

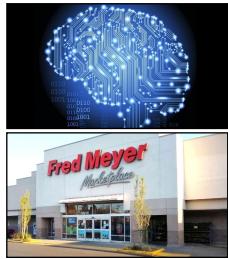
Soul Purpose

Last Note on Our Sole Calling

January 25, 2026



Today we're talking about the last note on helping lost souls find rest!



So, first off: **Do you want to witness to others?** For most, that's a *no*; of course not – for so many reasons. But **would you like to inspire others?** For most, that's a *yes*; of course – who wouldn't? So why do you call it **witnessing?** **Retrain your brain.** And be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Rom 12:2) And with that in mind: Why do we think of it as something we mainly do with our mouth? **Actions speak so much louder.** And it doesn't even take that much. In fact, **it's embarrassing how little it really requires.**

I went to *Fred Meyer* the other day, *loaded a cart*, completed the *self-checkout*, and *realized I forgot my wallet*. So, I asked 'em to *keep my cart* while I *went to get my wallet*. The gal *eyeballs* me and says, "You gonna come back?" I said, "Yes." She says, "Really?" I said, "Really." She says, "Well ... okay." I show up *ten minutes later*, and she says, *stunned*, "**You actually came back!**" And she *wheels the cart* to a *cashier*, and *hands* her the *receipt* and says, "He just *needs to pay*. He had to *go home* for his *wallet*." And the *cashier* says, "**And he came back?!**" And she *looks* at me and says, "**That never happens!**" And I *realized* as I *left*, **how incredibly easy it is to inspire others—just by being a barely decent human.** So just *imagine* the power of *inspiration* if you *throw* in some *sincerity* and *humility* and *mercy* and *love*!



We *end* every *service* with a *last note* to the *lost soul*. But I'll *bet* you don't *know* the *incredible story* behind *why we do that*. My *last message* was sermon #1,028. But *once upon a time* exactly 1,000 sermons ago, #28, early in 1998, I spoke on "*Dealing with Death*" and *asked* if you *really believe*:

My God *will* meet *all* your *needs* according to His *glorious riches* in Christ Jesus. –
Philippians 4:19 NIV

[And do you *really*] *Trust* in the Lord with *all* your *heart* and *lean not* on your own [extremely *limited* and – no *offense* – *ignorant*] understanding – Proverbs 3:5 NIV

And [do] we [really] know that in *all* [tragic and terrible] things God works for the *good* of those who *love* Him, who have been called *according to His purpose*. – Romans 8:28 NIV

So then: **Why do we ask, "Why?"** Or better (or worse) yet: "**Why me?!**"

For [we *know* that] we [only] *know in part* ... but when the *perfect comes*, the *partial knowing* will be *done away*. [And that ain't today!] ... For now we see in a *mirror dimly*, [like backing up a trailer at night using side mirrors. *Darkness limits visibility*. And it's *counterintuitive* and *disorienting* and *stressful*. Well, that's *life!*] ... now I *know in part*, but then I shall *know fully* just as I also have *been fully known*. – 1 Corinthians 13:9-12 NAS

How? By how I *react* and *respond* and *trust* in the *midst* of the *tragic* and *terrible* that I can't *understand*. You see, **all we need to do to inspire others to trust the Lord is to ... trust the Lord**. Really. Cuz it *only* takes *being* a *barely* *decent*, *sincere*, *compassionate* *human* to *stun* everyone around you with the *brightness* of "God's glorious riches in Christ Jesus", cuz it's just so ding-dong *dark* down *here*. But, in *order* to *actually* *trust* that "in *all* things God works for the *good*" **we need to know what it means to be "called according to His purpose"**. Cuz He *isn't* working *according* to our *temporary* *happiness* or *comfort* down *here*. Cuz *after all* is *said* and *done* down *here*:

"What do you *benefit* if you *gain* the *whole* *world* but *lose* your own *soul*? [And Jesus then asks] Is *anything* *worth* *more* than your *soul*?" – Mark 8:36 NLT



Not in the eyes and heart of our Father in heaven and our Savior on the cross! So, if you've *accepted* the *call*, *according* to His *sole* *purpose*, you can *know* and *trust* that He's *working* all the **consequences of sin**, and **randomness of nature and biology**, to the *eternal* *good* of His *greatest* *purpose*: **saving souls!** And *pain* and *suffering* and *unpredictable* *death* *work* *together* to *form* the **greatest spiritual growth and evangelistic tool ever to exist!** So:



