

**“Find Your Missing Masterpiece”
Ephesians 2:1-10**

Series: G.P.S. Week 1

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Ten years ago Lisa and I went on an amazing trip to Italy. To get around we rented a Fiat 500 which is the size of a roller skate. Its engine is a sewing machine. That’s fine if you’re driving the flatlands of Ohio but not when you’re scaling Italian mountains. For directions we had an old school Garmin GPS which required a special chip for Italian roads. Once I inserted the chip it gave directions with an Italian accent...and a little bit of an attitude. We called her Carmen the Garmin. When I made a wrong turn she said, “Ricalcolare” with a sigh and some hand gestures. After a while I think Carmen the Garmin got so frustrated she decided to take us for a ride. She’d make me go three times round the roundabouts and lead me on roads as tangled as linguini. At one point Carmen told me to go up a steep narrow city street barely one Fiat wide. I could not see the top so I had no idea if any cars were coming. It was a one way road – and she wanted me to go the wrong way. “This can’t be right,” I told Lisa. “Let’s try another way,” Lisa said. Yet every time Carmen ricalcolated she brought us back to that road. “There’s no other choice,” I told my wife. “Hold on to your lasagna, I’m going to gun it.” So I put the pedal to the metal and that sewing machine engine sputtered, coughed and wheezed. When we made it to the top we breathed a sigh of relief. And then I heard a strange sound – it was Carmen the Garmin laughing.

Do you feel like life has been taking you for ride? Do the last twenty months, maybe the last twenty years, make you wonder “What’s next?” “What’s the point?” “Why on earth am I here?” “What’s my purpose?” Today we begin our new series GPS – Find Your Purpose. Instead of letting the world ricalcolare your life, we want to help you tune into a soul-deep GPS system based on God’s Word and powered by God’s Spirit. The Lord created you for a unique purpose. Unfortunately, many live their lives completely unaware of their God-given purpose. By the time you reach your 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s, you’ve accomplished most of the goals our culture tells you to do – you completed your education, married, had children, and settled into a career. Then, after several years, the questions start to set in. Is this why I’m here? Is this the purpose of my life? Is this all there is? No, you conclude, there has to be more than this. And so you go buy a sports car ... preferably red...probably not a fiat... or you change jobs ... or you change spouses. The trouble with those decisions is that they don’t deal with the heart of the issue.

Your heart and your whole being are shaped and molded by the Lord for a purpose. It is your calling. God’s calling for you may not be the way you make your living. It may not be the easiest thing you do. It probably won’t give you a sudden rush of pleasure or instant gratification. It will not cause your ego to swell up with pride or fill up your accounts with assets. But when you find your calling, you’ll know it. You will feel like a puzzle piece that finally fits in, the voice that blends in beautiful harmony with the choir, the athlete who is in the zone. Your life will make sense and you will say, “This is what I was made for.”

Now is the perfect time to pause and seek your calling since many of us are at a crossroads. Whether you’re a high school or college student wondering what you want to be when you grow up or an adult at any stage of life wondering what you want to be when you grow up – this journey will help you tune into your unique God-given purpose for this time and place.

How do you find your calling? Before you discover what to do, you need to know who you are. You are God's masterpiece. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul calls us God's *poiema* which can be translated as handiwork, workmanship, work of art and masterpiece.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 New Living Translation

You are a glorious creation from the Master Artist. You and I are not an accident of nature. Each of us is designed, sculpted and shaped by the Lord on purpose, for a purpose. David praises God by saying,

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous ... You were there while I was being formed ... You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Psalm 139:14-16 Living Bible.

Trouble is: most of us don't know or feel like a masterpiece. That's because the glorious stuff is hidden on the inside.

They called it the "Giant" – a massive block of marble lying on its side. It lay there in the courtyard exposed to the elements for 26 years. Finally a 26 year old sculptor was commissioned to shape it. He labored on it for two years, sweating over it in the sweltering heat, shivering in the biting cold of winter He was a man on a mission. What emerged is an undisputed masterpiece. From that neglected block of marble, Michelangelo created the David. Lisa and I saw the David on our trip to Italy and it is truly a masterpiece.

Now if Michelangelo worked this passionately on the David, how much more passionately must God be working on you? You are God's workmanship. He won't rest until you are everything he envisioned you to be. When someone asked Michelangelo how he created such beautiful, lifelike sculptures from cold stone, he replied, he simply chipped away from the block of marble anything that did not look like David. In essence, he freed the hidden masterpiece within.

There is a masterpiece hidden in you. We want to help you free it. For the next six weeks we'll take a journey to find your masterpiece mission using a spiritual GPS. Just as your phone's GPS sends multiple signals to connect your location with your destination, we will explore three parts of your personality – your Gifts, Passions and Story. Each of these three is sending you a different signal. The Spirit of God uses these three to tell you where you are now and where you are called to be. The best way to tune into your spiritual GPS is in a community of trusted traveling companions. This is why we recommend hearing the messages on Sunday and then taking this journey with a Growth Group during the week.

