

## The Purpose of Ministry

### John 4:25 through John 4:29 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup>The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ).  
"When He comes, He will tell us all things."

<sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

<sup>27</sup>And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

<sup>28</sup>The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

<sup>29</sup>"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

### Series Introduction:

As we began our examination of Jesus' ministry to the Samaritan woman, we learned the first of those five purpose statements: "*God wants me in his family*".

God wants us in his family and is willing to go out of his way and put his reputation on the line to reach us. In week two we learned the second purpose statement: "God wants to make me better." God wants to make me better when I know better and do better. Last week we learned our third purpose statement: "God wants me to magnify his name." God is looking for worshippers so he can show himself strong on their behalf.

Today, as Jesus continues his ministry to the Samaritan woman, we will see the purpose of ministry in action. We will examine three key points, share our fourth purpose statement, give you some action steps, and conclude for the day. Up unto this point, Jesus has been doing all of the ministry work. He has reached out, he has shared truth, he has accepted with love, and he has given God the glory. Now, the ministry takes a turn as the Samaritan woman gets involved in service to God.

### God Equips Us for Ministry

Jesus has given this Samaritan woman everything she needs to serve him in ministry. He has given her his presence. Jesus had equipped her with revelation knowledge. He went out of his way to make her a part of his family. He has given her knowledge of the truth. He had equipped her with truth about her life and where she stood with God. Jesus insured this woman could know better and gave her an opportunity to do better.

He has given her a chance for fulfillment through authentic worship. He had equipped her by refocusing her ideas about worship. She is now charged to magnify his name. God has also given her talents and abilities. Every person has some amount or measure of talent that God has given them.

We were born able to do certain things. We were given particular physical and intellectual abilities. We were all given unique personality traits that impact our level of social influence. Whether we realize it or not, God has been meticulous in ordering our steps in life. Every step of the way, he has allowed our circumstances to leave impressions on us that shape our world view.

Every part of our lives can be used by God for ministry, both the good and the bad. God gave us both, the school teacher who nurtured us and the one who challenged us. He equipped us with good times and bad. God gave us times when people talked about us and times when people spoke up for us. He gave us people who stood by us and people who walked out on us.

God has given us education, occupations, segregation, and emancipation. God allowed us to have single parent homes. God allowed some of us to deal with wayward children. God blessed some of us with siblings. God has allowed us to have certain medical conditions. You may be wondering how negative things can be used to bring God glory. Here are two examples from the life of Paul.

### **Acts 8:1 through Acts 8:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. <sup>2</sup>And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

<sup>3</sup>As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

<sup>4</sup>Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

How many of you would agree that persecuting the church was a negative in the life of Paul? God used Paul for ministry before he was even saved. His negative behavior caused the church to scatter and fulfill the command of Jesus to go and teach all nations.

### **2 Corinthians 12:7 through 2 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup>And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. <sup>8</sup>Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup>And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup>Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in

reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

How many of you have ever been sick? Paul had an infirmity in his flesh. He asked the Lord to remove it, but was instead blessed with grace that was sufficient. He received strength for his weakness. Our victories, our defeats, our accomplishments, our failures, can all be used by God for ministry. We are like tool boxes. When God wants to do some work, he reaches for the right tool at the right time. We just need to be settled on the issue of whether or not we will allow God to use us.

## **Ministry is God's Work**

Jesus has deliberately launched a ministry effort in Samaria. This entire outreach belongs to Christ. He has made inroads by meeting this Samaritan woman, and now we find his ministry opportunity opens even wider, because of her willingness to participate. She is going to do some ministry work, but Jesus will get the glory. The same thing happened to Moses.

Turn to Exodus 3:6-10.

### **Exodus 3:6 through Exodus 3:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>Moreover He said, "I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD said: "**I have surely seen** the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for **I know their sorrows**. <sup>8</sup>So **I have come down to deliver them** out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and **I have also seen the oppression** with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup>**Come now, therefore, and I will send you** to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

God said "I have seen the oppression", "I know their sorrows", "I've come down to deliver them", "I've heard their cry", but "I'm sending you."

Whenever we read the Bible after the Exodus, we hear God remind his people "I am God who brought you up out of Egypt and parted the Red Sea." He never once says "I am the Lord who sent you Moses who brought you out of Egypt and parted the Red Sea." That's because Ministry is God's work. What can God do through you?