"Behold, [the Lord's plea] **all souls** are Mine ... [and] the soul who *sins* shall *die*. [But] If a man is *righteous* ... by *acting faithfully* ... he shall surely *live* [it's that simple] ... [So] Why will you die ... I have *no pleasure* in the *death* of anyone," declares the Lord God; "so turn, and *live*." – Ezekiel 18:4-32 ESV



We don't *realize* how *involved* He actually *is* in our day-to-day *lives*. I mean:

He *determined* [as in *strategized*] the *times* *set* for them and the *exact* *places* where they should *live*. [And] God *did* this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is *not* *far* from *each* *one* *of* *us*. – Acts 17:26-27 NIV

You'd never *sell* your *child's* *kidney* for *extra* *cash*. But **if their sibling was dying, you'd allow a transplant, despite the suffering inflicted**. Our Father is *forced* to *make* this type of *decision* when *answering* *prayers*. So He *asks* that we *trust* that **we're all working together to save as many souls as humanly and omnisciently possible**. Because **suffering is temporarily tragic, but a life eternally lost is infinitely worse**. We have *lots* of *promises* in *Scripture* and *problems* in *life*. So, just *know* that:

The Lord is not *slack* concerning His *promise*, as some count *slackness*, [He *wrote* to *reassure* you that He's *not* a *slack*] but is *longsuffering* toward us, [because He's] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. – 2 Peter 3:9 NKJ

[Therefore] Set your *minds* on things *above*, not on *earthly* things. – Colossians 3:1-4 NIV

So that's *more* or *less* what I said *back* in *March* *1998*. And *two* *months* *later*, **I received this mysterious anonymous letter with no return address and a Colorado postmark**. And it *read*, in *part*: "I received a *present* of your *tape* on *Dealing With death* and was *pleasantly* *shocked*. **It was not so much the subject that moved me** – it was *in* your *voice*, your *expression*, your *utter* *trust*, *love*, and *belief* in the *Lord*. Thank you. I just *wanted* you to *know*. **I'm a person who has lost faith** and *ask* you to *remember* me when you *talk* with your *God*. **Sincerely, a lost soul.**"

So, I read it to the church, and talked about *inspiring the lost souls* around us. And the *question* that *day* was: **What is your most valuable possession?** And the *answer* was: **The light of life.** Cuz **you can trade it for souls!** And “Is anything worth more than your soul?” **No!**

[So the *Light of Life* commands us to] “Let your *light* shine before *others*, [in a *way*] that *they* may see your *good deeds* and *glorify* your *Father* in heaven.” – Matthew 5:16 NIV

[So] Arise, [and] *shine*, for your *light* has *come*, and the *glory* [of the *riches*] of the Lord *rises upon you*. ... For the Lord *will be* your *everlasting light* – Isaiah 60:1, 19 NIV

And *then*, for the *first time*, I *ended* by saying: “I have a *note* to the *lost soul*: **Truth is a light. And sometimes it shines through us and sometimes it doesn't.** So when you see it in someone, *head* toward the *light*.” And after *that*, I left *notes* for our *lost soul* every Sunday.

After sermon #37, I said: “**Just cuz a guy calls himself a Christian, doesn't mean he reflects God's heart.** So try to *find a faithful ox* to *yoke* yourself to. And try to *avoid the donkeys.*”

And after sermon #43, I said: “God isn't *waiting* to *condemn* you for your *sins*. **He hates sin because sin condemns you, torments you, and alienates you.** He just wants you to *come home.*”

And after sermon #53, I said: “**If you have found that God is boring, you're likely confusing Him with the pastor or priest you grew up under.** God is *waiting* to *give* you an *abundant life!*”

And after sermon #58, I said: “We won't *judge* you. We have a *hard* enough *time* just *living up to our own beliefs*. But just *know* that **Jesus isn't a crutch – He's a power source.**”

And after sermon #78, I said: “**You'll never find fulfillment in a God that you control.** It's *only* through *surrender* to our *Creator* that we *find* true *freedom.*”

And then, on July 25, 1999, after sermon #90, I said, “**Are you holding God to an expectation that you've created?** Don't give up on Him. Seek after Him.” And after the service, a white-haired woman with an *Irish* accent said, “**I'm your lost soul. I've moved here to be with my family.**” And three weeks later, she said, “**I asked God to give me the passion I see in all these people.**” And she *asked me* to *help* her *make* Jesus the *Lord* of her *life!* And I *asked her* if I could *share* her *story*, which I *did* in sermon #95. And two days later I received *this letter*:



