

SEMINARY PROFESSOR GLENN NEILSEN: *WHEN YOU HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE, YOU DO THINGS ON PURPOSE. IF YOU WANT TO BE HAPPY, YOU SHREWDLY AVOID SADNESS. IF YOU WANT TO BE RICH, YOU DOGGEDLY SAVE MONEY.*

IF YOU WANT A LOVING FAMILY, YOU LOOK FOR THE RIGHT SPOUSE, REJOICE IN MAKING CHILDREN AND THEN EXPECT TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH THEM. IF YOU WANT TO BE LOVED BY OTHERS, YOU SPEND A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY ON SHOWING LOVE TO OTHERS. ...DO YOU HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE?

...JESUS IS ON THE ROAD WITH HIS DISCIPLES WHEN WE HEAR THIS EXCHANGE: *WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THAT I AM? ...THE BAPTIST, ELIJAH, SOME OTHER PROPHET. ...WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? ...YOU ARE THE CHRIST! ...GOOD ANSWER, PETE; NOW, KEEP IT TO YOURSELF. YOU GOTTA LOVE JESUS.*

PETER KNOWS THAT JESUS IS CHRIST; HE HAS NO IDEA WHAT CHRIST IS GOING TO DO. HE FIGURES HIS DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE. HE'S HOPING FOR CHRIST TO OVERTHROW THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT SO THE JEWS CAN BE FREE; HE SEES NO MORE OPPRESSION, SUPPRESSION OR DEPRESSION.

PETER BELIEVES THAT CHRIST WILL WIELD DIVINE POLITICAL AND MILITARY POWER. HE THINKS PEOPLE WILL BE WEALTHY AND SAFE; THAT THERE WILL BE SO MANY CAREERS AVAILABLE WITH THE ABSENCE OF ROME.

AND HEH, THE DISCIPLES WILL GET THE BEST POSITIONS. PEOPLE WILL LOOK UP TO THEM. HE, A STINKY FISHERMAN FROM IRRELEVANT GALILEE, WILL BE LOVED. MAYBE HE'LL BE THE RIGHT-HAND MAN – LIKE JAMES AND JOHN ARE HOPING FOR.

NONE OF THAT WILL HAPPEN BECAUSE CHRIST'S PURPOSE IS QUITE DIFFERENT. HE NEEDS THE BOYS TO KEEP QUIET ON THE 'CHRIST' THING BECAUSE PEOPLE WILL TAKE UP ARMS INSTEAD OF HEARING THE GOSPEL. HE WON'T BE ABLE TO SAVE ANYONE IF PEOPLE WANT CAMELOT – A GODLY KINGDOM ON EARTH.

JESUS SAYS: *I MUST BE REJECTED. I MUST SUFFER. I MUST BE KILLED. THIS IS CHRIST'S PURPOSE IN LIFE. HE HAS TO BE HUMILIATED AND SENTENCED, TORTURED AND CRUCIFIED BECAUSE THE SCRIPTURES SAY SO.*

ISAIAH DESCRIBES CHRIST AS DESPISED AND REJECTED, ESTEEMED NOT, STRICKEN, SMITTEN, AND AFFLICTED! THE MESSIAH BEARS OUR GRIEFS, CARRIES OUR SORROWS AND WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED. THE LORD LAYS OUR INIQUITY ON HIM. THE PROPHET SPOKE IT AND SO IT *MUST* BE FOR JESUS.

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH – BABY ISAAC, CONFIRMS THAT THEIR DESCENDENT WOULD BLESS THE WHOLE WORLD. IT *MUST* BE FULFILLED IN JESUS. ISAAC WAS SPARED SACRIFICE BECAUSE JESUS IS THE SACRIFICE LAMB. THE KING OF KINGS HAS COME FROM SARAH – DON'T TELL ANYONE!

