Speaker 1:

What a delight to be able to join you this way on a Palm Sunday. And it is Palm Sunday 2020. A high watermark in the life of the church and on our calendar, and a reminder as we walk towards the events of Easter week of the willing sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus.

Speaker 1:

But Palm Sunday is a dynamic illustration of how Jesus's life was marked by purpose. Jesus rides into Jerusalem well aware of what awaits, but he's come to earth for this, and even as the people of Jerusalem yell, "Hosanna!" and welcome him as the coming King, Jesus is well aware of how the tide will turn in the coming week.

Speaker 1:

The 20th chapter of Matthew reads, now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the 12 disciples aside and said to them, "We're going up to Jerusalem and the son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day, he'll be raised to life."

Speaker 1:

One of the great truths of scripture is that Jesus's life was filled with purpose. Sometimes our lives are filled with, well, we could only call them to-do lists, much more than purpose. So what's on your to-do list these days? It's a bit unusual, isn't it? Get groceries, stay home, get more groceries, keep the kids aligned, some peace in the house, but God wants so much more for you than just getting the to-do list done. He wants you to live with purpose, to live out a legacy of love, of lasting joy, of impact to others. But God knows our natural tendency. Well, it's just to drift, to wander.

Speaker 1:

Isaiah 53:6 put it this way: We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way, but living with purpose brings us back under the umbrella of blessing. Jesus is the greatest example of living with purpose. Even as a 12-year-old when his parents were looking for him, Jesus says, "Didn't you know I had to be about my father's business?"

Speaker 1:

I need to focus on purpose, not on problems. People focused on problems have certain characteristics. You've seen it, you know [inaudible 00:02:30], you know these people. But people focused on purpose have different characteristics. Well, what happens when I focus on my problems? I can't see the positive things of my life. I lose sight of the end results and I become insensitive to the needs of others.

Speaker 1:

How did Jesus focus on purpose? Well, he focused on purpose by focusing on who he came for. Here's how Jesus put his life's purpose. It's recorded in the fourth chapter of Luke, verses 16 to 21. The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.

Speaker 1:

Jesus came for us. For you, for me. The Bible says that he came to bring us abundant life, a life transformed through the power of the spirit of God when we surrender to him. And when we do, he fills our life with purpose.

Speaker 1:

So, four questions that we could consider on a Palm Sunday. Here's the first one. Who is at the center of your life? Are you egocentric or Christ centered? That is, do you live for self or for Jesus? Question two. What is my character? Am I in public what I am in private? Am I a person of integrity? How about number three? What contribution am I making? You might put it this way. What's the measure of a man or a woman? How will my life, your life, measure up when it's all over? And the fourth question, what is my community? Am I insulated or interested? Am I my self absorbed or engaged with others?

Speaker 1:

Having a life centered on Jesus brings us joy and purpose, peace and satisfaction, but it takes intentionality in our living to not drift away from our calling. Here's the warning from Hebrews, chapter two. We must pay careful attention therefore to what we have heard so that we do not drift away. That's out of the NIV. Let me give it to you out of The Message. It's crucial that we keep a firm grip on what we've heard so we don't drift off.

Speaker 1:

Towards the end of his life here's how the apostle Paul summarized how he viewed the legacy of his purpose in living. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day, and to not only me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.

Speaker 1:

Someday this could be our experience, to stand before the Lord, the God who created us, designed us, equipped us and gave us purpose in our living. God doesn't want you to simply exist on this Palm Sunday, he wants you to enjoy abundant life here on earth, and to know what it means to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. May God bless you with purpose on this Palm Sunday.