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**Series:** The Gospel of John: For God So Loved...

**Date:** August 22, 2022

**Speaker:** Rashard Barnes, Pastor of Campuses

**Text:** John 1:6-14

**Title:** His Plan, Our Purpose

### INTRODUCTION:

Who would you name as the most famous main character and sidekick combo? If you're old school, maybe you remember Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon. Perhaps that's a little too old for you. How about Batman and Robin, or Han Solo and Chewbacca? What about Jordan and Pippen or Diana Ross and The Supremes? Or my all-time favorite Michael Jackson and The Jackson Five? With all these characters, you can see where there is always "the man or women," and there are always sidekicks.

Nobody wants to be the sidekick. We want to be Diana Ross, Batman! We want to be, Michael! I know that some of us in the room have taken the BuzzFeed quiz, and you were disappointed with the results because you were not the main character.

So, in today's sermon, in our series, which we called **For God So Loved...** we will be diving into the life of John the Baptist as he plays the role of the sidekick in the main drama of redemption that stars Christ Jesus.

We are going to look at John's purpose within God's plan, and my hope is for us to consider *our purpose within God's plan*. So, my title for today's sermon is **His Plan, Our Purpose**. We are going to be **John 1:6-14**.

But before dive-in into the text, I want to give us a quick definition of purpose: *Our purpose is to understand the "why" you exist*. Purpose is different from calling. Every believer in Jesus has the same calling: *to bring glory to God by being a disciple and making disciples, but everyone has a distinct purpose in how that plays out*. Let's look at verses 6-7

### BODY

Verse 6- 7 **There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him.**

~~Okay, we just took a sharp turn from this beautiful exhalation of Christ.~~ So far in this prologue, Christ has been the centerpiece, and what we learned last week from Pastor Josh and Scott is that Jesus is the true light that gives life, light, and victory to all of humanity in verses 1-5.

Then in verse 6, we take a sharp turn with John the Baptist. *But why him?* Two reasons. First, the Jews, who were the primary audience, knew the OT narrative, and they



experienced the ministry of John the Baptist and needed an explanation of who John was. Second, they needed to know John the Baptist's role in light of the Christ narrative.

To make this make sense, I want you to imagine the TV Show *American Idol*, where John is like Ryan Seacrest narrating a story to understand why the next up-and-coming singer is being judged. Only here, the character we will learn about is John the Baptist.

Let's look at Verse 7 to see what John tells us, **He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him.**

There it is! John the Baptist, sent by God, came to **"witness"** to **"testify"** about the light so people would have the opportunity to believe in Jesus. *As the sidekick, his job was meant to exalt Christ, the show's main character!*

As the main character, Jesus has been preparing to hit the stage before he hits the public stage of human history. But before he hit the stage, he chose John as his hype-man!!

And for to understand this moment, I need to take you quickly through some key verses in the Bible for us to understand John the Baptist ministry and why it was so important here. *Remember John, and the writer is our MC, letting us know the back story of JTB. Y'all with me?*

1. **Matthew 3:5-8**, "Then people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" Therefore, produce fruit consistent with repentance. God's people's hearts have grown callous to their sins, and John the Baptist's main purpose was to prepare their hearts to receive Christ. This is a big deal because John spent most of his life in obscurity, in the wilderness, but when it was his time to shine, *he had to give a message that was not easy for the ear to hear. Hard calling and hard purpose.*
2. Then let's look at **Malachi 4:4-6**, "Remember the instruction of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse." In the last few lines in the last OT book, we see that Moses and the Prophets all were waiting on Elijah, who we know is John the Baptist, to speak to God's people so that they would not get cursed, but the timeline was unclear.



Ya'll, there were 400 years of silence from God to his people, but yall we get to see this same verse quoted in **Luke 1:13-17**, which shows the fulfillment of John the Baptist ministry. JTB ministry was mind-blowing to the Jews that a prophet was now speaking on behalf of God to his people.

3. And finally, let's look at **Matthew 11:4-6**, "Jesus replied to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, and **blessed is the one who isn't offended by me.**" In prison to be killed, it looks like there was going to be a forecloser of the purpose God gave John: to be the forerunner to Christ. However, John heard about the ministry of Jesus sent his disciples, and Jesus sent them back with a message. He tells them to tell John in verse 4 to report that his work was not in vain. There it is!! *John was the opener, and Jesus was the closer, the main event.*

*So, what can we gather here from the purpose of John the Baptist ministry? **Instead of passing by humanity to accomplish his plan, God saw fit to use humanity within his plan.***

Do you get it? John was mentioned for you and me so we can see that we can know we have a purpose in God's plan. We all have distinct purposes, and each role has significance but is

different. But here is what we need to see; we are not the main character – Jesus.

