Grab Your Purpose!

- Today I really want to dive into how to find that purpose, and how to seize that purpose. I want to really look into Jeremiah and what God said to Him and promised Him all about purpose and what His purpose was. Let's start with the same theme verse Pastor started with last week, just this time out of the Passion Translation:

Romans 8:28: "And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose(Prothesis)." Amplified Bible

- Every single detail, every little thing you have ever gone through, ever struggle you have ever faced, every trial overcome has been woven together for the good of your purpose designed by God. How exciting is that? We were created for His purpose, His calling.

Purpose Definition: The reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists

- I think before we get too far it's important to make a distinction between calling and purpose, they are often used interchangeably, but there are differences, we all share a singular purpose.

- Our purpose is why we were created, the sole reason we exist, and we were created with great purpose, with great things to do for God, all to give absolute glory to God. We were fully created and designed to bring Glory to God.

- But God gave each of us different callings to accomplish that singular purpose of pointing the world to Glory of God.

A Call of God:a unique, divine assignment given by God for his purposes, which requires faithful and active obedience, unwavering commitment, and devotion from the one called.

- The purpose is to Glorify God and the means is our calling. Your purpose is more important than calling but you cannot achieve your purpose without your calling.

- Calling is the road you take to get to purpose. Purpose is the destination. In Christ, we all have the same destination but we uniquely different roads to get to this destination.

- We are all one team with one owner, one coach, and one goal. That goal is to win the game and make the coach and owner proud and bring them glory. But the team has different players who play different positions on the field and so each teammate has different roles or callings on the field.

- We are all different pieces of a puzzle. We are shaped differently and fit in different places but we have the same purpose. When God puts us together and solves the puzzle, he is glorified. In Ephesians chapter we learn even more about the beautiful work of art God is weaving with our lives for His Glory.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us]." Amplified Bible

- Now there are two greek words from Romans 8:28 and Ephesians 2:10 I want to look at that give us some really good insight for our purpose and God's creative hand in us.

Prothesis(Romans 8:28-plan): a setting forth in advance for a specific purpose, every step worked together for the purpose of show, a sacred show-bread

Proetoimazo (Ephesians 2:10-prepared): properly made ready in advance for the glory of God

- These two words are both echoed in both verses and give us such a great glimpse into the amount of preparation God has into us and the calling we are to use to fulfill God's purpose. I love when it compares us to the sacred show-bread.

Leviticus 24:8: "This bread is to be set out before the Lord regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant." NIV

- Which a little background into that, it was the set out every Sabbath as commanded in ***Exodus 25:30***. This was a special ritual of the temple and part of the Sabbath, and a powerful image when used to describe us and our purpose.

- That bread was specific, it had steps to prepare and a very important role to play, it was the best of the best, set apart for Holiness. Just like us, God has worked on us our whole life and set us apart for show, for holiness. All to display the Glorious goodness of God! It was so particular and it took time and had to be a particular way!

Leviticus 24:5-7: "Take the finest flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah for each loaf. 6 Arrange them in two stacks, six in each stack, on the table of pure gold before the Lord. 7 By each stack put some pure incense as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be a food offering presented to the Lord." NIV

- It is so beautiful how our Sovereign God is particular in how He arranges things and directs. He was had a plan for the showbread just as He has had a plan for us and woven together the threads of our lives. He has worked everything together to use us as the show bread of today, all of His children to the world and it's all apart of His perfect redemptive Glory and love. And it reminds me of the prophet Jeremiah as well as the powerful things God spoke over him and to him all about purpose and His plans.

Jeremiah 1:4-10: "The Lord gave me this message: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations." "O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" The Lord replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!" Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant."" NLT

- Now before we dive too far into this I want to give some background on the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah prophesied around 600 BC and unlike other prophet's of the Old Testament instead of just prophesying about the

Babylonian invasion, exile, and destruction of Jerusalem he actually lived through it with his people.

