



-- Illustrations

- Shopping in the antique shop
- Why am I here?
- I'm just happy that all that junk...I mean collectibles...is somebody else's problem.
- Shopping in the mall
- Groggy Mall Syndrome
- I just want to find a mattress in J.C. Penny's and crash.
- Nothing is as exhausting and exasperating as aimlessness.
- Our Lord did not live an aimless life.

-- **Big Idea: We must be resolute in our pursuit of God's purpose.**

- Just as Christ resolutely pursued His mission, so must we be resolute in our pursuit of God's mission for us.
- *Are you moving through this life with resolute purpose, or are you wandering through it aimlessly?*

-- Read Luke 9:51

-- Pray

-- **Jesus had a clear purpose on earth.**

- Context of Luke 9:51
- In Luke 9:18-45, Jesus has been pointing His disciples to His purpose, essentially asking, "Can you concentrate on the cross?"
- Luke 9:51 – *"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."*
- 1 Timothy 1:15 – *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."*

- Matthew 20:28 – “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”
- Jesus’ Galilean ministry, which began in 4:14, ends here.
- This verse marks the transition to Jesus’ Judean ministry, which continues through chapter 19:27.
- This verse marks the inception of Jesus ultimate journey to the cross.
- Jesus’ purpose on earth was to give His life as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners like you and me.

If we were to look at Jesus' death merely as a result of a betrayer's deceit and the Sanhedrin's envy and Pilate's spinelessness and the soldiers' nails and spear, it might seem very involuntary. And the benefit of salvation that comes to us who believe from this death might be viewed as God's way of making a virtue out of a necessity. But in light of Luke 9:51, all such thoughts must vanish.

You see, Jesus did not accidentally find Himself entangled in a web of injustice, nor were the saving benefits of his death for an afterthought. In His infinite love for sinners such as us, God planned out every detail and brought it into effect in the fullness of time. Jesus, who was the very embodiment of His Father's love for sinners, saw that the time had come, and so He set His face to fulfill His mission. As He says in John 10:18, “*No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.*”

-- We too have been given a purpose in Christ.

Just as we were not created without purpose, so also, we have not been recreated in Christ without purpose. Ephesians 2:10 – *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

- Our purpose is best summarized by Christ in the Great Commandments and the Great Commission.
- Here at FBC, we have adopted a five part mission statement that describes how we can fulfill these.
- “reaching out... welcoming in... building up... sending forth... for the glory of God.”
- (Show how these five phases come from the Great Commandments and the Great Commission.)

-- Jesus Christ resolutely pursued His mission.

- “*Resolutely set out,*” as used here literally means “*fixed His face.*”
- Resolute: Webster – “Having a decided purpose; determined; resolved; fixed in a determination; hence, bold; firm; steady.”
- Example of the buffalo – All other range animals turn their backs to the storm winds. The buffalo heads directly into it.
- Jesus became resolute in pursuit of the mission for which He had come—the cross.
- He steadfastly resolved to go to Jerusalem to die on the cross of Calvary.
- He fixed His face to die in our place.

If we are going to be consistent, effective Christians... if we are going to be imitators of our Lord Jesus Christ... if we are going to be faithful to the calling we have received in Christ... then we must be devoted to the mission God has given us in the same way Christ was devoted to His. In other words...

-- We, too, must be resolute in our pursuit of God’s purpose for us.

- Illustration: Watching Dad and then spending an entire day learning how to whistle.
- Wishful thinking won’t work. Fulfilling our mission requires determined action.

Resolutely pursuing our purpose in Christ: It is the difference between a life regretted and a life remembered. It is the difference between existing and excelling. It is the difference between devotion and distraction. Being resolute in our pursuit of God’s purpose for us is the difference between vanity and value, between confusion and content, between pandemonium and purpose. It is the difference between energy wasted and energy well-spent, time squandered and time invested, futility and fruitfulness. It is the difference between watching things happen and making them happen, between living and loafing, between action and apathy, between spiritual survival and spiritual success.

-- Resolutely reach out.

- Reaching out means that we joyfully serve others for the glory of God.
- We have been created to contribute, saved to serve, and redeemed to reach out. Every member is meant to be a minister.
- 1 Peter 4:10 – “*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*”
- *Is God glorified in the way that you are serving Him? Is your service to Him resolute?*

Regretful living says serve yourself; resolute living says serve your Savior. Resolutely pursuing our purpose in Christ means that our time and our talents and our treasures belong to God, and not to us. It knows that God gives to us so that we will give back to Him by ministering to others in His name. It means working for the Lord in whatever He calls us to do. Whereas squandered living sits on the sidelines, sold-out living gets in the game.

