

3/25/2022

College and Young Working Retreat in Columbus, OH

Message 1: God's Eternal Purpose - "I will build My church"

I'm a leading brother in the church in Pittsburgh and I'm really grateful that, I'm not sure why I was invited here, but I'm grateful that I am invited here to participate in the conference with all of you who are really seeking the Lord and seeking to know more of the Lord.

So tonight, I'm gonna start by telling you a story and I do have a power point. Tonight we're going to talk about God's eternal purpose. Do I have a slide thing? Or do I just tell you, next slide? Next slide. I'm gonna tell you a story about Leah. Leah, and her sister, Rachel, were two young girls growing up in this family. A pretty well off family, who had a business of a farm. They had a lot of sheep, lot of goats. A lot of, you know, things to take care of, hard working girls had to take care of the farm. One day as they were taking care of the farm, as these young ladies got a little bit older and began to think about their future and marriage and you know, dating and so on. This young man: handsome, charismatic, eligible bachelor, showed up at the farm and there he is. So these two young ladies were just ecstatic when their father told them that he'd made a deal with this young man that they were going to invite him into their home and he's going to work for them and they're these young ladies were watching this young man, and this young man was watching these young ladies.

Unfortunately, for Leah, she was not the chosen one. This young man set his eyes on the younger sister, Rachel. And like usual, Leah just knew she always played second fiddle to her younger sister. The younger sister was always the pretty one, got all the attention from the family and so on. and poor Leah, there she was, left out. And this young man Jacob just fell head over heels for this younger sister Rachel. And so they were together and you could imagine at dinner time they're passing notes or saying secret things, and so on and they're all there at the farm and Leah's regretting this. Well, all of a sudden, it's announced one day that Rachel and Jacob are engaged.

It's a long engagement, seven years, because the father had made a deal and said, you can marry my daughter, but you've got to work seven years for her. So the seven years was passing by and, of course, Leah was just enraged with jealousy inside, because their sister Rachel, you can imagine they're over the side of the field and giggling and talking and they're taking walks in the night and they're just enjoying one another and maybe even right in front of Leah they hug and kiss and Leah, you know, just you know, enough, go somewhere else, get a room do something, don't be around. I mean, it was an absolutely horrible experience for this poor young lady, Leah. Well, to Jacob, the young man, he said these seven years went by so quick it's like a day to him. He was having such a great time with Rachel and then the marriage came and the father decided he's going to make a change in plans.

So before the marriage came, he had some talk. I would have loved to be there to find out how this happened, but the new arrangement was that Leah was going to sneak into the wedding

party when Jacob wasn't looking, and trick Jacob into marrying Leah, instead of Rachel. You know the strangest thing about it is that Leah agreed. What she thought she was going to do by getting into this marriage, I don't know. I don't know what she was thinking. I would have loved to ask her, what are you doing? But somehow she agreed. Who knows where Rachel was? They had a big party, they're eating and drinking. I don't know quite how it happened. The Bible doesn't explain how it happened but they were eating and drinking.

This is a story from the Bible, by the way, but it really happened. And I don't know if Jacob was drunk or whatever, but he got the wrong girl and he brought the girl into his tent and the next morning, he woke up, and he was enraged because Leah was there. Could you imagine if you were Leah, and you were there, and Jacob woke up. Who are you? What are you doing here? And she had to break the news to him that you just married me. Jacob stormed into Laban's house, to the father, the father-in-law, stormed into his house. What did you do to me and so on.

Okay, so they had a big discussion, big pow. Wow, yada yada yada, eventually bottom line. Jacob, you've married this one already. What you can do is marry the other one, too, with a little catch. Okay, you can marry her but you gotta promise me to work seven more years for this one too. Jacob agreed. How all this happened? I don't know. Jacob agreed, he'll do it, and he'll have two wives. Now, Leah and Rachel together, the older and the younger. I guess, Leah was kind of happy, she got her foot in the door? Jacob never paid attention to her for the whole seven years before and now maybe she has a chance to convince Jacob that she's a worthy wife, and she's just as good as Rachel, but it didn't quite happen that way.

