

# Fulfilling God's Purpose in our Generation (Acts 13:36)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 23 July 2023

Preacher: KC Wong

[ 0 : 00 ] Okay, so follow me, Acts chapter 13, 36. Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep.

He was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. That is the word of God. I invite Pastor Casey up to speak to us. Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Pastor William, for inviting me to come to speak to the young people.

It's always a pleasure to be speaking to young people. But I noticed that there are not so young people in our midst as well, which is an even better sign, which means that we are quite a wholesome church, notwithstanding the fact that it is an English-speaking church.

I see a lot of gaps in between. I'm going to do something terrible. I'm going to ask you guys to move. Because it's a very, very cold evening.

Unless you are sick, unless you are untouchable. Otherwise, please move into the center three rows.

[ 1 : 22 ] If you know me, it's usually not a request. All right, just move toward the center, so when I'm speaking, I don't have to move my head too much.

Okay, that's wonderful. Okay, let's move into the center so we can all feel warmer. Yeah, we can turn the volume of the mic down a little bit.

Yeah, like I said, it's so good. It's so good to be in God's house. And Pastor William is so glad I did that, because he's always wanted to do that, but never did. Moving the people around. Yeah, it's good.

Amen? It's good to be in God's house, and it is good for us to be able to worship God together. And it's also good for us to be able to open his word. And I don't know what the practice of this church is, but when the chairman said that, oh, it's only a short verse, then you guys better listen to the sermon.

So when the passage is long, you guys don't listen to sermons? What is it? I don't understand. Okay, whether it's long or short, you better listen to the sermon, or unless it is a practice of the church to leave immediately after the passage is being read.

[ 2 : 39 ] I don't know. I'm going to talk to Pastor William a bit more to understand what's going on. Well, today, the topic that I've chosen for you guys, and it is in fact a topic that I've spoken to the two Cantonese congregations, but of course all be in Cantonese, but I want to do it in English, because I think that this is such an important message for people like us, you know, people who are young.

I'm speaking to the not so young as well. But it is so important for us to understand what exactly we are here for. Amen? God has given us this awesome privilege to be living in these times, to be living in this generation, and to be alive in this country.

And what exactly is it that God wants us to do? Before we go further, let us open with a word of prayer. Father, we just want to thank you, and thank you, and thank you, because you are so good to us.

You have allowed us to come together as your children, as one people, to worship you this evening, to come together to sing songs of praises to you, telling you, God, how wonderful you are, how good a God you are to us.

And Father, my prayer this evening is that not only do we open our voices to you and sing our hearts out to you, but Lord, we are willing to give you our hearts.

[ 4 : 20 ] So Father, as we probe and look into the topic, Father, I pray that you open our eyes once again. Father, you will challenge us and that you will speak to us and that you will let us see the treasure that is embedded in your word.

So Father, we thank you and we commit this time into your hands. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. I would like to read it again. Verse 36 says, For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption. And of course, the other reading that was made earlier was the NIV version. But in effect, it is about the same thing. It talks about David having served God's will in his generation, he fell asleep. But in order to complete this particular verse, actually chapter 13 has another verse that talks about David. And that is in verse 22.

[ 5 : 38 ] Here, actually in chapter 13 itself, Paul was preaching for the first time in Antioch in Pisidia, which is different from the Antioch, the church that he was being sent out from.

Remember the church? He was from the Antioch church, but now he's in Antioch in Pisidia. It is actually a different place, but with the same name, Antioch. This was the first time that Paul was preaching.

And in his preaching, he was trying to explain to the people, all right, that Jesus is the one that they have been looking forward to welcoming.

He is the Messiah, all right? And in the process of telling the story of Jesus, he was tracing the history of Israel, all right?

And he was saying that how God has actually saved the Israelites out of Egypt, how they were wandering in the wilderness, and how they got into the promised land, and how they were served by judges, and in the end establishing their own kingdom.

[ 6 : 52 ] And of course, it went to talk about the first king who is Saul. And when talking about David, he was actually tracing that history, all right? So verse 22 says, And when he had removed him, when God had removed Saul as the first king, he raised up for them David as king, all right?

To whom he also gave testimony and said, I found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will.

You know, so he was literally going through the history of Israel, and he was trying to develop that story to talk about Jesus Christ, who came in the end. He was the Messiah.

And when he talked about David, saying that when David served God's generation, he fell asleep and his body decayed. Remember that? But that is to juxtapose with the later verse that says that when Jesus died, he rose again after three days and his body never saw decay, proving that he was the Messiah.