- Jeremiah was at a young age thrown into the midst of the most gut wrenching historical event of Israel in The Old Testament. In fact I'd say that the two biggest historical events of the Old Testament were the Exodus of Egypt and the fall of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms and the Exile, of which Jeremiah had a very significant role.

- Now the book of Jeremiah is a rather long book consisting of 52 chapters, there is a lot to cover, though I really want to focus on Chapter 1 for the most part, which is the calling of Jeremiah. But Jeremiah prophesied a lot of intense things, things about Judah's judgment, the impending exile and destruction, and even against specific leadership, and let's just say Judah, didn't like it.

- Jeremiah met heavy opposition especially from the priesthood and other so-called prophets. There were many at the time claiming to hear God and just speak from their imaginations, The jews of the time had included many pagan rituals into their religious practices and people were not close to God. Much like our world today. Jeremiah faced many hardships, and much persecution even imprisonment. And it was in that hardship that exile, that destruction we see one of the most quoted verses of the Bible, in fact my favorite verse.

Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." NLT

- This beautiful verse all about purpose and the nature of God is written by a heavily persecuted man to a people in exile and occupation, that these plans of God work together to good, for God's purpose of showing glory, His Glory! And it fits so perfectly into the nature of God's purpose for us and the verses we looked at earlier out of Ephesians and Romans.

- Despite what we see, what we are going through its all perfectly woven together in God's plan for our life, our calling, and His purpose for us. So when we look back at those six verses of chapter 1 of Jeremiah starting with verse 4 we can see three things God says of Jeremiah that is extended on to us and our purpose and calling, these three things are seen specifically in verse 5.

Jeremiah 1:5: ""I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations."" NLT

- God tells Jeremiah and by extension us here that before we were even born we were:

1. ***Known***
2. ***Set Apart***
3. ***Appointed***

- Think about that for a second, before you were ever born, God in His amazing vastness and Omnipresence ***knew you***. God knew every passion you would have, every talent you would have, every fault you would have, every tiny little detail about you. And in knowing everything about you ***He set you apart!***

- He chose to set you apart for His Glory, to call you a vessel worthy of Holiness, that through accepting God into our hearts at salvation we became vessels of Holiness and it was a plan He had for us from the start before our birth. God set us apart for Holy Purpose and Calling before we could even cry out to Him! And thirdly ***we were appointed***! God appointed us for our calling to achieve His Divine Purpose before we were born as well!

<u>Appointed:</u> Chosen, equipped and designated beforehand for a specific job and purpose meeting a specified standard for that job and purpose.

- God set aside a perfect calling and Kingdom position for us knowing exactly what was best for His Purpose and what fruit He could bear through us all before we even knew our own name. If that doesn't make you feel special and excited I don't know what will.

- But sometimes that is scary, we see what God is calling us to do, we see the purpose He has we come up with excuses, excuses on why we can't do what God set us apart to do. In fact we aren't alone with making excuses, Jeremiah did it too. The biggest three excuses I so often hear from people and honestly even I've made to myself at many points in life and Jeremiah was right there with us making them! The first being…

Excuse 1: Not Being Good Enough

- We see Jeremiah's first excuse right in verse 6: Jeremiah says He can't speak for God

<u>Jeremiah 1:6: "O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you!…" NLT</u>

- This is an issue I feel we all face one time or another, we face the feeling of inadequacy, we don't feel good enough. Be it we don't feel we have the talent, we don't feel we have the knowledge, whatever leads us to feeling not good enough, it's all a lie. God always equips who He calls! Looks at God's promise in verse 9:

Jeremiah 1:9: "Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said "Look, I have put my words in your mouth!…"" NLT

- God touched Jeremiah's mouth and gave Him the words to say and God does that exact same thing through us today. But in a different way. God may not physically come down and touch our mouths and fill them with words. But we have the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

- When we have been baptized with the Holy Spirit we have been filled with the power that will direct us, lead us, equip us, and give us the words we need to say. All we have to do is lean on Him, submit to Him, God will give us exactly what we need to break down every insecurity we could ever feel about the calling God has placed on us.

