Series: Four Cups - Based on the book by Chris Hodges.

February 25, 2018

Guests - Growth Track

Giving

Message Four:

**Livin’ the Dream!**

Exodus 6:6-7

***Have a fourth cup of juice on a table to add to the first one.***

**Intro:** We have been talking about 4 purposes that God has for our lives based on the four cups that are received in the Jewish Passover celebration. These are the four purposes of New Life Church.

The Passover is the most significant celebrations of the Jewish people - and since Jesus came as an extension and fulfillment of all the Jewish promises of the Old Testament, it is highly significant for us as well - and there are four promises and purposes symbolized by these four cups that are extremely important for us as well.

Jesus was celebrating the Passover meal with His followers just before His crucifixion when He took one of these cups and said that God was making a New Covenant -

Luke 22:20 - After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.”

That was the third cup - the cup we talked about last week -

* God has committed to helping you to know Him.
* God has committed to set you free from whatever holds you back.
* God has committed to help you discover His purpose for your life.
* God has committed to empowering you to make a difference in the world.

Exodus 6:6-7 - Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the Lord. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt.

* I will free you from your oppression.
* I will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt.
* I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment.
* I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God.

In the first message, we talked about **the first cup - The Cup of Sanctification -**

Exodus 6:6 - …I will free you from your oppression…

When we come to Christ we are cleaned up and set apart for God’s purpose.

We drink this cup by accepting Jesus as God’s Son and Savior of our sins. For all who believe - Jesus sets us free from the oppression of the sinful lifestyle.

This second week we talked about **the second cup - the Cup of Deliverance -**

Exodus 6:6- I will … rescue you from your slavery.

God promised not only to bring them out of Egypt, but to set them free from a slavery mindset.

First we are forgiven - then we are set free from our past. For that to fully happen, we need each other -

This is why we small groups are such a key part of our opportunities here. We do life together - This is God’s plan for us to live in freedom beyond forgiveness.

This is one reason we changed the chair arrangement - simply put, we were too far apart when we worshipped. We need to be close together. We don’t want to be crammed with no room - but we don’t want to be all spread out everybody doing their own thing. We need one another - we felt God leading us to develop a closeness and an intimacy in our worship times.

Many have told me they are already experiencing this - but I want to apologize for not explaining this more clearly earlier on - I should have done that -

**The third cup is the Cup of Redemption -**

Exodus 6:6 - … I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment.

Like when you redeem a coupon … God redeemed you with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ - That’s how valuable He considers you to be.

And He redeems you so that you can fulfill the purpose for which He has created you!

He has given you great and precious gifts - He has designed you a certain way. We drink the cup of redemption and we purpose to discover His purpose for our lives in that redemption! Why did He redeem us?

Find out - that’s what our Growth Track is designed for …

**Fourth Cup - The Cup of Praise**

The word “Hallelujah” - means to praise the Lord - but the root of the word is the Hebrew word, “hallel” - which means to celebrate - to boast or RAVE!

When a team has won a championship, they “hallel” - When your child does something great - concert - achievement - you “hallel” -

The fourth cup of the Passover celebration is the cup of “hallel” - With this cup they celebrate the fact that they were formed into a new nation after their rescue and deliverance from Egypt. They rejoice in their identity as part of God’s family. They praise Him for giving them a fulfilled and purposeful life that makes a difference in the world.

When God’s dreams for us become our dreams, and we live those dreams out - we will live fulfilled and we will be making a difference in the world! The result of this - praise naturally occurs!

We are part of God’s family - we are His children - He has a purpose for our lives - we are part of something much bigger than ourselves and we serve alongside others to fulfill God’s great plan!

Have you heard the phrase - “I’m living the dream!”

How do you feel when you hear someone use that phrase? Does it make you envious? Do you think you can honestly say that? Or, do you think, “I wish that were me”?

