

## MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTION

Series: Repurposed Pt. 3

John 11:17-44

Wendell Anderson, Director of Spiritual Maturity

Weekend 04.30-05.01.11

How about that! How about that! You know the enemy, Satan, lies to us. He tells us those things that we saw in that video but the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, the risen Savior that we celebrated the resurrection of last week. He is the One that tells us that his love for us endures forever...that he has plans for us, plans to prosper us, plans to give us a hope and a future. He has given us that brand-new beginning that we are new creations; that all things have become new. He says that we do not look back at that past that Satan tries to remind us of but we look forward...we look forward.

Well, this is week three of our Repurpose series. We are certainly very excited that you are here. This is just a great celebration weekend and we are going to explore this week, in the third week of this series, how to live a repurposed life...how we can rejoice as we live out a repurposed life and how we can live this repurposed life that brings glory to God. Well, last week, in Part 2 on Easter weekend, Pastor Tim taught us that we learned that Jesus gives us this brand-new life, that we are forgiven, that Jesus gives us a new future, that we have eternal life and that he also gives us a new right now...right now. We talked about, and Pastor Tim explored the verse from Ephesians 2:10 that says, "We are created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do." And then we had the opportunity to collectively together to participate in this offering. The first time in the history, the fifteen-year history of Crossroads, that we passed the baskets. Most of us that were participating were pretty confused; we didn't know how to pass baskets since we had never done that in this church. And yet we passed the baskets so that collectively we could make this investment in this orphanage in Cambodia. Now I know that everyone is anxious to hear the results of our first offering. Are you anxious to hear? Well, you are going to have to wait just a few minutes. Pastor Tim is going to come and bring us the results of that in a few minutes. But you do want to hear don't you? Yes, you do. Yes you really do. Well, you know, we are anxious to share that with you and we are going to do that in just a few minutes.

You know, this last weekend, we tallied up the offerings and then there were some gifts that came in through the week as well from people who were unable to be with us in worship on the weekend. We were just really shocked. You know, three things came to my mind as I was seeing what was happening. One was just the extensive participation by literally thousands of people that were here worshiping together that were participating in joining in what God was doing. The second thing was the extensive, prayerful, sacrificial giving by so many. I mean it was obvious that this was not incidental giving by most people—this was very thoughtful, prayerful and sacrificial giving. And then the third thing was that those of us that are regular attendees that, in fact, you met the church's regular weekly budget needs as well. And obviously we are very thankful for that—that you did not forget that responsibility as well.

We are going to hear from Pastor Tim in a few minutes with the results of that but as we have been working through this past two weeks and in the third week here of Repurpose series, we have learned that this Repurpose is a new term. It means the use of something for a purpose other than its original intended use—that when an item or person is repurposed, it can be done by modifying to fit it into a new use or by taking that item or purpose and using them in a brand new way. And as Christ-followers, we have been repurposed in that we have changed from serving darkness to serving Christ Jesus.

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Well, two weeks ago, we met Savorn, the Cambodia country director for Asia's Hope and John McCollum, Asia's Hope Executive Director. And both men if you perceived or were here and listened to their story, they were involved in what they were doing at the time and God intervened and interrupted their plans and repurposed them to do something completely different. And we find that happening throughout scripture as well where people were living their lives and God took ordinary people, like you and I, and intervened in their life and interrupted their plans and used them for something brand new. Think of Noah. Here's Noah, a farmer that was busy raising his family, and all of sudden, God says, stop and build an ark—build an ark out of gopher wood...whatever gopher wood is but that is what he was told to do. And then there was Abram. He was some seventy-five years old, a shepherd, who was busy again taking care of living his life and he found himself repurposed. God came to him in Genesis 12 and said: The Lord said to Abram, leave your country and your people and your father's household and go to a land that I will show you. Abram was repurposed and told to go some place and he did not know even where he was going to go. I find that interesting. We will look another statement very similar to that in a moment. But he was told that he was going to be repurposed by God. He says: Go a land that I will show you. So sometimes we take that step and then God unfolds to us as we proceed what the next step is. In fact, in most cases, that is what the situation is.

What about Joseph in the Old Testament as well? Here is a young man who has these dreams of greatness only to find himself thrown into a pit and sold to slavery. His dreams of greatness turned into a radical repurposing. And, of course, if we have read through that story in the book of Genesis of Joseph's life, we find that he had these ups and downs, and ups and downs, that he was repurposed again and again throughout his life.

