

25-1012a Transcript

25-1012a - *Placed With A Purpose*, Tom Freed

Bible Readers: Mike Mathis and Kevin Woosley

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Placed With A Purpose

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 1:11): Mike Mathis Jeremiah 29:11-13: (0:04) The first scripture reading this morning is taken from Jeremiah chapter 29 verses 11 through 13. (0:20) Jeremiah 29 verses 11 through 13 which reads, (0:30) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (0:48) Then you will call upon me, and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you, and you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. (1:08) That completes the first reading. (1:11)	2nd Reading (1:15 - 2:02): Kevin Woosley 1 Corinthians 12:17-20: (1:15) The second scripture reading is from 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 17 through 20. (1:26) 1 Corinthians 12, 17 through 20, and this is out of the New King James Version. (1:36) If the whole body were an eye, where would we be hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? (1:44) But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as he pleased. (1:52) And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed, there are many members, yet one body. (2:02)
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Transcript (0:03 - 24:53), Preacher: Tom Freed

(2:07) Good morning, good to see everybody.

(2:10) So my sermon is called Placed with a Purpose, trusting God's positioning in our lives. (2:19) Today I want to speak about a subject that resonates with many of us in our daily lives. (2:26) How many times have you sat in the quiet of your home, or perhaps during a long commute, and wondered, am I in the right place? (2:37) You look at your job and think, this can't be it.

There must be something better out there. (2:45) I think I do that every day at work. (2:49) You know, I think, man, should I be doing something else? I got 20 more years of this.

(2:55) You reflect on your relationships and question, is this the person God intended for me, or have I settled for less? (3:06) Even in our spiritual lives, you might glance around the pews of your church and ponder, maybe I belong somewhere else. (3:16) A bigger congregation, a different style of worship, or a community that feels more alive. (3:25) Some of you might have questioned that, you know, do I belong here at [x-the left side-x, West Side]? (3:31) We've all been there, that nagging doubt creeps in like a shadow, whispering perhaps that we've taken a wrong turn somewhere along life's path.

(3:44) We replay decisions in our minds, if I'd only chosen that other career path, or what if I had moved to that other city? (3:54) It's human nature to second guess, to imagine greener pastures just beyond the horizon. (4:01) Like they say, the grass is always greener on the other side. (4:05) We

wonder, you know, is that the right job? Should I have moved, you know, instead of stayed here? (4:12) A lot of us question where we're at in life.

(4:17) But today I want to challenge that restlessness with a biblical, profound biblical truth. (4:26) What if instead of questioning our position, we embrace the possibility that God has placed us exactly where He wants us? (4:36) Have we ever thought of that? Maybe we're exactly where we need to be. (4:41) In 1 Corinthians 12:18, the apostle Paul writes, (4:46) but in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be.

(4:55) Here, Paul is speaking about the church as the body of Christ. (5:01) But the principle extends to every facet of our lives. (5:07) God is a divine architect, a master planner who positions each of us with intentionality and purpose.

(5:16) We are not accidents in our jobs, our relationships, or our churches. (5:22) We are appointed, and if we can grasp this, it changes everything. (5:27) Over the next few moments, I'll explore why we feel misplaced, (5:34) how God orchestrates our placements, and what it means to thrive right where we are.

(5:40) Let's pray for open hearts as we dive into God's Word. (5:48) Let's begin by acknowledging the reality of our discontent. (5:52) In a world bombarded by social media highlights, comparison is a thief of joy, as Teddy Roosevelt once said.

(6:02) We see friends thriving in dream jobs, couples posting about their perfect vacations, (6:09) and churches online posting dynamic programs that make our team ordinary. (6:16) With the internet now, you see everybody's highlights. (6:21) Everybody seems to be doing better than you are.

(6:24) You don't see behind the scenes where they suffer, maybe are in debt, struggle with their relationships. (6:34) It's easy to think, they've got it figured out, why not me? (6:39) This dissatisfaction isn't new, it's as old as humanity itself. (6:45) Remember the Israelites in the wilderness? (6:48) In Exodus 16, after God miraculously delivered them from Egypt, they grumbled about their circumstances.

(6:58) If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt, then we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. (7:08) But you have brought us out in the desert to starve the entire assembly to death. (7:12) Exodus 16, 3. (7:16) They long for the good old days, forgetting the slavery they endured.