Sometimes people use that phrase in a very sarcastic way - when things aren’t going the way they want.

God wants you to be full and filled - that’s fulfilled! He wants you to live life to the fullest! He’s got a plan for you to do that!

John 10:10 - The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

Many people fail to reach the fourth cup. They become satisfied with something less than God designed for them. They never get connected to serving Him in a meaningful way.

This is dangerous - this is when it all becomes about us - and when it all becomes about us - what we need - what we want - then we will never be satisfied -

Everything and everyone bothers us because they are not catering to our desires - how we think things ought to be ….

This is why people move so quickly from church to church … shopping … consumers rather than servers … takers rather than givers … Their purpose is to receive from others, rather than serve others -

That can only lead to a constantly discontented life - thus, there is no cup overflowing with praise. It’s complaint instead of contentment.

Philippians 3:19 - Their god is their appetite… and they think only about this life here on earth.

Romans 16:18 - Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests.

The people who are most fulfilled are people who are serving others - not waiting to be served.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 AMP - He has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has planted eternity in men's hearts *and* minds [a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy], yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Are you living life just to satisfy your temporary, physical needs? Are you living life just to satisfy needs of safety, love, esteem, personal growth, getting stuff you want.

What about “transcendent needs” - What am I talking about?

What about satisfying a desire that exceeds the usual limits - surpasses what we usually satisfy ourselves with? I believe there is a God-given desire within each one of us to make a difference in this world!

Ephesians 3:20 - Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

That's God’s goal for you! Is it your goal for yourself - to accomplish infinitely more than you might ask or think?

“God - tell me what I should ask for! Tell me what I should dream for! Tell me what I should serve for! God - let your goals for my life be my goals for my life!”

Psalm 37:4 - Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires.

This fourth cup is about doing something beyond ourselves - living life beyond limits! This is possible because we serve a God without limits!

Indiana Wesleyan University - Society of World Changers -

“At its core, the mission of Indiana Wesleyan University is to change the world for Jesus Christ by challenging and equipping our students to pour salt and shine light everywhere their lives take them. The concept of being world changers and developing world changers permeates everything we do at IWU. Whether you are a student, an employee, an alumnus or a guest at IWU, we are striving to bring out the world changer in you.

 “To provide a focal point for this effort, IWU created the Society of World Changers in 2003 to recognize role models who have exemplified the concept of world changers and whose lives can serve as an inspiration to future generations. Each year a World Changers Convocation is held on IWU's Marion campus to induct a new member into the Society and celebrate his or her accomplishments. A life-size bronze bust of each inductee is placed on permanent display in the Society of World Changers Hall of Honor located in the rotunda of the Jackson Library.”

 [2016 - Ravi Zacharias](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Zacharias.html)

 [2015 - John Maxwell](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Maxwell.html)

 [2014 - Elizabeth Dole](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Dole.html)

 [2013 - David Green](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Green.html)

 [2012 - Kirk Cameron](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Cameron.html)

 [2011 - S. Truett Cathy](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Cathy.html)

 [2010 - Bill and Gloria Gaither](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Gaither.html)

 [2009 - Joni Eareckson Tada](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Tada.html)

 [2008 - Tony Dungy](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Dungy.html)

 [2007 - Dr. Benjamin Carson](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Carson.html)

 [2005 - Dr. James Dobson](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Dobson.html)

 [2004 - Frank Peretti](https://www.indwes.edu/about/world-changers/Peretti.html)

I’m not trying to sell IWU - but I admire the fact that they don’t say these people are the only world changers - they hold them up as examples of how God desires ALL OF US to be world changers! It is in God’s plan for you to be a world changer!

“I’m not an author - preacher - teacher - I don’t sing in front of large crowds!”

No - but do you make someone feel welcome when they come here?

