**CHOOSING YOUR FUTURE**

**HOW TO LIVE YOUR LIFE ON PURPOSE**

**1/29/17**

***Hebrews 11:23-27***

*“By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”*

**I. Introduction**

Today is the prequel of an exciting spiritual adventure that we’ll start next week on “Super Bowl” Sunday. We will begin a spiritual growth campaign called *40 Days of Purpose* answering the big question, “What on earth am I here for?” Tonight will be where we really put all of the pieces of the puzzle together for the campaign, get organized, help people find their place in a group and learn how to make the most out of this growth campaign. One of the big things we do in a campaign is involve all of the ways people learn into our strategy to maximize growth and impact.

**Ears**- Some learn the most by hearing, so each Sunday I will be giving

a message related to this topic.

**Eyes**-Some learn most by their eyes and so we have an all-time best

Seller that we encourage you to get and read one chapter a day.

Most chapters are just 3 or 4 pages.

**Mind**-Some learn by thinking so we will have scriptures to memorize

and meditate on.

**Hands/Actions**- There are some people who don’t like to read or talk

or listen, mostly they are called “men”. They like to learn by doing stuff, whether it’s messing with a computer, a car, or playing sports. We will have some very cool group projects to do.

**Discussion**- Many learn the most when they get to talk

about things and discuss them. That’s when the lights go on for them and that is what our groups are all about. We’d love for you to just make a 6-week commitment.

I know we all have a lot of things going on, that we would like to get more involved but there are things going on at work or in the family and we don’t know if we can commit ourselves to this. I want to urge you to just take a step of faith.

**Ecclesiastes** 11:4 says*, “If you wait for perfect conditions you’ll never get anything done.”*

I believe nothing could be more important in these next 40 days then getting clarity on what God wants you to do with the rest of your life. I figured that if I live a normal life cycle, I have a little more than 7,000 days left before I go to Heaven. I don’t want to waste these days; I want to invest these days. I want to be sure that I get the job done that I was put on this planet to do. I’m sure you feel the same way. A huge step in this process would be to pick up the book and come tonight. If you do, we’ll give you a free study guide.

A. One of the things we want to do in these 40 days is to look at what it means to live a purpose driven life or a life on purpose.

Paul said, *“I run with purpose in every step.” (I Cor. 9:26 NLT)*

In Eph. 5:10 (MSG)- *“Figure out what will please Christ and then do it!”*

What we all know is that something will drive our life- is driving our life. It might be people, problems, position, performance, pain, pride… something is driving us and taking us somewhere we may or may not want to go. The only thing that will take us where we really want to be is if we are clear and focused on our purpose. \*Charlie Brown

I love what Jesus said in His prayer in Jn. 17:4,

*“Father, I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.”*

B. Now the key to living this kind of life is deciding that we are going to live by our **choices** not our circumstances, feelings, or people’s plans for us. I believe that this involves a eureka moment in our life, when we absolutely decide that this will be the direction we will go with our life.

We want to look at the example of a man, who was the greatest man of the Old Testament and had the greatest impact of any person on earth up until the time of Christ. His name was Moses.

In Hebrews 11: 23-27, we read about the eureka moment when he laid claim to this key to greatness. Moses was in the palace being raised as a son of Pharaoh, the Prince of Egypt. He got there because of the courageous choice of his parents, who decided to disobey the king’s edict to let their baby boy be killed. (By the way, we are all impacted by the choices that our parents make.)

Choices are one of God’s **greatest gifts** to us but the results are either great or catastrophic depending on how we use those choices. When it comes to our parents, we all were handed choices. There is nothing you will ever give your children more valuable and fantastic than your good choices or more tragic than your bad choices. The good news is that whatever choices you were handed, you get decide which ones you want to keep and pass on to your children.

**Some facts about choices:**

1. **Choices are more important than circumstances**. What happens to you is not as important as what you decide to do about it. The possibilities of whether God can work in your life are defined by choices. Perhaps as important as anything is that your character is defined by your choices. Your character and your future are primarily the result of the summation of your choices.