Excuse 2: The Timing Is Not Right

- We see this excuse come from Jeremiah again in verse 6, first he expresses his feelings of inadequacy by sayings he can't speak for God but then we see a whole different excuse with his reason of why and it's all about timing.

Jeremiah 1:6: "…I'm too young!"" NLT

- We don't actually know Jeremiah's exact age but what we do know is he felt like he was too young to be used by God in such a mighty way, and I sure can relate. There have so many times I've not good enough because I was the youngest man in the room, or like God's call wasn't right because I'm just too young to do it. And maybe for you the timing may not be right for another reason.

- Maybe you don't necessarily feel you are too young but you feel you are maybe too busy. Or maybe this is just an inopportune time, but guess what? God never sends His servants out alone! Just like with the Holy Spirit we have the promise of His Leading we also have the promise of His presence!

Jeremiah 1:7-8: "The Lord replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you…" NLT

- When we commit to always following God's leading and going where He wants to send us, He blazes the trail preparing a way for us. God goes before us and also walks with us. His presence gives us the strength to stand in the face of every assault.

Excuse 3: Do I Really Have To Go Right Now(Spiritual Procrastination)

Jeremiah 1:17: "Get up and prepare for action. Go out and tell them everything I tell you to say…"NLT

- God was expecting immediate action from Jeremiah. God gave Jeremiah a very hard word for his people, and God expected him to move out now, not wait for the right time, for him too mentally prepare, clear his schedule, God said "GO NOW'!

- God expects immediate obedience when He calls us to something, be it a ministry, a location, a job, whatever it is God calls us to, He doesn't want us to come up with reasons why we can't go or a list of things to do in preparation, He wants us to be obedient right then and there. But God gives us the strength to do it, to go now! Look at verse 18:

Jeremiah 1:18: "For see, today I have made you strong like a fortified city that cannot be captured, like an iron pillar or a bronze wall. You will stand against the whole land—the kings, officials, priests, and people of Judah." NLT

- God will always give us the strength to do what we need to do, just as He did for Jeremiah. God will equip, enable, protect, and accompany you in everything you do, you just have to be wiling to act immediately on what you are called into. God wants true surrender to His plan and direction, and not always is His plan according to our timetable but His own.

- It is important that we cast aside any doubts and seizing God's purpose for our life by walking out our individual callings right now! We live every single day in a world eerily similar to the world Jeremiah found himself in. People are twisting Christianity into political agendas and replacing Jesus with whatever they want it to be.

- The divide is big and God is calling us right now! To wrap this up I want to talk about three things we need to do in order to answer the call of purpose on our lives today:

Accept God's Call on Your Life

- This is one that is very simple when God puts the call on your heart, accept it. In Jeremiah's case he was scared and didn't feel he could do it, So he argued with God. Created so many excuses, the very excuses we know God has promises of equipping for! And almost always God is going to give you a calling that you can't do on your own. He will call you to waters too deep.

Revelation 3:20: ""Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." NLT

- We must be willing! Regardless of any excuse we could ever make, we must willingly open the door to our calling, to our purpose. God wants a willing heart, He won't force that calling on you, He set you apart and it's our choice to then answer the call.

- God gives us all very unique gifts and abilities to use for His good! For His purpose, accept those gifts as a calling for God and use them to spread his word, you aren't going to truly live out God's plan until you accept your calling, God has a different callings for everyone, however we all share the calling of spreading the Glory and love of God.

Align to God's Perfect Plan

- In our call we must be in complete alignment with God. We can't mistake what we desire to do for what we are called to do. Our calling is birthed from convictions not desires, God does a miraculous work-either immediately or progressively-on a person's heart, and that work propels the person into action.

