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What On Earth AM I here For?

Cindy and Rosanne were best friends in junior high.

“I loved Cindy,” said Rosanne.

She was the coolest girl in school and
everyone wanted to be like her ... and
she chose me to be her best friend.

Cindy was beautiful with her black hair and tall thin body.

While the rest of us eighth graders were still looking
amorphous, trying to take shape,

Cindy was already beautifully poised in her adult body.

Cindy’s mother had died when she was a little girl.

She was an only child and lived alone with her father.

Her father worked a lot so we had free reign of the house
with no parental supervision.

It was the greatest thing we could ask for as teenagers.

At school Cindy was pretty much the center of attention.

She set the pace for music and clothes and
hair styles in our school. Even the teachers
were swayed by her power and
convinced her to run for school president and
I her best friend was her vice president.

By day

we were the acting liaison between students and faculty;
by night we hosted social activities at Cindy’s house.

What a life.

One morning when I arrived at school, there were police
cars all around and a lot of nervous activity in the halls.

When I came to my locker my counselor stopped me.

I was asked to follow him to the office.

My heart pounded so hard I could hardly breathe.

When we sat in the office the principal came and began
to talk about life and maturity and circumstances.

What was he trying to say, I wondered.

And then my world froze in time with the words

“.. and Cindy took her own life last night
using her father’s gun.”

I couldn’t talk, I couldn’t move.

Just tears and a black numbness.

She was only 15 years old.

The suicide note explained that her father had sexually abused her and she knew of no other way out.

One of our deepest hungers as human beings is the hunger for meaning and purpose in life.

True meaning, true purpose.

Without purpose, without significance,
life is not worth living.

Life is just a confused series of unrelated events
signifying nothing.

And that is how many people experience life today.

It is no wonder that the suicide rate in our society has gone up. Teenage suicide is now the number two killer of children under 20.

Today we begin our Lenten season.

As part of our preparation for celebrating Good Friday and Easter we are participating in the 40 Days of purpose Campaign.

For the next six weeks we want to set some time aside to look at and review three of the most important questions we can ask in life.

Three of the most essential questions we keep wanting answered, we keep struggling to resolve in our souls.

No matter who we are,
how old we are or

from what culture we were born;

we all want to know Why I am alive. Why do I exist.

What significance does my life have,
does my life really matter.

What is my purpose? What On Earth AM I here For?

I'd like you look with me for a moment at some pictures.

Do you know what this is?

Do you know what it is used for?

What purpose it would serve?

If you found some of these in your storage shed,
what would you do with it?

What about this? Or this?

How would you find out what this is used for?

How could find out the value to this thing?

You can't find the purpose or value in the thing itself.

You need to look in the owners' manual or
talk to the person who sells these, or

the person who invented this thing.

If you don't know the purpose or the value of something
what do you do with it?

If you don't know the purpose of something and
don't know its value you either abuse it, or
make up your own use for it, or you throw it away.

It's the same for people.

It's the same for us, for you and me.
We need to know our purpose

The first words of Rick Warren's book
the Purpose Driven life are "It's not about you."
We can't find the answers to the question of
why we exist in our own thoughts or our own life.
The purpose of your life is far greater than your own
personal fulfillment, your own peace of mind, or
even your own happiness. It's far greater than
your family, your career, or even your wildest ambitions.

If we want to know why we were placed on this planet,
we must begin with God,
the owner and inventor of human life.
The one who created us.
We were born **by** his purpose and **for** his purpose.

And so today rather than listening to philosophers,
or Oprah, or Dr Phil we turn to the Word of God and
we listen carefully to the opening teachings of one of
the most profound books in the bible.
I'll be reading Ephesians 1: 3 -14. Pray Read

In this chapter the question of our existence and
the question of our significance and
the question of our purpose is answered.

We belong to God (14). We are God's possession.
God is our creator, our father, and
we are his adopted children.
Notice in verse 5. In love God adopted us.
With intentional love God chose us.
God's pleasure and God's will and God's reason for
creating us was to love us – was to love us.
If there is nothing else we learn from our 40 Days of
purpose and our lent preparations and

our participation in the Lord's Supper
it ought to be this.
We were created to be loved by God.

The second great understanding from this passage is
God values us immensely.

We are his children.

He blesses us with every possible blessing there is (3).
Since the beginning of the world God was preparing for us.

Just as a pregnant couple eagerly expects their first child
so God prepared for our lives.

It was his pleasure to lavish on us his grace.

With all his wisdom and understanding
God planned and accomplished what he had hoped for us.

In love God even sent his only son into the world
for the forgiveness of our sins.

And not only did God give us his son,
he sent his own spirit the holy spirit to live in us.

And that is the second message we hear in this passage.

Each one of us is special in the eyes of God, and
for each of us there is divine plan
a divine hope in the heart God for our future.

And the third,

God loves and sees us as special because
he has a purpose for us.

There is a reason for sending his son for us.

There is reason why God gives his spirit.

(11) There is a reason why he adopted us and loves us.

We were chosen, we were planned for a purpose.

We were born, we exist in order that we might be
for the praise of his glory (12).

That is the bottom line.

Four times in this short passage Paul repeats this purpose.

(3) Praise be to the God and Father of Jesus.

That's a command. We were made to praise God.

(5) In pleasure God adopted us
to the praise of his glorious grace.

(14). He gave us his spirit, he marked us as special,
he made us brothers and sister of Jesus
to the praise of his glory.

What on earth am I here for? For the praise of his glory.

We, Paul summarizes in chapter 2:10;

and this is our memory work for this week,

we are God workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to

do good works which God prepared in advance
for us to do, which God planned and hoped for in
advance for us to the praise of his Glory.

Now it is easy to hear these words and
to know them intellectually, but
it is another matter to believe them and
to let them shape you life and you soul.

It takes time for those truths to sink in and become part of
your psyche and your personality and your whole way
of doing things.

And that is why we are spending 40 day looking at
God's purposes for our lives.

40 days of soaking in the love of God and looking at his
special care for us and his purposes for us
as we become the praise of his glory.

Today on this first Sunday in lent,
we begin this process of understanding our purpose
by pointing to the person who makes all of this
possible. Jesus.

Today in the Lord's Supper our attention is directed to the
one who bring all things in heaven and on earth together.

The one who makes the plans and purposes of God real
and possible in our lives.

Jesus Christ and especially the passion of Christ is
what puts us in touch with God himself.

Notice in this passage that Paul mentions
that it is in Christ, in him, through him, by him that
God's love, and his special care and his purposes are
made know to us.

(9) He made known to us the mystery of his will in Christ.

In him we are adopted, in him we have redemption.

In him we are chosen, in him we were planned,

in him we hear the gospel of salvation,

in him we are marked by the Holy Spirit,

In him we are the children of God who are for the praise
of his Glory. In him, in him.

Do you want to know the purpose of your life?

Do you want to know deep inside why you exist,

do you want your life to have meaning beyond you own
sense of peace and happiness and family and career.

On this first Sunday of Lent,

on this first Sunday in our 40 Days of purpose campaign

the Lord's Supper points us to Jesus and
the passion of the Christ.
It is there at the cross of Jesus that we find
what we are looking for.

It is there at the cross
that we begin to know what on earth we are here for.
At the cross all the abused, all the neglected,
and all the discarded people in the world,
all those who are confused about life
find their purpose and their value and their love.