What I love to see in the passage we are studying is that Moses’ life was defined by verbs: Moses **refused**, Moses **chose**, Moses **regarded**, Moses **persevered**. He didn’t blame, rationalize or excuse. He chose.

\*Some of you are here at church today by choice not circumstances. It cost for you to be here; it didn’t feel good to come. My hat is off to you; you are the kind of person who will be greatly rewarded.

2. **You make choices, then those choices make you.**

The cool thing is that this verse talks about a few of the choices he made. We want to really look at these 4 choices because they absolutely have the power to transform your entire life. These are choices that are at the heart of what we’ll talk about as far as living a purpose driven life.

**II. These were those life-shaping choices**

A. **He refused to be defined by people and the circumstances of his life.** *“He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”*

What was amazing is that Moses was part of a secret, that if he would keep would make his life sweet. That secret was that he was adopted and that he was a Jew not an Egyptian.

Keeping that secret meant great riches and privileges but it also meant that he would be squeezed into a role and a position he wasn’t called for or made for… worshiping other gods, not practicing his faith, ignoring the people he knew inside he was called to lead.

So even though it was costly and would be painful, he decided to break the secret and not let anything but God define him. He decided to live for God’s purposes and not the world’s.

Romans 12:2 says, *“Don’t let the world squeeze you into it’s mold.”*

Many of you are feeling the pressure to be squeezed into a mold that will keep you from fulfilling God’s purpose for your life.

**B. Some examples of what that might be**

1. To be what people want and expect you to be…

Maybe some of you are pressured by a vision your parents have for your life that isn’t God’s vision.

2. Maybe in a negative way your life is driven by a desire to prove someone wrong, maybe your ex-spouse, boss, or parent.

3. Maybe it’s to be one of the guys, one of the girls- “If you just keep quiet you’ll fit right in and have the benefits of the gang.”

Everyone who fulfills God’s purpose makes this quality decision, that their life is going to be about **pleasing God** not people. They don’t need the approval of people to be happy and successful. Who God is calling them to be is what they want to define them, not what the world says they should be.

The Bible says,

*“Our purpose is to please God, not people. He is the one who examines the motives of our hearts.”*

In Jn 17:16, Jesus said about us,

*“They are no more defined by the world than I am defined by the world.*

**C. As I mentioned Moses refused to be defined by the people in his life or the circumstances of his life.**

**This included:**

1. What was to his personal advantage. So many people miss God’s calling because, “They follow the money.” This is why one of the main things we’ll learn is that unlike the world’s advice, fulfilling God’s purpose is not about “following your heart, or following your dream.” To be honest, there have been times my heart was rotten and my dream was selfish. Fulfilling God’s purpose is about following God’s dream, even if that leads to suffering and loss.

2. Another huge thing is that for Moses it not only meant he wouldn’t let people define him, circumstances or personal advantage define him, ultimately he wouldn’t let failure define him.

Those of you who know the story know, that his first attempt at fulfilling God’s purpose didn’t work out too well. He let his anger take over and murdered an Egyptian and became a fugitive. He was 40 years in the wilderness and almost let his failure define him, but finally had the courage to go back.

There are some of you who live with something in your past that screams at you to give up on God’s calling and purposes for your life. But this story tells us something… **God refuses to allow people who follow Him to be defined by their past.** As he said to some disobedient people in captivity for the disobedience in Assyria

Jer. 29:11, *I know the plans I have for you says the Lord to prosper you and not to harm you...*

In Rom. 11 He says *the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.*

**II. He chose to embrace short-term pain for long term gain.**

Most people’s lives are railroaded from God’s purposes because they allow themselves to be driven by a desire for immediate gratification and allow that to outweigh the purpose that would come into their life, if they would deny themselves for long term gain.

How many of us have missed God’s purposes for our finances and perhaps went into debt because of the drive for immediate gratification? How many of us have sacrificed health, or hurt relationships because we “moved” before our heart was surrendered to God.

