

A Easter 6 2017 Purpose 3 John 14:15-21

(Much of the sermon is from Sermon #4 of Purpose Driven Life with permission.)

This weekend we honor our High School Seniors.

It gives us an opportunity to tell them how proud we are of them and to pray for them.

Parents will be thinking:

When did they get so grown up?

Where did the time go?

Students will be thinking about:

Caps and gowns, graduation parties, presents and more presents and cards...with money in them.

Sounds Pretty Good!

But stressful too.

All year long, people have been asking them soul-searching questions like:

“Where are you going to school. Where are you going to work? What are you going to major in? Have you got a summer job yet? What do you want to do with the rest of your life?”

How can they answer questions like that? Right now they are feeling lucky they have gotten this far and maybe Have the next step figured out but the rest of their lives?

Impossible!

I thought it would be fun for us to turn to our neighbor and tell each other what we thought we would be doing or maybe dream of doing with our life when we graduated from HS. Share EX I thought a biology teacher or the wife of a missionary pastor. Women weren't ordained in those days.

Honestly now, wouldn't we all like to know that we will, in the end, do something important, something significant and that will **make a difference in the world?**

Isn't that what we all want?

Well, you just never know!

Everybody needs a purpose and that's why I'm spending 5 weeks reviewing Rick Warren's 5 purposes of a Purpose Driven Life. If you haven't been here in the last few weeks or want to get an overview take a look at one of the green cards I put the pews. (More materials, books and tapes at the Purpose Center)

Two weeks ago I preached that our **first purpose** in life is to get to know and love God. We call that Worship.

When we worship we put a smile on God's face.

Last next week we talked about the **2nd purpose** and how we were formed for God's family. God wants us to learn to love other people and get along in His family. That's called Fellowship.

Today, we look at the **third purpose** that God put you on earth for: **You were created to become like Christ**. We call that Discipleship.

God's ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development, to **put on the face of Jesus Christ**.

Now an easy way to talk about that might be to remember WWJD. Remember the **What Would Jesus Do bracelets?**

The idea was to stop and think before you act about what Jesus would do and then do that.

But you know what? That is not always possible. Why?
Because Jesus was God's Son.
He had the power of God.

Jesus could feed a crowd with two fish and 5 loaves.

Jesus could heal, he could turn water into wine. We are
God's children but we are not divine.

We can't perform miracles and we cannot completely know
the mind of our Heavenly Father.

We can't always do what Jesus would do.

I read an article in the Christian Century (CC April 26, 2017
p. 19) this week. (Thanks to the Wisners for drawing my attention to it in
bible study.)

Enuma Okoro, a Nigerian-American writer suggests that we
might be better off by changing WWJD to IYLM. (*Write it
down.*)

Can you say it? IYLM. What a mouthful. IYLM—If you
love me...Based on today's gospel text from John. *If you
love me, ...you will keep my commandments.*

The setting is that Jesus has been crucified and he rose on
Easter and he will soon ascend into heaven and he is sort of
delivering a baccalaureate speech to the disciples.

They are a little worried about their future. No doubt
everyone has been asking the disciples "*What are you going
to do now that Jesus is gone. What will be your next step?*"

But Jesus gives them a promise that He wasn't leaving them
on their own. Jesus would send another Advocate, the Holy
spirit to be with them. And if they are unsure what to do,
they could remember Jesus words, **IF YOU LOVE
ME...IYLM, you will keep my commandments.** Keeping
the commandments is a consequence of our love for God.

In your faith statements years ago, you all acknowledged
God's love for you. God's love can be a motivating factor
when we need to figure out our next move in whatever
situation we find ourselves. (Okoro)

It works like this. God loves us dearly. When we
acknowledge that love and love god back, we want to do the
right thing.

When we aren't sure what the right thing is, then do the
loving thing. That is how Jesus summed up all of the
commandments. Love the Lord your God with all of your
heart, soul, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself.

So we share Christ by **imitating Christ**. A story is told –
by Fredrick Buechner I believe – called "The Happy
Hypocrite." It is a story about a man who was born with
an awful facial deformity. He grew up alone and lonely.
When reaching adulthood, he decided to move from his
town to begin a new life. On his way he discovered a
beautiful mask that fit his making him look handsome.
At first the mask was uncomfortable and he was afraid
that people would find out who he really was, but he
continued to wear the mask everyday.

In his new hometown, he made many friends and fell in
love. But one day a wicked woman from his old home
came to his town and discovered this man's true identity.
In front of his friends and fiancé, she forced him to
remove his mask. When he removed the mask, it
revealed a handsome face. His face had conformed to the
mask.

Becoming like Christ is analogous to this. Go ahead and put on Christ. At first it may feel unnatural or uncomfortable, and maybe you'll think, "Who am I trying to fool?" But everyday just keep putting on Christ and every day you will grow to look more like him.

(*A Fairy Tale for Tired Men* is a [short story](#) with moral implications, first published in a separate volume by [Max Beerbohm](#) in 1897. Summarized by CS Lewis and also used by Fredrick Buechner. It may have been originally based on Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

So my message to our graduates and to all of you here today is this: Maybe you have great plans for your future.

Maybe you have everything mapped out or maybe you are still working out what to do tomorrow.

Either way, **remember that God love you**. And put on the face of Christ. Don't worry if it fits or not, because **you will grow into it**, whether you are 18 or 81.

This is the good news of Discipleship.

This is the good news of the Gospel. Amen