### **Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

### **2 Corinthians 5:17 through 2 Corinthians 5:19 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. <sup>18</sup>Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

God shapes us and molds us into vessels he can use. We are the body of Christ which makes us the hands and feet the Lord uses to do his will in the earth. He is the head who makes the decisions to move the body where ever he wills. God's work is a spiritual work that is conducted through his people. But sometimes the people fail to get involved in ministry work. More people can be touched if more people join in the work.

### **Ministry Must Be Given Away**

#### **1 Peter 4:7 through 1 Peter 4:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup>But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. <sup>8</sup>And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "*love will cover a multitude of sins.*" <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>**As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Peter is right. All of us have received a gift from God. All of us have been blessed in one way or another. We have received mercy. We have received forgiveness. We have received kindness and acceptance. We have received second chances. We have received jobs and roofs over our heads. We have received reasonable health and strength. We have received the gifts of the spirit and the fruit of the spirit.

We didn't all get the same things all the time. Some of us really needed to receive patience from God because we were out of control. Some of us really needed to receive his love because we couldn't love ourselves. The diversity of our gifts from God is what makes his grace manifold.

Never forget, we are one body but many members. As a result, Peter says do what you do with whatever you've got.

Whatever it is that God has equipped you to do, go ahead and do it for one another. However God has prepared you to serve, serve one another. Don't worry that you will be used up. Don't worry about running out. Don't hold back your service because you can't figure out what you will receive in return. Serve in ministry so the Father can be glorified through the Son.

### **Matthew 10:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup>Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

In Matthew 10, Jesus is sent out the disciples to minister. He equipped them with supernatural power. Then he tells them "Freely you have received, freely give."

The goal of our ministry is not equity. The goal of serving God is not to be comfortable. The goal of serving God is glory. We need to be liberal with our service. We need to give it all away with confidence that God has more than enough in his supply. We have been given the riches of the kingdom so we can give to others. That's what GRACE is: God's Riches At Christ's Expense. There is our purpose statement for this week:

"God wants me to be a giver of his grace."

*"My life has purpose because God wants me to be a giver of his grace." I join in God's work when I give his grace. God's hand is on me when I pour out to others. God has blessed me so I can give blessings. God has given me time so I can spend it on others. God has given me skills so I can share them with others. God has forgiven me so I can forgive others. God has loved me so I can love others. Freely I have been given, so freely I must give.*

### **The Plan**

What is God's will for your life? First, he wants you to become part of his family. Next he wants to make you better. He also wants you to magnify his name. God has purposed that we join in his work and be givers of his grace. Here is what you do to fulfill that purpose in your life:

1. Check your inventory. Answer the question "what's in your hand?" Find out what God has given you. As believers in Jesus Christ we should be wealthy in the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. We should also be rich in amazing grace and mercy that we have received from God.

2. Find out what God is doing. Listen for opportunities to serve. Look for opened doors to be used by God for his glory. When you find out where God is working in the church or in the lives of others, join him.
3. Give. Give and trust God to give back to you. Every time we bless others we become a blessing and are blessed by God. Never ask yourself “what’s in it for me?” We can give without fear because our heavenly Father is so rich in grace.

### **Conclusion:**

Why do we say “God bless you” when someone sneezes? For centuries there have been many possible origins for this social function. Some have said it began because people thought their souls could escape their bodies when they sneezed. Others have said it began because people who were sneezing were under attack from the devil.

There are many more possible origins, but one tradition in particular stands out to me. During the time of the Bubonic plague it was believed that sneezing was one of the first symptoms that a person had acquired the plague. So, people spoke blessings on a sneezing person as a way of asking God to spare their lives.

If someone sneezed in worship today, we are all close enough to respond with “God bless you”. But sometimes we don’t say it. Maybe we don’t think it’s that important. Maybe we don’t think it really matters. Maybe we don’t feel like it. So, we wait for somebody else to say it.

Many of us have the ability to be used by God to bless those around us. We are uniquely equipped and strategically positioned by God to minister his grace to others. But sometimes we don’t do it. Maybe we don’t think it’s important. Maybe we don’t think it matters. Maybe we are waiting for someone to ask us. Maybe we are expecting someone else to do it.

The Samaritan woman didn’t keep her gifts to herself. She was so filled with Jesus Joy that she put down her water pot to go serve grace to those in her town. Through her actions, she was saying “God bless you” for all of the spiritual ills that plagued her people. Freely she had been given and freely she gave.

God bless you.