Then we turn to the New Testament and we find that as Jesus is walking through picks twelve men to come along beside him. And they were busy doing their occupations, their vocations. They were fisherman and what have you. And the Lord says, "Come, follow me", and changed what they were doing.

Well, turn with me to the book of Acts, chapter 9 and we are going to look at another individual, Paul, who was known as Saul. As we start this story, he was repurposed as well, perhaps one of the most radical repurposing that we find. It is on page 917 in the Bibles that are provided for you in the chair backs. In Chapter 9, verse 1, "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest"... Again, here is Saul and he was a very devoted Jewish leader that was trying to work within the Jewish system and was fighting against the Christians—the new Christians, the new movement that was happening at this time. In fact, in Chapter 7, we see where he was a part of and witnessed the stoning of Stephen, where Stephen was stoned to death. In fact, in Acts 8:1, it says, "And Saul approved of his execution." So Saul was a part of the execution of Stephen. So then we pick up his story here in Chapter 9, verse 1, "But Saul still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any that were belong to the Way"...these would be Christ-followers..."if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, that he might bring them bound back to Jerusalem." Now

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as he went on his way, he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him.” So he was all about his job and he heard this voice and this light flash and he was knocked flat on the ground...just like that. He was repurposed in a very significant quick way and there was no question that things, in fact, were changing. “And his voice said to him, “Saul, Saul, why are persecuting me?” And he said to him, “Who are you Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” And then verse 6, “But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” Now here is Saul just as he is being converted, similar to Abram being told: Rise up and go to the city and I will tell you what to do next. Again, so often as we are repurposed, as God redirects our life, as He gives us directions for the next step in our lives, we do not know what that next step is. He just says go and I will tell you when you get there what the next step might be.

Well, turn with me to Philippians 3 and we will see what Paul can teach us about how to live a repurposed life. From Philippians 3, beginning in verse 12. Now the book of Philippians, this is the letter that Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, this letter was written some forty, fifty years after Saul’s conversion, after Saul was converted to Paul and he received his new name. After this conversion and he had lived his new life...his repurposed life...helping to start the church throughout Asia Minor. He was obviously instrumental in starting the church. And after forty or fifty years of living for the Lord, being just a wonderful leader in the church, this is what he writes to the church in Philippi. I will read verses 12-16 and then we will come back and we will look at them each individually. It says, “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.”

So let us look at these verses just one at time and see some of the items that we can learn about how to live a repurposed life. In the first part of verse 12, we can see living a repurposed life requires proper awareness. 12a, the first part of verse 12, says, “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect...” Now as a Christ follower, Paul was already positionally perfect. He was in right relationship with Christ; there was nothing he could do to improve his relationship with Christ. Paul understood this; he understood what John had written in John’s letter that said, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and has crossed over from death to life.” Paul was a new creation in Christ Jesus and nothing could be done to improve his positional perfection. And as Christ followers, so are we. Our relationship with Christ and our citizenship in heaven is eternally fixed. It’s eternally secure. But right now at the same that we are positionally perfect, we are practically imperfect. We realize that we are not what we should be and that we are not what we someday, in fact, will be. And it is our awareness of this shortcoming that presents this tension internal that we have that drives us to grow and develop and mature spiritually. Paul had that awareness. He expressed it as he began this verse. He says, “Not that I have already obtained...” He had not yet attained the prize that he pursued. He had not yet become perfect or perfect means that he had not yet become complete...had not yet reached the goal that he was striving

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after. Pursuing spiritual maturity begins with this internal dissatisfaction with our current situation. We realize that, in fact, we need to live out our life to become more and more like Christ each and every day. As we strive to live a repurposed life and develop this awareness of this tension, we just embrace our need to grow spiritually. And as we take steps, as we each grow spiritually, as the Lord leads each of us on our own journey and we grow spiritually and become more Christ-like, we find that our lives, in fact, do bring glory to God—that we glorify God, that we find joy in our own life, that we make God visible to those around us and that we bear fruit.

