



# Central Peninsula Church

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2 Timothy 4:22  
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## Grace Be To You

SERIES: *A Life That Counts: Studies in 2 Timothy*

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A few weeks ago an article appeared in the newspaper about the widow of Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonalds. Mrs. Kroc left over a billion dollars to the Salvation Army, an organization dedicated to helping the poor of our society. The size of the gift is amazing when you think of the way that organization began 130 years ago in London.

William Booth was in a quandary. He felt like his life lacked a sense of purpose. Then his wife Catherine was invited to teach a Bible study in downtown London. While they were there, William took a late night walk through the slums of the east end. Every fifth building was a pub. Most of them had steps at the counter so little kids could climb up and order gin. That night he told Catherine, "I seemed to hear a voice sounding in my ears, 'Where can you go and find such heathen as these, and where is there so great a need for your labors?' Darling, I have found my destiny!" Later that year, in 1865, the Booths opened what they called the Christian Mission in London's slums. Their life purpose was to reach the down and outers that other Christians ignored. That simple vision later grew into the Salvation Army, which now ministers through three million members in 91 countries. With the Kroc's gift they will build a series of youth centers throughout the country.

You can't underestimate the power of a clear sense of purpose; a vision for what God wants you to do with your life. Individuals need purpose, and churches need a sense of purpose as well. Chuck Swindoll calls it vision, "Vision" he says, "is essential for survival. It's spawned by faith, sustained by hope, sparked by imagination, and strengthened by enthusiasm. It's greater than sight, deeper than a dream, broader than an idea. Vision encompasses vast vistas outside the realm of the predictable, the safe, the expected. No wonder we perish without it!"

Some time ago we established a purpose statement for Central Peninsula Church. *Our purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship God's person, obey God's word, love*

*God's people, and share God's grace.* We're as committed to that purpose as ever. As a matter of fact we've spent a lot of time this past year thinking and dreaming about what CPC might look like ten years from now in light of that purpose. For instance, what would happen if God allows us to make 5,000 new disciples of Jesus Christ in the next ten years, each one of whom was a passionate worshiper, committed to the Scriptures, devoted to fellow-believers, and excited to tell others about the grace of God? Wouldn't that be something? We'd have to start a new church. We'd have to hire more pastors.

For the past several months we've been studying Paul's second letter to Timothy. Since Paul knew he would soon be executed, this letter serves as kind of his last will and testament. This morning I want us to take a bird's eye view of this letter, asking the question, what does 2 Timothy teach us about our purpose, our vision? If you look at our purpose statement you can see that it breaks down into four priorities: God's person, God's word, God's people, and God's plan.

### **I. The Priority of God's Person (worship)**

When we talk about the priority of God's person we're talking about worship. When we talk about worship we're talking about a lot more than just coming to church and singing a few songs. We're talking about offering our lives to him. We see this so clearly in 2 Timothy.

Worship starts with recognizing God's infinite worth. Look back at chapter one. Paul started the letter by thanking God who he serves with a clear conscience the way his forefathers did. He thanks God as he remembers Timothy in his prayers night and day. Paul worshipped God personally. He worshipped not just on Sunday with God's people, but each day as he bowed before the Father.

Later in the same chapter he describes the infinite worth of this God he worships. Look at vs. 9-12. "**He has saved**

us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”

Who is this God we worship? Why should we lavish heartfelt praise upon him? Why should we bow before him in humble gratitude? Because he's a God who saved us and called us. He does this not because of who WE are but because of his own purpose and grace. His purpose encompasses all eternity. He prepared all of this for us before we were even created. He's the God who made this purpose plain through his Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus he defeated death and made eternal life a reality. Worship begins by seeing his infinite worth.

It's a response much like jumping from your seat when you see a ball explode off the bat of Barry Bonds and head for McCovey Cove. That response involves everything we do. “For this reason I endure things...” For what reason? “For I know whom I have believed...” He doesn't say “I know WHAT I have believed,” though that would have been true. He doesn't say, “I know WHEN I believed,” though that would have been true also. He doesn't say, “I know HOW MUCH I've believed,” though he did have great faith. He says, “I know WHOM I have believed.” His confidence is in a person; a faithful God of infinite worth. Because of who God is, Paul trusts that God is able to guard that deposit until the day arrives when all accounts will be settled. What deposit? His life. His work. God will keep that investment safe until the day he sees him face to face. That's worship: offering all you are, each day, to him.

## II. The Priority of God's Word (Scripture)

One of the things Jesus told us about worship is that we must worship in both spirit and truth. To worship him in spirit means to worship him from your heart. But what does it mean to worship him in truth? It means we have an

accurate view of who he is. But how do we get that? There is only one place - the Word of God. So our second priority is that of his Word.

You can't read very far into this letter without seeing that this was a major concern of Paul's. The church where Timothy was serving was rife with false teaching. That's why in chapter one Paul charges Timothy to **“Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”** (1:14). We make a deposit with God, but here it says God makes a deposit with us. It's a "good deposit." It's a treasure. It mustn't be lost. It needs to be protected from thieves. Paul is talking about the truth of the gospel, which is found in the 66 books of the Bible. That's why Paul says in chapter 3, **“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”** (vs.16-17). These words have been breathed out by God. They are designed to reveal to us what is true and real; about God, about ourselves, about how to live.