Jacob just adored Rachel and still ignored Leah which was very sad. Well, Leah. Got in her mind that she is going to find a way to convince Jacob to really love her. And to really pay attention to her. And her day probably went like this. Jacob would walk in the door, he would smile at Leah. How is your day Leah? and Leah's heart would jump and she, wow this is so exciting and she's so happy and everything. Jacob paid attention to me. But five minutes later, Rachel walks in the door. Jacob runs over to her, gives her a big hug. Lifts her off her feet, kisses her and there's Leah in the corner. Just tears down her face crying. it'll never happen. He just will not pay attention to me, poor Leah, She had in her heart. She just wanted her whole life to be to make this guy love her. That was her world. That was her purpose. You know, if she went to the beauty salon, maybe the people there would say, you know, Leah, give it up. Girl, let it loose, go away, give it up, forget it. But she wouldn't she wouldn't give it up. This was her whole life. Everything was surrounded like this. She had no idea what she was there for. She had no idea what Jacob was doing, she was surrounded by this.

Well, eventually she began to have children. She began to have children, and the great thing for Leah's was that Rachel didn't have any children. And now she thought, this will be it. When she prayed to God. She knew there was God. When she prayed to God at night, the prayer was not, "God, You know, what do you want me to do in my life? Where should I be?" Her prayer was like, "God give me a son. Please give me a son so that I can be pleasing to Jacob. Oh, God, please let Jacob smile at me."

Well, she got a son and she said, she named him, "See a son. He has seen my misery" and then she got another one named Simeon. That when she bore Simeon she thought, wow! God listens to me. I prayed to God and he heard me. He heard it. And so she named Simeon, "one who hears." It still didn't work. Jacob still didn't even know she was there. He just was having a great time with Rachel. I'm sure he liked the sons and everything but he wasn't paying attention to her. Eventually she prayed for attachment. God would you please have Jacob attach himself to me? Could he do that? And so she named that one Levi, I think the fourth one Judah. She just gave up. I don't know. Praise be to God. Whatever. Yeah, I don't know what happened, but she was her whole life surrounded by just thinking and thinking and thinking about herself.

What Leah didn't know, or what she didn't seem to figure out is how she fit in God's purpose. God has a masterful plan in the universe and yet the marriage was all messed up. I mean, what a messed up marriage with these two wives there and, and everyone praying for kids, so that the husband could be pleased. And I'm only giving you a small tip, if you want to read an interesting novel, read the story of Jacob. It's just a messed up life. But, God had this plan. And for Leah, this plan was something really important.

Jacob had to tell his wives about who he was. Do you know who Jacob was? He was the grandson of the man that God appeared to. He told this man, "you are going to be a blessing to the whole earth." He told this man "you will have ancestors, seed, descendants that will fill the whole earth" and who you are will become the people of God for the whole earth to see. That's who this man was. He was the only man that God appeared to, you know, what's also interesting is that when Jacob was on his way to go to this family's house, he also had a dream, he had a dream that angels were descending. And God told Jacob too! He said all this land here, this will be long to you. You're not just a landowner. You're gonna be a country owner. Your descendants will inhabit a whole country. Out of you will become a whole country. And He told Jacob, just like I told your grandfather, you're going to be a blessing.

I mean think about that you're going to be a blessing to the whole earth. I mean what if president Joe Biden invited you into his oval office and said something to you that he's going to give you something very special to do. This is God telling Jacob that he's going to do something. He told wives that. So if you are Leah, what should you be thinking about? I have just joined the most important family in the entire earth who is chosen to carry out God's purpose on the earth. Now how do I do my duty, my part, to be part of this purpose? But what was Leah concerned about? How can I make Jacob smile at me? How can I get his smile?

So some of her sons here are amazing. The accomplishments that are incredible. Rueben, the first son, when eventually, it was Rachel's son that was thrown into a pit, Joseph, and they were going to kill them. And Rueben came up and said, no, no, don't kill him, save him. And by that one step completely saved God's people. Because Joseph eventually saved all of God's people from famine. Simeon. I don't know that he did anything good in the Bible. But Levi, this was really impressive, Levi's ancestors: One was Moses, you know, Moses right? Moses who led the

people out of Egypt. And then from the good land, brought them all the way to the good land from the wilderness. Moses was her descendant. These are her children we're talking about.

