part of a project to build a road. Finally, they started to feel some purpose in life; some purpose in what they were doing. Day after day they hauled stones; their bodies aching.

 The work was extremely difficult. It was more than difficult. It was hard to find a word to describe how unbearable their situation was. But day after day they carried heavy stones, piled them all in a huge pile and they went to sleep that night with some sense of accomplishment-thinking they were going to build something a road, a building, something that would offer them some purpose in what they were doing.

 Then the next day they were ordered into the yard as usual. Their new assignment now was to carry those same stones-ones they had picked up and carried to one side of the camp-new assignment now was to carry those same stones back to where they started. So, it became that there was no purpose or meaning whatsoever in what they were doing. It was all absolutely meaningless. As a result, many of them died shortly after that. Because they simply gave up.

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 There are several words or phrases I could use that depending on the generation you grew up in, you would understand exactly what I mean.

• I am trying to find myself

• I want to find my destiny

• I want to know my calling

• I want to discover my purpose

 For me, these are just four simple ways of saying the same thing, expressing our need for purpose. Please close your eyes and bow your heads and listen to what God has to say as if for the first time; we tried this last week in Sunday morning Bible study

• Genesis 1: 27 *So, God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God, He created them; male and female He created them.*

• Jeremiah 29: 11 *For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

• Ephesians 2: 10 *For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

• Ephesians 1: 5 *God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.*

• Jeremiah 1: 5 *“I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”*

• Psalm 19: 21 *You can make many plans, but the LORD’s purpose will prevail.*

So, I want to ask and answer three questions this morning.

Question number one. Does God have a purpose for everyone?

Question number two. If He does, does God want me to know what it is?

Question number three. Is it possible to go through life and not understand my purpose?

 Well the answer to all three questions is yes, absolutely.

 Yes, God has a purpose for you! Yes, He wants you to know exactly what it is and yes, it is possible to go completely through life and miss your purpose, your Calling. In fact, many people miss it completely. So, let me begin by giving you three truths from God's word.

 1. First of all, you were made in God’s image. On the first day God created heaven and earth, light and dark, and said, this is good. Second day He created the sky and said, this is good. This continues for three more days as He created the universe we live in and each day He paused and looked at His creation and said this is good.

 Then on the sixth day the final day of creation, Genesis 1: 26 - 27 *Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”*

 *27 So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God, He created them; male and female He created them.*

 He doesn’t say it is good; He says it is very good. In other words, this is His best work.

 Consider the Milky Way, the galaxy we live in. Astronomers are now telling us that the universe holds as many as 200 billion galaxies. That may make you feel, small. But it should make you feel kind of special, unique, and some more unique than others.

 Because God says that when He made man, mankind was His crowning achievement. You see in all that He made, which is awesome, amazing and mind-boggling, mankind is the only creation made in the image of God.

 2. You were made in God’s image on purpose. There are no accidents. The psalmist wrote this: Psalm 139: 13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. God spoke to Jeremiah and said, in Jeremiah 1: *5 “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”*  God made us in His image and God made us on purpose.

 3. God made us in His image; on purpose for a purpose.

 1 Corinthians 3: 7 – 9 *7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God’s coworkers. You are God’s field, God’s building.*

 Every person here has experienced a time before when you have asked these questions...

• Lord, why am I here?

• What is it you want me to do?

• What is my purpose?

• How can I find meaning?

 God calls all of His children to full-time service. Serving God is never a part-time occupation. 24/7, 365 days a year. In Colossians 3: 23 Paul said, *Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.*

 You may find yourself in a job that is mundane, ordinary; perhaps you don’t even like it but, if you are where you believe God wants you to be then work at it as though you are working for the Lord Himself.

 How many of you have ever held a job that you didn’t like? You just didn’t care to do it. That’s most of us. Did you quit?

 I remember a young man at Disneyland many, many years ago we went in July to celebrate our daughter's birthday and it was incredibly packed and unexpectedly cool. Lines everywhere to do anything. We stood in line to do or get whatever.

 The cashier at a food stand was handling two separate lines by himself. Very efficiently and he was very patient. When I finished ordering I asked him, this job must get stressful at times with all the people you have to deal with, he simply looked at me and smiled, and said "I love it". It is what you make of it. In other words, attitude is what makes the difference.

 God will give you the gifts necessary to do the work He calls you to do. But understand this, you may or may not have these gifts right at this moment.

