

Accepting Our Mission

Text : **I Cor. 12: 12-27**

INTRODUCTION :

A. December 26, 2004 one of the most devastating disasters in history occurred.

1. Earth Quake registering in excess of **9.1** occurred beneath the Indian Ocean
2. Triggered a series of tsunamis that affected to shorelines of 11 countries.
3. Indescribable devastation resulted killing at least **225** thousand people.

B. What could one person do in respond to such massive devastation ?

1. It is incomprehensible to the average person.
2. One's first impulse is to feel helpless.
3. To aswage one's desire to see the problem go away,
 - a. many send checks to someone else,
 - b. others find more proactive ways to resolve the issue.

C. Sam Shultz was one of those proactive people.

1. **Read the excerpts** from the story of Sam Shultz's relief efforts. (**appendix - A**)
2. Sam Shultz understood what it meant to be a man on a mission.

D. Every person in this audience has a mission in a world devastated by Satan.

1. I can't tell if you are fulfilling your mission.
 - a. Only you know if you are fulfilling it.
 - b. God knows the exact extent to which you are fulfilling it.
2. God is the one who personally assigned your specific mission.
 - a. You are not worthless. (**i.e., unless you choose to be so.**)
 - b. God created you for a purpose. (**Every child of God is a chosen vessel.**)
 - c. He prepared you to fulfill that purpose.
3. All Christians have some assignments in common, but also assignment unique to them.
 - a. The mission of Christ and His church is to present salvation to the lost.
 - b. Within that overall mission, each individual has unique assignments.

This lesson and the one to follow will deal with our acceptance of and mastery of what God wants us to do on this earth, in this place at this time.

I. In order for me to fulfill the mission God has for me, I must do some things.

A. God has a plan for me and for you and for every one of His children.

1. The scriptures were written to teach us about God's will for man.
 - a. **Rom. 15:4-** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction,
 - b. Every passage has meaning for our individual lives.
2. The stories of God calling men to serve Him teach us about His calling us to serve Him.
 - a. **Acts 13:36-** For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;
 - b. God has a purpose for people even before they are born. (**To God all time in now.**)
Gal. 1: 15-16 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, ...
3. God has a purpose for evil men as well as good men.
 - a. **Rom. 9:11-** for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,
 - b. **Rom. 9:17-** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."
4. God has a purpose for every single Christian ever called out of the world.
 - a. **II Tim. 1: 8-9** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,
 - b. God called us to be SANCTIFIED, i.e., to be set aside for His holy purposes.
I Thes. 4:7- For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.
 - c. God called us to proclaim His excellencies to the lost.
I Pet. 2:9- But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
 - d. God created Christians to do things for Him.
Eph. 2: 10- For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- e. Wise Christians seek the will of God so they can make the most of every opportunity to serve Him. (cf.- **Eph. 5:8,10**)
- 1) **Eph. 5: 15-17** Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
 - 2) **Col. 4:6-** Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

B. Some brethren make the mistake of thinking God's purpose ended with salvation.

1. Salvation is the beginning, not the end.
2. If God's purpose for you ended when you were baptized, why did He not take you then?
3. One author wrote : *"Salvation includes you, but it is not all about you. It is what God wants to do through you."*

C. God placed you in the church at this time and in this place because He has a use for you here and now.

1. **Did you every feel you should have been born 100 years sooner ? I did.**
2. God controls when and where people are born.
Acts 17: 26- He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,
3. As He did with Jeremiah, God decided when and where you would be born .. **BEFORE.**
 - a. **Jer. 1: 5-** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."
 - b. Before you were created in Christ Jesus, God had a plan for you in His church.
I Cor. 12: 18- But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
 - c. God has plans for you and He has plans for me in this time and in this place.

Thus, the first step in fulfilling God's purpose for you is to realize that God has some plans for your life right here right now.

- There are things I must accomplish for God on this planet, in this place.
- As a member of His body, Christ wants for me to do some things for Him.
- God's purpose for me involves more than just getting me into heaven.