So I just want to put that into context, all right? So Paul was preaching for the first time and trying to explain to the people who Jesus Christ was.

[ 8 : 18 ] He wanted to tell them that this is the person you guys crucified on the cross, but he is the Messiah. Verse 36 is a very inconspicuous verse.

Like I said, the whole of chapter 13, Paul wasn't talking about David in particular. He was just tracing Israel's history.

But you know, in my opinion, in verse 36, that short little verse, God actually paid David an awesome compliment.

I don't know whether that was the intention, but can you imagine God saying that for William, served God's purpose in his generation, and he fell asleep.

If God spoke that about Pastor William, do you guys think that is a compliment? What greater compliment can there be than to have been told by God that you have served his people in this generation, and then you fell asleep?

[ 9 : 45 ] What an awesome compliment. I mean, is there any bigger, greater thing that we can do in life than to fulfill God's purpose and to serve his purpose in our generation?

You know, I'm particularly excited to be speaking to young people because I feel that, you know, the young people have all the hope in the world, you know.

Oh, I wish I was young again. You know, when I was much younger, I felt that the world was at my feet. There was such a long runway.

You know, there were so many things I could do. I mean, it was so exciting. I hope you feel the same. Do you? You don't really look that way.

But being able to serve God's purpose and being able to find purpose in life, I was told that this generation is the generation that lives for purpose.

[10:55] Am I right or am I wrong? Young people, okay, are you looking for finding, are you looking to finding your purpose in this life?

You know, I was told that for young people today, you know, if they have a purpose, they'll be able to give their life to that purpose. Is that true? And the problem with this generation is that nobody seems to be able to find purpose in life.

That's why they don't know what to do. They're moving around in circles. That's why there's abuse. There's mental health issues. There's suicide.

Because there's just no meaning in life. You know, it is my prayer that young people, or for that matter, anyone around, regardless of your age, you know, that we are still seeking God's purpose. That we are still looking for purpose in life. And I guarantee you, if you are serious about looking for your purpose, you will never be disappointed, because God will be so glad to be telling you what exactly He wants you to accomplish with your life in your generation.

[12:14] You know, David is an awesome guy, as far as I'm concerned. Not perfect, far from perfect. But he's the one guy whom God said, this is a man after my own heart.

You know, I've always, always wondered, what did David do to deserve that compliment from God? But I think I found the answer in verse 22.

Because here, when God paid David that compliment, he said, I've appointed, I found David for you guys, okay, for Israel, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart.

And why was he said to be a man after God's own heart? Read the rest of the verse. It says, Who will do all my will? You want to be known as a man who has served his generation, who is a man after God's heart?

What did the Bible say? Then do my will. That's what God said. You know, the Bible is full of examples.

[13:26] History is full of examples of people, you know, who have served their purpose in their generation. And you know what is amazing? God never wanted you and I to serve God's purpose in our grandfather's generation.

Thank God for that. I never sold my grandfather. He never asked us to serve the purpose of our father's generation. Right?

He never asked us to serve his purpose in our children's generation. That is their business. But he only expects us to serve God's purpose in our generation.

Like I said, the Bible is full of examples of people who have done that. I just want to run through that list very quickly. Noah. Did Noah serve God's purpose? Noah built that ark.

Alright? How long did he spend to build that ark? Do we know? We don't know. 300 years.

[14:35] Too long. 120 years. He spent a total of 120 years to build the ark. But during the 120 years, he didn't only build the ark, but he was trying to persuade the people of that era to repent.

Because God was going to destroy that generation. He served God's purpose. Abraham.

Somebody we are very familiar. What did Abraham do?

Abraham actually did something that was very, very simple. You know, if you look into Abraham's life, it is a bit difficult to see what exactly he has achieved for God.

But the one thing he did was to come out from the people and be separated for God. You know, God has such simple demands.

Come out of this world and be separate. Be kept holy for me. And that's what Abraham did. Joseph. What did Joseph do?

[15:37] Come, I'm going to test your Bible knowledge. The first question, you didn't know the answer 120 years. Okay, what did Joseph do? What did Joseph do to serve God's purpose?

Come on. I'm afraid you guys will fall asleep. What did Joseph do? Let me tell you what he did. Joseph remained submissive to God's will even when he was sold into slavery.

You know, that to me is so amazing. Can you imagine being sold into slavery by your brothers?

What would you do if you were being sold into slavery? Oh, wow!

You're going to hunt down your brothers. But before you can hunt down your brothers, what would you do? You must escape, isn't it? You must have freedom, isn't it?