 You see, sometimes we base what we do in life on want we already know how to do. It makes sense but it’s not always how it works. This is huge because at one time or another all of us have said: if I could do this or that I would do it. Leaving little or no room for stepping out in faith and trusting the Lord.

 Well how do you know you can’t? I don’t know what it may be like for you, but I know this, everyone has a dream and if God gave you that dream, it’s time for you to follow it. But we say Lord I can’t. I can’t because I don’t have…

• Confidence

• Money

• Education

 And basically, saying Lord you don’t either. Can’t is such a powerful word. One of the most powerful words in the English language.

• I can’t. I don’t have time.

• I can’t. I don’t have the answers.

• I can’t. I don’t have the talent or the gifts for that.

• I can’t. I don’t have money.

 Maybe it's time to change all that. Dig deeper. Find the resources. Ask God for what He knows you need. Because if God places a calling on your life, if He says this is your purpose, don’t you think He is going to provide the resources necessary???

 Please realize that feeling unworthy or inadequate come from the accuser stealing, killing, and destroying your peace and blessing from God, knocking them right out from under you and you may not even know it.

 God was calling me to be a pastor and I said Lord I can’t. I don’t have what it takes to speak in front of people. That’s kind of important. I believe that many times there is a much deeper reason than I can’t' it is I don’t want to.

 I don’t want to have to work so hard to make it happen. Too many changes I'd have to make. I’m comfortable with things as they are. And here is the result … you often miss out on what God has in store for your life and for His Kingdom.

 Do you ever ask, how could God ever use me? I did

 God has chosen some unlikely people to do some of His greatest work.

• When Abraham was 100 years old, his wife, who was 90 gave him a son just as God had promised.

• David committed adultery and murder. God called him a man after God’s own heart.

• Jonah ran away from the God, then God used him to preach to those in Nineveh and they all repented

• A little boy gave his lunch and fed 5000 people and had 12 baskets left over

• Saul persecuted and murdered one believer after another, God saved him. Paul wrote half the New Testament, led many to Christ, and started many churches. But he had been an enemy to every believer.

 It is God's power, His creative work in us. If God considers us His masterpieces, we dare not treat ourselves or others with disrespect or as inferior work.

 A mother wishing to encourage her young son’s progress on the piano, took the little boy to a piano concert by the great Paderewski. At the turn of the century coming into the 1900’a he was considered to be one of the best. He made a great deal of money but was also known for giving a great deal of it away to charity.

 This mother trying to encourage her child to practice and learn more took him to the concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked over to greet her. Not realizing that her son got up from his chair and went to explore the concert hall. He made his way eventually to a door marked “NO ADMITTANCE."

 About that time the house lights dimmed, and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat only to discover that her son was missing. Suddenly, the curtains parted, and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway piano on stage.

 But the even bigger surprise was, guess who was sitting at the piano her son. Not Paderewski whom everyone had come to see but her little boy. She was horrified.

 About that time the little boy started playing a simple song he had learned Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star. His mother had no idea what to do when at that moment the great Paderewski made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy’s ear, "Don’t quit ... keep playing!!"

 Then leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child, and he added some notes and chords of his own … and suddenly it was amazing.

 Together, the old master and the little boy transformed a very frightening situation into a moment no one would ever forget.

That’s us. That’s you, me and God.

 When we are obedient to do our part God will, if we let Him, reach in around us and fill in the beautiful parts to His masterpiece. His fingerprints are all over everything we are and everything we do.

 Keep your eyes and ears open to His voice, He will surprise you sometimes especially when He calls you to something you think you can't do.

Let us pray

 Lord, we believe that You will provide for us. We look forward to the ways that You will surprise and amaze us with Your faithfulness. The lives that You will touch and the people in this room You will use to brighten dark spaces and lift sad hearts.

 Father God, thank you for your love that created us to be light to the world… color to dullness… life to dead places… and love to lost faces. Bless our work and our time spent in your plan and purpose. Guide our steps and our progress. Grant us the power of Your [Holy Spirit](https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/10-supernatural-ways-the-holy-spirit-wants-to-empower-you.html) to work together because it’s impossible to see past our human stubbornness without You.

 Through the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells in us through our belief in Jesus, our Savior and Lord, inspire our hearts to seek You in Your Word daily.

 Grow us both individually and together, as we seek the peace of Your presence. Help us to walk faithfully and fiercely after Christ, reflecting His love.

 May we always lift our progress up to You, who holds the honor and glory for who we are and what we do. Use our lives, Lord, to reach those who desperately need to know You love them.

In Jesus’ Name, Amen.