

SERMON


PREPARED BY
MAJOR DARLENE BURT

made for a divine purpose

JEREMIAH 1:5



CALL AND COMMITMENT 2026



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TITLE: Made For a Divine Purpose
TEXT: Jeremiah 1:5

I can get lost in watching videos online sometimes. In recent weeks, I was watching a little boy who was about 2-3 years old praying up a storm and asking God to heal his body. It was obvious from the video that he was imitating his pastor. From what he had observed at church, the little guy was now putting into practice. He prayed with fervor and was calling down the heavens in his prayer. I couldn't help thinking who will this little boy become? How will God use him? Does God have something special in mind for him or is it just a cute video?

As a little girl, I always wanted to play church. When in my early thirties I decided, after a strong call from God to go to training college to be a Salvation Army officer, one of my cousins who really had no church affiliation, affirmed me by saying, "it's about time, you've been leading your own church ever since you were a little girl." She remembered how when they visited in the summer, I wanted to play church. I would set up the mercy seat and I had tissues that were wet so I could squeeze them for tears. I too, was imitating what I had observed happening in church. Who did this little girl become and how has God used me?

The theme in our territory for Call and Commitment in 2026 is "Made for a Divine Purpose." The theme is based on Jeremiah 1:5, from the Message: "The Lord gave me this message: Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you: a prophet to the nations—that's what I had in mind for you." This is where we are introduced to Jeremiah who would later be called "the reluctant prophet." Even though his life took some different paths before he came into his divine purpose, early in his life God had shared his purpose, a prophet to the nations. To be a prophet was not a childish game or something cute, it was a divine call to be a prophet who would speak words of warning and encouragement from God.



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We were all made for a purpose, God placed us in this world for a reason that only we could fulfill but the theme adds some weight or meaning for the purpose of our lives. We are made for a divine purpose. I am reminded of Psalm 139:16 which says, "Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." The New Living translation puts the verse this way, "You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed." God knew the days of our lives and our divine purpose even before we were born.

A British missionary and a man who played cricket named C.T. Studd dedicated his life to promoting Christianity; Studd wrote a poem that has a famous line: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." This poem encourages believers to live for something eternal rather than chasing after worldly pursuits so that our lives will have more infinitely more meaning and what we do will leave spiritual legacy. I have only ever heard or known one line, but there is more to the poem. One verse says, "Only one life, the still small voice, gently pleads for a better choice, bidding me selfish aims to leave, And to God's holy will to cleave."

When God reveals to us His divine purpose, if we allow him, he will give us a divine personality. When we submit ourselves to God's will, He will do a transformational work within us. It doesn't mean that He will completely change our personality and the core of who we are. It means that He will transform our human nature into a divine personality that can be used in His service. This change will depend on who we are and where we are and how much molding and shaping we need. It will be different for all of us.

As an eighteen-year-old, I had a divine awakening I believe. I had grown up attending church and learning from God's word but until I started to learn in a deeper way about Scripture and have some life transforming spiritual experiences and opportunities to service; the dots did not connect.



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I knew lots but I could not connect Scripture to how I lived my life. Was I making bad choices? Was I going down a road I shouldn't be on?

No, I wasn't, I was at Bible College after all. The divine awakening and the connection I made with God at time allowed me to see that I was made for something more. Did I race toward ministry and fully embrace what God had for me as an eighteen-year-old? No, but I was conscious of following God's will for me. That following after God's will eventually lead me to God's divine purpose for me as a Salvation Army officer.

Jeremiah had a 40-year ministry. Did he embrace what God had for him? No, there were many twists and turns and obstacles along the way. He didn't get the title reluctant prophet for no reason. There were times perhaps he wondered if God truly had a divine purpose for him. Times when he was reluctant to embrace the plans God had for him. In the end, he followed God's plan and purpose and became the prophet whom God used. Did he become someone else entirely? No, God used a quiet, gentle man who prophesied words of condemnation to the people. Even through the struggles, he eventually found his purpose and meaning. Isn't that ultimately what we all want? Studd's poem goes on to say, "Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep; Faithful and true what e'er the strife, pleasing Thee in my daily life; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

At the time this Scripture was written, God called Jeremiah, but he also called Josiah for a divine purpose. King Josiah was one of the better Kings of Judah. Together, these two men served God and His people. They had a huge task ahead of them, which was to transform Judah. In 2 Chronicles 34:3, we are told, it was "in the eighth year of Josiah's reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols."



