

Message #1073  
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"WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?"  
{Colossians 1:13-23}  
Trinity Presbyterian Church  
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#### INTRODUCTION

I want to begin by commending all who began the 40 day journey with me back on September 12th.

...it's been an exciting time  
...I've appreciated your notes, emails, and telephone calls telling me of your personal discoveries during this time  
...there were days of confusion  
...there were days of euphoria  
...and it's been a great experience.

Today we're going to reflect back upon the past 40 days. The Bible says...

"Remember today what you have learned about the Lord through your experiences with Him." {Deuteronomy 11:2}

The Bible says...

...remember the lessons you've learned

...if you don't, you'll have to learn them over and over

We've learned about God...about ourselves...about life...about growing...about our community.

So, what have we learned...

#### ABOUT GOD?

Write this down--the first thing we learned that it's all about God, not me! The Bible says {say it with me}...

"God is the One who made ALL things for His glory. He wanted to have many children to share His glory." {Hebrews 2:10a}

The purpose of your life is far greater than your happiness!

...far greater than your personal fulfillment

...far greater than your success

...far greater than your dreams and ambitions

You were made by God...and for God...and until you understand that, life doesn't make sense!

...you were made for God

...and God made us for His forever family

The Bible says: "Everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him!"

{Colossians 1:16}

This is the most basic truth you have to learn about life: that life is not about you, it is about God.

Listen carefully: You were made for God, and you were made to live with God forever in eternity; and you exist for God--not vice versa!

Someone sent an email...

"My life was changed on the first day of 40 Days of Purpose, with the first sentence of the book: "It's not about you!" I can't tell you how much those four words have altered my outlook on life...throughout each day now I repeat : 'It's not about me. It's all about God!' What a difference this has made."

Secondly, we have learned that GOD STILL PERFORMS MIRACLES!

The Psalmist wrote {read it with me}...

"You are the God of miracles and wonders! You still demonstrate Your awesome power!" {77:14}

...He's working miracles in many of our lives

...in our church

...lives are being transformed by the power of God--that's a miracle

God worked a miracle when he sent us Vincent Arishvara.

...He worked a miracle when he sent us Tom Waddell

...Norma Perkins...Carol Griffin...Berdie Bowlsby

...He's worked yet another miracle by sending Rev. Don Hammond to minister with us

Let's praise God that He's still a miracle-working God and that NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE to Him.

...God is good...ALL the time...ALL the time...God is good

...He is worthy of our praise!

So, what have we learned...

#### ABOUT LIFE?

Number one, we learned that LIFE IS PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY {write it down}.

If someone were to ask the meaning of life, I can't think of a better three-word-answer: PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY.

Look what the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:11 {read it with me}...

"God has planted eternity in the human heart."

...we all look forward to heaven!

...to be absent from this life is to be present with the Lord--that's hope!

...we are all significant to God

...He's not only giving us a purpose for today

...He's preparing us for a tomorrow

Think of it--we're going to last forever! Think of it!

...preparing for it takes a lifetime

...one day at a time

Now, the only way we can remember something is to review it. I want you to help me with this. You will see on your hand outs there are fill-ins. Let's do them together...{write this}

We're put on earth FOR FIVE PURPOSES. Please say, Proverbs 16:4 with me--"The Lord has made everything for His purpose."

Number one...I was planned for...? GOD'S PLEASURE

The Bible word for that is...? WORSHIP

Secondly...I was formed for...? GOD'S FAMILY

The Bible word for that is...? FELLOWSHIP

Thirdly...I was created to become...? LIKE CHRIST

The Bible word for that is...? DISCIPLESHIP

The fourth purpose...I was shaped to...? SERVE GOD

The Bible word for that is...? MINISTRY

The last and fifth purpose...I was made for...? MISSION

The Bible word for that is...? EVANGELISM

Let's say them again together...

I was planned for God's pleasure

I was formed for God's family

I was created to become like Christ

I was shaped to serve God

I was made for a mission.

That's why God put you here...to do those things in our lives and through our lives!

