

Are We There Yet? Matthew 11:2-6
Series: Find Your Purpose with GPS Week 6

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Have you ever gone on a road trip with children? If so, then you are familiar with those dreaded 4 words: “are we there yet?” Maybe you used to pester your own parents with this question. In 2002 Burger King had “The Simpsons” themed toys in their kids’ meals. I once got a kids meal with a watch. And when you pressed the button, Bart and Lisa Simpson would ask in unison, “are we there yet?” Homer Simpson would angrily reply “NO.” This sequence repeated twice with every press of the button. I’m sure my parents were happy when the batteries ran out! I wonder what actually happened to the watch...?

Truth is; we still ask this question when we grow up- “Have we reached our destination; our calling?” -Especially as we come to our final week of our current sermon series: GPS. For the last 5 weeks we’ve been seeking out our purpose by discovering our own personal navigational system. Our GPS looks at our Gifts, Passions, and Story. It was given to us by God, exemplified by Jesus, and navigated by Holy Spirit. God designed one for each of us. Using our GPS allows us to impact the world in our unique way.

So are we there yet? The answer is, no. We are NOT there yet. We’re just starting! When it comes to finding your purpose you may feel you haven’t found it yet. That’s ok! This journey starts by taking the GPS assessment. If you’ve not taken this assessment yet, you still can! Take a picture of the QR code on the screen and do it later!

But even after you go through the assessment; there’s still more to the journey! Don’t let this treasure God is revealing in you go to waste. There is joy to be found in using your GPS along the way - not just in reaching the destination. As long as you’re alive, God wants to grow you and use you! He wants to unleash your gifts, passions, and story out into the world to bring His impact to the darkest places! So let’s keep going.

Even people with a clear sense of God’s calling face disruptions along the way. This week we’re going to look at a man in the Bible whose life’s impact includes such a disruption. A man Old Testament prophets spoke of. Whose purpose is revealed to his parents before his birth. His name is John the Baptist. He was called to be the prophet preparing the way for Jesus’ arrival. In Matthew Chapter 3, we find John baptizing people and proclaiming, *“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* v. 11.

John knows that Jesus is the Messiah, who came to redeem the world. Continuing in Matthew Chapter 3 we see the beautiful story of Jesus coming to John in the Jordan River. This is the peak of John’s life and ministry. He recognizes Jesus and falls at His feet in reverence and honor. John lives his life perfectly following his calling. He’s rewarded by getting to baptize Jesus, the Messiah. Messiah means “anointed one.” John is blessed with the honor of anointing the anointed one!

Yet this is not the end of John’s story. Let’s check on John only a few years later. From this pinnacle moment of his life he descends to the lowest point - in jail. After baptizing Jesus, John continued preaching and pointing people back to God. Prophets often tell you the truth you

don't want to hear. One person who didn't want to hear the truth was Herod Antipas. Herod threw John in jail after John tried to correct his behavior. From prison, John started to doubt if Jesus was the true Messiah. *"Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"* Matthew 11:2-3

Even as one of the greatest prophets for Jesus, John forgot his true purpose while sitting in jail. Was Jesus really the one? God's chosen? He needed to hear a confirmation in order to drown out the doubt.

Doubt and other obstacles can stop us from living out God's calling to its fullest. What's getting in YOUR way? Are you asking why should I do this? Are your gifts not what you thought they'd be? Let's take a look at some common signal jammers for our soul's GPS.

Jammer #1: Busyness - It seems most people are functioning these days in survival mode due to our packed schedules. It's becoming harder to plan for things we actually want to do. Being busy is the new normal. We need to figure out how to become less busy so it doesn't become a jammer for us when it comes to living out our purpose. What if John was too busy to go to the Jordan River the day he baptized Jesus? He would have missed a big part of his calling! How many of you feel too busy? You feel you already have several callings and can't do another one? God has a purpose for you. Are you willing to reassess your schedules? To replace those activities that don't fit your calling with ones that make the impact you were designed to make?

Jammer #2: Fear and perceived limitations - What if John stopped preaching and pointing people back to God for fear he might get arrested? If he played it safe and didn't trust his call, would people's hearts have been prepared for Jesus? We'll never know because fortunately, John DID follow through. Even with the possibility of being arrested! John didn't allow fear to stand in his way.

