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Service held by the Prayer Fellowship of Saint Andrew's

A Journey With Purpose- Faith and Prayer

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We are living in critical and prophetic times. Are we satisfied with the way things are in our world? Does your spiritual life need spring-cleaning? What drives your life? What on Earth am I here for? Let me take you on a spiritual journey that will enable you to discover the answer to life's most important questions. By the end of the journey, you will know God's purpose for your life – how all the pieces of your life fit together.

How do you spend your time growing old? If you aren't concerned for yourself, who will be for you? We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. Life is just a space of time- it's up to you to fill it. How do we know we are growing old? Your mind makes contracts your body can't meet- your knees buckle but your belt won't. Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work. Whatever your reason is, just remember- it's when you give of yourself that you truly give. Life itself can't give you joy unless you really will it. Look at everything as though you were seeing it for the first or last time, then your time on Earth will be filled with glory.

Did you know the average life span is 25,550 days? How do you know what God wants you to do with the rest of them? The Bible is clear that God considers 40 days a spiritually significant time period of preparation. When God wanted to prepare someone for his purpose, it took 40 days. What drives your life? Everyone's life is driven by something. It may be a problem, a pressure or a deadline. Perhaps it's a painful memory or a haunting fear. There are hundreds of circumstances – just to name a few- guilt, resentment or anger. But, the Bible tells us that love, faith and prayer run against these.

Life on Earth is temporary compared to eternity. Life is extremely brief- it takes faith to live on Earth. Your time here is not the complete story of your life. You

must wait until heaven for the rest of the chapters- you won't be leaving home- you'll be going home. What will you live for? There's a wonderful book called "Life Without Limits" – written by Nick Vujicic- who had no arms or legs, and yet he amazes the world on all his accomplishments.

Life requires a change in priorities. First believe- second- receive Jesus into your heart as Lord and Savior. Life is a trust- and also a test. Third- worship- is pleasing him your greatest desire? Fourth- Surrender- three barriers block us here- fear- pride and confusion. We want to control everything in our world. You won't surrender unless you trust God, but you can't trust him until you know him better. Think of Abraham- Hannah- Mary and Joseph. They trusted God without knowing why. I'm reminded of a Sunday School teacher who was describing how Lot's wife looked back, turned into a pillar of salt. Little Jason interrupted and said "Mommy looked back once while she was driving the car and turned into a telephone pole." Now that's confusion.

When God seems distant- how do you worship him then? What do you do when he's a million miles away? That's when you converse with him, and one of the building blocks is complete honesty. Tell God exactly how you feel. Prayer lets you speak to God. Meditation lets God speak to you. Job did that many times- David's frankness revealed deep faith, God is always present.

What matters most? Life is all about love- a top priority, Mother Teresa proved this when she said "Remember- you can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving- the best use of life is love- the best expression of love is time- the best time to love is now".

Attendance at worship services is the first spiritual decline- your choice is being a church attender or a church member. It takes a lot to produce a loving community where we all respect each other's choices. It takes humility to cultivate a community. Pride builds walls between people. Humility builds bridges. God's goal for your life on Earth is not comfort, but character development. He wants you to grow spiritually. Yes, you'll be frustrated at times and will ask, "Why am I having such a difficult time?" Your comments can either develop or destroy you. Either way- they will define you. You need to depend on the Holy Spirit. Reading your Bible

fifteen minutes each day will take you through the scriptures in a year. The opportunity to do good can become a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block. Corrie Ten Boon explains it this way, "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed, if you look within you'll be depressed, but if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest."

How can we resist temptation? You can make wise decisions- reduce stress- build confidence- then share your faith- memorizing Bible verses will help you do this for you. Dwight L. Moody said "The Bible was not given just to increase your knowledge, but to change our lives." Temptation always starts in our mind- not in circumstances. There are four steps – the 4-D's- desire- doubt- deception and disobedience.

Each of us is uniquely designed or shaped to do certain things. God first planned- then he shaped. There's a place in the church where your specialties can shine. Listen to your heart- when you don't have a heart for what you are doing you are easily discouraged. Abilities- studies have revealed- the average person possesses from 500 to 700 different skills and abilities- the brain can store 100 trillion facts- your mind can handle 15,000 decisions a minute and your nose can smell 10,000 different odours. Personality- like stained glass, our differences reflect light in many colours and patterns- God loves varieties – thinkers, feelers, introverts and extroverts. Experiences- there are at least 6 kinds – family, educational, vocational, spiritual, ministry and painful. For god to use them you must be willing to share them in order to help others.

Everyone has weaknesses- we have a bundle of flaws and imperfections- physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual and uncontrollable circumstances. We need to admit them- stop pretending and be honest about yourself. Moses' weakness was his temper, Gideon's was low self-esteem, Abraham's was fear. Do you want to impress people or influence them? Your goal is to figure out where others are in their spiritual journey, and then do whatever will bring them a step closer to knowing Christ.

The Indian crazy horse was a seer. He loved to minister to the Indians, it was a gift he had. Meadowlark Lemon and Michael Jordan have taken basketball around the world. Meadowlark was given a vision, he used a coat hanger and an old sock to

make a basket, to help young people interested in basketball. Michael met his wife in Church, Meadowlark never went to Church but he heard hootenanny gospel music in 1982 and he met the real man from Galilee.

There are more Christians on Earth right now than there have ever been before. People may refuse our love or reject our message, but they are defenseless against our prayers. Jesus wants his lost children found, often, we forget that the biblical heroes of faith were just ordinary people like you and me. Although our faith may be small, god hears our prayers and sees our loving actions. Then God's divine touch increases the power of all that we do in faith. Faith is something to share, not a treasure to keep for ourselves.

To the unbelievers, who yet don't understand everything: we know the power of prayer. Your deepest need is to know Christ so that you can be made whole and complete. May the Holy Spirit reach your hearts, for you will never be the same again.

Life is an amazing gift. Be grateful for it. Make every moment of it a blessing. How you live it depends on you. Death is not an ending, but a transition. Through it you continue your spiritual journey. Think of the goals that can hold us together, and we can do it together. Miracles can be accomplished.

Prayer is letting go and letting God guide you.

Faith is released when you say it is going to happen- not doubting- not saying maybe.