What if I told you, one day, one of your grandchildren or great grandchildren would become Moses and lead all of God's people. Wouldn't that make you feel like, I better start raising up this grandchild in the right way and make sure that his descendants and his descendants, this, this is going to really work here. I have a really important role. What was, what was she concerned about? She's just concerned about, can I please Jacob? Can I be happy? Can I get another son? Maybe he'll like me then. Maybe he'll smile at me. Maybe I can make him something. Maybe it's my cooking. Maybe it's a... This is her whole realm, and then eventually one time when the children of Israel worship the calf, and God said, let's kill them all. It was, you know who it was? It was Leah's descendants, that when Moses said, who's on the Lord's side? And it was Leah's descendants, the Levites, that stood up and said we are for the Lord. It was no brainer that one day, God said, well of course you're going to be the priest, and the people, that lead all of my people to worship. You know, who are the people that led everyone to worship. You know, who wrote all the psalms and stuff, not all of them. But a lot of the psalms. These are Leah's descendants. You see how important she was in the Bible? Can you see? If she only knew, if she only knew, what kind of person she would be. And then Judah, can't rule out that, her fourth son became the ancestor of Christ. Christ came to the earth, was born of the tribe of Judah. And in revelation, he is called the lion of the tribe of Judah. You know, who gave birth to Judah, the one who is the line, the tribe of Judah, you know, who did that. That was Leah. That was Leah. Isn't that amazing? If she only knew.

And this is something, maybe we should all think about tonight. Do you know? You know, are you trying to please that Jacob? Or do you have a view, do you know what God's purpose is, and what he has for you today? Do you know what it is?

When I was in junior high I was in church. I was like 10 years old and I was pretty ordinary, I think a typical, naughty young, junior-high boy. And we had these great young men who wanted to take us, and try to bring God to us, and tell us about church and God and things like that. And we would always just do whatever we can to trip them up and just mess them up in any way we could. And they were so frustrated, they did everything they could and they were totally frustrated.

One time, one of these brothers had me and my friend Pete in a boat and we were there. He looked at us, he was so exhausted. And frustrated he just looked at us and he said, shook his head and said, "if you only knew Vern and Pete, if you only knew." And you know that really touched me, I never forgot that. I didn't know what he meant. I knew he was frustrated, I felt bad. I did really feel bad. Even junior-high boys can feel bad sometimes. But that word stuck with me. I don't remember anything else during that time, but I did remember, "if you only knew." And that's the word that we have tonight, if you only knew what God has planned for us, if you only knew God's eternal purpose, would you act the same way that you do today? Would you do the same things that you do today? If you only knew how/what God is doing, just like Leah, if

she only knew her sons were going to be like this.

I know you may say everything is messed up and everything, but I love this verse. Many are the plans in a person's heart but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. This weekend, that's what we're going to talk about. The prevailing Lord's purpose that's in our life.

You know, it's all about perspective. Today, this weekend, we're going to work on perspective. You see the, you see, a and b, you see those boxes there? This is box A and box B. You see that? How many here think they are the same color? If you know this one, do not raise your hand. How many think they're different colors? Now look at them. The only difference is the line connecting them. It's all perspective. It's so important. If you know something or perceive something. It's interesting, our eyes will fill in things that we think are really real, but they're not real, just because of the shadow up there and the way they're put, our eyes are determined to say that they're different colors. But they're not, they're exactly the same color. If you don't believe me, after the meeting, we can put that slide up and then you can come and see for yourself, close up.

Let me do another one. Okay, in the middle of this. There's a dot. You see the dot? Okay, I want you to stare at the dot for about 10 seconds, stare at it When I give a signal James, you can click that stare at it, stare at it, stare at it. Okay quick. How many saw colors when it clicked? Is that interesting? There are no colors in that slide. It's all black and white.

You know, it's all our perspective and how we see things is really not what we think, we trust everything with our eyes and what we can see, but it's not usually like that. Leah trusted everything, what she could see and what was around her. Her perception was way off. Perception is everything. This weekend this is something we really want to talk about. Maybe it's not that practical. We want to focus on perception. What is perception? What do we see? What do our eyes see? How do we see things? Because God has a certain kind of sight. Do we see things Like God sees things? If Leah could only understand, God has an eternal purpose. She would see things different. Even Jacob and those ones didn't know that much about what God's eternal purpose is.

One day, God stepped into time, to begin to talk to us about, what is, exactly, God's eternal purpose. This is his mercy to us that he stepped into time. When he stepped into time, He did it by sending His only begotten son, Jesus, to the earth. Jesus came as a person that was to accomplish God's eternal purpose. You know, the thing with Jesus though, is that as he was there on the earth doing a lot of things, nobody asked him, "Why are you here? What are you doing? What's this all for?" What did people ask him? "My eyes, Can you heal me? My hand, Can you heal me? Can you do this for me? Can you give me a good teaching?" Even one person asked him, "Can you come and settle the accounts of my father who just died and there's an argument on who gets what money. Can you come and settle all the accounts? Everybody wanted him to do all these things. Nobody asked him, "Why are you here? What are you doing? Is there any reason why you did all this? Why are you spending time doing this?"

