

***TO LIVE IS CHRIST – Part 2***  
**Philippians 1:21-26**  
**By Andy Manning**

The title of this sermon is “To Live is Christ.”

Today we’re talking about purpose.

What is the purpose of life? What is your purpose? What is my purpose?

A **Chicago Sewer Worker** described his definition of the meaning and purpose of life: "I dig the ditch; to earn the money; to buy the food; to get the strength; to dig the ditch."

That’s depressing. That’s not your purpose. There’s more to it than that.

Everybody has a general purpose, and an individual purpose.

Your **individual purpose** is the unique problem that God wants you to solve; the need that God wants you to meet; the disease that God wants you to cure; the void that God wants you to fill.

One **author** wrote, “Your purpose is your calling. An inner desire given by the HS through the word of God and confirmed through the community of Christ.”

I **once heard it said** that “Your purpose is the specific story you were created to tell.”

And God has a unique story for each of us.

Be we also have **general purpose**. There’s a purpose that all of us share in common as Christians.

The Bible tells us our general purpose in life. It's the title of this sermon. "**To Live is Christ.**"

Today and last week we're trying to unpack that idea and try to figure out all that it means.

Turn with me to **Philippians 1:21-26**.

21 For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. 25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound.

In the first part of verse 21 Paul writes, "**To live is Christ.**"

What does this mean?

**Paul is saying that the meaning of life is Christ. The purpose of life is Christ. Christ is the reason we exist. Life is all about Christ.**

What does this mean? To fully understand the phrase "to live is Christ," we need to understand 7 truths about Christ, and 7 truths about us.

Last week we looked at seven essential truths about Christ.

## **7 Truths About Christ**

- 1. Christ is the creator of life.**
- 2. Christ is the giver of eternal life.**

3. Christ is the giver of new life.
4. Christ is the giver of abundant life.
5. Christ is the only way to life.
6. Christ is the judge of life.
7. Christ lives in the believer.

Christ is life!

Now let's take a look at 7 truths about us that will help us to understand the phrase "to live is Christ."

### **7 Truths About Us**

1. **We live first and foremost to honor Christ.**

This is seen in the verse right before Philippians 1:21.

Look at **Philippians 1:20**. "My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death."

Paul was in jail, under house arrest, and he didn't know how it was going to end – in his martyrdom, or in his release. In life, or in death. But Paul's main goal, his priority, was not safety; it was not finding relief from his suffering; it was not getting out of jail; it was not survival; it was honoring Christ.

What does it mean to honor Christ? It means to show how great God is through the way you live.

"To Live is Christ" means that in all you do, in good times and in bad times, your main purpose is to honor Christ – to display how great He is by the way you live.

You do that primarily by imitating His character.

The meaning of life is not to make yourself look good, but to make Christ look good.

It's not to attract people to yourself, but to attract people to Christ.

You all know what's going on with Colin Kaepernick right now. He and many of his fellow players are not standing in honor of the national anthem. I'm not against free speech; but I think the NFL should make them stand. Why? Because when he puts on that 49ers uniform, he is no longer representing himself and his personal views. He is representing the 49ers, and the National Football League. And therefore he needs to behave in a way that honors the NFL – that makes the NFL look good.

And it's the same with us. When you become a Christian, you put on the Jesus Jersey. You are no longer representing yourself. Now you represent Jesus Christ. Now your purpose isn't to make yourself look good; your purpose isn't to draw attention to yourself; now your purpose is to draw attention to Christ and make Him look good.

## **2. We live to serve Christ.**

This is seen in Paul's words in the next few verses after Philippians 1:21.

Look at what he says in **Philippians 1:22-26.** “22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. 25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound.”

So Paul says he would rather die and be with Christ, but if he continues to live it means one thing: First, fruitful work for Christ.

And then in verses 25-26 Paul gets more specific. The focus of his life will be working for Christ to help others progress in the faith, so that they will praise Christ more and more.

So Paul is saying that the purpose of his life is not personal comfort, or pleasure, or advancement, or success.

The purpose of Christ is to serve Christ's purposes.

After every meal at my house my children have tasks. One has to wipe the table and chairs, one has to vacuum the floors, one has to take out the trash, one has to do the dishes, etc. And usually Lydia and I will escape to our bedroom to shower and put on pajamas and get ready for the evening. And that means it's very tempting for one or two of the kids to goof off. And when they goof off, you can hear from the other room. And so I'll storm in there and say, "Guys, I love it when you laugh and goof off; but this is not goof off time; this is work time."

You know for Christians, while we are on this earth, this is not goof-off time; this is work time. We're not here to try to have as much fun as we can; we're not here just to enjoy life; we're not here just to do what makes us happy. We're going to have all the fun we want in heaven. But right now, while we're on this earth, this is not goof-off time; this is work time.

The purpose of our lives is to serve Christ – to reach the lost, to make strong disciples, to disciples our kids and grandkids, to build the church.

### **3. We live to please Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 5:9** says, “Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to him.”

Paul is talking about life and death. In this life we are at home with the body – our spirit is connected to our body. But when we die, our spirit is away from the body and at home with Christ.

So Paul is saying that whether we are dead or alive, our aim, our goal, our purpose, our mission, is to please Christ.

When I was in middle school I was super-sensitive to the opinions of others. I was very self-conscious. I was terrified of people laughing at me; or not liking me; or teasing me. I worked hard to make sure to not do anything that would even tempt my classmates to laugh at me or not like me. I would put tons of hair spray in my hair so that not one hair would be out of place. One time when my mother was about to drop me off at school I realized that I forgot to put on deodorant, and I panicked. I freaked out. If I stunk my classmates would notice and laugh at me. I was lucky that my mom was nice enough to drive me back home to put on deodorant.

