

Series: God Saves #1385

Title: Romans 8.28c; Luke 5  
Christ's Purpose

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. We are going to end this week focusing on Christ the Lord. If you were with us last time then you know we have come to this final phrase in Romans chapter 8 and verse 28 in which we focus on “those who are called according to [God's] purpose.” The Apostle Paul clearly states that God has a purpose. As to what that purpose is, we turn to Jesus. And I have in mind a few texts in the Gospels, because I find that Jesus speaks about His purpose quite often.

For example, we could go to Mark's Gospel chapter 1. I will start the reading in verse 35 and go through verse 39. Mark 1, verses 35-39, **“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”**<sup>36</sup> **Simon and his companions searched for Him;**<sup>37</sup> **they found [Jesus], and said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You.’**<sup>38</sup> **[Jesus] said to them, ‘Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.’**<sup>39</sup> **And [Christ] went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons.”** I am interested in verse 38. The Lord speaks to His purpose. He says, “...so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for...” Friends, Jesus' purpose was to preach. That is why He came. He is a preacher.

The next time you think, or hear someone articulate, that preaching is not important or that preaching is a thing of the past that should not be taken so seriously – remember – God had One Son and He made Him a preacher! Preaching is essential to us. Please do pray for your preacher and be sure to encourage whoever that is. Sunday's coming. Keep this in mind. Engage with the preaching of God's Word and learn. Then, apply what you learn to your life.

So the Lord speaks to purpose in Mark chapter 1. Then we can flip over in our New Testament to John's Gospel and chapter 12. In this text Jesus is looking forward to His soon coming death. He discusses this with His disciples and prepares them for it. Putting His full humanity on display, Jesus makes quite a statement in verse 27. I am reading the word of the Lord in John chapter 12 and verse 27, **“Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.”** His soul was becoming troubled. This is powerful original language. When Jesus thinks of taking on the wrath of holy God for our sin – *our sin!* – He gets agitated. He feels, deeply, the horror of what this will be like. Oh my friend, Jesus was very *human*. Do not forget it. No wonder He sympathizes with our weakness, because He Himself was fully human as we are. His soul became troubled.

But listen to how He counters the trouble in His soul. He states: “for this purpose I came to this hour.” What is the purpose of God the Son? It was to die the cruel death of the crucifix so that all who believe in Him will not die but have everlasting life! His purpose was to die for us, therefore saving us from our sins. He is our substitute. He took on the wrath of God for our sin, so that we do not ever experience the wrath of holy God. And that is such Great News that perhaps we should end here, and go away rejoicing, thanking, and praising God for all He has done for us. Oh, let us worship and exalt the Lord together with other believers this weekend! He is worthy of our thanks and praise, because He fulfilled His...*purpose*.

So the Lord speaks to purpose in Mark chapter 1 and in John chapter 12. And let me give you one more before we move into the verses I really want to focus on. This is Jesus speaking in Luke's Gospel chapter 19 and verse 10. Luke 19, verse 10, **“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”** That certainly speaks to Jesus' purpose, “For the Son of Man [who is Jesus] has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” We are lost spiritually and Christ comes to seek us and to save us. That is an *awesome* truth!

All of those are valid purpose statements, if you please. But I invite us to center ourselves in *the great* purpose statement of our Lord which is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These are parallel passages, and I have chosen to major on the one in Luke. So, turn with me in your Bible if you are not driving to Luke's Gospel, chapter 5. We will put in at verse 27. (Luke 5, verse 27.) While you are finding Luke 5, let me say a few words about why, as we focus on Romans 8, verse 28, I will take us back to Luke's Gospel.

I want to spend some time developing this Luke 5 text *not* to distract from Romans 8 but rather to *enhance* Romans 8. By the grace of God, I hope to put Luke 5 and Romans 8 in dialogue with one another. As we listen to Jesus teach us about God's purpose this will help us understand *how* God saves the sinner from sin. We will need this narrative (the Gospel story) when we get into the more heavy theological terminology of Romans 8, verses 29 and 30. My purpose (no pun intended) is to put theology into the context of the concrete life and teaching of our Lord. I want Jesus to help us understand God's purpose.

You will see (or hear) what I mean as we proceed, but upfront (and because this will last several days) I just want you to know this is no wild goose chase or rabbit hole we are descending towards! This all has, well, a *purpose*! Please stay tuned. And let's begin by reading Luke chapter 5, verses 27-32. **"After that [Jesus] went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and [Jesus] said to [Levi], 'Follow Me.' <sup>28</sup> And [Levi] left everything behind, and got up and *began* to follow [Jesus].**

**<sup>29</sup> And Levi gave a big reception for [Jesus] in [Levi's] house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other *people* who were reclining *at the table* with them. <sup>30</sup> The Pharisees and their scribes *began* grumbling at [Jesus'] disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?' <sup>31</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, '*It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.* <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'** That's Jesus in Luke chapter 5, verses 27-32.

You can also read about this in Matthew chapter 9 and Mark chapter 2. Along the way, I will make reference to those parallel passages. As we talk about what is here we will identify the people in these verses. They are, most importantly, Jesus, then Levi, other tax collectors and people, the disciples of Jesus, and then the Pharisees and their scribes. When you read the passage for yourself, you will clearly identify each participant.

I will also tell you up front that this man Levi is Matthew. Matthew and Levi are the same man. Matthew, who wrote the Gospel According to Matthew, Matthew the disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ. The name of his that Luke uses is Levi. L-E-V-I. It was common in that day for a man to have two names. Think of Simon who is Peter. (Simon Peter.) Well, we have the same here with Levi-Matthew. In fact, so that we understand who this is, throughout I will call him Levi-Matthew, if that is OK with you.

We have before us the conversion of the tax collector Levi-Matthew to disciple (and later apostle) of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the actions of Jesus and the words of Jesus here are some of the most significant that He ever did and said. This reflects clearly and powerfully on the purpose of our Lord in His first visit to this earth, as He took on human flesh to redeem us from our sinfulness; to set us free from evil; and to sanctify us for holy living before God the Father. Therefore, we need to delve in and understand what is happening here. And yes, I will relate this back to Romans chapter 8! *I will*.

Having clarified who Levi is, let me also reflect on the context as given to us by Luke. Verse 27 begins, "After that [Jesus] went out..." And we ask, "after what?" If you go back and read the verses that precede this one you will learn that Jesus has forgiven the sins of a paralytic man that was lowered through a roof by his friends. Christ has also healed that man. He said, "Get up, and pick up your stretcher, and go home." The man does. It is a very important (true) story in the flow of this narrative Luke is writing. Can I recommend you read it this weekend? Luke chapter 5, verses 17-26. (Luke 5, verses 17-26.) Well, after this, the Lord left there and was walking along when He came to the tax booth. More on Monday because God Is.

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