You're a vengeful person. You must escape. You must run away. You must get your freedom.

[ 16 : 48 ] But you know what Joseph did? Even when Joseph could not understand what was going on, he submitted to God's will because God had allowed that to happen.

And he believed in his heart that there is a purpose. He may not understand what it is, but he submitted to it. And in the end, he declared that you guys meant me harm, but God meant it for good.

Because at the end of the day, God placed me in Egypt so that I can help the Egyptians gather their grain. so when the drought came, we didn't have to starve.

And in the process, I even was able to save my family. What did Moses do? Come on, come on, quick answer.

Saved his people from Egypt. He, well, he did save them, but he actually brought them out of Egypt. Isn't it? Easy? How many of you want to be Moses?

[ 18 : 03 ] I wanted to be Moses until I realized what he went through. It was horrible. I tell you, I would have killed all those Israelites.

Stiff-necked people. But he remained faithful. What did Joshua do? Joshua brought them, after 40 years in the wilderness, into the promised land.

What did Daniel do? I'm testing your Bible knowledge. What did Daniel do? He trusted God.

He trusted God when he was taken away by Israel's enemies. I would love for the church to study Daniel together.

Because Daniel is a remarkable person. You know, Daniel was taken away by his enemies to serve in two different empires.

[ 19 : 09 ] The first being Babylon and the other one being Persian. But you know what Daniel did? Daniel remained faithful to God. And Daniel served his enemies faithfully.

And in the process, I believe I would see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven. I would even see Cyrus in heaven.

Darius. Why? Because of Daniel's testimony. I could go on and on and on.

The New Testament, we see the apostles. The apostles were faithful in preaching the gospel, making disciples.

Amen? Most of them remain in Jerusalem, but a lot of them went up. What did Paul do? Paul brought the gospel to the Gentiles.

[ 20 : 20 ] What did William, not this William, what did William Wilberforce do? You know, a lot of times we simply focus on the Bible.

But let me tell you this, in history, there are many great men of God. William Wilberforce do. I don't know whether William, you were given that name because of William Wilberforce.

No. Oh, different reason. William the Conqueror. No. William Wilberforce was a parliamentarian in the United Kingdom, in England.

He was the one responsible, he was the one instrumental to the abolition of slavery in England. He spent 20 years of his life endangering his own life, just to fight against the rich and the authorities because slavery was a great way to get cheap labour.

But in his heart and in his mind, God showed him that this cannot be it. Even the blacks are made by God, isn't it? They are God's children.

[ 21 : 33 ] William Carey, what did William Carey do? Very good. You guys, I'm so disappointed in you. If the pastor could answer my questions, that means something is not right.

You must help him. He brought the gospel to India. What did Hudson Taylor do? Wrong. Hudson Taylor, who followed who?

Hudson Taylor, yes, Hudson Taylor brought the gospel to China, but he wasn't the first person.

There were people before him. What Hudson Taylor did was brought the gospel into inland China, where in fact no missionaries went because it was too dangerous, too difficult.

That is the reason why when he set up the mission organization, it's called the China Inland Mission. Hudson Taylor did that. What did Bob Pierce do?

You know who Bob Pierce is? Heard of World Vision? World Vision? Bob Pierce was the one who started World Vision.

[ 22 : 50 ] Bob Pierce was an American soldier fighting during the Korean War in the Korean Peninsula in the 50s. When the war was over, Bob Pierce saw the devastation.

The devastation that was left behind because of the war. He saw orphans, children without parents. He saw wives without husbands, widowed.

he saw these people roaming around the streets, aimless, helpless. He said, this can't be it. This can't be it.

And because of that, he started World Vision to help the marginalized peoples of the world. And I love Bob Pierce's prayer. His prayer is made famous already.

He's very famous now. He's often quoted, God break my heart with the things that break yours. What a prayer. Amen. God break my heart with the things that break yours.

[ 23 : 59 ] You know, I really can go on and on and on, but this evening, as I go into my message proper, I would like to re-highlight the person that we just read about.

For when David served God's purpose in his generation, he fell asleep. What exactly did David do? I think David's life is worth our in-depth study.

In fact, David had done many, many things. But as I look at David's life, I believe that there's one thing that he did that God really honoured and God really took pleasure in.

And that can be found in 1 Samuel chapter 17. I actually would like to go through reading the entire chapter 17, but I can't.

But you can. Go back and read chapter 17 because it is a famous chapter that talks about his battle against Goliath. Remember the story?

[ 25 : 05 ] All of us in church, we grew up reading a story. and we grew up hoping to be David's. But it was a famous chapter.

