



+ **YOU**

Fall 2024

Thrive: Living on Purpose

**Sermon Title:** The Misery of Life Without Christ

**To be used with Session 2:** Purpose Abandoned

**The Point:** God created us with purpose, but our sin keeps us from living out that purpose.

**Scripture:** Romans 1:20-25

**Connection with the Study:** To complement the Bible study “Purpose Abandoned,” this sermon focuses on the words of the Apostle Paul written to the church in Rome, as he outlined the consequences for knowing God but still choosing to turn away from Him. As we read these words, describing the terrible results of purpose abandoned, it likely brings us a degree of pain. We can look to the world around us and see the same abandoned purpose being played out in real time. This is a reminder that there is no in-between in life: either we find our joy, peace, and purpose in Christ alone, or we leave ourselves without purpose: beaten, battered, and ruined by the sin that works tirelessly to claim us and draw us from the Father. Thank God for His gift of salvation in Jesus!

**Introduction:** There are times in life when we choose to learn a lesson the hard way. When I was young, I had a bit of a sweet tooth and like many kids, I enjoyed a good chocolate bar. When my mom brought a package of these home from the grocery store, I was elated! Yet she made it very clear that these were not to be eaten without permission, and only as a special treat. The problem was that one day I had a couple of friends over, and the three of us decided it would not be so bad to go ahead and eat a couple, and then a couple more. Needless to say, the missing chocolate bars were obvious, and my friends and I had pretty serious stomach aches at the end of the day. I found out too late that my parents had planned to take us swimming, but we were not up to it. Obedience would have led to truly enjoying what was offered, but disobedience just led to shame and a horrible feeling.

### 1. **God reveals Himself to us (Rom. 1:20-21).**

There are few experiences in life that compare to watching the sunrise. No matter where we are in the world, this majestic moment is an undeniable visual representation that there is a God who loves us, gives us light and warmth, and desires for us to know Him intimately. This passage reminds us that we are “without excuse” in knowing who He is and what He has done. The heavens declare His glory, and our very beings are evidence of Him. The air that we breathe sustains us. Our minds are capable of reason and emotion. He gives us a deep and profound sense of the beauty, majesty and power that brought creation into being. The evidence of God is all around us in every moment, yet as humans we so often choose to

**Lifeway**

ignore Him and go our own way in our own strength. He has made Himself clearly evident and choosing to ignore the obvious presence of God always ends in failure.

**2. Our disobedience separates us from Him (Rom. 1:22-23).**

There are few things in life more insulting than being called a fool. It is even more painful to realize that it is true, and when we exchange the evident, obvious truth of God for meaningless, purposeless things of earth, a fool is exactly what we become. The truth is that although God is so clearly evident to us, every human is born into sin, and therefore we all have a sinful tendency to foolishness. Yet our desperate need for Christ is never more evident than in the midst of our sin! In our sinful nature, we regularly claim to be wise, and work to elevate anything we can to replace the presence of God in our lives. We fill our time with things that do not satisfy and spend our energy on things that yield no reward in exchange. It is only when we turn away from all this world offers, turn from all the foolishness our sin draws us into, and obediently turn to the true and living God will we find true wisdom, peace, and purpose for ourselves.

**3. God gives us over to our sin (Rom. 1:24-25).**

How can we neglect the truth of God? As the first century society in which Paul lived fell deeper and deeper into sinful living, God's patience and mercy were revealed in that he "delivered them over" to their evil desires. In His mercy, God will allow us to choose evil and walk away from Him. Yet it was not, never has been, nor never will be God's will for us to choose sinful nature over choosing Him! Peter wrote that God's patience with us ultimately brings salvation (2 Pet. 3:15), as it gives us opportunity to see evil for what it is, then submit to following the one true God in response. As far as Paul's society had fallen, worshipping false gods and denying the truth of creation, this was the society within which God chose to build His church. In a godless world, the church of Christ thrives. The obedient church stands as a clear example of what should be, what it looks like to worship God the creator and not the creation. In our sin, we are depraved, hopeless, without joy, peace, or purpose in life. The choice we face is clear – when we turn our back on sin and embrace the eternal life we can find only in Jesus, He will restore and reclaim what has been so dreadfully broken and corrupt. In Him alone can we become clean, righteous, and free.

**Conclusion:** There is no halfway in our relationship with Jesus, but there is a glorious hope! Either we choose to walk away and live in the foolish and wretchedness of our sin, or we embrace the overflowing truth and grace of the creator of all things, trusting in Him to cleanse us and make us whole and new. In Him we receive wisdom instead of foolishness, purpose instead of aimlessness, love instead of hate, and acceptance instead of judgement. In order to escape the misery of a society overrun with sin, we need only to turn to God as our refuge and accept the truth that is so evident in all creation.

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