But then I got saved. And I had a new purpose. To live is Christ. And so my behavior radically changed. I still was very self-conscious; that’s just my personality. But suddenly I started intentionally doing things that would make people laugh at me; things that would make some of my classmates to not like me. I started doing things that made me stand out; things that made me very different. I started wearing a Christian t-shirt to school every day. I started carrying my Bible to class every day. Anytime I was given a writing assignment, I would somehow use it as an opportunity to share the gospel, and I would volunteer to read it aloud to the class.

I changed from working super hard to avoid being laughed at and disliked to intentionally doing things that would cause me to be laughed at and dislike. Why? Because I had a new purpose. To live is Christ.

Before Christ, my focus was on pleasing people; but once I became a Christian, my purpose was on pleasing Christ, even if that meant losing favor with people.

#### **4. We live to obey Christ.**

We live to do His will.

**Romans 14:7-9** says, “7 For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 Christ died and returned to life for this: that he might be Lord over both the dead and the living.”

First it says that we live and die for the Lord. Then it says that we “belong to the Lord.” In other words, God owns us.

And then it says that Christ died to be the Lord of all.

The word “Lord” means master, or boss. So what this verse is saying is that is that the meaning of life is to obey Christ; to let Him be in charge of your life and to do His will. The meaning of life is not to do what you want, but to do what Christ wants.

One of the games that my kids like to play is Simon Says.

Let’s see if you are any good. “**Simon says touch your touch your elbow (touch my shoulder).**”

To win at Simon Says, you have to be really good at listening, and really quick at following Simon’s orders.

It’s the same thing for Christians. As Christians, the meaning and purpose of life is Christ Says. And to be good at life, to succeed at life, you have to be really good

at listening to what Christ says, and then really quick at following His orders. The better you get at listening and doing what Christ says, the more successful you will be at life.

## **5. We live to love Christ with all of our life.**

Do you remember the greatest command in the Bible?

Jesus said in **Mark 12:30**, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

Notice the word “soul.” That’s a Greek word, *psyche*, that simply means “life” or “breath.”

Jesus is saying that we need to love Him with all of our life; or all of our breath. We are to love Him with every arena of our lives; with every aspect of our living; with every breath that we breathe. With every minute.

We are not to compartmentalize and keep any parts of our life from God.

**“Jesus doesn’t just want Sunday; He wants every day. He doesn’t just want one hour a week; He wants every hour of your week. Jesus doesn’t just want to be your religion; He wants to be your obsession. He doesn’t just want a tithe; He wants every penny you’ve got. He doesn’t just want your prayers, He wants every word you speak, and every thought you think. He doesn’t just want to be one slice in the pie of your life; He wants to be the filling in every slice. He doesn’t just want to be a cross around your neck; He wants you to put your neck on the line for Him. He doesn’t just want to be a bumper sticker; He wants to sit in the driver’s seat of your life. He doesn’t just want you to wear a Jesus t-shirt; He wants you to clothe yourself with His character, and give your shirt away for His glory. He doesn’t just want to be a part of your life; He wants you to love Him with all of your life. Every breath; every word; every**

**movement; every goal; every possession; every thought; every heartbeat; every moment; every day; with Him; for Him; through Him. To live is Christ.”**

## **6. We live to imitate Christ.**

**1 John 2:6** (NLT) says, “Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.”

Our aim and goal and purpose is to be like Christ in our character, conduct, and convictions.

The meaning in life is not to be unique, or to be different.

Guess what? God made you unique. If you are trying to be different or unique, then something’s wrong. You are already unique just the way God made you. There’s only one you.

It’s not hard to be different. That comes naturally to us. This past week was picture day at work. My boss sent out memos that everyone was supposed to wear the same shirt and the same color pants. The only problem is that I didn’t the memo about the pants. So the picture has 20 people or so wearing black pants, and then the largest man in the picture is wearing tan pants. I was so embarrassed. I didn’t to try to be different. That’s comes naturally to me.

But the meaning of life is not to be different or unique, but to imitate Christ; to copy Christ.

And if you focus on copying Christ, then you will be the only person who ever copied Christ the way you do. You will imitate Christ in a completely unique way.

Lydia tells our kids all the time. “Girls, if ever you’re in a situation and you’re not sure how to act, just act like Mom. And boys, just act like Dad.”

Jesus says the same thing to us. How do you know how to act in life? How to behave? Just act like Jesus.

## **7. We live by faith in Christ.**

**Galatians 2:20** says, “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Paul writes that “the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God.”

In other words, Paul is saying that he puts no confidence in his own good works for salvation; rather he puts all confidence, and hope, and trust, and faith in Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection for his sins.

In other words, the meaning of life is not to try to earn our way to heaven by doing good deeds. We can’t do that. That’s impossible. If we got what we deserved it would be hell.

Instead, the meaning of life is to trust in Christ as the payment for our sins, as our Savior.

A lot of people say they believe in exercise, but they don’t exercise. That’s not faith. Faith is when you actually do regular exercise. That’s someone who truly believes in exercise.

There are a lot of Christians who say they believe in Jesus, but they aren’t trusting in Him because they are focused on trying to work their way to heaven. Real faith

admits that I can't earn my way to heaven. Instead, I have to rely by faith on what Jesus did for me.

## **CONCLUSION**

So what is the meaning of life? To live is Christ.

1. We live to honor Christ.
2. We live to serve Christ.
3. We live to please Christ.
4. We live to obey Christ.
5. We live to love Christ with all of our life.
6. We live to imitate Christ.
7. And we live by faith in Christ.

Don't miss the meaning and purpose of life.

It's not found in the search for happiness or pleasure or fame or power.

It's found in a relationship with Christ. To live is Christ.