(7:21) Their eyes are on what they lack, not the manna God provided daily. (7:26) I've read that story plenty of times and I wonder, how could they have possibly acted like that after all God did for them? (7:34) After the miracles He showed them, delivering them out of Egypt, all the things He provided. (7:41) But we do the same thing.

(7:44) You know, we complain, we grumble, we're not happy. (7:47) I'm the same way, and we have it probably a hundred times better than they had it in the desert. (7:53) You know, in our lives, discontent often stems from unmet expectations or unhealed wounds.

(8:01) Maybe your job feels stagnant because it doesn't match the passion you felt in college. (8:07) Perhaps your relationship is strained by conflicts, leading you to wonder if it's the right fit. (8:16) And in the church, how often do we criticize it? (8:20) We're too old-fashioned.

(8:23) The sermons are too long. (8:25) That's one of my, you know, type Bs. (8:27) You guys probably think that about me sometimes.

(8:30) How about, I don't feel connected? (8:33) And how often do we say, I'm just not getting anything out of service? (8:39) But beneath these surface complaints lies a deeper issue, a lack of trust in God's sovereignty. (8:46) Proverbs 16, 9 reminds us, (8:50) In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps. (8:56) We make plans, but God directs.

(8:59) The promotion you didn't get. (9:01) The breakup that shattered your heart. (9:04) The church where you feel out of place.

(9:07) These aren't random. (9:08) They're part of God's divine strategy. (9:12) God isn't surprised by where you are.

(9:16) He's the one that led you there. (9:20) So let's shift from our perspective, why here, to what now, Lord? (9:27) That happens to a lot of us. (9:28) We feel disappointed.

(9:30) You know, we feel frustrated in our lives. (9:33) But God's preparing us for something greater. (9:39) Now let's go over that key verse from 1 Corinthians 12.

(9:44) Paul uses a metaphor of the human body to describe the church. (9:49) Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (9:54) Just as the body has eyes, hands, feet, and ears, (9:59) each with unique functions, so does the church.

(10:02) In verse 18, it's crystal clear. (10:05) God places each part just as he wanted them to be. (10:11) Imagine if your foot decided it wanted to be an eye.

(10:15) I'm just tired of being stepped on, I might say. (10:18) I want to see the world from up high. (10:22) Chaos would ensue.

(10:24) So what if you're just a pinky toe? (10:26) Who would want to be that? (10:29) You might think I'm the worst part of the body. (10:33) But without it, you'd have trouble walking or running. (10:37) My dad lost just part of his one toe, and he still isn't walking right.

(10:41) So every part matters. (10:46) The body needs every assigned part and its assigned role to function properly. (10:54) In the same way, God has positioned you in your job to bring light to the workplace, (11:00) in your relationship to reflect his love, (11:04) and in the church to contribute to the body's health.

(11:10) Think about Joseph in the Bible, (11:12) sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely imprisoned. (11:17) Talk about feeling misplaced. (11:21) Yet Genesis 50 reveals a purpose.

(11:24) You intended to harm me, (11:26) but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, (11:31) the saving of many lives. (11:36) Joseph ended up in Egypt not by accident, (11:40) but by divine appointment. (11:43) His wrong places were God's right path to promotion and preservation.

(11:50) Just think, you know, he was probably miserable. (11:52) His brothers had sold him into slavery. (11:56) You know, he probably thought, God, why me? (11:58) Then he was falsely accused and imprisoned.

(12:01) All that time, you know, he was probably wondering what God had in store for him. (12:08) And later on, he was appointed second in command under Pharaoh. (12:13) All that was preparing him to lead Egypt and save many lives.

(12:20) Here at the left side, you might not feel like you make much of a difference. (12:25) You might feel like it doesn't matter if you're here or not, (12:28) but God sees you as essential. (12:31) Perhaps you're the encourager who lifts the weary soul with a kind word, (12:36) or the prayer warrior interceding behind the scenes.

(12:41) Ephesians 4.16 tells us that, (12:44) from him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, (12:50) grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work. (12:56) We are not attending church. We are the church.

(13:00) Each of us a living stone, precious to God, (13:05) being built into a spiritual house with Jesus as a chief cornerstone. (13:11) You know, we're all built up to make the church. (13:15) If some of the stones are missing in a house, the house is eventually going to fall over.

