

# 17. How to fulfill your life

January 2, 2011

By now, you might have your New Year Resolution for 2011. It might be losing weight, getting into shape, getting out of debt, paying off mortgage, or simply making ends meet each month. Yesterday and today, so far you probably kept your newly-made resolutions. Good for you.

Let me give you a tip for those who want to get in shape. It is not a new exercise equipment which will get you in shape. Simply persevere in exercising regularly and stay off junk foods. Then some of you might say, "Hey preacher, you are not helping me with all those donuts in the foyer." Just pretend that they are vegies. But they sure are tasty, aren't they? Smack on the lips, stick on the hips.

Many people search for the meaning of one's life. Some become spiritual, I didn't say that they would become born-again Christians, rather they become spiritual in weird ways and dabble into the realm where they are going to find themselves in deep trouble because they are in the devil's territory. Or others pursue the bottomless pit of ambition and lust in their work, sports, wealth, fame, sex, or hobbies. You all have heard a phrase, "Midlife crisis".

It not only happens to men, but also women. The most common excuse they use to bail out of the responsibilities of their family life to pursue their selfish goal is "I have to find myself." Guess what, buckaroo, look at yourself in the mirror, there you are.

I understand what they meant. They meant to say, "I want to know how to fulfill my life." Then they go around all the wrong places to find whatever they are looking for. If you are in this stage, I am going to save you a lot time, troubles, disasters, and money. This morning, the Lord Jesus is going to show you how to fulfill your life from the Word of God.

In light of the first sermon of Year 2011, I believe that the Lord designated this for all of us to take heed whether you are in midlife crisis or not.

## A. THE FOOD WHICH PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW

*John 4:31-34 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." 33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*

Jesus' disciples could not possibly think of anything more than their own physical and carnal desires – not just this time, but repeatedly throughout Jesus' earthly ministry. They encouraged Jesus to eat so that they also could eat. It was a common Eastern custom that disciples could not eat before their master.

In v32 and 34, Jesus shows them a more important thing than eating meals – doing the will of God. He is absolutely correct. There is nothing more satisfying than doing the work of God.

Anything people chase after selfishly other than doing the work of God would give them emptiness in their hearts like the water from the well the Samaritan woman got. As she had to come back day after day to get more, the carnal pursuits of people in

their lives leave them fruitless and give them unending hunger and thirst for more.

The will of God ought to be a source of strength and satisfaction to the children of God, just as if we sit down to a sumptuous feast. If what we are doing tears us down instead of builds us and others up, then we may well question whether it is the will of God for us.

Our Lord Jesus did not look on the Father's will as a heavy burden or someone else's job. He viewed His work as the very nourishment of His soul. Doing the Father's will fed Him and satisfied Him inwardly.

*Psalm 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.*

Then, what is "doing the work of God"? I find four facets we must understand:

### **1) Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ**

*John 4:35-38 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."*

As we learned that evangelism is every single Christian's duty and privilege last Sunday, this should be one of the highest priorities in our Christian life.

The harvest is ready and only needs faithful workers to claim it. It takes faith to sow the seed, and we must do it even when the circumstances look discouraging. Unfortunately, many Christians are busy looking for excuses why they cannot evangelize than simply being obedient to the Lord and doing it.

*Ecclesiastes 11:4 He who observes the wind will not sow, And he who regards the clouds will not reap.*

Nothing, I mean NOTHING is more selfish than going to heaven without telling anyone about it.

Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelievers is doing the will of God and it is one of the ways to fulfill our lives.

A couple of side notes, Jesus said, "lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" in v35. What does it mean "white for harvest"? I believe what theologian William Barclay said makes a lot of sense: "White turban was a common head gear for average ancient Jewish male during Jesus' time. As v40 said, many of the Samaritans of that city were coming out to see Jesus, He was making a visual illustration of evangelism to His disciples."

Notice v36 as well, please.

*John 4:36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.*

There should not be any competition in the work for Jesus. As I have said before, we all work together for Jesus as a team, not to achieve individual award selfishly.

However, there is great benefit in doing the work of God – we get to find out what the true reason for our lives is – living for the glory of God which gives us a complete fulfillment in our lives.

## 2) Planned neglect

I heard about a great concert violinist who was asked about the secret to her great performances. She answered, "Planned neglect. Anything that would keep me from practicing and playing well must be neglected."

I think that some of us could use some planned neglect in our lives this year, because there is a lot more junk in our lives than we may realize. If you don't believe me, then try moving from one house to another. Isn't it amazing how much junk you have accumulated? I know. I have a big garage, neither of our vehicles stay inside.