For Timothy, as for every servant of God, the Word of God is his toolbox. Besides obeying it himself, there were two things he was to do with this toolbox. First, he was to study it and in doing so handle it accurately. In chapter 2 Paul says, **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth”** (v.15). It's not enough just to read it. He had to cut it straight. Recently I began reading Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life*. I respect Rick Warren a lot, and he has a lot of helpful things to say in that book, but I didn't get very far before I became uncomfortable with the way he used Scripture, taking verses out of context and using translations that best supported the particular point he wanted to make. It's called “proof texting” and although it's common, it's not cutting it straight.

The reason why you want to cut it straight is because of the second thing Timothy was to do with it. In chapter 4 Paul says, **“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word;...”** (vs.1-2a). If Timothy didn't cut it straight, he'd be in danger of preaching something God didn't intend to say, and that could be disastrous for his flock.

### III. The Priority of God's People (fellowship)

And ultimately, that's what really matters - people. God cares about his flock; his people. Our third priority, that of God's people, is all over this letter. This encompasses our conviction that the work of the ministry is to be done not by paid professionals but by ordinary saints. When Paul tells Timothy to **"rekindle the gift of God which is in you"** in 1:6, he could have been talking to all of us, for we all have been gifted by the Holy Spirit to do something no one else can do in building up the body of Christ. We don't want to be a church that just keeps hiring people to do the work of the ministry; we want to hire people who are uniquely gifted to equip others to do the work of the ministry.

In 2 Timothy you see God's people in action. In chapter one Paul reported to Timothy about the services of a man named Onesiphorus. **"The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me - the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day - and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus"** (1:16-18). This guy's willingness to find and visit Paul in prison "refreshed" Paul. Notice the word play in v. 17. Paul says Onesiphorus **"found me"** while in v. 18 he says **"may he find mercy from the Lord..."** Paul says, "May he who found me find mercy from the Lord." It's mercy for the merciful. In the day of judgment it will be the small acts of kindness and forgotten expressions of mercy that will be rewarded.

We do those things because of our commitment to God's people. I know we can always do better, but I'm really proud of the way the people of this church care for one another. Rarely a day goes by when a meal isn't fixed, a check isn't made out, a note of encouragement isn't written, a visit isn't made to someone in need. I'm grateful for the Onesiphoruses at CPC. May the Lord grant you mercy as you have shown it.

### IV. The Priority of God's Plan (outreach)

Of course, Jesus told us that when we live like that, when we love one another, the world will take notice. This brings us to the last priority, that of God's plan. God's plan is to give every person an opportunity to hear and respond to the good news that God sent his only Son into the world; his purpose was to provide a

way, through his death on the cross, for us to be forgiven; and through his resurrection, for us to become new creatures in Christ. We know Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter, and we know he would soon pay the ultimate price, but why? Why was he there? He told us in chapter 2, **"For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory"** (v.10). Paul was willing to endure hardship because he knew God was calling out a people for his own possession. In order for them to receive salvation they had to believe the gospel, and in order for them to believe the gospel, they had to hear the gospel. So even when he stands before the emperor and no one is there for him, he could say in ch. 4, **"But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth"** (v.17).

We don't exist for ourselves. God keeps us here and not in heaven because there are people who need to both hear the gospel and see it lived out by a credible witness. There are over a million people who live just here on the Peninsula. What if we reached 1% of them? That would be 10,000 people. Why not? Why don't you just start with one person in your life who doesn't know the Lord, and commit to praying for him or her every single day, and ask the Lord to help you take advantage of any and every opportunity you have to share the gospel with them? What if that one person came to Christ in 2004? That would add 1,500 more names to the book of life.

### V. The Priority of Discipleship

But it's not just about making new Christians, it's also about making disciples. What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who worships God's person, obeys God's word, loves God's people, and shares God's grace. But how do we MAKE disciples? This is what we really can't afford to miss in 2 Timothy. Paul invested his life in young Timothy. He called him his "beloved son." He brought Timothy with him on his missionary journeys. He modeled for him what it meant to be a godly man. He taught him the Scriptures. So Paul could say to Timothy in chapter 3, **"Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,**

persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!... You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,..." (vs.10-11,14). We make disciples by having younger believers in our lives to whom we can say, "But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith..."

We make disciples by investing our life in a few. Paul lays it out so clearly in chapter 2, "**You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also**" (vs.1-2).

There it is. Four generations: Paul entrusted something to Timothy; Timothy was to repeat the process with faithful men; and those faithful men would do the same thing with their own disciples. If you took and discipled three people every year, and then the following year each of those three people did the same thing with three other people, look how many people would be reached in ten years.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DISCIPLER</u>
1	4
2	16
3	64
4	256
5	1024
6	4096
7	16,384
8	65,536
9	262,144
10	1,048,576

## CONCLUSION

You might be thinking, "Man, he's dreaming! What did Mitchell have for breakfast?" I mean, how can we possibly do this? Not by ourselves, that's for sure. I want you to look at the very last verse of the letter. I think this will tell all we need to know about how "**The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you**" (4:22).

These are the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul. There are two things he extends to Timothy and to us: God's presence and God's grace. He is with us and he is for us. That's how we can do the impossible. The Lord is with you - his presence; the Lord is for you - his grace.

Many wonder, well, whatever happened to Timothy? Did he bail out or did he stand fast? In Hebrews 13:23 we have a hint. It says, "**Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.**" It appears Timothy did come to Rome and he was willing to pay the price. The Lord's presence and the Lord's grace were with him, and may they be with us as well.

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