*So, what does this mean for us with God's Plan and Our purpose? Well, I have three points coming from the text that I hope will give you more clarity.*

1. **To fulfill His plan and your purpose for your life, you need to know you came from God and for God.**

As I alluded to before, many of us are still searching for our purpose, and if you are unclear about your purpose, your primary responsibility is to know where you come from. **You came from God for God.**

Verse 8 **He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.** John the Baptist knew he wasn't the Messiah, although people told him he was the stuff. John the Baptist assignment was weird and hard. He lived in obscurity for 30 years; he faithfully raised disciples and was faithful to the Lord, but *when he came to speak, his words and his purpose made sense!*

*Are you willing to wait on God like that? You see, many of us want to fast-track God's purpose in our life because we receive a message from him. JTB received a message from God before he was born, but he had to wait.*



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In fact, with every saint in the Bible, including Jesus, God's assignment for them always came in the wilderness, then came a long period of time of waiting in the wilderness, and then came they got to walk in their purpose. *How are you waiting on God right now in obscurity? In the brokenness? In hardship? Are you waiting on God or trying to microwave his purpose for your life?*

*You see, we all want the dream but not the process. We all want the promised land but not Moses' ministry. But I tell you something? When we don't wait on God, usually our immaturity cashes checks that we can't pay for. Then stuff starts happening that God did not intend for you. And then we start to blame God, but our God is a God to be loved, not bullied by our demands. However, he does want us to have good things, but it has to be on his timing.*

*Can I share the good news with you all? Each of you has a specific assignment that God has for your life, and he has created you to do that for his glory. However, are you willing to wait in the wilderness until God tells you to move?*

*As an action step, I want to challenge you to pray for the Lord to teach you to love the preparation. But we have to keep moving forward, point two.*

**2. To fulfill His plan and your purpose, you need to learn the rhythm of demonstrating and declaring the Gospel in your everyday life.**

Verse 8-9 "8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world." The writer explains in the text what happens when we testify about Jesus in our everyday lives – light shines! That is what John did in his ministry. He walked around with *kingdom intentionally*.

As he waited to fulfill his purpose, he walked in his calling, that is, to make much of Jesus. In fact, John impacted many with the Gospel in his everyday rhythms of life in both word and deed.

But many of us hear a word from God, and then we remain stagnant in our obedience to him. But what we need to see is that purpose starts in simply **demonstrating and declaring the love of God and the word of God in our normal life.**

But the challenge for many of us is that we often live in the dichotomy of the sacred and secular. When it comes to walking in purposes, we think our lives do not matter if we are not doing churchy things or big kingdom things. *But that is not the truth!* You can be faithful in being a gospel witness where you live, work, and play.



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So, what this means is that maybe you are not on the street corner sharing the gospel every day, but it cannot cut corners at work. That is how we shine the Gospel. Maybe you're not going to India to serve overseas but can have your neighbor over for dinner. Perhaps you're disappointed you are not making disciples as you were in college, but you have children who need to form in the Gospel biblically.

*Do you see what I am getting here?* For those waiting on God, you do need to wait; however, how are you being faithful as a gospel witness in your everyday life? In fact, we have many opportunities at Mercy to help you: DMTs, Lydia Collection, and Mission of God to help you learn how to be intentional in your everyday lives.

We need to grapple with this reality. Because some of us are too attached to the purpose, *we forget God's plan in the normal ordinary things of life.*

So, my question is, would you be okay if you lived, breathed, preached Christ, and then be forgotten? Are you alright with your dream not coming to fruition before the Lord takes you home? Are we okay with God's vision to be fulfilled through someone else?

What if you are the planter but not the harvester? You see, some of us will experience great things. Some of us will be

experiencing the 30, 60, or 100-fold. But we must be faithful to preaching and living the message of the Gospel and allowing God to bring the increase. Okay, last point.

**3. To fulfill His plan and your purpose for your life, you have to know you are a child of God.**

Let's look at Verse 10-14 **10 He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, 13 who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God. 14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

We must remember that John, the writer is our MC. He transitions back in verse 10, talking about creation as the proof of Christ contrasted with humanity's blindness (light and life). All creation knows its purpose, but humanity does not. Jesus came and dwelled among them, but they could see him. Do you see it?