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Maybe it is never too early to recognize God's divine purpose or have a divine awakening. The key comes in what Josiah did – at the age of sixteen, he sought the Lord. In a sense, he asked God, what is your divine plan for me? What divine purpose are you calling me? Four years later, "he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols." After a short, but wicked reign of King Amon, there was a lot of idolatry in Judah. There were a variety of idols being worshipped and this showed how deeply entrenched they were. King Josiah began the cleansing of these idol worshippers from the inside out. It seemed that idolatry was happening at all levels. If you read further into 2 Chronicles 34, you will see that the cleansing taken on by Josiah was extensive. It wasn't only the idols that were removed, he also removed people who were practicing idolatry; some of them were the priests in the temple. As Josiah took on the divine purpose God had for him, He worked to restore the temple to its original intention – the worship of our Holy God.

It was during King Josiah's reign that Jeremiah stepped on the scene and accepted the divine purpose God had for him. He was young, just 17-20 years of age. As our key verse suggests, "'Before I formed you in your mother's body I chose you. Before you were born, I set you apart to serve me. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.'" God was letting Jeremiah know that this call on his life went way back before he was born. These words were given to Jeremiah so that he would know and follow the will of God. Jeremiah aligned his will with the will of God.

Sometimes we refuse to do that, we do not want to follow God's will; we think we know best and want to follow our own wills. The choice is ours: do we follow our own will or the divine will of God? Which is best? I have found that even following the divine will of God is not always perfect, but it is for my best. God has chosen us for a divine purpose, do we step into that, allow him to shape us and mold us for his intended purpose? Or do we follow our own will?



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As I reflect on 26 years of officership and heading into retirement in a few years; I will be grateful to settle and put down some roots and not have to pack and move. However, I do not regret stepping into God's divine plan for me. It was for the best and even though difficult at times, I see God's hand on my life. I could never have orchestrated what God has. I could never have chosen my own path and the experiences He has placed before me. Some of my assignments have been difficult. I imagine the potter with the wheel; there were times when I was flat on that wheel and had to be reshaped and remolded. There were times when I was a beautiful piece of pottery ready to be used by God. Other times, I needed God's hand to shape me into who He needed me to be because I did not know the way forward.

The end of C.T. Studd's poem reminds me about God's divine purpose for me. Only one life, yes only one, now let me say, "Thy will be done"; And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say "twas worth it all."

One day I will stand before God, I don't know what words He will ask. I know that I want to say, I have followed your divine purpose for me. I did my best and it was worth it all.

In the end, did Jeremiah and Josiah accomplish the divine purpose that God intended? Judah did not change overnight but Jeremiah and Josiah were faithful to God's divine purpose for them. They stepped in and stepped up and did their best. The cleansing that Josiah started and the words that Jeremiah proclaimed may not have achieved all they have hoped, but they were key players in the plans of God. Jeremiah's focus was on Judah, but his purpose was further reaching than that; He was a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah had his objections to what God wanted him to do. He used his youth as a reason for not stepping into God's plan. He thought he was too young to speak with authority for God. But God did not want to hear that.



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This is the difference when we step into God's divine purpose and not our own purpose. Jeremiah 1:7-8 says, "Do not say, 'I'm too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to. You must say everything I command you to say. Do not be afraid of the people I send you to. I am with you. I will save you," announces the Lord."

God went on to tell Jeremiah, "I will put the words in your mouth, and I am giving you the authority to speak to the nations and kingdoms." God gave him the authority to tear down and build up.

God will do the same for us as we step into what He has for us. We will have our reasons for not wanting to do what God wants. But He will counteract our human desires with his divine purpose.

We can start taking those steps toward God and his plans as we surrender ourselves to the will of God. As we pray, look at the image of the potter's wheel and think of yourself as the clay. Are you willing to allow God to shape you and mold you for his divine purposes? May I encourage you today to take a step forward. You were given a piece of clay pot as you came in. If it would be helpful for you and as a sign of your commitment to following God's divine purpose for you, place your piece of clay on the wheel we have before us. May it be an outward sign of your inward desire to follow God's divine purpose for you.