(13:21) So we're all important. We're all building upon each other. (13:26) God has a reason for every single one of us, (13:30) and we're divinely placed here.

(13:32) We each have a role to do. (13:36) Just like every part of your body has a purpose, (13:39) you have a purpose here, whether big or small. (13:42) Like I said, you might not think the things you do are that big a deal.

(13:48) But in God's eyes, our small things are his big things. (13:52) You know, even the little things make a difference. (13:58) Let's look at some real-life stories to see how God positions us where he needs us to be.

(14:04) I recall a friend named Sarah who hated her entry-level non-profit job. (14:09) This isn't what I studied for, she complained. (14:14) She dreamed of corporate success.

(14:16) But in that wrong job, she met a colleague who invited her to church, (14:22) leading to her salvation. (14:26) Years later, she realized God placed her there to find him. (14:31) She is now thriving spiritually and using her skills to help others.

(14:36) Or consider my own story. (14:39) At my lowest, facing a second DUI, a breathalyzer in my car, and looming jail time, (14:46) I felt lost. (14:49) But God turned my darkest moment into a divine appointment.

(14:55) A chance encounter at a car service led to a Bible study, baptism, and a new life in Christ. (15:04) We had about a dozen people worshiping in a garage at the Interlock Gap. (15:10) So no complaints about our setup here.

(15:13) God works anywhere. (15:16) So if you think it's rough, you know, at our building with our small crowd, (15:20) imagine in a garage for years. (15:25) And what about David and Goliath? (15:27) David wasn't supposed to be on the battlefield.

(15:31) He was a shepherd boy delivering food. (15:35) But God positioned him there to defeat the giant and propel him toward kingship. (15:41) What seemed like a divine, a mundane errand was a divine setup.

(15:47) If you're doing DoorDash, you know, God might be setting you up for something great. (15:55) In relationships, consider Ruth. (15:57) Widowed in a foreign land, she could never turn home.

(16:03) Instead, she stayed with Naomi, saying, (16:05) where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. (16:10) God used that loyalty to place her in Boaz's field, (16:15) leading to a marriage and becoming an ancestor of Jesus. (16:19) Her misplaced life was God's genealogy in motion.

(16:25) At the West Side, our spiritual growth shines despite our size. (16:31) Without a full-time preacher, members preach and serve growing profoundly. (16:37) You know, we don't have a full-time preacher.

(16:40) All the guys, we have six guys, believe it or not, taking turns. (16:45) So John's preaching tonight. Let's come support him.

(16:49) But we've all grown. We've grown huge, you know. (16:53) None of us are trained, but, you know, like Jim.

(16:56) Jim could be a full-time preacher if he wanted to be. (17:00) You know, and everybody's grown and done great. (17:03) Like the mustard seed, small yet mighty, (17:07) we mirror the apostles' faith, sparking powerful impact.

(17:12) God worked through us here. (17:15) [x-Clearly,-x, The early] church didn't have a lot, and they preached to the whole world. (17:19) If we apply ourselves, we can make a huge impact.

(17:25) So these stories affirm our detours are God's direct paths. (17:31) Jeremiah 29-11 promises, (17:35) For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. (17:39) Plans to prosper you and not to harm you.

(17:42) Plans to give you hope and a future. (17:46) Trust your place in His plan. (17:49) God wants the best for us.

(17:52) Even if we are miserable at times where we're at, (17:55) it's all part of a bigger plan. (17:57) We can't see into the future like God does. (18:02) We need to grow where we're at.

(18:06) We're here for a reason. (18:10) So how do we move from doubt to delight in our divine positioning? (18:15) First, pray for revelation. (18:18) Ask God, what do you want me to learn or do here? (18:22) James 1-5 promises, (18:24) If any of you lack wisdom, you should ask God, (18:28) who gives generously to all without finding fault, (18:32) and it will be given to you.

(18:35) Second, seek contentment. (18:37) Paul learned this in Philippians 4-11-13. (18:41) I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

(18:46) I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. (18:51) Contentment isn't resignation, it's active trust. (18:55) Bloom where you're planted.

(18:57) Invest in your job. (18:59) Nurture your relationships. (19:01) Engage in the church.

(19:05) 1 Timothy 6-8 says, (19:07) If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. (19:12) We have all been given so much more than that. (19:16) So it's hard to be content.

(19:18) It's something I struggle with. (19:20) But we have so many great blessings, we just take it for granted. (19:26) Third, look for opportunities.