The Jews, God chosen people, believed that in order to find purpose in life, you must get it apart from God. You must earn



your way to God. They believe it is their ethnicity, heritage, effort, and will to know God V10 -13. But this writer is saying how you are saved by faith and for faith. Any other means of effort is meaningless.

John, the writer, tells them it takes receiving Christ, and how does one do that? Simply, you need to become a child of God. That was the point of John's baptist ministry. He told the Jews that it takes more than religious activity. It takes receiving and embracing Christ as Lord and Savior.

You see, Jesus Christ, who came as God, came to restore humanity into intimate fellowship with God. Jesus knew that we needed a relationship back with our Father to know our purpose and God's plan for us to fulfill his ultimate plan, which is to shine the glories of Christ all over the world.

So, he lived the life we would not live and died a brutal death because of sin and rebellion, and then he was raised three days later, defeating sin and death so we can be made back in the right relationship with God. Because of Christ, we can be a child of God if we receive him. For that that do not know God, you can know. You have identity and purpose with him, and he has a plan for you.

But for those who are a child of God, ya'll, we have a good Father who thinks the world of us in Christ. He is pleased with

us! But everyone one of us still believes we must do something more for him to like us. *And that is why so many of us struggle with our purpose because we fail to see how much he loves us.*

If you ever pay attention to a child, they always need constant reaffirming of their identity and purpose. But when a child knows how much they are loved, they are content with not trying to prove themselves to their daddy. When we lose sight of God and his love for us, we tend to find it all in the wrong places. And whether you're a believer or not, you are seeking affection and seeking love, and only God can give your purpose and identity. When you rest in his love, all other loves will never compare.

#### **CONCLUSION**

*I want to conclude here with a story about David and Svea Flood, the first missionaries to DR Congo over 100 years ago. During their first year, they didn't see a single convert. The village was resistant to the gospel. Their one achievement was to share the love of Jesus with a 5-year-old boy who delivered eggs to their back door every day. Shortly afterward, they have a baby, and the mother dies during birth because of malaria. David then soon buried his 27-year wife on the mountaintop of this village. Overwhelmed by grief and bitterness, he gave his daughter, Aina, up to the other couple, the Erickson, who was with him and his wife. David leaves the Congo and his faith.*



A few years passed, and the Erickson's were raising Aina, who is a toddler. All was well until they got poisoned by villagers and died within three days of each other. Aina was then given to another missionary couple, Arthur and Anna Berg. They immediately changed her name and eventually returned as a family back to America to pastor in South Dakota.

Years later, she married Dewey Hurst, who became a Bible college president. On their 25th wedding anniversary, the college gave the Hursts a special gift - a trip to Sweden. While in Sweden, she came across a magazine on the cover of her mother's tomb. She finds a translator and identifies the location of the tomb of her mother. And she finds out that her dad is still alive, so she then begins a quest to find him.

Meanwhile, they go to this missionary conference in London with 10,000 people. And one of the main speakers at the conference is from the region where Angie's parents had been missionaries half a century before. After the message, Aggie spoke to him through an interpreter and discovered that the man had grown up in the same village as she was born. She asked if he knew of missionaries by the name of Flood.

He said, "Yes...Every day...I would go to Svea Flood's back door with a basket of eggs, and she would tell me about Jesus. He

said, "I don't know if there was a single convert beside me." Shortly after I accepted Christ, Svea died, and her husband left. *"She left a baby girl named Aina, and I've always wondered what happened to her."* Then Aggie said, "I'm Aina," and they hugged like siblings that have been separated since birth.

Then the man told her that just a few months ago, he placed flowers on her mother's grave to thank her for 10 of thousands of believers in Zaire. *He told Aggie, "Thank you for letting your mother die so that many of us could live!"* Wow!! But the story gets better.

She then finds her father and goes to him and finds out he is not doing well. He is bitter and angry at God. Many told her not to, but she ignored them and went. As she went to the house, she told her father that God cared for her and that their ministry was not in vain. There are thousands of believers and schools because of them. He sobbed and then repented. And died two weeks later. ***Is your ministry worth it, even for one? David Flood did not know, JTB did not know, and you won't know your impact? But you can walk in calling and let God fulfill your purpose according to his plan. Let's pray.***