People who live for the purposes of God understand that there are no short cuts to anywhere that you really want to go to in life. They are willing to give up short-term pleasures for long term purpose. Notice it says… that *the life of sin is pleasurable for a season.*

One of the things that I want to say is that as you make the adjustments to live for God’s purposes, there will be some short-term cost and pain involved. People may leave you or judge you; you may not fit in… you may be less successful in your business in the short run.

But I love what the Bible says about this

**2 Cor. 4:17**

*“These present troubles are quite small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever.”*

We’ll actually grow better through the pain.

**Rom. 5:3-4**

“*We can have joy in our troubles, because we know that these troubles produce patience. And patience produces character, and character produces hope.”*

**III. He chose God’s values instead of the world’s values.**

*Heb. 11:26, “Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking to the reward.*

A. As we’ll see more and more, living a purpose driven life means embracing a whole different set of values than the world. We understand what the world values. It is mentioned here and other places:

**Popularity**, power and prestige- I want to be famous and powerful.

**Pleasure**- I want to feel good.

**Possessions**-I want to have the goods.

Just look at advertisements… sex, salary, and status.

I John 2:15-16, “*lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life.”*

The world says passion, possession, and position are what matter but what does God say?

1. **Purpose** is more valuable than popularity.

2. **People** are more valuable than pleasure.

Many of you are serving in outreaches… spend days going to the jail to minister, or going to McArthur or Anapra… you believe people are more important… the best way to invest your time and life.

3. **Peace** of mind is more valuable than possessions.

In I Jn. 2:16, it reminds us how these things in the world just pass away, but what God puts value on lasts forever.

It is also important to see how Moses got and kept these values. He did it by looking forward to the reward. He kept an eternity perspective instead of an earthly perspective.

I think especially of how temporal fame is. Can you remember who won the Super Bowl two years ago, who was on the cover of People or Time magazine last year? Have you had the chance to go back to visit your high school? Maybe at one time you were a hero and now you realize that to most people you really are a 0.

I want to so encourage you to clearly choose your values, otherwise the world will choose them for you. As a leader the three values I’ve chosen above all others- Authentic, Kind, and Trustworthy

B. At the heart of a purpose driven life is the understanding that we aren’t made for this world; we are made and our lives are being shaped for eternity. As author Ron Hutchcraft says, L*ife during our earth time is like a short night in a cheap hotel. We aren’t here to rest and seek our joy, we are here to fulfill our mission. We are here to capture that which will last forever.*

When I think of the purpose of our mission one of the things I think about is how I hate to go to parties that I don’t know anybody. I hate the idea of going to Heaven and not finding people who are there because of me and the idea of knowing that people I might have brought with me are going to be lost and not part of this party forever.

**IV. I believe Moses was able to do all of this because of a fourth unbelievably great choice he made which was to decide to live by his faith instead of his fear…**His believing instead of his doubting.

This is obvious in this first choice, but is underlined in a later choice when he comes back to liberate the children of Israel from Pharaoh.

*Hebrews 11:27: “By faith, Moses left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.”*

There were so many courageous choices that Moses made, but how he made them is what I especially want you to see. You don’t make these choices by what you feel, or even what you know is moral or the right thing to do. You make these choices by faith, by daring to believe what you can’t see… That God is the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

A. Listening to your faith means you really believe the promises of God even when they seem to lead you to places that seem disadvantageous, hard, difficult, and discouraging.

Perhaps the greatest promise we will be underlining in this series is one that many are familiar with but so many choose to misquote.

Romans 8:28, *“We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes.”*

So many times people carelessly quote this as a wishful platitude… “Well, all things work out for the good.”- That is absolutely false and is what you might call “fake news.” It says, “all things work together for good”, if you love God and are seeking to live your life according to God’s purposes… if you’re living a life aimed at doing what God has called you to do and aimed at becoming what God has called you to be... if you are seeking God’s dream for your life.