The second part of verse 12, we find that living a repurposed life requires a maximum effort. Paul writes, "...but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." You know, as Christ followers, we will not pursue the prize of spiritual perfection until we recognize our need to improve our condition. But the awareness of the need is not enough. We must also be in diligent pursuit or maximum effort. Now throughout Paul's writings including right here, he uses a lot of illustrations from athletics and athletic competition as well. And he uses this term, "I press on" as a runner would run after, follow after as well. And he speaks of this energetic, aggressive endeavor. Paul pursued the spiritual prize with all his might straining every spiritual muscle, straining forward to that end line—straining forward to the goal line. In other places, Paul describes the Christian life as labor and striving or fighting the good fight of faith. And so should we as well—strive and reach and strain on as well doing everything that we can within our power but realizing at the same time that we are totally reliant upon God's spirit working within us to accomplish everything.

And what was it that Paul was running after that we should run after? Well, Romans 8:29 speaks to that where he wrote and says, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son..." God chose us; He is remaking us. He is remolding us; He is conforming us into his image. I use the term, "Christ-like". We are becoming more and more "Christ-like" each and every day. And this is a life-long pursuit of being, if you will, repurposed into Christ's image.

Well, in verse 13, we pick up that living a repurposed life requires a focused concentration—a focused concentration. He writes, "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead..." He makes us this disclaimer: I do not consider that I have made it my own. Now here is Paul, forty to fifty years after his conversion, having done so much in the foundation of the church and he realized that he had not achieved spiritual perfection. He had this internal discontentment; this tension present in his life that motivated him to continue the pursuit. In fact, what he states here, he says, one thing—one thing. He was focused on one thing. A very impassioned language that he is using here, singled-minded focus on what was important to him. No doubt lots of other things that he did in his life but one thing that was of importance and that what he is encouraging us in as well. You know, it is the singular-focused people who succeed in athletics and basically any other pursuit in life as well. It is when we put one thing ahead of others that, in fact, we start to succeed. And that is what Paul is saying we should do in this spiritual race as well. But once aspect that helped Paul maintain his focused concentration was forgetting what lies behind. He says, "...forget what lies behind..." And again using the athletic illustration, a runner who looks back risks being passed. Those who look off to the side or look back are very likely to end up tripping or falling on their own feet. Every athlete in competition realizes

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they need to focus ahead and look ahead and continue to keep that being their focus as they are running.

Well, Paul made a break with everything. He made a break with everything in his life, both the good and the bad. I mean, he had obviously a very bad past, if you will. He was a part of murder. So he had participated in Stephen's murder. But he did not look back to that and say, "Oh woe is me. I made mistake; there is nothing good that I can do anymore." He forgot that. He also forgot the good that he had done. He did not look back to his past accomplishments and rest on his laurels. He ended up forgetting that as well. In fact, look up to verse 4 where he states just some of the things that he has done in the past. In Philippians, Chapter 3, verse 4, he is establishing his credentials as an apostle. And he says: Therefore, I have reason for confidence in the flesh also. "If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." In other places as well, he speaks forth some of the things that he had accomplished and yet, what he tells us in this passage, in Philippians 3, he says: I forget what is behind. He did not look back and neither should we as well if we are to run for that spiritual prize, God is not interested in what we did in the past. He is interested in what we are doing now and, what is it that we are seeking to do in the future.

Well, not only did Paul not look back but he maintained that focus by reaching forward to what lies ahead. So he was definitely reaching forward, straining forward. And he speaks of this goal when he wrote the letter to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4:11-13. It says: It was he, Jesus Christ, who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service so that the whole body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity of faith and knowledge in the Son of God and that we become mature attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We look forward to that unity. We look forward to growing and becoming more mature. So we need to live our lives, forgetting what is behind and looking forward as well.

Next in verse 14, we see that living a repurposed life requires a proper motivation. Verse 14 says, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Now this really is the heart of the passage...the heart of the passage...the present tense, I press on. I am doing this continuously. I am doing it now and I am doing now and I am doing now. I continue to press on continuously. And we are encouraged to press on as well. Press on towards the goal...towards the goal of a finish line, to fix our eyes upon that finish line, to press on toward the prize, to press on toward the prize of becoming more and more like Christ. You know, in I Corinthians 9, Paul had written in verse 24 and says, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it." This metaphor that he is saying for us to strain forward here: he is not speaking of a fun run, this is not going out for a casual jog but I want you to pour all of your life to run this race to win.

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Now as Christ followers, we are not going to receive our ultimate prize until we are ushered into God's presence in heaven. That is really what the finish line is. The finish line is the threshold of heaven where rewards will be handed out for the things that we have done while in the body of Christ. So we continue pressing on throughout this life, day in, today, tomorrow, we continue to press on. And then as we approach that finish line, we can declare like Paul did when he was writing to Timothy in II Timothy 4. He says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day.