Resolute living is, therefore, far more concerned about serving than being served, about blessing more than being blessed, about encouraging more than being encouraged, about giving more than receiving. It means going wherever we are called, not just where we are comfortable. Resolutely pursuing our purpose in Christ means that, because the God who sent His only Son for me calls me to serve Him with joy, then I will right now in my heart determine to serve Him just how He wants, where He wants, when He wants, and with all the joy He graciously gives.

Will you, with me this morning, resolutely pursue your purpose as a servant of Christ, or will you just sit on the sidelines and watch those who respond the call to resolutely reach out for the glory of God?

-- Resolutely welcome in.

- Welcoming in means that we love each other deeply for the glory of God.
- We have been formed for fellowship, created for community, and liberated so that we might love one another.
- 1 Peter 1:22 – *“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.”*
- *Is God glorified in your love for His people, especially the people of this church? Is your love for this congregation resolute?*

Whereas regretful living says, “I go to church if I can,” resolute living says “I go to church because I must!” Whereas futile living says, “I can make on my own,” fruitful living says, “I need the help and the company of God’s people.” And whereas empty living wants only shallow relationships, effective living lets people in and loves people deeply.

Resolutely pursuing our purpose in Christ means no more fudging about why we never show up for Sunday School or LIFE groups or the Wednesday night prayer meeting. Rather, it understands that because Christ is exalted, we must stop making excuses, and because He loves us, we can love one another deeply.

Therefore, resolutely welcoming in for the glory of God means doing everything we possibly can to make sure our church is a place where the love of Christ is ever and always on display.

Will you, then, covenant with me this morning that, by the power of Christ, we will do all we can to love one another as best as we can with all the affection of Christ for the glory of God?

-- Resolutely build up.

- Building up means that, with His help, we strive to become the people that God created us to be for the glory of God.
- We have been created to become like Christ, rescued to be renewed, and saved to be sanctified.
- Romans 8:29 – *“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”*
- *Is God glorified in your spiritual growth?*

Squandered living comes proud and opinionated; sold-out living comes humble and ready to learn. Distracted living comes filled with the world; devoted living comes hungry for God’s Word. Careless living says, “Give me comfort;” courageous living says, “Give me character.”

Are we resolute in our pursuit of Christlike character? Do hard times make us grow, or do they make us grumble? Are we by God’s grace overcoming temptation, or are we enabling it to overcome us? Is our desire for spiritual growth whole-hearted, or is it half-baked?

Resolutely building up requires a passion to know God, obey His Word, and daily grow in the likeness of Christ. *Will we today set our faces to Scripture and pursue the path of spiritual growth?*

-- Resolutely send forth.

- Sending forth means that we humbly, yet boldly, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ for the glory of God.
- We have been made for a mission, saved to be sent, transformed to tell the Good News.
- 2 Corinthians 5:20 – *“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.”*

-- Is God glorified in your testimony to Him?

Resolutely sending forth understands that coming to Christ in faith automatically includes being sent into the world as His representative. It knows that evangelism is not simply our mission; it is our commission from God, who is our Commander in Chief. Christ calls us not only to come unto Him but to go out for Him. Whereas squandered living recoils and retreats, sold-out living reaches out and relates the Good News! The resolute know that we are not saved to be silent; we are saved to speak up for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

Therefore, are we looking for opportunities to share the Good News of Christ and are we habitually making the most of those opportunities? Do we have a passion to see the lost come to saving faith in Christ? Are we regularly inviting people to come to church? Resolutely reaching out means that we have the lost on our hearts, missions on our minds, and the Gospel on our lips.

Will you then confess with me our common need to be resolute in our pursuit of God's purpose to make us ambassadors of Jesus Christ for His great glory and praise? Will we resolutely go forth to tell others about Jesus Christ?

Let me conclude with this thought: The question today is not, "Are we perfect in all of these purposes?" Of course we're not. Only Jesus ever was, and only Jesus ever will be. No, the question is, "Are we resolute in our pursuit of the purpose for which we have been created and recreated in Christ?" In other words, are we willing to cast off every contrary ambition and wholeheartedly set our faces to the purposes for which God has created us and drawn us together?

- Will we be resolutely reaching out in joyful service to this church and to our community?
- Will we be resolutely welcoming in by loving one another with all the affection Christ gives?
- Will we be resolutely building up in Christlike character and biblical truth?
- Will we be resolutely sending forth to tell others the Good News of our great Lord and invite them to "Taste and see that the Lord is good?" (Psalm 34:8)