

## Easter Explanations: For Heaven's Sake

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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Ephesians 1:9 (The Apostle Paul wrote) ***“...And God made known to us the mystery of His will according to his good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ...”***

What on earth am I here for? We talked about the mystery of history. Now we are looking at the mystery of God's purpose. Why didn't God just make us and take us to heaven? Because God wants a people who choose to love Him. We begin with some reasons why we are here.

Reason #1 \* **LIFE ON EARTH IS A TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT** Hebrews 13:14 ***“For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to our everlasting home in heaven.”***

Our life is not going to last forever...100 years at best. Even human history isn't that long. This is all good, because this world is broken...broken by sin. Nothing works perfectly on this planet...not your body, not your relationships...the weather, the economy, your plans, your dreams – nothing works perfectly here. Everything is broken on this planet. So thank God we don't have to spend eternity on an imperfect planet with sin, suffering, sorrow, sadness, sickness. It's temporary.

Reason #2 \* **LIFE ON EARTH IS A TEST** Luke 16:11 ***“If you are untrustworthy of worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?”***

Who and what am I going to live for? What am I going to do with what I have? Salvation is the first test, Stewardship is the second. One day God is going to say, “What did you do with my Son Jesus? If you didn't need a Savior, I would not have sent Jesus. Did you accept Jesus into your life?” Not, “did you go to church...and which one? Rather “Did you receive my love by receiving my Son?” That's the salvation question. The stewardship question is, “How did you manage what I gave you?” Life, relationships, brains, bodies, spirits, abilities, resources, creation – everything is “on loan” from God...even our children. God entrusts us to care for His possessions. We don't take any of it with us. It all belongs to God. Salvation comes through what Jesus did for us. Stewardship is what we do for God...with riches in heaven for those who honor God with what they have been given.

Reason #3 \* **LIFE IS PREPARATION** 1 Thessalonians 1:5 ***“God is using your suffering to make you ready for His Kingdom.”***

God uses all we go through to prepare us for the next. Does God make bad happen? No. But God brings meaning to it by using it for His purpose. And part of God's purpose for this life is preparing His children for eternity.

Since life on earth is temporary and a test and preparation...what on earth should we be doing?

**First Purpose of Life...GOD WANTS US TO LOVE HIM.** Matthew 22:37-38 ***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”***

Jesus said nothing matters more than this. God made us so God could love us and have us love God back. This is the privilege of being a human. The Bible word of loving God is **Worship**. In a crowd, alone, in a building, in nature...anytime you are expressing love to God, you are worshipping.

**The Second Purpose of Life...GODS WANTS US TO LOVE OTHERS.** Matthew 22:39 ***“The second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”***

God wants us to learn to love other people because God is love and life is all about love. Life is about relationships...about learning to be unselfish. You are not taking any of your accomplishments with you...but you are taking your character. Especially learn to love your brothers and sisters in the family of God. Why? Because you are going to spend eternity with them. Loving others is called **Fellowship**. Listen up: You cannot fulfill your purpose in life by yourself. Why? Because it's all about love. Love God, love others. We need each other...and God has given us to each other.

**The Third Purpose of Life...GOD WANTS US TO BECOME LIKE JESUS.** Romans 8:28-29 ***“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.”***

You are never going to be a god, but God wants you to become godly. God wants you to become like Jesus...and as you do you become more like who God created you to be. When God created humans, God said *“Let us make humans in our image, in our likeness.”* (Gen.1:26) Christ likeness is a process of spiritually growing up that is called **Discipleship**. As we grow, the Holy Spirit produces within us *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”*. There is no question we live on a broken planet...where bad things happen to good people. But when God's children go through tough times, our question shouldn't be “Why? But rather, “How can God use this in my life?” “What does God want me to learn through this?” Life is not about making us comfortable; life is about building our character so that we become more like Christ.

**The Fourth Purpose of Life...GOD WANTS US TO SERVE HIM.** Ephesians 2:10 ***“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”***

When we get to heaven we are going to be able to serve God directly, but here on earth the only way to serve God is by serving other people. Jesus said, *“Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me”* (Mt.25:40). Every good you do in Jesus' name counts. It is called **Ministry**. Ministry is simply serving God. Everybody is a minister. You are a minister. In the Bible the word “minister” and the word “servant” are the same word. Whenever you take whatever you do well and use it to help other people and you do it in God's name, that's called ministry. Our work, our abilities, our interests...God intentionally gave us these (as well as many opportunities) to do good works.

**The Fifth Purpose of Life...GOD WANTS US TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.** 2 Corinthians 5:18,20 ***“All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.”***

You are God's spokesperson. God has made peace with you so that you could help others make their peace with God. Jesus sends us into the world to speak on His behalf. What do we speak? The “good news” as we know it. The Greek word for “good news” is “evangel”. **Evangelism** is simply sharing the “good news”. The good news is that we are not an accident...that God made us to love us...God wants us in His family...that Christ died for our sin so we don't have to die for them...that we can have our past forgiven and a purpose for living and a home in heaven.