

UNPICKING THE PANDEMIC THIEF'S POCKET

Part 4 – What's My Purpose?

GOOD NEWS

- * It is possible to come back from this STRONGER, FITTER, WISER & better POSITIONED than we were before.
→ *How do you feel spiritually, post-Covid? Do you feel stronger or weaker? What have you learnt that's made you wiser? Are you positioned better or still catching up? Is this series helping?*

PURPOSE UNDER ATTACK

- * Without doubt, GAPING HOLES opened up in our lives during the two lockdowns.
- * Our ability to meet NEEDS, fulfil FUNCTIONS & solve PROBLEMS, so crucial to our sense of PURPOSE, was chronically challenged.
- * Overnight, some of the things we believed we were FUNDAMENTALLY HERE FOR were gone ... and we felt PURPOSELESS.
→ *What 'holes' appeared for you? What changed? What went missing and how did it affect you? Did you feel as though your sense of purpose had been challenged, whether that be at work, at church, in pursuit of your personal dreams and callings?*

UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS

1. What's left for me when tasks from which I derive my sense of SELF-IMPORTANCE have gone?
2. What is this showing me about my MOTIVATIONS?
3. I thought I was doing this FOR GOD, but perhaps it turns out I might have really been doing it FOR ME.
4. What is my TRUE PURPOSE in God, and what has actually been subtly twisted to making me feel GOOD ABOUT MYSELF?
→ *Why does the Enemy attack your sense of purpose? What is he hoping to achieve when he does? How does he tend to attack you specifically? Whenever he has in the past, what have you done about it?*
→ *Why do the twists in those questions leave you vulnerable? What are the 'fine lines' in each of those questions?*
→ *Some other questions: What did we learn about what fuels us & what doesn't? What did we learn about what we missed & what we didn't? What did we learn about who we felt we needed in our lives & who we realised we didn't? Or those we felt called to serve & those we didn't?*

JOHN 15:1-8

- * You are a BRANCH → That's your IDENTITY.
- * You also have a responsibility to BEAR FRUIT → That's your PURPOSE.

- * You are not a DISCIPLE because you produce FRUIT; you're a DISCIPLE because you're a BRANCH.
- * The significance of order: Because of your IDENTITY, you can have UNHINDERED RELATIONSHIP.
- * And out of that RELATIONSHIP flows PURPOSE ... Not the OTHER WAY AROUND.
- * You don't find identity in the SUCCESSFUL FULFILMENT of PURPOSE. Identity comes FIRST & STANDS ALONE.
- * PURPOSE is what flows when you're SECURE in your IDENTITY & CLOSE in your RELATIONSHIP.
→ *Why is it so important to get identity and purpose in the right order? To what extent do you tend to derive your sense of value or self-worth from the fulfilment of what you see to be your purpose? What can potentially happen if your performance (or perceived lack of it) starts to become the defining factor in how you judge yourself? During the pandemic, which parts of your 'stalled' purpose affected which parts of your 'perceived' identity?*

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT PRUNING

1. Pruning is BIBLICAL
2. Pruning is GOOD
3. Pruning is ESSENTIAL
4. Pruning is SEASONAL
5. Pruning is INEVITABLE
6. Pruning is UNCOMFORTABLE
7. Pruning FOCUSES GROWTH
8. Pruning RESHAPES A BUSH in the form the Gardener wants.
→ *Which of these statements do you find the most reassuring and why? How does God prune people? How can you tell the difference between the Gardener pruning and the Enemy attacking?*

THIS IS WHAT GOD'S BEEN UP TO

- a) God has used Covid saga to cut off DEADWOOD.
- b) God used His pruning knife to file off sharp, jagged PRICKLES
→ CHARACTER FLAWS that needed addressing.
- c) Some of what God has cut away could have been to REFOCUS your GROWTH in a NEW DIRECTION.
- d) After a while, skilfully pruned branches start to produce BUDS of NEW LIFE.
→ *What deadwood got cut off? What prickles were snipped off? In what way did the pruning of the pandemic period steer you in a new direction? Have you noticed any buds of new life appearing yet?*
→ *Pray for one another, asking the Lord to continue and complete the pruning work He has begun.*