In verse 15, we see living a repurposed life requires a realistic assessment. Paul writes in verse 15, he says, "Let those of you who are mature think this way, that if anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you." I like this verse a lot. He says we are not in the spiritual race alone. He begins it, "For those of you who are mature"...so he is writing to all of the Christians who are on this pathway towards maturity, to all of us that on this pathway to becoming more and more Christ-like, we are not alone. It includes all maturing Christ followers.

And then Christ writes to all of us, if you will, all Christ followers. Think this way. I like that. He is saying, now think this way, what I am just writing about. This is what you ought to be thinking. Put this in your mind. Remind yourself of that. Think this way that each of us should strive to live out our repurposed life, that we should strive to grow spiritually, that we should strive to become more and more Christ-like, to put Christ first in all aspects of our life, to put Christ first in our homes, in our relationships with others, to put Christ first in our time and our talents and then our treasures. And then he boldly writes at the end of this verse, if you do not agree with me, God will reveal it to you. I really like that. He is kind of saying, look, I am telling you this is the way you ought to think but if for some reason you are struggling with this, the Holy Spirit will reveal this to you. I like that.

In verse 16, we see that living a repurposed life requires us to stay the course. He writes, "Only let us hold true to what we have attained." "Only let us hold true to what we have attained." We must stay the course; keep to the spiritual path that we have begun. You know, earlier in this letter, in the first chapter of Philippians, he writes and he says, "...And he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus Christ." We stay the course but we become encouraged in it that, in fact, Christ's spirit is working in our lives to encourage us and bring it to completion in our lives.

Well, as we conclude, let me just remind you of this Repurpose series we have been in that Jesus does, in fact, give us a new life, that we are forgiven. That he gives us a brand-new future, eternal life and a brand-new right now, that we strive to live out our life being repurposed, to live out our life and be more and more Christ like each and every day. There is an internal aspect to this, that internally we are transformed to be more and more like Christ and then there is an external aspect to where our actions, our attitudes, what we do with our time, our talents, our treasures, with our relationships, more and more becomes Christ-like each and every day. So I encourage us all together as a community of believers to strive to be repurposed and live out this repurposed life.

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Well, now are you anxious to hear the results of the offering from last weekend? Well, I know you are. Pastor Tim is going to give us those results right now and how we have come together and repurposed some of the resources that God has entrusted to us to do something beyond any one of us individually. And then after Pastor Tim shares with us, we are going to praise the Lord together.

Pastor Tim:

Hi, Crossroads. I wish I could be with you to give you the update on the Cambodia Orphanage project in person this weekend but unfortunately I am out of town and I could not change my schedule but I did not want miss the opportunity to tell you personally the results of our Easter weekend special offering. Now if you remember, we were given a \$50,000 matching grant through a charitable organization and their grant would be used to build the one orphanage building for our twenty-four children presently living in a leased facility. The challenge was to match their \$50,000 gift so we could build not one orphanage but two orphanages and take another twenty-four children off the streets of Cambodia. Ephesians 3:20 says that: God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ask or think according to the power at work within us. That statement could not be more true than what we experienced over this last weekend. I am overwhelmed at your generosity and sacrifice for this cause. You not only gave the \$50,000 matching grant, but you gave exceedingly, abundantly above our goal. Are you ready for this?

Last weekend, you gave, along with the foundation money, \$344,000. I don't even know what to say. Those of us who waited to hear the final results on Easter Sunday afternoon were blown away when we heard that number. You gave nearly seven times our original goal. Now what that means is that we are not going to build two orphanages. We are going to be able to build a total of four. There are so many exciting things and details that I have to tell you but I am going to wait until next weekend when I can share them with you face to face. At that time, I will be giving you a clear breakdown of how we are going to plan to use the funds you generously gave to save the lives of dozens and dozens of children in Cambodia. But you need to know this, I am so proud of you and I feel overwhelmingly privileged to be ministering at Crossroads and serving the Lord along side of you. I think the expression of our children say it all. Here is their reaction when they were told they would be receiving a new and permanent home of their own. Watch this!

(Children's reaction)

Well, I think that says it all. Thank you again for your generosity and I look forward to seeing you next weekend.