

Easter 4 2017 Acts 2:42-47 (Large portions from sermon #2 of Purpose Driven Life Series.)

Today, I am sharing with you material from Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life Program.

Most of what you hear this morning is his, not mine, but it speaks to my heart and I hope it will speak to you too.

Mike Royco reported this true story in *The Chicago Tribune*.

A man named Bill Mallory traveled to India to discover the purpose of life. But he didn't find the answer there.

So after returning, he noticed a sign at Chevron gas station that simply said, "As you travel, ask us."

So every time he pulled into a Chevron station, he would look to the sign and say, "I'm a traveler. I'd like to ask you a question. What is the purpose of life?"

These were the real answers he got. I'm not making this up.

The first guy said, "Sorry. I'm new here."

The second guy said, "I don't remember anything in the manual about that."

Another guy said, "I'm not much for church myself, sir."

One guy gave him a leering look and a wink, whatever that meant. However, most people just gave him a blank stare, cleaned his windshield; but he kept asking at all the Chevron stations.

One day Mallory got a phone call from Chevron Customer Relations. He said, "We understand you've been asking our dealer questions and getting unsatisfactory answers."

The man suggested that he write out his question and send it to Chevron Corporate with a self-addressed stamped

envelope. So Bill Mallory wrote, "What is the purpose of life?" and sent it to Chevron Gas Company.

A couple of weeks later, the envelope was returned.

The only thing in it was an application for a credit card!

If you want to know the purpose of life, you're not going to find it in a gas station.

You're not going to find it on a talk show.

You're not going to find it in a self-help book.

You're not going to find it at some seminar.

If you want to know the purpose of life, you have to either talk to the creator who made you, or look in the owner's manual.

You were made by God and you were made for God.

And until you understand that, life isn't going to make sense.

Over the years we have had a number of *40 Days of Purpose* campaigns and lots of small groups.

As a congregation we studied "What on earth am I here for?" I love that book. It changed how I think about church and my own purpose in life. Now some of you never got the chance to read the book or weren't members when I preached on it.

Don't worry, I can **summarize everything** the author Rick Warren said **in 1 sentence**.

The first sentence of the book reads: ***It's not about you.***

The purpose of your life is not about you.

It ...is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and

ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet you must begin with God. You were born by God's purpose and for God's purpose. (From What on Earth am I Here For? By Rick Warren p.21.)

The Bible says in Revelation 4:12 "You (God) created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created." "For God's pleasure!"

The Bible says you were created for God's enjoyment.

God made you just to enjoy you. God planned you for his purpose. And the only reason that you're alive is because God wanted you alive and he gets enjoyment out of watching you.

How many of you are parents? Can I see your hands? How many of **you enjoy watching your kids**? Most of the time! And I think the same thing is true with God, most of the time he enjoys watching you be you. You were made for God's pleasure.

So you were created to be loved by God.

The flip side of that is that God wants you to love him back.

He wants you to bring enjoyment back to him.

That is your main purpose in life.

Remember when Jesus was asked what the **greatest commandment** was and he said:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. (Matthew 22)

This is our number one purpose in life: To love God.

To love God back. **God's love comes first. That is the message of the cross and resurrection. "God so loved the world."** And we are called to respond to that love with our love for God. God always initiates the relationship. That's grace. We then love God back. That's gratitude.

And, **there's a word for this kind of love.**

It's a word we misunderstand so a lot of people don't use it. But it is a good word and it is the word I want you to think about today. **The word is "worship."**

Worship is knowing God and loving God back.

So, **our first purpose in life is to worship God.**

It's your primary objective. It's your highest priority.

It is your number one purpose in life.

What does a person look like when they worship?

Have you ever thought about that? What do they look like? (Show someone piously worshiping God.).

Now Rick Warren would want you to know that worship is more than piously singing to God.

To get a better idea look again at our first reading today:

The baptized devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...

...They had all things in common...they shared their possessions and gave to those in need and they spent time together in the temple. Praising God!

So worship is really about orienting our whole lives in the direction of God. Offering ourselves as living sacrifices.

Surrendering our lives to God's will.
It is a lifestyle and a spiritual discipline

But it is also rooted in weekly gatherings of worship to praise and honor God.

We are responding to God's love by being here today.
You know this and I want you to know that by being here today, you have put a smile on God's face.

We are now in May and each of us has all sorts of plans for the summer. Vacations, reunions, tournaments, home projects, travel, rest, relaxation...the list goes on. I love summer and have some exciting plans too.

Having said that, summer is not a time to take a break from God. We don't get to Memorial Day and say to God, *Hey see you in September...or October or when baseball season is over.*

How would you feel if someone you loved said, *Hey I'm busy, I think I'll take a break from loving you for a while. Maybe I will get back to you later.*

Not so good right?

So I was thinking about all of this lately and I thought maybe we should make a commitment to ourselves to worship God more faithfully.

What would that look like for you?

*Turn to your neighbor and offer a suggestion;
What did you come up with?*

Something like

In town; in church.

When away; remember to pray.

Talk together with your family, spend some time praying to God and figure out how you personally are going to continue your discipline of worship this summer, no matter how busy it promises to be.

And when you do, remember **you are putting a smile on God's face**

This is the good news of the gospel.