**II. Secondly : In order to fulfill God's purpose for me
I must reclaim God's assignment. (Life keeps distracting us.)**

A. One of the examples God presented to us is the Apostle Paul.

1. **Acts. 13: 2-4** While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.
 - a. All Christians are God's called people. **Rom. 1: 6-7 , Heb. 3:1**
 - b. You are .. We are all called for a purpose. **I Pet. 2: 21**
 - c. That purpose includes proclaiming God to a lost world. **I Pet. 2: 9**
2. Paul, Christ and all other church leader in the N.T. church are examples to teach us.
 - a. Paul ... **I Cor. 11:1 , II Thes. 3: 7, 9**
 - b. Christ ... **I Pet. 2: 21**

B. God set each one in the church with a different assignment so all needs would be met.

1. **Remember ... I Cor. 12: 18 ...** God set each of us in the church for His purpose.
2. Some must water while others plant.

I Cor. 3: 5-9 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.
3. No matter who you are and regardless of your circumstances, if you are a Christian, part of your assignment is to share the good news to other people.
 - a. Young or Old
 - b. Educated or Illiterate
 - c. Bold or Shy

C. A college senior prepared a paper that was essential to his graduation.

1. When he turned it in the professor wrote :
 - a. Good research
 - b. Great Illustrations
 - c. Material was well presented, interesting and informative
 - d. Bibliography was impressive
 - e. Grade F ... **WRONG ASSIGNMENT !!**

2. It is a humorous story with a very poignant application :
3. No Christian wants to hear God say :
 - a. Great house
 - b. Nice car
 - c. Wonderful salary
 - d. Good financial planning ... secure retirement
 - e. Grade F ... WRONG ASSIGNMENT !!
4. No congregation wants to hear God say :
 - a. Great building location
 - b. Beautiful facilities ... well-kept
 - c. Dynamic programs
 - d. Good job always meeting your budget
 - e. Grade F ... WRONG ASSIGNMENT !!

D. Heaven is a wonderful place.

1. Being there will be fantastic experience.
2. We will see and experience many new and wonderful things.
3. One thing we will never see in Heaven ...
 - a. We'll never see another lost soul in Heaven.
 - b. That's why God urges us to take advantage of every opportunity now.
 - 1) **Col. 4:5-6**
 - 2) **John 9:4- We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.**
 - c. The time is coming when you'll no longer have opportunity to share the good news and none of us want to hear God say ... **"Wrong assignment !!"**

Thus, the second step in fulfilling God's purpose for you is to reclaim your assignment.

- **No matter how successful we are in this life, it is all for naught if we do not fulfill the assignment God has given to us. CORRECT ASSIGNMENT**

III. Finally : In order to fulfill God's purpose for me I must be responsible for following the course to which God has assigned me.

A. God has set the course that we must follow.

1. It's not within our realm of authority to determine what course we are to follow.
2. **Read ... Phil. 3: 17-21**

B. God designed Christianity to be a proactive lifestyle which follows a set pattern as we journey through the desert of sin en route to Heaven.

1. Too many Christians try to define themselves in the negative.
 - a. By the thing we don't do.

“I don't drink and I don't chew and I don't hang with those who do.”
 - b. By the things we don't believe in.
 - c. By the things we don't have in our church or in our worship.
2. WHAT ARE WE ? (**How are we different from those round about us ?**)
 - a. What are we about ? and Why ?
 - b. What is the message we have, the hope we extend ? WHY DO WE EXIST ?
3. Christians are different from the world. **We conform to God's pattern.**
 - a. Satan will put people in your way to try to lead you from the pattern.
 - b. The world will pressure you to conform. **When we do God looses, we loose.**
 - c. The lives of too many Christians are indistinguishable from their neighbors.

C. God has a plan for your life and it is up to you to find it and to accomplish it.

1. His plan for you may be completely unique. **You must seek out His plan.**
2. **ILL.- A nurse who worked in the ICU prayed for her patients.**
 - a. Sometimes they knew it and sometimes they did not.
 - b. Grumpy guy who was terminal ridiculed her for praying for him.
 - c. As his condition worsened she prayed fervently expecting him to die.
 - d. The next morning he was much improved, setting up, eating, etc.
 - e. Patient said, *“Well, it looks like you healed me.”*
Nurse replied, *“I didn't heal you God did. Now it's up to you to figure out why.”*
3. God saved you and now it's up to you to figure out how He expects you to serve Him.
 - a. He gave you new life.
 - b. He gave you a second chance **and it's not just for Heaven.**
 - c. He created you anew to serve Him, **to do some things for Him.**
4. Most people, including many Christians, spend their whole live serving worldly things.
 - a. **Mark 8: 36- For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?**
 - b. As Sam Shultz decided he was going to be of assistance during the tsunami, we Christians must make the decision to serve, not just sit waiting for it to happen.

