

Fresh Start
Week 9: My Unique Mission

Are you in need of a fresh start? It's been a tough year and a half. You **blinked and everything changed**. You want to get back to normal, but then you remember that **normal wasn't all that great**. **When everyone is trying to get back to the way things are, you can get a fresh start**. Wipe off the **white board** and start from the most basic things that are true, foundational.

God is good and he is gracious and he wants a fresh start for you. **He is waiting for you to seek him**, to let go of what is holding you back; those **regrets and fears** that he is just waiting for you to slip up.

Then we need to get back to the basic questions for those who are trying to follow Jesus. **Who am I and why am I here?** This is what we **label your calling**. It is a combination of your own **be, do, and go**. Here's a diagram from... [Diagram page 214](#)

Here's the foundation for a fresh start. **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.** Ephesians 2:10 ESV

Also from **Ephesian 1:22-23** we know that we are the **fullness of Christ**, filling the cracks and crevices in society.

Here's the truth about you. **For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.** Psalm 139:13-16

Discover and embrace my unique identity (Be).

We talked about this two weeks ago. **Go back and listen to it**. Did you take the **opportunity to reflect with a friend about clues** you have discovered about your unique identity?

Sin and brokenness cover it up with fog, so we can't see it, or fill our heads with noise, so we can't hear it. The **Holy Spirit** can reveal it.

Write three descriptive words...Mine are "**think, assess and visualize.**"

So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. 2 Thessalonians 1:11

Paul is saying this to the people in the church in Thessalonica. He is not addressing elite, ordained, full time, professional Christians. He is talking to regular people.

What is his prayer, that they would live a life worthy of his call? Then he gets more specific. He asks God to give them the power necessary to accomplish those "good things" that he said God has prepared for them ahead of time. These good things not only has God prepared ahead of time, but we are prompted by our faith to do them.

What are you prompted to do by your faith?

It all begins with God calling people who he has designed for those good things. We talked two weeks ago in depth about our common mission; it is simple to have, take the fullness of Jesus wherever we go, and to make disciples as we go. Today we want to talk about how to...Discover and embrace my unique mission (Do).

We tend to romanticize this into one magic moment, like Moses crossing the red sea, Samson bringing down the temple on the heads of his enemies...

We think about a voice coming from the sky, this right now is what I put for you on earth. "My son I have blessed thee with a humor, good looks, even though you have little hair. Go forth and preach to the multitudes through a syndicated cable show, write that great how-to book on kayak fishing, and your kids will carry thee financially in your old age."

The existence of people will pivot on what you are going to do right now. You were born to cure cancer or covid, that's your unique special calling.

It's really not like that at all. That's how we can dodge this whole discussion. Just say, a calling isn't for me, it's for special people or professional Christians who do really spiritual stuff, like preaching sermons.

Let's bring this down to the real world, where we live. Discovering and embracing your unique mission is really...A sacred stewardship of opportunities right in front of me.

First of all, what is a steward? A steward is someone who cares for the owner's property. The bank is a steward of your money. They take care of

it, and if it gets into an interest bearing account, it will actually grow. A steward is someone who looks after **the guest on a plane or boat**.

Sacred means God is the owner and he wants you to take care of what is his. It's his money, it's his boat or airplane and it's his world and his people in it.

The opportunities that are right in front of me to love others like Jesus would, to help them find peace and purpose in a relationship with God, to meet their basic needs when I can, are all a sacred stewardship. In other words, **your presence as God has uniquely designed you is powerful.**

It goes back to those good works that God has prepared ahead of time, that I will walk into. That's something God specifically designed me for, **they are a gift in which I can bless others and find a sense of purpose.** When I am doing what God has prepared for and designed for me to do, **there is a sense of effortlessness.** It's the perfect match.

When Tammy is talking to someone about finding a place to serve, it seems effortless to me. **When Tammy Scully is talking to someone at Cultivate,** it seems effortless. **When Matt is teaching,** it seems effortless. **When Pastor Julie notices something that the rest of us can't see,** it is effortless...

But this comes in ordinary packages of regular life.

"My secondary or unique calling is less about the perfect match of some fairy-tale journey and more about my bias to act in faith and obedience (Let's just stop right there) to play my unique roles in carrying the fullness of Jesus to a lost and dying world. My unique mission is about faithfulness in expressing the fullness of Jesus as I look for the opportunity to serve others today." 165

Remember, Jesus came to serve and not be served. Am I looking for those sacred opportunities?

Mark Naffie sees his teaching as a sacred stewardship of opportunities to serve and bless kids that are in his class and then pass through.

The people who serve at Cultivate see those opportunities with people who come into the shop hurting and needing someone to listen. We have a sacred stewardship of the opportunities that we have to meet people through Cultivate. We are going to be looking for 25 families or individuals who are willing to give **\$50 per month.** We will be making this more public later.

Again, it's the regular things that we pass by, looking for something shiny. Being a good steward or caretaker of what God is giving us on a daily basis. **So let's continue to keep it simple** by saying it to discover and embrace your unique mission is about...**Being ready when needed.**

This verse is so simple that it's easy to read right over.