(19:29) In your wrong place, who can you serve? (19:33) In church, volunteer for the work you've been avoiding. (19:39) Romans 12-4-5 urges, (19:43) For just as each of us has one body with many members, (19:47) and these members do not all have the same function, (19:50) so in Christ we, though many, form one body, (19:55) and each member belongs to all the others. (19:59) Your role matters.

(20:02) Fourth, guard against the enemy's lies. (20:04) Satan loves to sow discontent, (20:07) as he did with Adam and Eve in the garden. (20:13) Counter his attacks with scriptures just as Jesus did in the desert.

(20:18) Psalm 37-23 says, (20:21) The Lord directs his steps to the godly. (20:24) He delights in every detail of their lives. (20:28) Don't let the devil knock you off course.

(20:31) He can't stop you from becoming a Christian. (20:34) The only thing he can do is keep you frustrated. (20:38) Don't let him win.

(20:41) Finally remember seasons change. (20:43) Ecclesiastes 3-1 says, (20:47) There is a time for everything, (20:49) and a season for every activity under the heavens. (20:53) If God wants you elsewhere, he'll open doors.

(20:56) Until then, thrive here. (21:01) All of us attend here, (21:03) not by chance, but by choice. (21:06) God's choice.

(21:08) Perhaps you have moved to the area for work, (21:10) where a friend invited you. (21:13) But behind all this is his hand. (21:15) In Acts 17-26-27, Paul declares, (21:22) From one man he made all the nations, (21:25) that they should inhabit the whole earth.

(21:28) And he marked out their appointed times in history, (21:30) and the boundaries of their land. (21:32) God did this so that they would seek him, (21:35) and perhaps reach out to him, (21:37) and find him, (21:39) though he is not far from any of us. (21:43) Your address, your community, your church, (21:46) appointed for seeking him.

(21:50) Above your doubts about the church, (21:52) are invitations for deeper involvement. (21:55) Instead of leaving, lead. (21:58) If a program lacks energy, step up.

(22:02) If fellowship feels shallow, host a gathering. (22:07) God places us to fill gaps, (22:09) not just fill seats. (22:12) So how many of us just think, (22:14) all we got to do is show up once a week, (22:16) and sit here for an hour? (22:17) It's not how God intended it.

(22:21) You know, God did a lot. (22:22) Jesus came down and did his job. (22:25) He did all the heavy lifting, (22:26) but we still need to participate.

(22:29) We can't just sit here and complain and do nothing. (22:33) Consider the early church in Acts 2-42-47. (22:38) They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, (22:41) breaking bread, and prayer.

(22:44) Spiritual growth followed, (22:46) and the Lord added to their number daily. (22:49) When each member functions his place, (22:52) great things are bound to happen. (22:55) You are vital to

that.

(22:58) If you're in a leadership role, (23:01) and feeling misplaced, (23:03) recall Moses' reluctance in Exodus 3-4. (23:07) God equipped him despite doubts. (23:10) He will with you too.

(23:13) As we wrap up, let's reaffirm. (23:16) You are not misplaced. (23:18) You are masterfully positioned.

(23:21) Jesus declares in John 15-16, (23:25) You did not choose me, (23:27) but I chose you and appointed you (23:29) so that you might go and bear fruit, (23:33) fruit that will last. (23:37) God has you in that job to be his ambassador, (23:41) in that relationship to mirror his grace, (23:44) and in the church to build his kingdom. (23:49) Cease the mental wanderings of what-if (23:51) and embrace what-now.

(23:55) Hebrews 12-1-2-2 encourages, (23:59) Let us throw off everything that hinders us (24:02) and the sin that so easily entangles, (24:06) and let us run the race with perseverance, (24:09) the race marked out for us, (24:11) fixing our eyes on Jesus. (24:14) Your race is marked. Run it well.

(24:17) But today you realize (24:19) you've been resisting God's placement. (24:22) Repent and realign. (24:25) Surrender your plans to his (24:26) and watch his purpose unfold.

(24:30) If you haven't become a Christian yet, (24:33) you're here today for a reason. (24:36) God can't direct you if you're not his. (24:41) May the God who positions us (24:43) empower us to shine where we stand.

(24:46) So if you need our prayers, (24:48) or you need to be baptized (24:49) and become a Christian today, (24:51) now's the time to come forward.