The same is true in our lives. The most important relationship you must maintain and keep in excellent status is not the relationship between you and your spouse, or your parents or your children or your siblings, though they are all important. It is your relationship with the Lord Jesus. If we keep our relationship with Him right, other relationships will be a lot easier to handle.

When the race of life gets difficult, we like to blame circumstances, other people, or sometimes even God. But we need to remember that if we stumble or fall because of all the other things in our lives, it is our own fault, not God's.

*2 Peter 1:3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*

Rather than trying to dump the excess weight while you are in the middle of race, I suggest you evaluate your life and ask the Lord if you are holding onto anything that would slow you down in your race for Jesus before this year's race goes into full swing.

## 3) Delight or drudgery?

How do you feel about your daily devotion? If you've been coming to our church for sometime and you don't know what a daily devotion is, we need to talk.

Daily devotion is your time with the Lord one-on-one through your Bible. You hear from Him through His Word and you meditate upon the verses which He just spoke to you. How can you do that? We have a little booklet that is called "Our Daily Bread" to help you to stay in the Word everyday.

Back to my question, how is your daily devotion? Are you doing it daily? Is it a delight or drudgery? Please be honest.

*Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.*

A person who seeks God's glory wants to learn more about Him through His Word, the Bible, each and everyday. To that person, it is not a drudgery, rather it is delight. He or she cannot wait to open the Bible and hear from God.

Since I used the word 'meditation', you might be thinking, "Am I supposed to sit with my legs twisted like a pretzel and make a humming noise through my nose and mouth?" No. Of course, satan had to abuse a perfectly good word 'meditation' from the Bible and makes people to think that they are going somewhere spiritually if they meditate in transcendental meditation by emptying their mind. Please don't do that. If you do, you are opening your mind's door to the demonic attacks.

Next time you are ready to meditate on God's Word, ask yourself these four questions:

1. Is there any sin here for me to avoid?
2. Is there any God's promise for me to claim?
3. Is there any victory to gain?
4. Is there any blessing to enjoy?

When we read the Bible with these questions in mind, we can expect a real sense of anticipation from ourselves. We're no longer just reading the Bible like it is a homework assignment from school. Instead, we recognize that this is the Word of God; and we are to value God's words more than gold. There are great rewards for the person who meditates on the Scriptures day and night.

#### **4) Willing to take the cross?**

*Matthew 16:24-25 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."*

Cross was a crude tool of execution by Romans during the time of Jesus. It would be like carrying an electric chair now. But then again, there are so many twisted and weird people nowadays, they think that it is a cool thing and it might become a fashion – everybody carrying an electric chair on one's back.

When we walk with Christ daily and 'take up the cross' and proclaim His name to unbelievers, we, too, will experience the ridicule of the world for identifying ourselves with the Savior. But the Lord will smile at you and give you His approval. People are fickle – one moment they say, "You are the best," and next moment, nobody cares about you, going from penthouse to outhouse. But your God promises that He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

Remember, a Christian is a walking Bible written by God and read by others.

### **B. THE DANGER OF FALSE FAMILIARITY**

*John 4:43-45 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. 44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.*

Apparently Jesus had detected the increasing hostility of the religious leaders in Judea – "His own country". In addition to that, our Lord was really never identified with Judea even though He had been born in Bethlehem. He was known as the "Prophet from Galilee." The same goes with another town, Nazareth according to Matthew 13. The people of Nazareth didn't receive Him either, because they thought they knew everything about Jesus, a son of Joseph the carpenter.

There is such a thing as a false familiarity with Jesus – an extremely dangerous thought that we know all about Him. Such a dangerous thinking leads to a lack of honor towards Jesus.

While the people of Judea truly missed out a great opportunity to know about the Savior of the world, the people from Galilee welcomed Him and they came to Him. One area rejected Jesus and the others welcomed him. Just like one person would receive Jesus into one's heart all the while others reject Him; just like one born-again

Christian decides to follow Him with all of his or her heart even if the people around him or her ridicule all the while others barely get into heaven without doing anything for the glory of God.

I hope and pray that Year 2011 would be different for all of us. I hope that all of us will be fired up for Jesus in evangelizing, in praying, in obeying His Word, and serving Him and His church like never before. Why such an urgency? Because the time is near. As Jesus said, *"Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"* There is no time to waste on selfish pursuits.

That is how you can fulfill your life; that is your calling from God.

### **C. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) Following Jesus costs us a lot. But we cannot afford not to.
- 2) If what we are doing tears us down instead of builds us and others up, then we may well question whether it is the will of God for us.
- 3) Nothing is more selfish than going to heaven without telling anyone about it.
- 4) If we keep our relationship with Him right, other relationships will be a lot easier to handle.