Series: Do You See What I See?

December 17, 2017

**I See Purpose**

Luke 1:13-35; Matthew 1:18-21; 2:19-23; 2:1-2; 2:9-12; Luke 2:8-20

**Intro:** The title of our series comes from a Christmas Song titled, “Do You Hear What I Hear?” But the second line of the song says, “Do You See What I See?”

That’s the line that got stuck in my head as I was thinking about our Christmas series this year.

As we go through this Christmas season - we come to the end of another year and prepare for a year to come - we want to see what God wants us to see -

* For our lives
* For our families
* For our ministries
* For our church

I believe the Christmas story is helping us to see what God wants us to see.

First message - God Came to Know Me!

**God came to be with us because He wants us to know Him!**

Last week - I See Freedom!

Matthew 1:21 - And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

**Jesus came to give us freedom!**

* He came to set us free from sin.
* This freedom is secured in healthy relationships.

**Big Idea: The Christmas story shows us that God has a purpose for every life.**

**> God gave John the Baptist a purpose: Prepare**

Back story … Zachariah & Elizabeth …

Luke 1:13-17 - But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John… he will be great in the eyes of the Lord… He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth... He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord…

* To prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

He fulfilled His purpose -

* He preached repentance …
* He pointed the way to Jesus - declaring plainly who He was -

John 1:29 - …John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

What this meant … lamb of God …

Luke 1:18-19 - Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure this will happen? I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.” Then the angel said, “I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news!”

So God gave this boy named John a purpose … God had this purpose in mind for him before he was born … He lived to fulfill that purpose …

**> God gave Mary a purpose: Believe**

Luke 1:26-35,38 - God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.”…

Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.”

* **Believe God & Follow His plan**

How much we can learn from Mary in her submission to God’s will -

How unusual was this … how fearful was this …

How often do we feel God is asking something of us - speaking something to us - “Do this!” Or “I want to do this through you! I want to use you in ministry in this way!”

We are unbelieving - we are fearful!

“Fear not! I am with you!”

When God reveals His will and purposes to us, we need to believe Him - and submit to His will!

Lord’s Prayer - Your kingdom come … as it is in heaven …

Jesus in the Garden - Not my will ….

God gave Mary this purpose - to believe Him no matter how unusual the plan, and follow that plan - she fulfilled that purpose!

**> God gave Joseph a purpose: Provide & Protect**

Matthew 1:18-21 - This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew 2:19-23 - When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. “Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

* **Believe -**
* **Obey -**
* **Provide -**
* **Protect -**

God gave Joseph this purpose - to provide & protect -

Shouldn’t we be providing for God’s ministry today, and working to protect what God wants to do?

All kinds of people want to tear down what God is doing. Jesus told His followers that people would hate them - attack them - kill them - try to end what God wants to do in this world.

It is still happening today. Part of our purpose, even in celebrating this awesome season, should be to provide for what God is doing, and protect what God is doing.

**> God gave the Wise Men a purpose: Worship**

Matthew 2:1-2 - Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking,“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”

**- Worship**

They could not have accomplished their purpose without obedience. We cannot worship without obedience.

Matthew 2:9-12 - …And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

We cannot accomplish the purposes God gives us unless we are sensitive to His leading and obey. We must commit ourselves to knowing God’s word and doing it.

Lori Johnson … amazing personal growth … this is what I pray for for each one….

**> God gave the angels have a purpose: Tell the story.**

Luke 2:8-14 - That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

* **Tell the story.**
* **Lead in Worship.**

God has a purpose for you to tell His story … family - friends - neighbors - co-workers - fellow students -

Who can you tell His story to? How can you tell His story?

* Accept the personal responsibility -

Jesus expects His followers to reach those that are closest to us. We are God’s plan to share His love with them.

* Build a personal relationship -

Jesus was so good at being a connector. He connected before He corrected.

People aren’t looking for a theological debate - they are looking for love!

This should take some of the pressure off! You don’t have to have all the answers. People don’t care how much you know - they want to know that you care!

“I really don’t know the answer to that - I’ll try to find out and get back to you - but I know this - Jesus loves you!”

* Share your personal story -

Evangelism is not telling people that they are wrong. The Bible tells us that we are to be “witnesses” - what does a witness do? They tell their side of the story.

We are not to tell people what they should do - we are to tell people what Jesus has done in us and for us! You tell your story. You tell them, “I don’t have it all together, but Jesus made a difference in my life!”

Look for opportunities to tell your story.

* Give a personal invitation -

If you know how to give a personal invitation to accept Jesus, go ahead and do that -

Maybe invite them to Christmas Eve service next week … two to choose from …

We tell people in our Growth Track how easy it is to share our faith ….

**> God gave the Shepherds a purpose:Tell the story.**

Luke 2:15-20 - When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

* **Tell others about Jesus.**
* **Worship**

Just like the angels - they saw the leading they followed - The wise men worshipped - the angels told the story and worshipped - the Shepherds told the story and worshipped!

If we keep doing this - it will get contagious!!

If you do something - do what God gives you to do - do it faithfully - others will follow!

**> God has given you a purpose!**

Like John - we can prepare for others to receive Jesus.

Like Mary - we can Believe and obey.

Like Joseph - we can Provide for and Protect this plan of God.

Like the Wise Men - we can worship.

Like the angels and Shepherds - we can tell the story and worship.

Too many people think their life has no purpose … Christmas depression … loneliness … many have a sense of failure … suicides go up during the holidays … people feel as if their life has no meaning -

Nothing could be further from the truth. Christmas tells us that God has a purpose for every life!

God has given you gifts … the third purpose of our church is to help people find their purpose … gifts …

Know God - Find Freedom - Discover Purpose - Make a Difference

Christmas is about gifts -

Gift of salvation …. Grace …

Romans 3:23 - For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.

Romans 5:6 - When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

Romans 5:8 - God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 10:9 - If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

More than that - God is so generous - He has given you spiritual gifts!

Step 3 …

God gives us these gifts to help us fulfill these purposes.

**> Jesus came with a purpose.**

He came for you. He came to forgive you. He came so that you would know that God loves you.

John 3:16 - For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

* Spontaneous
* Unprejudiced
* Generous
* Saving

Oh How He Loves …