It is a famous chapter. But I believe what made David so special was not so much was his fight against Goliath, but what he was fighting for.

You know, in short, what David was fighting for was God's honour and God's reputation. As we look into chapter 17, you'll understand what I'm saying.

Chapter 17 opens up to tell us that there was war going on between the Israelites and the Philistines. For those of us who are not familiar, please go back and read those chapters because it talks about the reign of Saul and how the Philistines were continuously bullying the Israelites.

Okay, they were fighting the Israelites. They were trying to conquer the Israelites. They were trying to gain territory from the Israelites. That is the reason why if you look at chapter 17, it opens up by describing a battle between the Philistines and the Israelites.

[ 26 : 28 ] But the thing is that the battle was fought in Israel. Alright, that will tell you who is fighting against who, who is bullying who, the battle was fought in Israel.

And if you follow that chapter, it will tell you that both armies came out, both were on different sides of the battleground. They literally encamped themselves on two different sides.

Wow, if you love battle scenes, okay, that is another really awesome battle scene. you know, both armies came together and after setting, after drawing the battle lines, after encamping on both sides, the Bible starts to tell us.

And the Philistines came out. One person came out and his name was Goliath. Goliath came out and Goliath was this huge man.

Huge man. Who is the tallest guy here? Okay, anyway, it doesn't matter. You're not taller than Goliath. Okay, I was just trying to show what a big tall man looks like.

[ 27 : 43 ] But it was Goliath and I love Goliath's challenge to Israel. Goliath said, let's make this fight simple. Alright, let's not kill so many people.

Goliath said, give me one man. Give me one man. Let him and I let's both fight.

Alright, whoever wins will lord over the other country, the other nation. Okay, the party that loses will submit themselves to the winning side.

Do you think battles should be fought this way? Well, I think battles should not be fought in the first place. No war should take place. But if ever there needs to be a fight, good way?

You don't dare to answer anymore. I think it's an awesome way. How many people will die in the end? One. is that good? One guy.

[ 28 : 53 ] One guy. Goliath wanted one man. One man. But you know what the Bible recorded? The Bible recorded that Goliath came out for 40 days challenging the Israelites.

And the Israelites for 40 days came out and shouted across the battle line. Shattered. But what the verse 24 says, after shouting when the Israelites saw the man, they ran from him in great fear.

Up to a certain stage, Goliath was literally abusing, verbally abusing the Israelites, belittling the Israelites. Not only that, he was belittling God, Yahweh.

You guys worship a true God, you claim. You guys, and Yahweh is supposed to be one and only true God.

And is this Yahweh's army? All I'm asking is one man and there's no man who dares to come out to fight me.

[ 30 : 17 ] 40 days. You think that's comic? What do you think? Can you imagine, I don't want to go into the politics of Russia and Ukraine.

Can you imagine Putin standing there for 40 days, shouting at the Ukrainians? That will never happen, doesn't it? But the whole thing went on for 40 days, more than a month of shouting. And every time the Israelites finished shouting, they trembled and left the place and went back to their own camp until David turned up.

David was only a teenager then. He couldn't even wear the armour that was given to him. He was a brave young lad and everything was really stacked against him.

A teenager who has no battle experience, no war experience, he wasn't even old enough to join the army, but he came out to want to do battle with Goliath.

[ 31 : 26 ] And what was his motivation? Of course there were lots of promises made, isn't it?

Promises that, if there's anyone who is willing to come out and he beats Goliath, he's going to be able to marry Saul's daughter and his father and his family doesn't have to pay tax anymore.

Is that good? Sure? Of course it's good if you can stay alive, isn't it? If you're dead, all that is good for nothing, right?

So let me tell you this, David's motivation wasn't all that. David was concerned with God's honour. David was concerned with God's reputation. Somebody is belittling God here and none of us are doing anything.

That's why when he came onto the scene he was wondering, doesn't Israel have one person who is willing to stand up and fight this man?

[ 32 : 38 ] No? None? I'll do it. But his confidence wasn't in himself. His confidence and motivation was brought.

God, you know, if you read verse 45, you will see that he was going against Goliath in the name of the Lord Almighty.

He was in Yahweh's name, the God of the armies of Israel. You see his declaration? He's coming to fight, not because he can do it, but he's fighting because of God.

And verse 46 goes on to say that the Lord will hand Goliath to me. Not that I can fight him, but God will hand him to me.

And then the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. You see his bold declarations? Who is he fighting for?

