

A Purposeless God

God has no purpose. God is going nowhere. These two statements sound wrong, don't they? They sound like absolute blasphemy. And yet, I assure you, taken together, these two statements convey the deepest truths about our Lord. Let us take the first statement: 'God has no purpose'. This of course does not mean that God has no meaning for that would be an error in judgement. To say something has purpose, though, implies that it has something still to achieve. A purpose by definition is an objective, a futuristic goal to be pursued, an ideal still waiting to be fulfilled. But this cannot be said of God. For if God had such a purpose, which was somehow awaiting fulfillment at a future date then there would be something missing, something still left for Him to do, and God would cease to be God. God has no deficiency within Himself. He is perfect, which means He is self-contained, complete, fulfilled. Nothing further is lacking. God has no purpose because He has no future in the same way that He has no past (Hebrews 13:8). He stands outside of time; He exists in the eternal present where everything is happening in an instantaneous moment.

In regards to the second statement, 'God is going nowhere', the same rationale applies. To say something is going somewhere implies change. If I go from here to over there much has changed. The scenery has changed. The point of view has changed. And in a subtle way, I have changed—time has elapsed, matter has been shifted. But of course, when we speak of God, we say that He never changes. He is immutable (Malachi 3:6). Considered from a slightly different angle, what is the purpose of all movement? Why do we move at all? There are an endless number of practical reasons you could provide, but they can all be summed up by saying the purpose of all movement is to rest. Now think about that for a moment and you will discover the truth of it. I move to reach a point of rest. For rest, after all, follows completion; it comes after the fulfillment

of a task or an objective. Whether it is a mental/intellectual movement or a physical movement it does not matter. The purpose of both is the same: to reach a point of restful satisfaction. But God exists in a state of perpetual rest for He has nowhere to go. There is no new understanding He needs to acquire, no job He needs to complete. He is perfectly fulfilled. He is omnipresent, existing everywhere; He is omniscient, knowing everything. This is why God calls us to rest: “Come to me all you who are weary and I shall give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). He is inviting us to share in His restful state. This is also why He invites us to be still, to be content. For in stillness, we imitate our Lord. In stillness, we get a glimpse into the enjoyment of the eternal moment.

To call Christ our Good Shepherd is to invoke this train of thought. For Christ fulfills the role of a shepherd—caring for us, providing for us, and ultimately leading us. But the question then becomes *where* is He leading us? If God is going nowhere then where are we going? Of course, we are not God therefore we exist in time and space, we have purposes and goals, and we are constantly on the move. But this constant motion, this constant activity, is not a sign of our superior status, but rather a sign of our sin. Because of sin, we are restless. We are constantly moving about trying to find our place of belonging. Our minds can never settle, our bodies can never rest. We are weary from all our travels; day after day we move without really getting anywhere. Months roll into years, seasons come and go, but we are still no closer to understanding who we are and why we are here. And apart from God this perpetual pace would continue until the end of our days. For there is nothing under the sun that can answer the deep longings of our souls.

God understands our predicament precisely because He has been where we are. This is the mystery of Christ’s incarnation. The God who is going nowhere entered our ‘somewhere’ to share our plight. The God who has no purpose was born for just such a purpose: to walk our dreadful

path, to share our dreadful fate, to experience our dreadful anxiety, to die our dreadful death. And though we will never understand how God can change without changing or move without moving, we confess it to be true for our very salvation depends on it. For God's motionless motion was for our benefit. Christ, our Good Shepherd, stepped forth to call us by name. His voice breaks through the chaos of our lives. It reaches our ears, and for a brief moment, we stop, we listen for there is something different about this voice. It's a sound we have heard before for Christ is the very Word, which once called us into existence. We recognize its tender melody as the very same one that formed and shaped us, knitted us into our mother's womb. Christ calls out to us and we follow. Where He is leading, we don't yet know. We can't know. Our fallen minds cannot begin to grasp the wonders, which are in store for God's children. But what we do know is this: Christ tells us that where He is there we will be also (John 14:3). And that's enough for us. Wherever He is leading us will be a place suited for Him. It will be a place of peace for He is peace; a place of rest for He is rest. This is God's promise to us. That one day our Good Shepherd will lead us to our eternal home. We will enter our rest with Him; we will share in His eternal attributes. Time will stand still for us. Death and dying will be at an end. Toil and tribulation will be no more. And all that will remain will be a stillness and the beauty of God's presence. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Jeremy H. Mills