When Paul wrote this in Romans 8, it was in the context of all the suffering he and others were facing as they were serving the Lord… things like prison, persecution, opposition, hardship…

He was saying none of these would move him, distract or detour him because he knew He would have God’s love and presence with him, but he also knew something else. When your focus is on fulfilling God’s purpose, God will move heaven and earth; he will put 100 angels on rations for a month. Like Wayne Myers said, “He will cause whatever is happening to turn out to your advantage including the enemies plots and every form of attack and hardship you go through”.

Moses saw this when the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart simply made the miracle God did to deliver them more spectacular. Daniel saw this when he was thrown in the lion’s den. Jesus saw this when He was put on the cross and rose victorious over the dead in such a way that it says, if Satan and the demonic forces knew what was going to happen they would’ve never killed the Lord of Glory.

God’s power is released not when you are seeking power, provision. Joy doesn’t come when you’re seeking joy. Success doesn’t come when you seek success; it comes when you seek God’s glory and purpose. As I’ve been working on my health, God reminded me not to seek health but to seek to present my body to him and whatever I do as far as eating or drinking or activity do it all for the glory of God. He will take care of my health. The same with your business or finances as we saw last week.

B. Living by faith means refusing to allow your fears and doubts to have the last word on any decision you make. Many of you remember the story of Bethany Hamilton whose arm was eaten off by the shark. What is remarkable is that she got back in the water again and is surfing. Choosing faith means choosing even when you’ve been bitten, betrayed, beat up, broken. Even when you’ve failed, even when it doesn’t look like a single good thing is going to happen in your life, you choose to get up and risk and try and walk by faith anyhow.

**V. What makes this possible. There are two things that are absolutely crucial to starting and living a purpose driven life.** To be able to stay true to your resolutions and God choices

**A. Get in a small group for support**

It says of Moses… he chose to suffer disgrace with the people of God. If you want to really see how he was able to come back to his purpose when he failed, stay on purpose when it was hard and discouraging, the answer was that he was plugged into real relationships with people of faith Jethro, Aaron, Hur, Joshua, Caleb. These people walked beside him, prayed with him, held up his arms when he would’ve given up.

What I know is that no one has the strength to fully fulfill God’s purposes for their life alone. I believe fulfilling God’s purposes is like climbing Mt. Everest, you won’t make it alone. Those who grow the highest, who obey God in the tough times, who endure the assaults and struggles of life are those who link up with a small group of like-minded believers and do life together, not as an audience on Sunday but as a family in a circle together during the week. The reasons the Redwoods grow so tall in CA and last for 100’s of years is that their roots are interlocked.

We are doing everything we can in this campaign to get you in a small group this year. As I’ve said because you need the support. Can I tell you something I wish wasn’t true? It is… Crises are going to happen to you in 2017, that you weren’t expecting and you don’t have the strength you need to handle alone.

Not only that, you need others input and understanding of God’s Word, shared with you through their life experiences, in a context that you can ask for prayer and really be accountable to grow and learn. I meet people who used to go to our church… something happened. Sometimes they’re mad. “Why wasn’t anybody there?” In the kindest way, I try to say I’m sorry it’s on you, you never reached out to make these relationships. I have come to discover you will never really feel part of the family here until you attend a small group. You will never really grow to your fullest potential or be able to help others to grow without a small group. Again, we want to help you however we can. Come tonight, email us, talk to us, take that step of faith to join.

B. **Ask and expect God to help you.** Become a person of faith. Make God the source of your life. You’re not close to being big enough to handle life, that’s why Jesus came. The Bible says, “*apart from me you can do nothing”.* Like this microphone or that guitar, it must be plugged in. Moses locked into God by trusting and asking Him to be the source of his life. I love this verse because it says so beautiful what will happen as you plug in.

*Isaiah 50:7*

*“Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be dismayed. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone; determined to do His will. And I know that I will triumph!”*

*“He persevered because he saw Him who was invisible.”*