Each Sunday we'll look at one of the three dimensions of GPS. We begin with **Gifts**. Scripture tells us God blesses each one of us with gifts – natural gifts which are common to all people and spiritual gifts which are given to those who follow Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus works through both our natural and spiritual gifts to build up the Church and advance His mission in the world. Most churches stop here, yet we'll go further.

Next we'll uncover your **Passions**. There are causes which touch your heart – the environment, poverty, evangelism, mental health, education, homelessness, recovery. There are

groups of people which tug at your heart – children, youth, adults, refugees, unbelievers, special needs. There are leadership styles which track with your heart – you may be a pioneer who loves to launch new missions or an organizer who likes to get stuff established with solid roots. Some churches stop with Gifts and Passion yet we'll go further.

Next we'll review your **Story**. God is the author of your life story. He uses both your troubles and triumphs, both your moments of blessing and the brokenness to mold and shape you for His purpose. Most of us do not learn from our past because we never pause to reflect on and review our story. Football teams carefully review the highlight reel of last week's game in order to build on what went right and learn from what went wrong.

How can you tune into your unique GPS? We'll begin with a special assessment which is free and available to everyone at Woodside. Here is the link to the assessment. It will ask you to create a username and password and then lead you to a questionnaire. Now don't be overwhelmed by the number of questions – 166. We'll take this in easy to manage bite size pieces. Gifts will be covered in Questions 1-77, Passions in Questions 78-159, and Story in Questions 160-166. The first two parts, Gifts and Passions, are multiple choice and should take only about 30 minutes. Story are essay questions which ask you to think and reflect. This will take you longer and we'll save it for later.

If you think that's a lot of questions or that 30 minutes is too long let me ask you this: how many of you have watched a football or baseball game in the last month? How many of you have watched a movie in the last week or binged on TV shows? Those take 1.5 to 4 hours to watch and they will not change your life one bit. I'm offering you the opportunity to discover what gifts, passions and story God has placed in you and how He wants to use these three in your unique God-given calling. This investment of 30 to 60 minutes can literally change your life.

St. Augustine said,

Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.

On that trip to Italy, Lisa and I glimpsed majestic Alpine mountains, crashing waves on Mediterranean coastlines, sun-drenched Tuscan fields. Yet St. Augustine says we miss the greatest wonder in God's creation – the masterpiece He placed inside you. If you take this assessment and then discuss it with your Growth Group or a GPS coach you will uncover a masterpiece that will make Michelangelo's David look like Gumby. Who will we look more like?

God will mold you to match His model: JESUS. And Jesus, the model, said,

Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28

Some believe that they are called to amass wealth, to build a career, to gather possessions, to become famous, to take charge. Some think that they are called to have their own needs and desires satisfied. If you want to find your calling, the first thing to learn is you are called to serve others. That starts in the Church. Your GPS will reveal ways you are called to serve God's people, to build

up the Body of Christ, to care for one another in the family of God. Yet here is the crucial mistake – it's can't stop here. Jesus wants us to use our GPS to bless the world.

When Michelangelo completed the David in 1504, there was a great debate about where it should stand. The final decision was to put it in the central public square where everyone could see it. There it stood for 369 years until 1873 when authorities decided to move it indoors to a museum where it stands to this day. That's wise for a statue made of marble that wears away in the storms. Yet God's masterpiece – the Church of Jesus, the people of God – must not stay inside a museum. God is calling us to go and be His masterpiece in the world – telling the Good News, opening eyes, feeding hungry stomachs, helping the fallen to get back on their feet and setting every kind of prisoner free.

Now more than ever we are all at a crossroads, a ricalcolare moment. As tough as these last twenty months have been, maybe they are also your opportunity to discover what God has placed inside you so He can bless those outside in the world. To do that, you have to tune into your GPS. Here's how:

1. Take the GPS Assessment – Just do the first 77 questions on Gifts.
2. Join a Growth Group discussing GPS.
3. Pick up a copy of the book Find Your Place for a donation. You can go deeper into the background of GPS.

Sue Harris Miller worked 18 years in banking starting from the entry level position of a teller and eventually reaching sales. Her organizational skills, compassion, positive attitude and ability to meet people's needs served well in this field. Yet there was a continual tug on her heart that she was made for something more. For a time she ignored that nudge but it wouldn't go away. Eventually, through prayer and conversations with her spouse Harry she left the banking world and accepted two positions: one as an administrator for a local Physical Therapist and the other as the Director of Mission and Evangelism at Woodside. Now Sue organizes and sends forth teams of Woodside servants who build homes with Habitat, stock food pantries, make lunches for hungry frontline heroes in the battle against Covid, house and feed homeless neighbors through Code Blue and Family Promise and this fall she is laying the groundwork for another Rise Against Hunger Event in which we'll pack meals for thousands. Sue found her calling and now she is helping all of you find yours.

Let's start the GPS journey. It's time to ricalcolare.