* Do you make their children feel safe?
* Do you help in the office -
* Help set up tables and chairs
* Keep a building clean and well-maintained - in good repair
* Shake hands - smile -
* Hold babies in a nursery?
* Give a word of encouragement in your small group
* Offer to assist someone around their house
* Give a large tip?
* Give well over and above the tithe, just because you want to?

All of that and more is the result of God-given gifts. All of that and more results in people being open to the message that Jesus loves them and wants to have a relationship with them!

**When you find your gifts and your purpose and you give your life to that - YOU ARE GOING TO BE LIVING THE DREAM!**

When you go through our Growth Track - you will find out that God wants this relationship with you - you find out you can be free and be in life-giving relationships with others - you find out how God designed you and what gifts God has given you - you find out there are many opportunities to serve in those gifts -

When you complete the Growth Track, we will meet with you personally to fit you for a place to serve!

It’s better than a personal fitting at a New York tailor shop!

**Ultimate fulfillment comes when we live beyond ourselves and pour our passion into service; when we do that, we change the world.**

I’ve seen this firsthand -

* I’ve seen a former priestess of a Wiccan witch coven become a minister, counselor and hospital chaplain. - Donna
* I’ve seen someone who vandalized church property become a missionary. - Justin
* I’ve seen the drug addicted become the pastor.
* I’ve seen the student caught up in pornography become the church planter.
* I’ve seen the person who had a marriage fail because the leader of a marriage small group!

Anytime you are being used in your gifts, fulfilling God’s purpose for your life, you are overcoming the past - you are living the dream! You have found freedom and are making a difference!

When Jesus came on the scene, He looked at normal, everyday people - fisherman, laborers, tax collectors, even terrorists - and He said, “You are the light of the world!”

He said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you!”

The message is clear - God wants His extraordinary power to flow through our ordinary lives - that makes us extraordinary!

Through Christ, the common becomes uncommon - the usual becomes unusual - the ordinary becomes extraordinary - the taker becomes the giver - death is turned into life - and the non-factor becomes the difference-maker!

The church grew - but then a problem came. The ministry became professional - they were called the “clergy” - whatever that means.

People began to think you had to get paid - or be a pastor in order to make a difference for God -

Ephesians 4:11-12 - Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

Everyone is to be taught and empowered to be a difference-maker!

1st Peter 2:9 - …**you** are a chosen people. **You** are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, **you** can show others the goodness of God, for he called **you** out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Maybe it is all about you after all! But - no it’s not -

Notice this -

Exodus 6:7 - I will claim you as my own people…

Luke 22:20 - …This cup is the new covenant between God and his people…

We are part of a people - we are part of a family - we serve together. He didn’t promise to make you a fulfilled person in isolation. He promised to make you part of the family.

It’s not much of a party if you’re the only one there.

This Cup of Praise - the Cup of Celebration - this is meant to be done together.

Hodges: “It’s clear that we were created for a purpose that’s bigger than ourselves. We were designed to be part of a cause, a movement, a mission. Without a doubt, this is what the body of Christ, the church, is intended to be…

 “Experiencing the fourth cup is the ultimate sign of the mature work of God in our lives. Instead of feeling burdened by ministry, it feels like real joy, a selfless giving of who we are and what we’re about… If purpose is the real secret to happiness, then there’s no happier person than the one who’s making a difference.”

This is living the dream! This is not about getting more people to do stuff around here - this is about helping people live the dream that God has for their life!

**It begins with knowing God … invitation …**

In the traditional Jewish celebration of the Passover, after the fourth cup, hallel, the participants recite a prayer that looks to the future and expounds on God’s mercy and kindness.

Hodges blessing -

May the God who parted the Red Sea for the Israelites as they fled Egypt part any obstacles in your life that would hinder your freedom. May you taste the exhilaration of not only your salvation, but also your deliverance from besetting sin. May you drink in the pursuit of your deepest dreams as your Father redeems your life and reveals your purpose. And may you savor the overflowing fulfillment of belonging to his family, forever and ever. Amen.