

GOD'S PURPOSE: **HIGH IMPACT**

Jesus' primary concern for us is how we live out our life on this earth.
Many people think the Bible's focus is about getting us to heaven.
They think it is predominantly a how-to manual in getting to heaven.
The Bible is about that.

Make no mistake; the Bible is about God's desire to spend eternity with us.
Jesus came to show us the Father and He is absolutely the way to the Father.
But the New Testament shows another purpose of the Church.
The Church is about how we impact each other in relationship.
Jesus is very concerned about how we live on this earth.

Jesus' desire is that we live with high impact on each other.

Many stories in the Bible are about people who struggled to do that.
Some got it right while others failed miserably.

In the Bible, life on earth is not an afterthought.

The Bible is about how men and women live Godly lives with each other.

Jesus' prayer clarifies God's will.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

God wants us to know how to do His amazing will in this life.

The purpose of the church is not just to get me to heaven.

We are here not just to dream about heaven.

We are here to stir each other to love and good works (vs. 24).

That is why Jesus died on the cross.

He opened the new and living way through His flesh (vs. 20)

Paul said to the Colossians, **"teach and admonish each other in all wisdom."** (Col. 3:16)

In Christ it is my responsibility to wisely focus on the eternity of others.

Eugene Petersen says only wisdom enables us to do God's will.

Wisdom is living skillfully in every place we live.

Wisdom enables skill in honouring parents.

Wisdom enables skill in raising our children.

Wisdom enables us to skillfully handle our money.

Wisdom is essential in conducting our sexuality.

Going to work and exercising leadership is transformed with wisdom.

Wisdom helps us treat friends kindly.

Wisdom enables us to eat and drink in healthy ways.

Wisdom cultivates attitudes toward others that make for peace.

The opening verses of Proverbs in the Message read this way.

"These are the wise sayings of Solomon, David's son, Israel's king - written down so we'll know how to live well and right, to understand what life means and where it's going; a manual for living, for learning what's right and just and fair; to teach the inexperienced the ropes and give our young people a grasp on reality. There's something here also for seasoned men and women, still a thing or two for the experienced to learn - fresh wisdom to probe and penetrate, and rhymes and reasons of wise men and women. Start with God - the first step in learning is bowing down to God; only fools thumb their noses at such wisdom and learning."
(Proverbs 1:1-7)

This all has to do with how we live our lives in this world.

Responding to God is the most practical thing we do in our day.

Nothing, absolutely nothing in life, should come before God.

With that understanding, Jesus' actions in Hebrews 10 begin to make sense.

That is why Jesus shed His blood on the cross (vs. 19).

That is why He opened the way to be with the Father (vs. 20).

That is why, through the resurrection Jesus is our Great High Priest (vs. 21).

That is why Jesus is concerned about forgiveness and cleansing (vs. 22).

That is why Jesus wants us to talk about heaven without wavering (vs. 23).

Every action of Jesus impacts how I live today.

The resurrection of Jesus is about life in this world.

If it wasn't Jesus would not have appeared to Mary and the disciples.

Jesus would have left the tomb and ascended right to heaven.

But Easter impacts how I live today and every day.

Easter is about Jesus' dynamic, dwelling presence in this world.

And so our focus, our purpose, is to stir each other up.

Our purpose is to brew up a huge dose of love and good works.

Our focus is to get together as often as possible.

We are to encourage each other and do so feverishly.

The closer we get to heaven the more we involve ourselves in life.

The closer to heaven the more we connect with each other.

As the Day draws near we live together in God's wisdom.

There is a resurrection story at the beginning of Mark's Gospel.

It involves 4 friends of a paralyzed man and a crowded house where Jesus taught.

They couldn't get near Jesus.

You may know the story of how they opened up the roof and lowered the man.

He was plopped down right in front of Jesus.

Jesus said the most unusual thing to the paralyzed man.

"My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5)

Could it be that Jesus missed the point?

The man was paralyzed, he couldn't walk!

He wasn't worried about sin; he was worried about useless legs.

He wanted to walk!

That was his greatest need!

Or was it?

What is the point in walking on healed legs right to hell?

Strong legs were not his deepest need.

And Jesus knew that.

What would you label as your greatest need right now?

Might it be the cure of a disease; a better job; mended relationships?

If Jesus could do something in that area my life would be complete.

If that happened I would be set for life, I'd never be unhappy again.

I would never complain because life would be perfect.

Don't kid yourself.

A change of circumstances only intensifies needs.

Jesus knew the paralyzed man had a deeper need than lifeless legs.

My son, your sins are forgiven.

And because Jesus has authority to say that, He could do anything else.

Jesus realized the roots of discontent go deep.

They go deeper than anything that paralyzes us.

And that is the message of the resurrection.

Jesus addresses the real issue of your life and my life.

The thing we think will make everything alright never fulfills.

This story of resurrection begins with the spiritual battle.

It begins with the forgiveness of sins.

It begins with the resurrection of rebirth.

The paralyzed man became a new man even while lying on the mat.

If he never took a physical step it really didn't matter.

He was a new creation in Christ.

In Mark's Gospel this was Jesus' first step toward the cross.

Jesus' journey headed toward the Cross and ultimately the resurrection.
The Pharisees who listened in on the conversation said Jesus spoke blasphemy.
They were correct that no one could forgive sins except God Himself.
His claim to do what only God could do was punishable by death.

By Mark 3 the Pharisees were plotting Jesus' death (Mark 3:6)
That is why this is a resurrection story.

Not only did the paralyzed man rise up and walk.

Jesus stirred his heart with His loving forgiveness.

And the power of the resurrection continues as we stir each other.

When you stir me up I more courageously confess my hope in Jesus.

When I stir you up you won't waver in your faith.

Stirring each other gives boldness and confidence.

It reveals to me Jesus in you.

I am encouraged.

Christian faith flourishes in an atmosphere of fellowship.

The spiritual arousal of fellowship and worship makes us vigorous.
Meeting together is essential to this stirring action.

The author's of Hebrews worst fear is the believer's neglect of worship.

If we are careless to worship we will not stir each other up.

We will become limp and sloppy in our faith.

Nothing minimizes or marginalizes faith more effectively than lax worship.

If Satan can distract me from worship others will suffer.

My failure to worship will cause others to stumble.

It makes my faith superficial.

It lowers the Church's impact and we cease to fulfill God's purpose.

It is so easy to stir each other up.

It begins with consistent worship together.

We just need to be near each other.

It won't happen if we aren't together.

I had some meetings this week that really stirred me up.

I needed those times with brothers and sisters in the Lord.

I was encouraged and challenged.

My faith was invigorated and I am so thankful for them.

That should happen every time we are together.

The resurrected Lord is in our midst to give us faith.

He is here to stir up our slumbering hearts.

He is here to strengthen our weak knees.

And He does that through each other.

F. F. Bruce the great NT scholar said of this stirring, "This will never happen, however, if [we] keep one another at a distance. Therefore, every opportunity of coming together and enjoying their fellowship in faith and hope must be welcomed and used for mutual encouragement." (The NIC on the NT, the Epistle of Hebrews, page 253)

The Lord's Table stirs us together in a resurrection moment.

We cannot be distanced at the Lord's Table.

Receive the bread and the cup and be stirred up to love and good works!

Jesus wants to meet you at your deepest need.

And as you receive you will stir others with your witness of faith.

Nothing could be more beautiful than this resurrection moment.

Let Jesus use you to resurrect something new in each other.

Let us break the bread together with joy.

Receive the broken body and shed blood of Jesus unto new life.

Communion Song - In Christ Alone