

Serving the Purpose of God

Acts 13:36

Introduction:

1. Why am I here? What is my objective in life? What am I supposed to be doing?
2. These are all fundamental questions, that in one way or another, we are all asking ourselves.
3. I hear it from young people as they give consideration to their vocational decisions. I hear it from middle aged people well along in their careers, in the development of families, who are questioning what they are doing. I hear it from elderly people who ask, "Why is God continuing my life?"
4. Acts 13 has Paul in Pisidian Antioch speaking in the synagogue after the reading of the Law and the Prophets.
5. He rehearsed the history of the nation of Israel . . . spoke of how the prophets wrote of the death and resurrection of Jesus and that God had thus fulfilled the promise made to the fathers.
6. In the course of his message he said in verse 36, "David served the purpose of God in his own generation."
7. What does it mean to serve the purpose of God? Is that what I am supposed to be doing? How does one go about serving the purpose of God?

Discussion:

- I. What does it mean to serve the purpose of God? A look from the negative perspective . . .
 - A. Maybe we can gain some insight into what it means by considering it from a negative perspective. If one were not serving the purpose of God, what would that look like?
 1. There is a passage in Lk. 7:30 which refers to some who "rejected the purpose of God for themselves."
 - a. The passage contrasts those who accepted John's baptism with the Pharisees and lawyers who were not baptized by John.
 - b. John preached that the kingdom of God was at hand and that men should repent and turn to God in order to be prepared to receive the kingdom.
 - c. Jesus validated John's message when He was baptized by Him. So, John's message was from God.
 - d. So to "reject the purpose of God for themselves," meant that these refused to accept God's plan for them.
 2. The word that is translated "purpose" (NASB) is from the Greek word family ("boulēma" (noun), "bouleuō" (verb)) that means to take counsel. The KJV translates it that these Pharisees and lawyers had rejected "the counsel of God" for themselves. They rejected the counsel, the plan, the purpose that God had for them.
 - B. There is clear evidence in Scripture of what it looks like to NOT serve the purpose of God. If we are not serving the purpose or counsel of God it means that we are living our

lives in a way that runs counter to His plan for us.

1. Two ways that people do that.
 - a. Some just live their lives without direction. Their lives evidence chaos. This is what the Pharisees saw in the tax-collectors and sinners.
 - b. Some like the Pharisees and lawyers go in the wrong direction. Their lives are less chaotic, bear evidence of organization, but they are going in the wrong direction.
2. Those without direction and those who are wrongly directed are both lost!!
- C. 1 Pet. 4:1ff contrasts those who are without direction with those who live “for the will of God.”
- D. Rom. 1:18ff refers to those who suppress the truth of God. They rejected the counsel or will of God and God gave them over.

II. What does it mean to serve the purpose of God? A look from the positive perspective . . .
How did David serve the purpose of God?

- A. He trusted in the Lord in His youth (1 Sam. 17:37).
- B. He served the Lord under Saul (1 Sam. 18).
 1. Saul turned against David. Tried to kill him on multiple occasions (10-11).
 2. Did not kill Saul when he had opportunity (2 Sam. 24:1-15; 26:7-12).
- C. “But what about his sin?” Adultery, murder, lying, despising the word of the Lord, despising the Lord? See 2 Sam. 12:9-10.
 1. Not serving the purpose of God in these actions.
 2. He was only serving the purpose of God when he subjected himself, his life, his time, his relationships, etc. to God’s objectives.
- D. When David acted in serving the purpose of God things went well for him. When he failed to do so things did not go well.
- E. Are we seeking out the counsel of God for our lives or are we despising the word of the Lord?
- F. David charged Solomon to keep the way of the Lord (1 Kings 2:1-4).
 1. We are serving the purpose of God when we counsel our children to follow the way of the Lord (Deut. 6; Eph. 6).
 2. We are serving the purpose of God when we teach a Bible class.
 3. Can we be more diligent in these areas? Absolutely!! I shudder for those mentioned in Heb. 5:12. That text says to some, “By this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God.” How long have you been a Christian? Are you a teacher? Are you capable, but unwilling? I couple that with Eph. 4:11ff and think how inefficient I must be. Some seem not to progress. They seem to never become equipped. We pray, “Lord help us to be better Christians tomorrow than we were today.” Do we mean that if we always remain the same, never do any more than we did yesterday? Do we focus attention on our work, our pleasures, our stuff and neglect the purpose of God?
 4. I marvel at the church at Antioch. There were many prophets and teachers. Out of this setting a series of preaching trips emerged that took the message of the gospel throughout the Mediterranean world (Acts 13:1-3).

5. Are we charging others to keep the way of the Lord? The way to make America great is to make disciples of them. It is not only America that we need to be concerned ourselves about. The way to make the world great is to make disciples of them.

III. Serving the purpose of God has always been the way.

- A. Moses wrote about what the king of the future should not do and what he should do (Deut. 17:14-20).
- B. This is what David did. Not perfectly.
- C. This is what he instructed his son Solomon to do (1 Kings 2:1-4).
 1. Solomon began well enough (1 Kings 3:6-9, 10ff).
 2. But did what God said not do.
 - a. Multiplied horses (1 Kings 10:26).
 - b. Gathered gold and silver (1 Kings 10:14ff).
 - c. Multiplied wives (1 Kings 11:1ff).
- D. In your life are you serving the purpose of God or are you serving some other purpose?

Conclusion:

1. The world praises those who serve the gods of this world: materialism, power, and pleasure.
2. A heart devoted wholly to the Lord serves His purpose.
3. The Lord God has a plan and purpose for us. If we will follow His counsel, do His will, accomplish His purposes then it will go well for us.
4. Is this your determination?