



Finding Your Place

Finding My Place, 2nd Corinthians 8:1-5

Jigsaw Puzzles

- Anyone here like to put together Jigsaw Puzzles?
- How do you feel when you use up all the pieces on the table and find there are one or two pieces missing?
- Even though you can see the picture, it still feels incomplete
- Something is missing

Church is like a Jigsaw Puzzle

- It is made up of people or pieces that come in all different shapes, sizes, stripes
 - Different interests, characteristics, talents, skills, histories, hurts, and desires
- You were made by God and positioned by God in His church to fit
 - But you don't feel like it
 - Feel like you belong in some other puzzle and content to sit on the side until the right picture come

Church is like a Jigsaw Puzzle

- Then you notice church or worship becomes stagnant and no longer speaks to you
 - Randy's not as good as he once was
 - Jonathan is always too loud
 - I really don't like the music at all
 - My group I was comfortable in is no longer consistent
 - It is easier to just watch it on Facebook Live, no expectations there

Church is like a Jigsaw Puzzle

- What happened?
 - What happened to your joy of and in life?
 - What happened to the sense of expectation that God was moving and working in us?
 - What happened to everyone?
 - What happened to me?
 - You've lost or never had your sense of purpose and meaning in the Church of Jesus Christ

Rick Warren

- Rick Warren is a pastor and author who wrote the book “The Purpose Driven Life.” In it, Rick talks about God’s intentions to use our gifts, talents, and bent to do good in the world and explains God’s 5 purposes for us.
- **1. We were planned for God’s pleasure** RH6
 - **So, your first purpose is to offer real worship**
 - **We were formed for God’s family**

Slide 6

RH6

Randall Harwood, 1/1/2022

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

- **1. We were planned for God's pleasure**
- **2. Your second purpose is to enjoy real fellowship**
 - **We were created to become like Christ**
- **3. Your third purpose is to learn real discipleship**
 - **It begins to get really hard here as we are being challenged to change to be more Christlike**
 - **We are being shaped for serving God**

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

- 1. We were planned for God's pleasure
- 2. Second purpose is to enjoy real fellowship
- 3. Third purpose is to learn real discipleship
- **4. Your fourth purpose is to practice real ministry**
 - **What question do you think is asked here?**
 - **What does God want me to do?**
 - **Or how do I find what God wants me to do?**
 - **We were made for a mission, purpose, meaning**

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

- 1. We were planned for God's pleasure
- 2. Second purpose is to enjoy real fellowship
- 3. Third purpose is to learn real discipleship
- 4. Fourth purpose is to practice real ministry
- **5. Your fifth purpose is to live out real evangelism**
 - **Actively looking for ways to share Jesus, to touch broken lives, to give hope to those without**

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

1. We were planned for God's pleasure
2. Second purpose is to enjoy real fellowship
3. Third purpose is to learn real discipleship
4. Fourth purpose is to practice real ministry
5. Fifth purpose is to live out real evangel

- There should be consistent growth in each of these categories throughout our lives
 - But we get stuck at times, don't we?
 - Where within this list are you now stuck at?

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

1. We were planned for God's pleasure
2. Second purpose is to enjoy real fellowship
3. Third purpose is to learn real discipleship
4. Fourth purpose is to practice real ministry
5. Fifth purpose is to live out real evangelism

- Many, if not most, born-again Children of God get stuck in steps 4 and 5
 - We identify our gifts, talents, and interests
 - We calculate how much time we might have

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

1. We were planned for God's pleasure
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- Many, if not most, born-again Children of God get stuck in steps 4 and 5
 - And try to plug ourselves into a place that we think might work for us and usually ends in a sense of failure

Rick Warren's - God's 5 purposes for us

- I think there is a better, more Biblical way to get unstuck and find where you fit
- We find that in the churches of Macedonia and a ministry opportunity

Scripture

2nd Corinthians 8:1-5 NIV, “1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”

Paul wants us to know some things about the Macedonian churches

- about the grace that God has given
- midst of a very severe trial
- extreme poverty
- rich generosity
- their overflowing joy
- Entirely on their own
- exceeded our *(or anyone else's)* expectations

Macedonia became home to a number of the early churches

- Luke mentioned in **Acts 16-17** Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea
- These young Macedonian churches were severely persecuted from the time they came to faith, and it had left them financially destitute

Macedonia became home to a number of the early churches

- Most of the time these verses are used to teach on giving and you may have already checked out this morning because it looks like I am going to talk about money and that's none of my business
 - And you would be correct, but it is God's business
 - We forget at times we are stewards of the life God has graced us with