We've experienced plenty of fear and limitations since March of 2020. This doesn't mean that we can't make an impact. For example, taking time each day to intentionally pray is one of the greatest impacts we can have on the world! We can pray anywhere at any time. Sign up on the Connection Card to receive the Woodside prayer chain and you can be making an impact from wherever you are. Maybe you are limiting yourself because you think you already know your calling so you dismiss other opportunities presented to you. God isn't a "one gift and done" God. As His masterpieces, He is constantly molding and changing us regardless of our age. He's calling us into new things so don't close yourself off to God's plan. Ask God to bring you out of limitations and fear and into the purpose He has for you.

Jammer #3: False Expectations - John was expecting the Messiah to come and take down the Romans to restore the Kingdom of Israel. They'd be free from Roman rule once and for all! That was John's expectation, but NOT Jesus's plan. Jesus' picture of His Kingdom was very different. John's false expectation led to his doubt of Jesus.

Do we have misguided expectations? Are you frustrated because you expect to be able to understand how God is working, but then find that the world seems crazy and out of control? We won't always understand why things happen; however, God allows things to happen with intentions we cannot always see.

Maybe the assessment indicated a gift or an influencing style we don't understand or agree with? So we're disappointed and don't engage with them. Instead of refusing to use them, ask God to show you how to use them. God gives every gift and passion with intention and has designed you to use them with a specific influencing style. It's okay to not understand it, but don't let it go to waste because it's not what you pictured. Ask God to help you see HIS expectations for your life. Talk with a trusted friend or mentor, sometimes they can see things in us that we can't see in ourselves. Don't fall into the pit of false expectations!

Let's jump back into our story and see how Jesus responded to John's disciples: *"And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.'"* Matthew 11:4-6

Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of what the Messiah came to do. By sending these examples back to John, John would know Jesus was the Messiah and that His work continued on even as John was imprisoned. The blind could see, deaf could hear, lame could walk, lepers were healed, dead were raised, and the Good News was being preached to the poor! John's obedience led to ALL of that happening.

John did find his purpose and put his whole life into it. He prepared the world to receive its Savior. We've heard John's story, now what about yours? Where do we go from here? What's going to be your impact moving forward?

Woodside is here for whatever you think your next step is. We want to help you uncover where God's calling you. We're not trying to fit you into one of our "Woodside shaped holes." Yes, there are ways to serve here, but there's also a whole world out there; beyond this Woodside Community. Here are 3 next steps for you to take.

1. **Get your GPS Assessment Results** - Complete your assessment by logging in. Now's the perfect time for you to fill out your Story section of the assessment if you haven't yet. There are 6 fill in the blank reflection questions for you to fill in. Don't feel like you need to fill up the entire box. Even if you only write one sentence, we'd love to hear your stories of how you've seen God working throughout your life!
2. **Share your results and talk it out loud with someone.** Here are 3 ways to do that: Talk with your GG Leader, a Staff Member, or Linda Marr. We want to help uncover the treasure God has placed in you! God's blessed our congregation with all of you, every single one of you is important. We'd love to remind you of that by going through your assessment with you.
3. **Hit GO on your GPS and start living your purpose!** The time is now to try things! Check out the handout for other ways you can GO and get involved. We even have a few opportunities at Woodside coming up in the next month and a half! The "Rise Against Hunger" meal packing event is next Sunday, November 7th at 11am. Click the link on our website under "SERVE" to sign up or check it off on the Connection Card. There are jobs for all ages and abilities! Join us on Wednesday, December 1st for a benefit Christmas Concert, with Paul Baloche, Dave Pettigrew and Stephanie Joy to support

children in Zambia. You can purchase your tickets in the lobby starting today and sign up to help.

Let's take a look at a story from one of our families; The Staffords, how God brought them together and is making an impact on the world through them.

VIDEO 4:12

The Staffords are in the early stages of seeing their IMPACT on the world, all because of their obedience in following God's purpose for their lives!

Every day you wake up, God has a PURPOSE for you! He's shown us the tools to live how He wants us to, so now we obey. The authors of the book "Find Your Place," sum up this journey in a great way. *"Like most people, you've got a lot going on. You'll be tempted to just keep driving. Or settle for whatever directions you can figure out on your own. But if you do, you'll miss the road Jesus has **for you** that will take you to personal calling. If you miss that road, you'll miss the purpose you were created for. You'll never find your place."* page 185-186. We have our coordinates in our Gifts, Passions, and Story. Now hit the start button on our GPS! What are you waiting for? Let's continue this journey to unlock our calling and unleash our impact because we're NOT there yet!