For example Saul(Paul):

Acts 9:3-4: "As he was approaching Damascus on the mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" NLT

- Saul was working out of his desires, then God got ahold of him and then he left his desires behind and aligned with God's plan for his life.

Acts 9:17-18: "So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized."NLT

- God's sovereign hand was at work in Paul's life from the beginning, aligning every piece to build Paul's character so he would be the faithful man God called to preach good news to the Gentiles. God allows us to go through events in life that align us to his plan, then with God's help we align our hearts to His to feel the convictions He has called us to, and accept His plan or call on our lives.

- We need discernment to properly align to God's will and calling for our life, Paul heard God's voice on the road and listened, we need to properly attune our ears to the words of God, to what He is saying to us. To the calling He is directing us to, and sometimes we need to be honest with ourselves and ask some questions:

Ministry Questions:

1. What lights a fire inside of me?
- passions and interests I could do all day
- world issues that burden my heart
- messages I feel led to share with others

2. What can I do very well without much effort?
- natural strengths
- natural abilities
- special talents

3. What is unique about me?
- personality traits
- values or life principles
- spiritual gifts

4. What are my significant life experiences?
- prepared or inspired me to help others
- found meaning in the experience

- learned major life lessons

5. What dreams are in my heart that won't fade?
- types of people or situations I usually help
- messages I feel led to share with others
- a role or activity I keep imagining myself in

- God has designed us specifically from the very beginning of our lives for His Purpose and the individual calling He will use to achieve that Purpose through us. All of these questions when answered honesty and combined with prayer can help direct and discern what God wants from you, and the calling you need to seize.

Trust That God Will Equip You

- Once we truly have those convictions the anointing is what passionately drives us to faithfully continue the work. A true calling can be sustained only by abiding in Christ and totally depending on him and His anointing.

What is anointing?

Anointing- the tangible power of God's Holy Spirit resting on your ministry

The Greek word in The New Testament used for Anointing is

Chrio: to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service:--anoint.

- I love that context, God's tangible power smeared all over you! And without that anointing, that smear, our call is not a true call. A divine calling cannot be self-contained by any human being. A true calling requires God to jump-start the effort and God's presence to sustain it.

- But the amazing thing is when we walk in God's calling He will anoint us! He calls us to deep waters but gives us the tools to walk on the water. With prayer, and constantly seeking God after answering the call comes anointing.

1 John 2:27: "But you have received the Holy Spirit and He lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need." (NLT)

- God created us for his work, has already prepared the work for us to do, and will glorify himself through the work of our hands. We must accept the call God has given us than through alignment and anointing, God sets us on track to seize the purpose he has for each of our lives. Our acceptance of that calling means that we say yes to God and fearlessly abandon anything that does not work toward his ends.

- We can answer the call of God with confidence, knowing that God does not waste anything. He uses every strength, weakness, heartache, success, relationship, and experience to shape our hearts, to draw us closer to him, and to equip us to fulfill our life's calling!

Ending:

- In Jeremiah 18 there is a prophesy God gives Jeremiah about Israel and I think it the perfect way to end any discussion on Purpose and Calling, God tells Jeremiah to go the local potter's shop and there he sees the potter crush a clap jar back into a lump because it wasn't what he wanted them God said this:

Jeremiah 18:1-6: "This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord:
2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message."
3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel.
4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.
5 Then the word of the Lord came to me. 6 He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel." NIV

- When seizing purpose, calling, we need to always be willing to let God mold us in absolutely every way, maybe He needs to break us down to remold us into something even better. Or is turning our life into a masterpiece that was different than you imagined.

- This morning if you are willing to molded for God's purpose, if you are willing to let God destroy your excuses, you preconceived notions about your calling and life. Let God mold you this morning, come to the alter, we are going to have a time of prayer for direction, molding, remolding, discernment, all the above. This morning we are seizing purpose!