

Lesson 8:

Placed Where We Are on Purpose!



“Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on the yesterdays.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14b

“Jesus called Peter a “Rock” long before Peter was stable and

He leads us by calling out what He sees

Not calling out our failures.”

Unknown

Satan would like nothing better than to convince us that we are not part of God’s plan. Throughout our lives, we will be bombarded with images and messages that try to convince us that we are not good enough to be used by God. Scripture teaches us a very different truth. God’s word tells us that God knew us and designed us before we were ever even born. God knows our weaknesses as well as our strengths and has tailored our calling to encompass all of these qualities. We need to learn to let go of the opinions of this world and embrace being all that God says we are.

Made Just the Right Way - - -

Far too often, the way we are comes under attack. Society's models change constantly. If we have straight hair, then curly hair is the style. If we are plump, being very thin is all that beauty magazines feature. If we are talented in sewing, all anyone wants to talk about is painting. We can never measure up to an ever changing line of perfection. I think one of the most interesting depictions of this principle can be seen on social media lately. Periodically, there will be a global beauty experiment. A photo of a man or woman is taken and sent to different countries around the world. Each country is told to photoshop the picture to make it a model of beauty and fashion. Each country sends back a different standard. One country emphasizes the eyes while another makes them smaller. In one country a high forehead is considered gorgeous, in other bangs make the cut. If we continue to look to outside influences we will never understand that we are created exactly the right way... on purpose. The things that make us unique are designed by God for his purpose. The gifts, talents and even weaknesses are all part of His plan. We talked about this in the video this week when we read God's response to Moses lamenting about his speech impediment. God responded, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" (Exodus 4:11)

Is there something about you that you, like Moses, believe hinders you from fulfilling God's call? If so, I would like to encourage you to brainstorm some ways those weaknesses might actually be an important part of God's plan.

To see how God instills us with the gifts and abilities He knows we will need, let us look at the lives of Bezalel and Oholiab. Please read a portion of their story in Exodus 35:30-36:2.

What 4 things did God fill Bezalel (verse 31)?

What other ability did God give to both Bezalel and Oholiab (verse 34)?

How do you think these men acquired the skills God would use to build the Tabernacle?

What skills do you have? How can you think of ways to use those skills for God's work?

Just Where We Need to Be - - -

In as much as how we are made and the skills we have are important and on purpose, where we are bears just as much importance. Every part of our life can be used for God's glory, and that includes the place we are in. The job we have, the classes we take, the city where we live are all a part of God's calling on our lives. When we realize that, we can begin to see our circumstances as opportunities to be used by God.

Dorcas (also known as Tabitha) stands as a great reminder of this truth. Please read her story in Acts 9:36-42.

What had Dorcas done that endeared her to so many people (verse 39)?

Dorcas always inspires me. Mostly because she used the gifts and talents and resources she had to bless the people around her. I think that is something that all of us should aspire to copy. But also, think of how the impact of her life would have been different if she had lived in any other place. The town of Joppa, where Dorcas lived, has had a very rocky lifespan. This principal port of Judea was often fought over. In fact, Easton's Bible Dictionary says of it, "Scarcely any other town has been so often overthrown, sacked, pillaged, burned and rebuilt." Like any other town of importance for trade and commerce, there was a great difference in the social classes. The merchants and ship owners enjoyed great wealth while the dock workers and peddlers suffered great poverty. So here,

in this land of vast diversity, lived Dorcas. God had obviously given her the talent for making clothing. He had obviously also given her the income to be to purchase the fabric to make it. She used her talent and her wealth to bless those in need. And in this great diverse town of Joppa, she found plenty in need of compassion. Dorcas could have lived any place else. God could have given her the same talents and even the same wealth, but would He have been able to use her the same way? Perhaps not. Regardless, she lived in Joppa because that is where God called her to be. He had a plan to use the talents he placed in her to reach the needy in this often dangerous seafaring port, and her life touched so many people.

There are times when God calls us to travel and there are times He makes us stay put. There are jobs that we despise and there are situations we wish would never end. When we acknowledge that we are where we are on purpose - for however long that might be - we can look for opportunities to be used by God just where we are.

How do you think God can use where you are to bless those around you?

We Are Not on Our Own - - -

I want to leave you with this last insight. We have been talking about Who God says we are and how we can do and be all that He says we can be. That can get a bit overwhelming. Stepping out in faith to do what God has called and prepared us to do can be very scary. The good thing is that God promises to never abandon us when we seek Him and His plan for our lives.

Deuteronomy 31:6 encourages us, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” And then in verse 8, “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

How does it make you feel to hear that promise?

Is there any part of where God has placed you or what He has called you to do that scares you?
If so, what?

I would really encourage you to fold a piece of paper in half long ways. On one side write your fear. Across from the fear - on the other side of the fold line - use your Bible Concordance or simply Google "scripture that talks about.... (list fear)" and write the scriptures that you find that give hope against that fear. The enemy will throw our fears up in our faces any chance he gets. Let's learn to use God's word as our shield and our sword against Satan's attacks.

Let's end by reading one last section of scripture. Please read Jeremiah 29:11-13.

How are the plans of God described?

What promise does God in these verses?

Let's end this series by spending some time reflecting about what we have talked about.

What challenged you the most?

What part of who God says you are is the easiest for you? What is the hardest?

How have you applied what you have learned over the last few days and weeks?

Which lesson encouraged you the most?

Spend some time thanking God for all the blessings and opportunities He has given you. Pour out your worries or insecurities and ask Him to make you stronger and to show you His mercy and provision. Thank you for taking this journey into scripture with me. I hope you have been encouraged and blessed!