So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: "As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. Mark 14:13

That man had to say yes to carrying a pitcher of water and looking for someone who needed to be led to where God needed him to go. He is the one who led them to the place where Jesus would hold the Passover meal with his disciples.

Does someone need something that you can provide? That's the way we embrace our unique calling. There are things that you can do that aren't always super special, but if you need it, then it is special. Example...

If you are retired, older, a little grey hair, you've seen a lot and you aren't as easily put on edge. You are steady and easy to approach. Kids need your time. Their parents need your time. If you are a grandma, you can fill a need for a kid.

To discover and embrace your unique mission also means...**Being strategic with our unique gifts and abilities.**

In the midst of being a steward of the everyday and being ready when needed, we also must put our gifts into play.

How does this work in my life? I need to make space to think and assess. I need to **prepare sermons and teaching** with that in mind. That is **why I teach in series**, because it works better with my skills.

Why do I work at Burger King or places like that? Because I can still think, but **I'm not locked away from the world** and I can use my **ability to speak into people's lives** and serve them.

This one is super important, because it **doesn't have to do with making any huge change** in your life. To discover and embrace your unique mission, you must...**Rethink work.**

It starts with confronting one of the **biggest lies that Satan uses to try to make us ineffective** for the Kingdom. He tries to tell us that there is a **small list of spiritual things** that God is really interested in. The rest of

what we do is **secular** and just because we are **stuck in this messed up world**.

"Most of our teens go off to college without understanding their unique identity, passions, burdens and gifts. We spend lots of money to equip them for a life of 'doing.' But in an ill-fitting career path, they may become disillusioned and frustrated by a lack of joy and fulfillment. When they should be hitting their stride, many of them experience a midlife crisis, wondering if what they've been doing is really what they were meant to do. They live with a nagging discontent that keeps them from experiencing the abundant life Jesus says is available. The 'rut' is deep and firmly established, so they begin dreaming of a more hopeful future in retirement. Work becomes a necessary evil to be tolerated rather than a sacred mission field to bless others and live out our calling."

I'm going to run quickly through some key verses, each followed with the question, **"do I really believe this is true?"**

The thief comes only to **steal and kill and destroy**; I have come that they may have life, and **have it to the full**. John 10:7-10 NIV
Do you believe this?

For we are his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10 ESV
Do you believe this?

¹⁹ "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:19-20

Do you believe this too?

If all of this is true, then your work cannot simply be a way to make a living, achieve something you want, or be able to have things you want or think you deserve.

Why would God put his presence, his holy spirit in you and then place you in a job **40 hours a week** that is only for making a living?

Discovering and embracing your unique mission is about asking the question...**Specialist or generalist?**

Your unique calling is not only one main cause for your whole life, but it is often a series of good deeds or works that are loosely connected to one another.

When we think of calling, we usually think of the specialist. We think of Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, Moses, David, Martin Luther King who did one thing.

But on the other hand, there are people like Jonah, Nehemiah, Noah, Lydia. **Do you think God was done with Jonah, him preaching repentance to Nineveh?** Or **Nehemiah** after he built the wall around Jerusalem? Or after **Noah** built the ark? Or, after **Lydia** housed Paul? **No, I think God probably had them use the gifts and abilities they displayed** after preaching repentance in Nineveh, Nehemiah building a wall or mobilizing the people, Jonah building an ark and organizing all those animals, and Lydia using her home for God's glory.

We so often make this more complicated than it needs to be, since most of us are generalists. **Three questions** can help you hone in on your general mission.

What are my natural talents and abilities?

What am I most passionate about? Another way to say this is what gives you energy?

What am I most burdened by?

Robin has recently changed, because she wanted to work with clients, not develop programs, write grants and oversee others who get to be with clients.

Ted...

- In thousands of buildings around lots of people
- Has helped build countless homes and remodel a school where poor kids get Jesus and a superior education then the public school.
- People see his desire to serve them by doing it right, not just quickly or cheaply.

¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father... ²³ Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. How would that change how we operate and the attitude we have at work? ²⁴ Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. Colossians 3:17 & 23-24

No matter who your boss, supervisor or overseer is. Your master is Jesus and he is the one you are to please. How do you please him? Not by earning

it, but rather by allowing him to work through you by being a good caretaker, and being ready to serve.

Steps to a Fresh Start:

1. Meet with Tammy.

I'm going to keep saying this each week because some of us need me to keep saying it, because you are resisting.

Director of mobilization...

2. Reflect with someone upon 3 questions

- ✓ What are my natural talents and abilities?
- ✓ What am I most passionate about?
- ✓ What am I most burdened by?

I didn't write this one in, but I'm adding it. **Come visit Cultivate** at the mall and pray. (Our regular hours are...) Then ask when you can come and volunteer. **We used to be able to take the cart around** and give coffee to the shop workers, but since we have been thin because of COVID we can't do that. Dietrich and I are going to start doing it on Wednesdays.