

Bible Notes for Small Groups WB 9th February '25

- What have you seen to be your purpose in life?

Philippians 3:1-14

We are on the third session where we are looking at Apostle Paul's letter and this week the title for us is '**Living a Life of Loss**' By that we mean loss of self where we put Christ first.

A question was asked from a group of people ;What is your purpose in life?; Some answered 'I don't know. Maybe I'll find out when I die.' Some just said they didn't know. Some said it was to live a good life, look after their family, get a good job. Many answers were based around self centeredness. If that is what existence is about then we are missing something.

Apostle Paul says that our purpose in life is to join our lives to Christ. God puts His purpose in our hearts.

We have a destiny. God has prepared good works for us. This does not happen all at once as soon as we are saved. There is a process of sanctification that gradually transfers us as we increasingly live a life in tandem with Jesus and in obedience to Him.

- What is your favourite worship song and why?

'It's not about you'

God does not intend us to just live a life of self-centred pleasure, although He does want us to enjoy life, have fun and look forward to what is in store. All our needs, the welfare of our families and how we progress in life are important to Him but we are born by Him and for Him.

He has a special purpose for each of us.

Our lives are designed to be centred around God. They should not be so full of things that there is little room for Him. He should be first and the other things we are engaged in come next and are made easier, more exciting and interesting because we build them on Him.

- How does it make you feel knowing God has a purpose for your life?

Read again vv 1-3

Watch out for the dogs

By this Apostle Paul is talking about those people who try to impose rules and religious restrictions on us that are really nothing to do with Jesus, His life in us and His gift of salvation. They press in with 'bad theology' that they want us to

apply to our living with Jesus. A modern example of this is the prosperity gospel that says if we believe in Jesus our lives will always be wonderful, with no problems or hitches, no ill health or heartaches. This is obviously counter to both the teachings of Jesus and Apostle Paul.

- Have you ever thought that God was being unfair because you had done things for Him but life was still tough? How was this resolved for you?

Read again vv 4-9

Before he met with Jesus Apostle Paul had been fooled into thinking he could earn his salvation by committing his behaviour and religious observances to the law of Moses that we see in the Old Testament. He would strive to do it without fault and became a slave to it exercising a zealot approach both to his own life and to the lives of others.

When he met Jesus, he removed that whole attitude from his life. But on doing that he lost his friends, his reputation and all his followers.

He considered those previous things worthless compared to the value of knowing Christ. He discarded everything else to gain Christ. They have no value when seen in the shining light of Christ. He lay all his accomplishments at the feet of Jesus.

The gospel challenges us to discard everything except to be in the presence of Christ.

Read again vv 10-11

There is always more to know and experience of the power of Jesus' resurrection. But Apostle Paul points out that there is not a short cut. The journey is through the sharing of the suffering and death of Jesus to enjoy His resurrection. By this he means the giving over of the selfish part of our lives and living the new life of Jesus that comes with God's call on our lives and the Holy Spirit's power. Our infinite God wants us to go ever deeper into His presence and glory.

- Has there been a time when you began to realise a deep truth about Jesus and it affected your whole life?

There is so much more than we can imagine.

Paul writes to the Philippians saying the way to becoming less self-centred is to go on this journey of becoming like Jesus in His death and attaining the quality of His resurrection. Dying to Self and allowing the Holy Spirit to raise us up.

Read again vv 12-14

Jesus had something in mind for each of us when He saved us. We don't get perfection immediately but as we press on to achieve it, we will be going deeper; a deeper mindedness as we find ourselves in the Father's heart. When we get to the end will God say 'Well done' ?

- Has God presented you with a special task that you are working through?

God has a reason for us and that is to share Christ with those around us. It is not all about us but all about Him. Christian maturity can be seen in those who live in hope that God will be revealing more and more of Himself to them. In joyful obedience to Jesus, we will discover our purpose in Christ.

Living a life of loss means letting Jesus shine through our lives.

Which of us is saying to Jesus 'Here am I send me.' ?

Can God point to our lives as a model of Jesus to others?

- This week spend some of your daily prayer times lifting your fellow group members to Jesus and asking Him to take them deeper into Himself.