
Sermon Notes

December 18, 2022

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

WHEN JESUS CAME

The Right Purpose

Galatians 4:4-5

Jesus' Purpose Statement

- ❖ Jesus came to earth for one purpose and one purpose only
 - *to redeem those who were under the law*
 - a rescue mission that culminates with Christ's death on the cross of Calvary
 - the purpose of the cross is to glorify God by buying back (redeeming) lost sinners from the realm of sin, death, and darkness
- ❖ In the ancient world, the idea of redemption was particularly associated with paying a price in order to release a slave from slavery

Elementary Principles

- ❖ All of us come into the world as slaves of sin
 - Galatians 4:3, *enslaved to the elementary principles of the world*
 - what are these *elementary principles*?
 - demonic spirits? stars? astrology?

- the basic things that form the foundation of all man-made religion?
- ❖ Paul connects the phrase *elementary principles* with the ceremonial rituals of human religion in Galatians 4:9
- ❖ In Colossians 2:8, Paul speaks of us being taken captive by philosophy, empty deceit, and human tradition according to the elemental spirits of the world
 - these are all opposed to Christ
 - the heart of much Jewish religion in the 1st century revolved around the system of rabbinic traditions that had been painted over and obscured OT truths
 - in the Gentile world of the 1st century, human philosophy and pagan religion overlapped and intersected with each other
- ❖ The human heart is susceptible to being enslaved by all sorts of man-centered, man-made system of works
- ❖ In Colossians 2:20, Paul connects the *elemental spirits of the world* with man-made regulations such as "*Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch*"
- ❖ Jesus comes to buy us back from our enslavement to all such worldly principles
 - example from the life of John Wesley (1703-1781)
 - how Wesley came to know the One who had redeemed him from the law

Calvary

- ❖ The death of Christ on Calvary's cross makes some people uncomfortable

- everyone loves “the baby”
- but not everyone loves the idea of a battered and bloody Savior hanging on a cross
- not everyone wants to admit that their sin is so horrendous that it requires the death of the infinite Son of God to atone for it
- ❖ There could never be any Easter joy apart from the wonder of Christmas
 - Christ is born of Mary for one purpose and one purpose only: to die on the cross
 - Philip Ryken: “Christianity is not a religion of stable and straw; it is a religion of thorns and nails, wood and blood...”
- ❖ Sin inevitably leads to death (Romans 6:23)
 - because of Jesus’ perfect obedience, He is uniquely qualified to redeem us from the law’s deadly curse
 - Christ made our doom His own
 - Jesus comes to earth in order to purchase the restoration of the unhindered, unbroken, undiminished relationship God originally designed men and women to enjoy with Him
- ❖ The story of the boy and his sailboat
 - a beautiful illustration of what God has done for us in Christ
 - we are all like the tiny toy sailboat
 - we have all been carried away from our Creator, by sin

- we all have a desperate need for someone to redeem us
- there is nothing we can do to redeem ourselves
- ❖ If you have been redeemed by Christ, rejoice, worship, marvel, give thanks, be astounded!
- ❖ If you stand apart from Christ, skeptical and separated, there is no better gift you can receive than the gift God has sent to you in Christ

Personal Application

1. Having noted Jesus’ single-minded purpose in life, how would you define and articulate the purpose you believe God has for your life?
2. What *elementary principles* of man-made religion may still be holding you down in slavery? What will you do in order to break the hold those have on you?
3. Are there any ways in which your life may have any similarities to the life of John Wesley in his pre-converted state? Does the account of Wesley’s coming to genuine, saving faith provide you with any motivation to follow his example?
4. If you are in Christ, review some of the things from which Christ has redeemed or bought you back from. Spend time during this season worshiping Him and thanking for His gift!