5. Apply : If every one of your prayers were answered, what would be your condition ?
 - a. Nice house
 - b. Financial security
 - c. Good health
 - d. Blessing in abundance

*** What would be the value of any of these if you missed the very purpose for which God put you on this earth ?**

D. This same principle applies to congregations.

1. What is gained if we have :
 - a. Dynamic small group ministry
 - b. All programs flourishing
 - c. Beautiful facilities
 - d. Consistently exceeded the budget
2. What would be the benefit of all these if the congregation missed the very reason God called it into existence ?
3. We exist for a reason **and** that reason is determined by God.

Remember ... I Per. 2: 9

CONCLUSION :

A. Each individual Christian must take personal responsibility :

1. He must accept that God has a purpose for him.
2. No one else has the responsibility to find God's purpose for us. (**Elders, etc.**)
3. You alone know what God has invested in you.

*** God doesn't have a toolbox, just Christians, just you.**

B. Each of us must :

1. Realize God has a plan for me.
2. Reclaim the assignment has given me. (**accept it and do it.**)
3. Take personal responsibility for following the path God has set for me.

C. Apply and challenge

INVITATION :

Appendix A :**ONE MAN'S MISSION TO BRING RELIEF TO CUT-OFF VILLAGES**

By [Daniel B. Wood](#) | *Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor*

Just minutes after watching pictures of the tsunami, (*Sam*) Schultz got on the phone. First he called friends ("What should we do?"), then a local aid organization ("I'm ready if you need me").

Then he bought a plane ticket - along with his best friend, Lee - to Padang, a small town on the East coast of Sumatra.

Hundreds of miles of shoreline have been denuded; only a brownish brine is left. A coastal road has been scraped away, and palm trees and bridges clog beaches.

A "people person" who speaks fluent Indonesian, and self-professed "pushy guy who gets what I want, and I wanted to help," Schultz, along with his pal, began buying 6-1/2-gallon buckets. With a dozen volunteers from a hotel in Padang, they filled them one by one: tarpaulin, cooking pot, oil, soap, saw, axe. ("I know what people who have lost everything need," he says.) He and his partner ended up spending \$13,000 on tarpaulins, cooking pots, stoves, kerosene, and thousands of dolls.

While looking for a way to transport these kits to devastated areas, Schultz met two representatives from AUSAID, the Australian aid agency. Teaming up, the trio flew a quick reconnaissance mission north to Sibolga, looking for a place to bring in deliveries. No good: bad roads, inaccessible airport, no goods on the ground to buy. "This is unbelievable," says Mr. Schultz. "A month ago, this was a shoreline of thriving communities, boats, villages, and fishermen. Now ... nothing."

Next, Schultz tried to find local operators with a boat big enough to carry hundreds of tons of cargo but small enough to get into tiny, possibly damaged ports.

On his first voyage, Schultz took five colleagues from Bali, three doctors, three Indonesian nurses and two volunteers. They visited several small villages, taking a small dinghy ashore to locate and talk to local Indonesian military officials about casualties and to assess needs. The crew offloaded their buckets of tools and 40 tons of rice in Calang over three days.

(Sam) Schultz is a regular guy: husband, father of two, businessman, history buff. But the cargo on his boat ... tells the story of how the steely housing contractor, galvanized by the devastation on TV - transformed himself into a kind of archangel of aid.

His motivation for a month of flat-out, 20-hour days is simple, he says. He is inspired by his family's Quaker roots and his father's example of doing right by others. "The Quakers' real name is Society of Friends," he says, "and we treat everyone we deal with as if they are our friend. My friends are in trouble. That's it."

