

Coram Deo
Soli Deo Gloria, Soli Deo Gracia, Soli Scriptura
Agnus Dei, Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi
Deo Volente

Palm Sunday Celebration
Sermon Preach at Stouffville United Church
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The Purpose Driven Life

Mark 11:1-26

April 10, 2022

A little boy was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from church with his mother. His father returned from church holding a palm branch.

The little boy was curious and asked, "Why do you have that palm branch, dad?"

"You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved Palm Branches to honor him, so we got Palm Branches today." The little boy replied, "Aw man! The one Sunday I miss is the Sunday that Jesus shows up!"

As Jesus approached, the crowd cries out, "Blessed is the He who comes in the Name of the Lord. ...Hosanna in the highest!"

Some of the people were just a part of the crowd. Others were the committed. To be committed is to live on purpose and not just go along with the crowd.

I

A purpose driven life is a life that has a **vision** because *if you aim at nothing, you will be sure to hit it.*

Jesus came that we might have life and that abundantly. That was His purpose for His life and ours.

Steve Goodier says "Both the hummingbird and the vulture fly over our nation's deserts. All vultures see is rotting meat, because that is what they look for. They thrive on that diet. But hummingbirds ignore the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, they look for the colorful blossoms of desert plants. The vultures live on what was. They live on the past. They fill themselves with what is dead and gone. But hummingbirds live on what is. They seek new life. They fill themselves with freshness and life. Each bird finds what it is looking for. We all do.

Vision has a way of ignoring its critics and chasing its dream regardless of how many people say it can't be done. Consider these famous predictions that underestimated the incredible power of vision. Thomas Watson, the chairman of IBM in 1943 said, "I think there is a market for maybe five computers in the world."

Ken Olson, president and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation said in 1977, "There is no reason why anyone would want a computer in their home."

Consider this Western Union memo from 1876: "The Telephone has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication."

Or consider the words of Decca Recording company, when why they turned down signing the Beatles in 1962: "We don't like their sound and guitar music is on the way out."

Charles Duell, commissioner of the U.S. Office of Patents said in 1899, "Everything that can be invented has been invented."

Yet, when you look at the lives of the most successful people who ever lived, you can see that they had a definite purpose and vision for their life.

Walt Disney's purpose: "To make people happy." Dr. R. Buckminster Fuller's purpose: "Humanity's comprehensive welfare on spaceship earth." Henry Ford's purpose: "To mass produce, mass distribute and have cars mass consumed." Andrew Carnegie's purpose: "To manufacture and market steel." Mother Teresa's purpose: "To care for and comfort the poor, sick and needy all over the world."

Each and every one of them accomplished their purpose.

There was a man who was laying across three chairs in a crowded theater. Yet, no one said anything. An usher noticing this, came by and told him that he was only allow one seat, and that others were reserved for the other two people. The man said nothing. The usher became indignant and said, "Sir, if you don't move I will have to call the manager." Still, he said, nothing. The manager came and shook his shoulder and told him that he had to move. The man just moaned. Then that manager threatened that he would call the police - which he did. The police came and said, "Sir, you will have to move." No response. "Sir, they said, "What is you name?" The man said with slurred speech, "Sam" The police said, "Where did you come from." The man pointed and then said, "The balcony."

He didn't look where he was going. Life is just like that. When you don't look where you are going, often the results can be devastating.

II

Jesus showed us what a true purpose driven life is. It is a life that has a vision, because if you aim for nothing you will be sure to hit it; and it adds **value** because *if you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything*.

Jesus knew what he stood for. In Mark 8:31 we here Jesus say of himself, "*... that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again*" He knew what he was to do but he also knew why He needed to do it. He knew what the future held. He had held onto that vision from the beginning. Yet, He did so because of what and who he valued. He said, "*I have come that you might have life - and that eternal.*" "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*"

What do you add value to? Often the thing we add value to is the very thing that we value. So, what is it that you value? Is it your faith? Is it your family? Is it your possessions? Is it your home or heritage?

A little girl came to us clutching tightly a locket that she received from her mother. She took it everywhere with her in our home. She was never without it. However, one day she did put down and it was lost for a time. She became frantic when she was unable to find it. She tore through the house pulling things apart and looking under chairs and cushions to find it. I assured her that we would find it. I asked her why she was so desperate.

Finally, she collapsed in tears and said, “When my mother would leave me somewhere I always asked to wear her locket. She thought I liked the locket, but that wasn’t it at all. I knew I wasn’t worth coming back for, but I knew she would come back for her locket. I have to find it! Or she will never come back.” I tried to assure her that she was more valuable than any locket, but it wasn’t until we found it that she felt secure again.

Listen, some people feel just like that, they feel of no value and so they don’t add value. Let me assure you of something. You are far more valuable to God than anything that you can do or anything you possess. And the message of Easter is that Jesus came, and died for you and will ultimately, because of that, claim you for Himself and receive you home.

III

Jesus shows us what a truly purpose driven life is. It is a life that has a vision, because if you aim for nothing you will be sure to hit it; and adds value because if you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything. And third it has a **vocation**, because *if you live for nothing, you will die achieving it.*

One year a young brought home the report card. It was heavy with poor grades. "What have you to say about this?" asked his father. "One thing for sure," the boy replied, "Dad, you can be proud. You know I haven't been cheating!"

“And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry. And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves...and said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”(12-14)

The fig tree was designed for a purpose. And since it failed to fulfill its purpose was useless.

Rabin Tranathtagor once said, “The song I came to sing, I have left unsung. I have spent my life stringing and unstringing my instrument.”

The fig tree was designed for a purpose. As were you and I. Are you fulfilling it? Do you know what that purpose is?

What would you do if you knew you had only one more year to live?” Would there be any changes in your life?

There is a story about three men who went to heaven and in the course of their conversation the question was asked, “What do you want people to say about you at your funeral?” One man said, “Well, I would want people to say that I was a doctor that made a difference in people’s lives. That I dedicated my life to helping people.” The next man said, Well, I just want to people to say “he was a good husband and father, devoted to his family.” And the third man said after think about it, “Well, I’d like someone to say, “Hey, look he’s moving.”

None of us know when ours last day will come.—the days of our years are threescore years and 10....

That reminds me of the old story about an elderly missionary returning to the United States to retire. He and his wife had spent over 40 years serving in Africa. But now he was alone. His wife and two children had long since found their final resting place in the soil of Africa.

As he got off the plane he saw a great crowd of people waiting at the gate. Some were holding signs, others were waving banners, and he could even hear sounds of music above the

shouting voices. For a few seconds he thought, "Can it be? After more than 40 years of service, all of these people have actually come out to welcome me home?" But no, that was not the case. On his plane was a politician returning from a visit to Africa. During his visit he had been catered to and waited upon and all his needs had been met. And now he was being welcomed back with all the ceremony his nation could provide.

As he waited and waited at the airport, the contrast was almost more than the old missionary could bear. For a moment he began feeling sorry for himself, and he started to pray. "Father in Heaven, why? I've served You faithfully and for so long, and yet, look. I don't expect much. But is it wrong to desire that there be some kind of a welcome home?" Then, almost as if God had spoken out loud, the old missionary heard Him say, "But my son, you're not home yet." And neither are we.

There is still work to be done. You think about that.