

**God's Purpose, Plan and Pattern**  
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We're in a series entitled 2020 Vision: Seeing God's Plan for Your Life. Today I'm preaching a message entitled God's Purpose, Plan and Pattern.

When I grew up my Mom did something you rarely see anymore. She practiced an ancient skill called sewing. This might shock you – but at one time people used this invention called the sewing machine to make their own clothes. To do so required fabric and a pattern. You didn't just sit down and start randomly sewing. The pattern showed you exactly how to cut the fabric into the right sizes and how to sew it together to make a garment. The garment would come out perfect if you made it according to pattern.

According to Hebrews 8:5 - when God gave Moses instructions for building a tabernacle, He said *See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.*

These days everyone wants to do things their own way. But the secret to success is to do things God's way. God always has a way He wants things done. He always does things according to pattern!

Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins, but also to show us how to live as Christians. He came to be our example – our pattern.

I'm talking today about God's purpose, plan and pattern. God's ultimate purpose for you is revealed in Romans 8:28-29. Verse 28 says:

*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

This is my favorite Bible verse because it encourages me to know that God works everything that I go through for my good. But, what's my good? Well – it's to accomplish God's purpose. And what's God's purpose? The next verse shows us!

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Our destiny is to be conformed to the image of Christ. This is God's purpose for your life - To be like Christ! And God's plan to fulfill His purpose is to use everything that happens in your life to conform your character to the image of Christ.

The Bible does not say that everything you go through will be good. It says that God will take everything you go through in life – the good, the bad and the ugly –

and will use it to make you like Jesus – and that’s good!

There are many verses that teach us to follow Christ as our pattern.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said: *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

Jesus Christ is our example of how to live and how to give.

Jesus Christ is our example of how to pray and how to obey.

Jesus Christ is our example of how to serve and how to love.

Matthew 3:16-17 shows us a pattern for the Christian life.

*As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."*

There are four parts to this Jesus pattern.

### **1- The Jesus Pattern Begins with Becoming a Child of God**

I think we can all agree that Jesus was born a child of God. When Jesus was baptized – the Father addressed Him as His Son. He is the only begotten Son of God! He never sinned so He never needed forgiving. He was never lost so He never needed saving.

But the rest of us sin – so we need to be forgiven. We are all lost – so we need to be saved. We are all born in sin, so Jesus said in John 3:7 *You must be born again.*

And salvation requires repentance and faith. Hebrews 6:1-2 says:

*Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

Salvation takes more than believing in Jesus. True salvation also requires repentance. That means a turning from sin, from going your own way. Salvation requires turning from dead works and placing faith in God.

Notice that the doctrine of baptisms in plural. The Jesus pattern includes three baptisms: baptism into the body of Christ, water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Baptism into the body of Christ occurs at salvation. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says: *Some of us are Jews, and some are Greeks. Some of us are slaves, and some are free. But we were all baptized into one body through one Spirit. And we were all made to share in the one Spirit.*

When we are born again, we are baptized into the body of Christ.

## 2- **The Jesus Pattern includes Water Baptism**

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. People were confessing their sins and being baptized in water. That's why John balked at baptizing Jesus: Jesus had no sins to confess. But Jesus said He needed to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. To be righteous means to be right with God. Jesus was already right with God – but in His baptism He was identifying with us as sinful people and showing us the way of righteousness.

In the Bible – being right with God always involves being in a covenant with God. When God enters into a covenant – it always includes a sign.

The sign of the covenant with Abraham was circumcision.

The sign of the covenant with Noah was the rainbow.

The sign of the New Covenant we have with Christ is water baptism.

Jesus showed us the pattern for what it took to fulfill righteousness. We need to be saved by the blood of Jesus. And we need to be baptized in water. Yes, you can go to heaven without being baptized in water. But I don't believe we should see it as optional for the believer – it is a command of Christ. If you've never been baptized in water, I urge you to follow the Jesus pattern and sign up for our next water baptism.

## 3- **The Jesus Pattern includes the Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience after salvation where a believer is immersed in the Holy Spirit.

I want you to think about this: before Jesus was water baptized He did no miracles and preached no sermons. But after that, He began to do miracles and operate in the power of God. What happened? Did water baptism have that effect on Him? NO.

Jesus did not start operating in the supernatural until after He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Right after Jesus was water baptized, He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:1 says:

*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan.*

Jesus was the Son of God – but when He came to earth He laid aside the independent exercise of power and relied upon the power of the Spirit.

Some people confuse the baptism **by** the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ and the baptism **in** the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the body of Christ happens when we are born again. That is not the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The distinction between the baptism into the body of Christ and the baptism in the Spirit is that the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ, while Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. God told John the Baptist in John 1:33

*The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is He who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.*

That was Jesus – so He is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit and He told the disciples they needed to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them in power. Understand, they were already believers and had the Holy Spirit in them. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, He appeared to His disciples and John 20:22 says: *He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

They were saved and had the Holy Spirit – but Acts 1:4-5 says:

*He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

And that happened in Acts 2. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them in power. They began to praise God in other tongues. This drew a crowd and Peter preached the Gospel to them. When he was finished - Acts 2:37-39 says

*Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."*

Peter told them the same pattern for power we saw in Jesus. Be saved – Be water baptized – Be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

And notice what else he said – this promise is for everyone throughout history who is called by God to salvation. He was talking about you there! You need to follow the Jesus pattern and be saved, water baptized and baptized in the Holy Spirit.