Thirdly, what have we learned...

#### ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

That we grow through MAKING COMMITMENTS and we grow through FELLOWSHIP.  
...that basically summarizes what our 40 day journey was all about--making commitments and fellowship

It takes more than attending church to grow. The Bible says: "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead!" {James 2: 17}

...we grow not by sitting and listening

...we grow by making commitments

...we grow through fellowship

A number told me that you grew by the commitment to read for 40 days...and you were encouraged by the fellowship of nearly 100 others who made the same commitment. We need each other. Read with me the passage in Proverbs 27: 17..."As iron sharpens iron, so people can improve each other!"

That's why we're committed to building more small groups at Trinity.

...my goal is--every member a member of a small group

...Rev. Don Hammond excels in this area and he's going to guide us in this process

I talked about the importance of small groups the day I walked through the doors of this church 26 years ago...and I'll be talking about them the day I walk out for the last time! I believe in them.

Read with me Proverbs 4: 9...

"Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard, and the God of peace will be with you!"

We read in Hebrews 10: 25...

"We should not stop gathering together with other believers. Instead, we must continue to encourage each other even more!"

A good number of people who were in the small groups during the Sunday School Hour have indicated a desire to continue to meet together.

Why? Because we grow through fellowship!

...and we grow through commitment!

So, we've learned a lot, haven't we?

We have learned a lot about God

We have learned a lot about life

We have learned a lot about growth.

So, what did we learn...

#### ...ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY?

Write this down--we learned that PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY FOR SPIRITUAL TRUTH!

...the world is hungry to know God's love

...the world is hungry to discover God's purpose.

We discovered that it's a big myth that they're not interested. As I shared with you last week...they are...and, they're waiting for YOU to share with them your story and invite them to worship!

Say with me the words of Jesus from John 4: 35...

"Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening all around us and they are ready now for reaping."

God wants to use you.

...God WILL use you IF you're available!

Every organization in our mission faire today has a sign-up sheet on how you can become involved in hands-on mission...evangelism! I hope you'll take time...and get involved!

## CONCLUSION: NOW WHAT?

Let me conclude by telling you a couple things God wants us to do.

Number one--write this down--START LIVING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED!

...now, put it into practice.

...all the knowledge in the world is worthless unless we act upon it!

Read with me from John 13...

"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them!"

...blessings don't come from knowing

...blessings come from doing.

Now, let's read the Ephesians 5 passage...

"Live life with a due sense of responsibility, not as those who do not know the meaning of life but as those who do!"

...you are more responsible than you were 40 days ago

...you know more

...you know what life is all about

Now, God says--"Don't go back to the old way of things!"

...you can't do that

...you now know the meaning of life.

I was planned for God's pleasure...so, I better worship God today!

I was formed for God's family, so I better fellowship with some other believers.

I was created to be like Christ...I was shaped to serve God.

I was made for mission...

...no turning back

...no turning back

Philippians 3:16 says: "Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it!"

...keep your book handy

...pick it up occasionally and reread a chapter

...on Ash Wednesday--read it through again for the 40 days of Lent

Number Two--PASS IT ON! {write that down}

...you only keep what you give away

...God doesn't want you to be a human reservoir

...God wants you to be a funnel.

Read with me II Timothy 2:2--

"Now I want you to tell these same things to followers who can be trusted to tell others!"

Finally, when I think about all of you..."I thank my God through Jesus Christ for every one of you because the news of your faith is spreading throughout the whole world!"

I want us to pray together this Sunday...pray with me...

Since life is preparation for eternity, I want to use my time on earth fulfilling God's five purposes for me. I was planned for God's pleasure, that's worship, so I will use this day to get to know and love God better. I was formed for God's family, that's fellowship, so I will use this day to show love to other believers. I was created to become like Christ, that's discipleship, so I will use this day to make choices to grow my character. I was shaped to serve God, that's ministry, so I will use this day to serve God by serving others. I was made for a mission, that's evangelism, so I will use this day to share the good news.