Okay, so He decided at one point to take all his disciples, the close ones to him, away to a retreat center, just like this here. Because it's really good to get away. But the way Jesus did it is he took him away out into the woods at the foot of Mount Hermon, Caesserea, Philippi. Just a place where maybe the air was clear and they could enjoy being together. I imagine they had a campfire going. I don't think they have marshmallows but I think they have a campfire. They're all sitting around the campfire. Probably all the disciples were joking and everyone's laughing. They had a good time with Jesus.

At one point in the conversation. Jesus was like, "whoah whoah whoah, stop. Everybody stop. His voice got really serious and he said, Who do men say that I am? Who do men say that I am? Jesus said to them. They knew that was a very sober question. And in that answer, in thinking about it, then they said, well, some say you are Jeremiah some say, John the Baptist some say, and they gave the number of names. They all knew that Jesus had something coming. And then his question was, "Who do you say that I am?" There's the question. Who do you say that I am? Simon Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

Now, why was this important? When we translate it into English It's kind of like Christ. It doesn't mean that much to us, but back then Christ, meant anointed one, which meant a man on a mission. It meant that you were given a certain job with something to do and now you are on a mission to do that. Basically, Peter said to him, you are a man on a mission. Can you imagine how happy Jesus felt? Although nobody asked him. What is your mission? At least, they knew he was on a mission and Peter said that. And of course the Lord just erupted and said, blessed, are you Simon bar-Jonah. Because flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but my father in heaven. Obviously it couldn't come from you. It came from my Father in heaven that you are a man on a mission and then Peter continued and said, not only a man on the mission. I mean, this is even really much better, but you are the very son of God. You're the son of God on a mission today.

Wow. Now you know what Jesus was thinking inside his heart? Very simple. Finally, it's time. I'm gonna unveil, I'm gonna unveil what is on my heart and what I'm really here for. Even though you didn't ask, but you're close enough. That's enough, you know, I'm on a mission, you know, I'm the son of God and I'm gonna tell you what I'm here for on the earth. This is what it's all about. All the teachings, all the healing, all the things like that. No, it's not it, it's not it. If you guess any of those things it's not it. What is it that I am here to do? This is what he said.

I will build my church. Isn't that something? Everything that started with Leah and everything that was there, all that was happening. It came down to God's stepping into time through Jesus Christ, a man on a mission to build the church and then he didn't stop there. He continued and he said, and you are Peter and on this rock, I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail. In one simple answer, not only did he unveil what his mission was, but he got Peter into the mission himself. This man on a mission now became a group on a mission to accomplish God's eternal purpose.

I want you all to think about that a little bit tonight. God has an eternal purpose. There's a mission that he wants. He's been waiting thousands of years to unveil this and what he has unveiled is that he wants to build the church. This is what he's after. This is what he wants to do.

I'm telling you, there's nothing else in your life that's worthwhile, giving yourself to. If Joe Biden said to you, I have a mission for you. There's a problem in Ukraine and I'm leaving it on your shoulders. Okay. You feel really important or scared and to do something, but really important, or if the CEO of Google or, you know, or of Apple or something said, we're coming out with a new video game technology and we know your programming skills are top notch. Please come to my office right away, I want to talk to you. Or if Billie Eilish said, I'm starting a new album and I'm looking for some musicians, I heard you play, could you please be? Wow. You know, you feel like, whoa, you know, what a mission!

Well, if God told you, I have an eternal purpose. That's greater than anything you could ever think of, and I am commissioning you to come with me to build the church. Wow, what a wonderful thing that is, God has an eternal purpose. Later, the apostle Paul helped us understand. How we say this in the Bible, there's only one verse that has the word, one set of verses 10-11, that have the words eternal and purpose in the same verse and that verse also has the word church.

I think you can just look at it in this way, it is through the church and only through the church that God will accomplish his eternal purpose. It is through the church that God is going to do that. And he's calling us all, and he's telling us, if you only knew. You might be worried about this, worried about that guy paying attention to you, worrying if that lady likes you at all, worrying about your career, worrying about your future, worrying about all this. And then maybe this weekend, you can just, if you only knew, if you can just take a minute to think, if you only knew that God has this purpose.

So if you're convinced, this is the next question, you have to ask. What is the church? So what is it? So say I've got it, and you've got me, and convinced, I've taken the bait, I'm hooked, I'm ready, I'm going out. What is the church? Okay, spoiler alert. This weekend, we're going to tell you what the church is. Every meeting we're going to give you a perspective of the church and hopefully the Lord will have a way to touch everyone of us to give ourselves to the church.