This same pattern can be seen throughout the Bible. I'll give you a few examples. In Acts 8 – Phillip went to Samaria, preached about Jesus and people got saved. Verses 14-17 say:

*Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had*

*fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

See the Jesus pattern? The Samaritans got saved, then water baptized, then baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The same thing happened to the Ephesians in Acts 19. The Ephesians got saved, then water baptized, then baptized in the Holy Spirit.

We see this same Jesus pattern over and over in Scripture. We see it taught in 1 John 5:7-8

*For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.*

We even see the pattern in the Old Testament. In order for the priests to minister in the Tabernacle – they had to do three things. First they went to the altar where the blood of a lamb was shed. This speaks of salvation through the blood Jesus Christ. Then they went to the brazen laver where they washed – this speaks of water baptism. Then they had to be anointed with oil – which speaks of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Jesus pattern always includes the blood, the water and the Holy Spirit. And you need to follow the Jesus pattern in your life. You need to be saved by the blood of Jesus. You need to be baptized in water. And you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to have the power to walk in your new life in Christ.

Many people try to make the baptism in the Holy Spirit all about speaking in tongues, but it is all about power - power to witness, power to do the ministry of Jesus. Jesus said in Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Without the power of the Spirit, no one would ever be saved, healed, delivered, or restored. To live an extraordinary life like Christ, we must do it as He did it, in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Remember – Luke 4 says Jesus was filled with the Spirit and then was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After that, Luke 4:14 says:

*Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit...*

And that's when He began His ministry of teaching, healing and setting captives free. That's the fourth part of the pattern: being a minister who serves God and serves people.

#### 4- The Jesus Pattern Results in Serving

Why were you saved? Some people say to go to heaven. Others say to not go to hell. I understand both of those things in an eternal sense. But were you saved for anything in the here and now? I believe God saves us for a purpose more than where we spend eternity.

In fact, I believe God created you to make a difference on this earth with your life. How do you make a difference? The same way Jesus did. Mark 10:45 says:

*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.*

Jesus came to serve. Not to be served. Do you want to be like Jesus? Then SERVE SOMEBODY. DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEBODY.

Jesus came to serve and since He is our example, we too must serve. Philippians 2:5-7 says:

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.*

It's interesting how much time and energy we spend trying to make ourselves something, but Jesus made Himself nothing and became a servant.

When the disciples were arguing about which one of them was the greatest, Jesus said in Mark 9:35

*Anyone wanting to be the greatest must be the least – the servant of all!*

Jesus defined greatness is His kingdom as serving.

Why were you saved? You were saved to serve. Galatians 5:13 says:

*For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.*

God did not put you on earth to live a self-centered life. He put you on earth to serve. He wants you to make a contribution with your life. He wants you to give something back. If you do that, you can make a difference!

Too many people think I've got to have a big name or a big ministry to make a difference, so they do nothing. What a lie of the devil. We are all called to be ministers. Whenever you use your talents, your abilities, your experience, your time, your energy to help somebody else and you do it in God's name; that is

servicing. The Bible has a word for that. It's called 'ministry.' It's interesting that the New Testament word for minister is the same as the word serve. And contrary to popular opinion, everybody is a minister. Not everybody is a pastor, but everybody is to serve using the abilities they have.

Now – I realize our first ministry is to the Lord. Revelation 1:5-6 says:

*To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father — to Him be glory and power for ever and ever!*

I know we ultimately serve God, but one of the main ways we serve God is by serving other people. Hebrews 6:10 says:

*For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for Him and how you have shown your love to Him when you served the saints—and you continue to serve them.*

We love and serve God by loving and serving people. So I want to challenge you to start serving and you will become great in God's kingdom. God's ways are higher than the world's ways!

The world says that to move up you must walk all over people.  
But God says to move up you must lay down your life for people.

The world says that to move up you must sacrifice your family.  
But God says to move up you must sacrifice yourself for your family.

The world says to look out for number 1.  
But God says look out for others.

The world says, "Destroy your opposition."  
But God says, "Love your enemies."

The world says, "Promote yourself." But God says, "Humble yourself."

The world says, "Rule others." But God says, "Serve others."

This is how great our God is!  
When you humble yourself – God will exalt you!  
When you lift others up – God will lift you up!  
When you bless others – God will bless you!  
When you give to others – God gives to you!  
When you serve others – God promises to make you great in His kingdom!

To fulfill God's purpose for your life – you must follow His plan and pattern – the Jesus pattern!

This pattern never changes – it's the same yesterday, today and forever!  
First, you must be born again.  
Then you must be baptized in water and baptized in the Holy Spirit.  
And the result is that you will have the power to serve God and others.

I'm asking everyone to respond to this message today by either coming forward for prayer or going to the back of the sanctuary and get info on how you can serve here.

We're asking you to pray about how you can serve God and serve people.

We're asking you to use your God given gifts to help others.

We're asking you to be like Jesus, to be a servant, to put others first.

That's how we touch heaven and change earth!

That's how you fulfill God's purpose and plan for your life!