Macedonia became home to a number of the early churches

- But this morning I want to look at the process the Macedonian churches used to be a part of this ministry of giving

Please notice, this ministry was outside of their church structure

- The vast majority of Christian ministry does not happen inside of the church walls
- The world is too big to fit inside whatever structure God has provided so it must be out there in the scary world of the unsaved, the broken, the hopeless
- This was the primary ministry area for Jesus when He walked this earth

Please notice, this ministry was outside of their church structure

- Jesus prayed for us as recorded in **John 17:15-19 NIV**,
“15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by (give them power to live) the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

Please notice, this ministry was outside of their church structure

- Now this is where it gets spooky
- In here we are more like family than our own family
- We are comfortable and confident in the structure and routine
- Out there are lions, tigers, and bears – Oh my!
- There are challenges we don't have the answer for, the hurt of rejection, there are dirty feet to wash

Please notice, this ministry was outside of their church structure

- Even within the church structure and routine there are places to branch out within it, but we are more comfortable with routine of service that we stop looking for different ways to minister here as well
- However we look at it, there is a limited number of places to serve at church, but it is unlimited in our lost and dying world

Please notice, this ministry was outside of their church structure

- It would have been so easy for the early church to just stay in Jerusalem
 - Here is where the Apostles are at
 - Here is where the early power was at
 - Here is where I am comfortable
 - But we would not be in this place this morning without someone bringing the Gospel of Jesus to us

Please notice, this ministry was outside of their church structure

- God used the Roman persecution to spread His Gospel with the intent of it being spread around the whole to every stripe of person
- I guess I'm saying they were open and available to whatever ministry the Holy Spirit presented to them

Please notice, they actively pursued the possibility of being a part of this ministry

- **Vs. 4** they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people
 - They saw this as a privilege and that is what ministry is
- **Vs. 2** In the midst of a very severe *trial (which resulted in)*, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity

Please notice, they actively pursued the possibility of being a part of this ministry

- **Vs. 1** the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches
- God has promised you grace or the ability to minister in the Name and Power of Jesus Christ
- So often we are waiting for someone to come and ask us to do something and that is normally within the church structure

Please notice, they actively pursued the possibility of being a part of this ministry

- When we are to actively search for ministry opportunities and when those are revealed to us as we try them
- We are so afraid of spiritual failure we are hesitant to try anything, or we determine it does not fit us well

Please notice, they actively pursued the possibility of being a part of this ministry

- Find someone struggling in your area
 - Purposely get to know them and their situation
 - Don't ask how you can help, find a way to help them
 - There are struggling, broken people and families all around us
 - Be gracious and merciful to those around you when you would rather dope slap them
 - Find something to praise or encourage them

Please notice, they actively pursued the possibility of being a part of this ministry

- How about visiting or calling a shut-in?
- How about a small Bible study in your home?
- How about welcoming new families into our area?
- How about fixing up older cars to give to those in need?
- How about organizing a diaper bank for those with small children in our area?

Please notice, they actively pursued the possibility of being a part of this ministry

- The ways to minister are literally unlimited if we don't suffer from a lack of imagination
- Jesus never calls us to be successful on our ministries
- He just simply calls us to be ministers
- All of us

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- **Vs. 5** They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us
- The first thing these churches did was present themselves to the Lord

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- I have the image of a knight in armor presenting himself to the King
 - Everything about me King is available to you to use as you desire
 - My sword and my hours of training, My hopes and dreams, My time and desires, My loyalty, All of me and whatever is me I present to you

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- The churches of Macedonia offered all of themselves and whatever they managed to the Lord
- We hold back nothing from You
- **Vs. 5** They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us
 - The Macedonian churches not only dedicated themselves to the Lord but to the Lord's work

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- **Isaiah 6:8-12 NLT**, 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” 9 And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- **Isaiah 6:8-12 NLT**, 'Keep on listening, but do not understand; Keep on looking, but do not comprehend.'
10 "Make the heart of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- **Isaiah 6:8-12 NLT**, 11 Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered, “Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, And houses are without people And the land is utterly desolate, 12 The Lord has removed [His] people far away, And there are many deserted places in the midst of the land.

Please notice, they did not look at themselves first but to the Lord and the Lord's work

- Isaiah caught the image of God's holiness and asked God to send him to be his voice with a message the nation will not want to hear
- Here am I Lord send me

Someone, “I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.”

- **Matthew 5:14-15 NLT**, 14 “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.
- The lost and broken can not see your light unless you let it shine in their darkness
- May our attitude be, “Here am I Lord. Send Me.”



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Finding My Place, 2nd Corinthians 8:1-5