

Week 4. Connected to purpose in life (Eyes on the prize)

1. What's the meaning of life?

For Paul, it was preaching the gospel. For others, people have been trying to work it out for years. Douglas Adams stated the answer to the meaning of life was 42. Others have said self gratification, others ultimate pleasure. Others have said family, success, comfort. What about you?

What is the meaning of your life? As I said Paul's whole existence was wrapped up in telling people about Jesus. Listen to this.

1 Co 9:16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

1Co 9:17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship.

1Co 9:18 What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

A couple of things here:

1. NO boasting – It is not about him, but about Jesus
2. It is a stewardship. A duty, He is compelled by conscience.
3. Here is a big thing – tell the gospel free of charge. Now, someone this week used this verse to say that paid church staff are not biblical. Na, what it says here is the gospel is free to those who it is shared with. Yeh, we shouldn't charge people we are evangelizing. But then he says something funny.

so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Now, here is something huge. We have rights but we choose not to use them for the benefit of others. Yes. There is much discussion about the individual rights of the Christian at the moment. Basically Paul says – Don't use your rights so you can minister effectively. Now, I am sure that will get some comment so feel free to email me during the week your thoughts on that.

Paul unpacks it here.

1Co 9:19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

1Co 9:20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.

1Co 9:21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.

1Co 9:22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

Do we get this? But we must be careful. This is about proclamation or evangelism basically telling the Jesus story. We become all things to all men when telling the gospel – we find ways to make it happen, to speak into their lives if you want to use that terminology. Notice the terminology.

Make myself a servant

Become like a Jew

To outsiders – become like them

Become weak

All things to all people.

This is how important the sharing of Jesus is. This is not talking about life in the church!! We are instructed to utilize our gifts within the church not be everything to everyone else. Notice that. We are who God made us, and utilize what giftings God gave us when in the church but flexible and nearly all rounders when sharing Jesus.

We go on.

1Co 9:23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Share the good news so they can get blessed. Too often these days we pull back from the gospel, we don't share it because that's not our culture. Well, we need to find a way to be what is needed to communicate effectively what Jesus wants

communicated. But notice something
that I may share with them in its blessings.

It is about sharing the blessing! Is our aim to bless people? Actually each person, each ministry, each department, each church are suppose to bless people! It's our role in life. So let's make it our aim.

Notice what Paul does next. He uses an example of contextualising. Uses something they all know about to explain where he is coming from. Corinth was full of athletes. They had their own games like the ancient olympics, each year and Corinth was famous for it. Everyone in Corinth understood the athletes lifestyle. Paul uses it to make a point.

1Co 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

1Co 9:25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

1Co 9:26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.

1Co 9:27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Lifestyle of athletes are different today. They are professionals, hang on so where those in Corinth. They had a sponsor that put them into the gym system. They became famous and rich by their exploits. It's not as foreign to us as we think.

Notice its points then, as they are applicable to us.

- 1, Everyone runs
2. Only one winner _ We now have three winners at the Olympic games - much fairer!
3. Athletes train – they go without
4. The prize is short lived – fame is short lived – a different event the next year.
5. One of the training techniques back then was shadow

boxing – every sport did it. We have push ups and sit ups they had shadow boxing. The basic exercise.

6. Its about control.

How does that work for us?

WE all are sharers of Jesus

We all aim to win

But we need to be prepared

The prize, is the chance to tell rather than the convert.(please note the prize here is not heaven or being blessed but sharing the blessing!)

We need to know what to say, how to explain etc.

We need to do it within the boundaries – to the Jew, to the non Jew etc.

If Paul's meaning of life is sharing Jesus then so is ours!

Actually, we are confronted with the meaning of life for churches aren't we? Why does a church exist?

To service the saved or to serve the message of Jesus.