



Sermon Series: Thrive: Living on Purpose

To be used with Session 3: Purpose Restored

Sermon Title Possibilities: 1 Degree Off Means 1 Degree Lost

Scripture: Acts 3:14-26

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Thrive: Living on Purpose” this sermon teaches us the importance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ cannot be overstated. We often take for granted how the resurrection of Christ released the Holy Spirit into the lives of the disciples, offering a boldness that serves as proof of the power of the resurrection. In this text, we will discover how purpose is restored and how the disciples used the resurrection of Christ as the linchpin for returning to the resurrection. Peter shares the good news of what Jesus Christ did on the cross and challenged sinners and unbelievers to repent, turn back to Him, and receive restoration of purpose.

Introduction: Math is an equalizer, providing an honest assessment of one's position. For instance, if we are off-course by just 1 degree, after 1 foot we would miss our target by 0.2 inches. After 100 yards, we would miss it by 5.2 feet. After 1 mile, we would miss it by 92 feet. Traveling from San Francisco to Los Angeles, we would miss by 6 miles. From San Francisco to Washington, D.C., we would miss by 42 miles. If we were navigating the globe, we would miss by 435 miles. In a rocket to the moon, we would miss the mark by 4,169 miles. Over time, a mere one-degree error in course makes a huge difference. Similarly, sin causes us to miss the mark of communion with God. Sin can result in separating us so far from God's presence that we feel empty and alone. However, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we can restore the relationship and begin anew to live for Him. In this text, Peter shared the glorious good news of what Jesus Christ did on the cross and challenged others to repent, turn back to Him, and have their purpose restored.

1. From Disqualified to Qualified (Acts 3:14-16).

Peter was course-corrected after being off by a few degrees for denying Jesus Christ. Not only did he recover, but he became on fire after being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts chapters 1 and 2). Peter's purpose was restored as he healed a lame man begging at the gate called Beautiful in the early verses of Acts chapter 3. As people gathered around Peter and John, Peter began

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course-corrected his fellow Israelites, reminding them that the power enabling the lame man to walk was not their own but God's power. More directly, Peter reestablished the name of Jesus, the familiar miracle worker whose fame stretched across the land. Jesus, whom they had disowned and murdered but who was raised from the dead, had endowed Peter with the boldness to be a conduit for miracles through faith in His name. In verses 14 and 15, Peter criticized the mistreatment of Jesus, but by verse 16, he declared the undeniable healing power in Jesus' name, making people whole.

The miracle was not just the restoration of the lame man but also the renewal of Peter's purpose. Despite having denied Jesus, Peter became a proclaimer for the one he denied. Jesus did not disqualify Peter from being a vessel; instead, He restored Peter's purpose and used him to spread the gospel to all. We, too, do not have to live disqualified but can be qualified by the power of the resurrection.

2. From External to Internal (Acts 3:17-23).

Peter, not satisfied with the external miracle that drew the crowd around him and John, had bigger things in mind. While the healing of the lame man garnered attention, Peter aimed for an internal healing that could restore souls. External healings are beneficial for this present life, but internal healing is essential for eternal life. That's what Peter was after. He took his fellow Israelites back to Old Testament teachings, reminding them of what the prophets foretold in verses 17 and 18. He then switched gears in verses 19 and 20, encouraging them to repent for their sins and allow a time of refreshing from the Lord.

Peter reminded them of one of their most respected Old Testament characters, Moses, who had long ago spoken of the Lord raising up a prophet to whom they must listen. He warned them in verse 23 that failing to heed this prophet would result in being completely cut off. Peter presented Jesus as that Messiah and challenged them to recognize Him as such. The prophets of old mentioned that restoration can only come from Him, and no one else reaches internally like Jesus does. This truth was relevant then and remains true now.

3. From Off Course to On Course (Acts 3:24-26).

Peter returns to the starting point for launching, understanding that being 1° off can lead to missing the mark. His Old Testament references began with Moses and continued through Samuel, eventually reaching Abraham, where the covenant of God began. This deliberate choice underscores the continuity of God's plan, reminding his fellow Israelites that Jesus is the destination and the marker that generations have aimed for. Moses points to Jesus, Samuel points to Jesus, the prophets of old point to Jesus, and Abraham points to Jesus. Staying on course ensures that we hit our mark.

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In verse 26, Peter shared that God raised up His servant, and by turning from their wicked ways, they stay aligned with Him. Peter is praised for walking on water, healing a lame man, and preaching a powerful sermon, but none of these accomplishments would be possible if Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead. Verses 24 through 26 seal the deal for individuals needing their purpose restored. It's not just that purpose is restored, but the question is how that purpose is restored and who is responsible for that restoration. Peter declares that only Jesus Christ is able or worthy to restore purpose and those who repent, confess, and believe in Him shall be restored. May we forever remember our redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Peter's declaration is simple: no one has to miss the mark. Imagine a space shuttle launch. There's a control panel, manned by engineers who read and monitor the shuttle's trajectory. They can tell when the shuttle is off course and communicates with astronauts to course-correct. There are shorter distance markers that must be hit to reach the final destination. Similarly, in our lives, heaven is our home. To meet our final destination, we must hit the markers of repentance, confession, and belief in Jesus. These markers ensure we stay on course toward heaven. Once we become members of God's "NASA engineers" we can guide others to hit these markers and reach their final destination. We have the golden opportunity to share the gospel and show other "astronauts" that they don't have to miss the mark. We can guide them by telling them about Jesus, who left a trail from Calvary to eternity. Our purpose is to help others find their way to heaven, and because of Christ, we know the way!

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