“Even though I knew you were going to *include* a *mention* of the *lost soul*, I was not *prepared* for my own *reaction*. My *heart* was *pounding* so *hard* I thought *everyone* around me could *hear* it, and knew I was the *lost soul*. I *felt* a wonderful *warm glow* *within*, as if the *Heavenly Father* was *saying*, “*Welcome home.*” **Your constant prayers and reaching out have made me realize that I needed that someone special called Jesus in my daily life.** I look *forward* to my *baptism* of *faith*. God must be *very proud* of you. Very sincerely, *Madeline Slattery, no longer lost.*”

And when she was *baptized*, she *quietly confessed* to those *around* the *pool*, that she was the *infamous lost soul* of *His Place*.

And on *March 26, 2000* (two years since sermon #28 in March of '98) Madeline was the first greeter in our new sanctuary. And **she witnessed – I mean inspired – the entire church when she**, in her endearing Irish brogue, **revealed herself as our lost soul, and told how she'd given her life to Christ**, and what everyone here *meant to her*, because of the *role* they'd *played* in her eternal life. And that's why we end each service with a *last note* to the lost souls out there. Cuz you never know.



And five years later, *February 21, 2005* she passed away while standing firm in her faith after suffering and struggling with cancer of the larynx for nine months. But she's not forgotten. Cuz she painted the *cast iron tree grates* around the church for all the *soles* of the *feet* of those of us still down here at *His Place*. And is God this funny and playful – cuz this is a crazy coincidence: the very day that I put my notes together for this message, sermon #1,029, I found this bottom of a work-shoe lying right in front of my office door. I didn't make the connection till Ron Vater walked by, and I asked him if it was *his*, and he said: **"What'cha got there, a lost sole?" I suspect the Lord is way more involved in our day-to-day lives than we'd ever suspect!** So then, "when [will] the perfect come" so that we can "know fully"? Well, **when would you like it?** Because:

The *instructions* of the Lord are perfect, **reviving the [lost and weary] soul**. The *decrees* of the Lord are *trustworthy*, making *wise* the *simple*. **[And]** The *commandments* of the Lord are *right*, bringing **[much needed]** *joy* to the *heart*. **[Because, unlike that dark mirror]** The *commands* of the *Lord* are *clear*, giving *insight* for *living*. – Psalm 19:7-8 NLT

[You see] The Lord is my *Shepherd* ... He *leads* me ... **[And]** *He restores my soul*. **[Because]** He *guides* me in *paths of righteousness* for *His name's sake*. – Psalm 23:1-3 NIV

Truly my **[weary]** *soul* finds *rest* in God; **[because]** my *Salvation* [Yeshua (in Hebrew) and Jesus (in Latin)] comes from *Him*. Truly *He* is my *Rock* and my [Yeshua] ... Yes, my *soul*, find *rest* in God; **[because]** my *hope* comes from *Him*. Truly *He* is my *Rock* and my [Jesus] ... **[So]** *Trust in Him at all times*, you people; **[and]** *pour out your hearts* to *Him*, for *God* is *our refuge* ... and with *You*, Lord, is *unfailing love* – Psalm 62:1-12 NIV

[So] "Come to Me, all you who are *weary* and *burdened*, and I will give you *rest*. ... Learn from *Me*, for I am *gentle* and *humble* in *heart*, and **[if you learn to be like Me]** you will find *rest* for your *souls*." – Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

Return, my *soul*, to your *rest* ... For my *soul* has been *freed* from *death* – Psalm 116:7-8 NAB

We have this *hope* as an *anchor* for the *soul*, *firm* and *secure*. – Hebrews 6:19 NIV

No wonder my *heart* is *filled* with *joy*, and my *mouth* shouts *His praises*! My *body* rests in *hope*. For You will not *leave* my *soul* among the *dead* – Acts 2:26-27 NLT

Most people aren't even sure what they believe. And they're *looking* for *ideas* and *suggestions*. So don't *hide* your *light*. **Shine brightly with trust in your darkest moments.** Because, from *forgetting* a *wallet* to *getting cancer*, it *all* *works* *together* for the *greatest good* for those who are *called* according to *His soul purpose*. **So, work with Him.** Cuz it's *embarrassing* how *little* it *takes*.