THOU HAST FULLY KNOWN MY PURPOSE

Intro: Two men were talking of a great satirist who had been filled with moral earnestness. “He kicked the world about,” said one, “as if it had been a football.” “True,” said the other, “but he kicked it to a goal.”

Paul had a specific goal or purpose to his life and tells Timothy that he knew his purpose; 2 Tim. 3:10 “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,” Let us consider Paul’s purpose and in seeing his purpose, we should be able to learn about our purpose in life. When dealing with one’s purpose, we are dealing with that which a person sets before himself as to the end to be attained or the goal in his life.

I. PAUL’S PURPOSE WAS NOT

A. Money and material goods
   1. Paul knew material gain; Phi. 4:11-12 “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”
   2. He knew this world would be destroyed; 2 Pet. 3:10-11 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,”

B. Fame
   1. He had plenty of fame in the Jewish religion.
   2. Gal. 1:13-14 “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”
   3. Phi. 3:3-6 “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

C. Popularity
   1. He received the opposite; 1 Cor 4:12-13 “And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”
   2. He was not popular even among some brethren; Gal. 4:16 “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”

II. PURPOSE

A. Purpose (Greek πρόθεσις — prōthesis) is always used by Paul of God’s purpose with this being the only exception.

B. God’s purpose is seen throughout history in bringing everything together for the sending of His Son.
   1. Gal. 4:4 “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law;”
2. God through His providential means was working throughout history to bring everything together to make it the perfect time to bring His Son into the world.
   a. God’s promise to Abraham
      (1) Gen. 12:1-3 “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
      (2) Their time in Egypt to make them a great nation; brings them up out of Egypt and gives them a great land.
      (3) Keeps the Jewish nation separate from the other nations.
      (4) All to keep His purpose to bless all nations through Abraham by sending His Son through him.

b. Consider each of the 4 world empires in Dan 2, 7.
   (1) Babylonian—rise of synagogue worship
   (2) Medio-Persian—respect for law
   (3) Grecian—common language
   (4) Roman—transportation

c. God was bringing everything together for the purpose He had in sending His Son: social, economic, linguistic, political, moral, religiously, etc.

C. Paul was the same way with his life—working everything in his life to glorify God and attain heaven’s home.

III. Paul’s Purpose
   A. Paul had a single purpose in life.
      1. Phi. 3:13-14 “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”
      2. 1 Cor. 9:24-26 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:”
      3. Ecc. 12:13 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”
      4. Mat. 6:22 “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”
   B. His desire was to do God’s Will and finish the work God gave him to do.
      1. Acts 20:24 “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”
      2. Phi. 1:20-21 “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether in life, or by death. 21For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
   C. He was willing to give up all to attain that purpose.
      1. Phi. 3:7-8 “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 7Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”
      2. Gal. 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
D. At the end of his life:
1. 2 Tim. 4:7-8 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”
2. He could look confidently at death and eternity.
   a. 2 Cor. 4:17-5:2, 8 “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 5For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:...8We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”
   b. Phi. 1:23 “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”
E. Paul encourages others to have that same purpose.
1. Acts 11:23 “Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”
2. Acts 17:26-28 “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”
3. Col. 3:1-3 “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Conclusion: What is your purpose in life? The only way to be successful in life is to make your purpose the glorifying God by obedience to His Word and bring every aspect of your life in harmony with that purpose. Then we will truly be able to say with Paul, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phi. 1:21).