



+ **YOU**

Fall 2024

Thrive: Living on Purpose

Sermon Title: There is No Purpose Apart from Christ

To be used with Session 1: Purpose Questioned

The Point: Apart from God life is meaningless.

Scripture: Mark 10:17-22

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study “Purpose Questioned,” this sermon focuses on the interaction Jesus had with a rich young ruler. This passage draws us to accept the difficult truth that in order to find peace and purpose in this life, we must fully surrender ourselves to God. Jesus makes clear that our tendency to seek out our own purpose in the pleasures of this life, or even in “doing the right things,” will lead us to the same response as the rich young ruler—to go away “grieving.” There is nothing in this life that provides us with true meaning or purpose outside of Christ.

Introduction: Common sense tells us that each generation should have more purpose and clarity than the one before them. After all, as each generation learns and grows, wisdom could surely pass down to the next, right? Statistics prove this is not the case. As Americans, we are growing lonelier, more isolated, and less aware of a sense of purpose or meaning in life. A recent study states that young “Americans between the ages of 7 and 22 experience much higher rates of loneliness than other generations.”ⁱ Devastatingly, our young generation is increasingly turning away from faith and instead looking to anything else to find purpose, meaning, and community. Predictably, as they seek purpose apart from Christ, they are not finding it. Social media is one culprit, but the fact is that these young people have a desire to do good and to bring about a better society. Yet as they go about such work without Christ, they are misled and end up finding emptiness instead of purpose. Our hope, our only hope, is in Christ, and none of us can find purpose apart from Him!

1. Purpose is not found in passion to do good (Mark 10:17-18).

Have you ever run to Jesus with a pressing question? The young man in this passage was so desperate for truth that when he saw Jesus, he ran to meet Him and then knelt before Him. There can be no doubt of his sincerity! He didn’t approach Jesus casually, but made every effort to get His attention and then kneel in reverence before Him. This young man had wealth and authority, but he did not have the answers. He did not understand his true purpose, and none of his possessions brought him meaning. His desire to get to Jesus shows

Lifeway

that he understood some of who Jesus is and that Jesus was the only one could answer his questions. He wanted to do good and do what was right. He knew that his wealth and titles were not enough to merit eternal life, and even with all he had, he was still lacking in direction and purpose. When we reach the end of all that this world has to offer, we should instinctively “run to Jesus” and find the answers and purpose that He alone can offer. Without Jesus, we can accomplish no good in this world, but in Him His Spirit can do more than we imagine.

2. Purpose is not found in avoiding evil (Mark 10:19-20).

Although we are born sinful, we have an instinctive knowledge of what is good. We generally know not to do the things Jesus listed here, such as avoiding adultery, theft, and murder. Yet Jesus made a clear point that “no one is good except God alone.” When the young ruler replied that he has kept these things from his youth, he said this with a degree of confidence. He said this as though his ability to avoid evil qualified him for eternal life. Yet he still clearly sought answers. We also can fall into the same trap of thinking that we have avoided enough evil to find our life’s purpose and inherit life eternal. Like this young man, most of us can say that we have successfully avoided acts of greed, theft and murder. But Jesus made it clear that that anyone who feels anger is guilty of murder, and anyone who looks lustfully upon someone is guilty of adultery (Matt:5:22,28). Here, all of us become guilty, and the bar is too high for us to reach on our own. There is no good we can do or evil we can avoid in this life that will allow us to find true purpose and an assurance of life eternal. Like the young man, we also must lay these things down and submit to Christ alone.

3. Jesus sets the standard for purpose (Mark 10:21-22).

Jesus now explained where purpose can be found and how eternal life can be attained. It is not through actions performed in attempts to be righteous or avoiding things that are evil. The things of this earth are fleeting. Jesus told this young ruler that his life can only be found by giving it up. He commanded the ruler to give away all he has to the poor and follow Him. As Jesus said elsewhere, following Him begins with denying self and taking up the cross daily (Lule 9:23). Can we truly find our purpose through taking up a cross? The cross is an instrument of death. It’s only purpose in the time of Christ was for death. This is not what the young man wanted to hear, and he went away grieving at this. He knew that what he had heard was true, but he didn’t have the faith to do it. The path to eternal life starts with a path to purpose in this present life, a purpose that involves letting go of all this world has to offer and embracing the death and eternal life found in Christ alone. This is not a formula that is easy to accept, and so few choose it. How blessed are those who do!

Conclusion: Ours is a culture that promises purpose and happiness at every turn, yet provides loneliness, depression, and lack of purpose. While taking up our cross and counting nothing on this earth as our own seems counter-intuitive, it is the only way to truly see the meaning that God has for us, and the miraculous work that He will perform amongst us. Striving in our own

Lifeway

strength, trusting in our own wealth, and hoping that our good deeds will somehow bring purpose in this life and qualify us for heaven is a losing formula. Like the young ruler, let us run to Jesus and bow at His feet, but then follow through by hearing and obeying all He has for us. We will never regret the decision.

Jason Soroski is a pastor and teacher who holds degrees in Church Music and Education from Missouri Baptist University and is active in his local church. His best known writing is [Drop the Blanket: the Moment You Never Noticed in a Charlie Brown Christmas](#).

ⁱ Bowler, A. (2023, July 26). *Isolation among generation Z in the United States*. Ballard Brief. <https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/isolation-among-generation-z-in-the-united-states>