

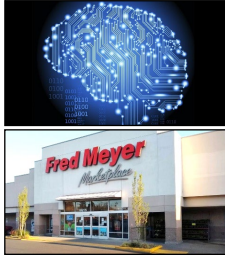
Soul Purpose

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 slacker] 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.