

Sunday May 5th 2024.

A New Way

Scripture: Matt 5:1-12

The beatitudes spelt out a new lifestyle for the disciples of Jesus and for us. The sermon on the mount is the new law which fulfills the old. In it Jesus spells out the implications of the love commandment which He proposes as the sum and basis of all law.

But they are not a set of regulations but a series of illustrations showing us what we must be like and how we must live if we are to be followers of Jesus.

The first 4 refers to our relationship with God. The second 4 to our relationship with our fellow human beings.

Where do you find purpose?

Have you ever wondered – what am I doing here? Even, as Christians, we can find ourselves confused, disorientated or useless.

We might understand, theoretically that God has some purpose for us, but we're not always sure what that means. Today there is a tension in our society. We are the most socially conscious, globally minded, justice orientated generation in living memory.

But we are also the most mentally ill and chronically unhappy, a generation of people doing exactly what we want with our lives

No God = No Hope.

Know God = Know hope.



and yet we are completely overwhelmed, utterly exhausted and chronically anxious.

Something is off, we all feel it. We have a sense we are here to live fruitfully and make a difference, but too often we are experiencing more harm than help. We are trying to achieve good things but encountering bad outcomes.

What's happening?

Augustine, the 4th century theologian said our hearts are restless until they rest in God. There is an inner ache, a restlessness that nothing and no-one can satisfy except God.

Consequently, we will never walk effectively in our calling until we first learn to rest in Christ. This practice is our way of finding purpose.

How do we do this?

Amid our cultures noise, Jeremiah's words ring out – 6:16

The Lord says this: stand at the crossroads and look and ask for the paths of former times, ask where the good way lies, take it and find peace for your soul. But the people of that time said we will not take it."

Are you standing at the crossroads and wondering which way to go? It can be challenging. Our purpose has not changed since creation. We don't need to find new solutions, instead we need to look backwards to walk forwards, back into scripture, back into history – the answers are there.

What is the chief end of man – to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. This is why we are here, to walk in a meaningful, faith

filled way, honouring our creator. This is our purpose. It always has been. Knowing this is like a breath of fresh air for our flustered souls. The unchanging meaning of your lives is to know Jesus a little deeper every day.

We are primarily created for a joy-filled relationship with God. This is the ancient path; this is the good way. When we live with this priority restored, everything else finds its fulfillment.

Our love for others; our desire to serve and our hope to forge a better world. The pathway to purpose is simpler than you imagine.

Rest in God. Pursue your connection with Him. Everything else flows from there.

Prayer:

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Thank you for this time together. I pray that our hearts and minds would be open to receiving Your Word, Your Holy Spirit, Your love, and Your guidance. Jesus died for us while we were at our worst. He doesn't love us because we have suddenly earned it. He loves us because of who He is. God is love. Lord, if anyone is still standing at the crossroads - trying to decide which path to take, I pray that You would touch them and urge them to follow Your way, which is the only Way. Amen.

In God's word there are over 1000's of promises. Let God's promises shine on your problems, to boost our energy, teach us and restore us so His promises are woven into the fabric of you.

Begin by telling God how you are feeling. Is anything making you feel grieved, unsettled, or fearful? As you identify the discomfort with your soul, intentionally welcome Jesus in, listen for a moment, allow Him to speak to you, let His promises gently reach into your pain. He sees you.

If you are feeling alone, dwell in God's reassurance from Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire you will not be burned.

Jesus will never forsake you.

If you are feeling unloved, meditate on God's unfailing character in Psalm 100:5.

The Lord is good, and His love ensures forever.

God's love hasn't run out on you.

If you are struggling for provision, saturate yourself in 2 Corinthians 9:8.

God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

God may not give you everything you want, but He will provide for your needs. Trust Him today.

If you are encircled by despair, surround yourself instead with Jesus' voice as read in John 8:12.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

This stunning truth transpired Francis of Assisi to joyfully proclaim – all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.

Jesus can illuminate a path through your darkness.

These scriptures are only scratching the surface of God's love for you. Whatever is going on, you can shine God's incredible promises onto your problems today.