JESUS *MUST* BE A SHEEP SILENT BEFORE HIS SHEERER BECAUSE HIS FATHER HAS GIVEN HIM THAT MISSION. HE HAS TO LIVE UP TO HIS NAME – 'JESUS' MEANS 'SAVIOR.' WHEN YOU HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE, YOU DO THINGS ON PURPOSE.

2 JESUS **MUST** SAVE SINNERS, RECONCILING THEM WITH GOD BY ACCOMPLISHING PEACE AND PARDON. HE **MUST** BE FORSAKEN IN THEIR PLACE – IN OUR PLACE; IN YOUR PLACE! *HE IS THE CHRIST – THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!*

GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE FOR YOU IN THIS; *WHILE YOU ARE YET A SINNER, CHRIST DIES FOR YOU.* YOU ARE RECONCILED TO GOD. JESUS **MUST** BE REJECTED AND KILLED BECAUSE THIS IS HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE: HE HAS TO MAKE PEACE BETWEEN YOU AND GOD OR YOU ARE DAMNED FOREVER.

THE BOYS **HAVE** TO BE QUIET ABOUT HIM BEING CHRIST SO THAT HE CAN DO WHAT HE **HAS** TO DO. THE PEOPLE ARE NOT IN CHARGE OF SALVATION. THE SCRIBES. PHARISEES AND PRIESTS ARE NOT SAVIORS. ROME IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT IN CONTROL – THE GOVERNMENT IS UPON CHRIST'S SHOULDERS.

JESUS DOES EVERYTHING ON PURPOSE. HE TELLS PETER TO BACK OFF ON SAVING HIM. THEN, IN THE GARDEN, HE HAS PETER PUT AWAY HIS SWORD WITH THE WORDS: *YOU KNOW I CAN CALL DOWN LEGIONS OF ANGELS!*

AT THE JEWISH TRIAL, JESUS IS QUIET WHEN WORDS WILL FREE HIM AND SPEAKS THE WORDS THAT CONDEMN HIM. IT'S TIME FOR ALL TO KNOW: *I AM THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.* 'I AM' IS GOD'S NAME; THE BLASPHEMY CONDEMNS HIM TO DEATH. HE'S DOING THIS ON PURPOSE.

AS JESUS STANDS BEFORE PILATE, AGAIN HE'S QUIET WHEN THE TRUTH WILL MEAN A MISTRIAL. HE'S GOING TO BE CRUCIFIED ON PURPOSE BECAUSE THIS IS HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE - TO REMOVE SIN BY A CROSS; TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR THE WORLD.

SO, WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE? YOU HAVE A FEW, I'M SURE. YET, YOU DO HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE GIVEN TO YOU BY CHRIST: *TAKE UP YOUR CROSS, DENY YOURSELF AND FOLLOW ME.*

YOU BEAR THE CROSS BY PUTTING GOD FIRST WHEN IT'S DIFFICULT TO DO SO, LIKE WHEN YOU MIGHT LOSE FRIENDS OR A JOB OR YOUR LIFE. YOU DENY YOURSELF BY SEEING THAT THE POOR HAVE FOOD AND CLOTHING; THAT WIDOWS ARE NOT LONELY, THAT PRISONERS KNOW GOD LOVES THEM, AND THAT YOUR CHURCH HAS SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO DO ITS MINISTRY.

YOU FOLLOW JESUS WHEN YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TOUCHED BY HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE. YOU FOLLOW JESUS WHEN YOU DO THINGS ON PURPOSE. SOME OF IT ISN'T THAT DIFFICULT - JOINING YOUR VOICE IN CONFESSION AND PRAISE, BUILDING SOMEONE UP RATHER THAN TEARING THEM DOWN, MAKING YOURSELF AN ORGAN DONOR. THESE THINGS GIVE LIFE TO OTHERS.

YOU DO THINGS ON PURPOSE WHEN YOU HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE. YOU CAN'T HAVE A BETTER GOAL THAN SHARING THE LOVE YOU HAVE IN CHRIST.

AMEN?