[ 33 : 40 ] He's fighting for God. And verse 47 he says that the battle is the Lord's and God will give all the Philistines into Israel's hands.

What was his motivation? His motivation was God. God's glory, God's honour, God's reputation. And now you wonder why he is called a man after God's heart.

Do we hope to be called men after God's hearts? Do we? Are you concerned with the things that God is concerned with?

You know, the rest of the story, as they say, is history. You and I know what happened. With a sling and a pebble, David killed the lion, chopped up his head, and Israel gained victory.

You know, at the most basic level, if we want to extract lessons from it, at the most basic level, it is the fight between David and Goliath, right?

[ 34 : 56 ] And if you want to go a little further up, it is actually a fight between Israel and the Philistines. But this evening, I challenge us to go even further up.

What do you think God is trying to teach us, or what God is trying to challenge us by putting in this story? You know, very often when we read the Bible, we can't just read it by the words, okay?

Surface. It can't be just surface because God has very deep meanings in His Word. If I want to go at a higher level, you know what this chapter is about?

This chapter is actually about God and about Satan challenging God's people. You know, the world is screaming at you and I every day.

Just 10, 20 minutes ago, we were praying for New Zealand. You saw how terrible New Zealand is? You guys came to the wrong country, man.

[ 36 : 08 ] We were looking for a better place. But this place is more horrible, I'm sure, from where we came from compared with where we came from. So many problems.

You and I read about this. You and I hear about it from the news every day, social media every day. What do you think that those sort of news is? It is literally the world and Satan screaming at us, laughing at us.

We have all these problems in the world and you Christians declare every day that Jesus is going to save the world and Jesus is the solution to all of the world's problems.

Amen? Is that what we are saying? Give me one man. how many of us are really looking at the world today and say that truly the gospel and Jesus is the only solution to all the problems?

We sing about it, we talk about it, we preach about it, we hear about it, but all these have just become sound bites for Christians. how many of us are willing to put our hands and say me by God's grace, not because I can do it, David couldn't do it, but it was with God's strength that he was going to do something about it.

[ 37 : 56 ] The world says give me one man. And I ask all of us here today, where is that one man? Where is that one man?

Are we concerned with God's reputation? Are we concerned with what's going on around the world? Are we happy to just continue to shout for the next 40 years?

Where is that one man? I am very blessed. For those of you who know me, I am so blessed because Christina and I, we gave our lives to God for full time ministry more than 20 years ago. It was such a blessed life that we embarked on. Why? Because we were not there was this holy discontent in us.

That life cannot be like that. You know, the world has too many means for us to continue to live the lives as we know it to be. We were able to serve full time in New Zealand for eight years and we were so privileged that we were able to serve in China for the next 10 years and when we weren't able to stay in China anymore we came back and continued to serve the community with the organisation to mobilise people for missions how awesome is that people but whilst we are mobilising whilst we are going to different churches talking to young people middle aged people older people retired people we are discovering more and more that the people who are willing to say here I am send me are few and far between but there are cases that are willing to go there are people who are willing to go and we praise

[ 40 : 06 ] God for that because in our mobilisation efforts we have seen people raise their hands and say I'm here but you know for whatever reasons a lot of these people not many but those who are willing to go are not able to go for whatever reasons and those are valid reasons why because they just gave birth to a baby that had lots of medical issues and they cannot afford to go overseas Christina will tell you that I came back to New Zealand kicking and venting because I wasn't very happy to leave the mission field and I've always had the heart to go back because the needs there are tremendous and God continued to put this holy discontent in our hearts but as we saw the situation not many really very very few are willing to go but those who are willing to go very few people can go we looked at each other and we said we can go and we are willing to go

I thank God in October November this year both of us will be heading out back to the mission field the only problem is when I share this with people they never tell us directly but in their hearts are saying aren't you a little bit too old I'm 64 but God willing if God gives me good health gives my wife good health we will use 70 as a milestone if we can serve on further we will my only headache is language learning at this age we are not going back to where we went but we are going to Thailand so please pray for us pray with us that

I will be able to learn Thailand Thai at 64 but thank God I don't have to minister in Thailand because our focus when we are in Thailand is actually the refugees from the Middle East and from South Asia so we will be ministering mostly in English but I need Thai to survive all I know is at this moment so if my Thai doesn't go well it's because you guys have not been praying for me but how I wish that all of us at different stages in our lives will have this holy discontent I don't care how old you are but my prayer is that we will be contented with what we are doing where we are in life because there's something bigger something greater that God would want us to do amen what exactly is that in your life

Acts 13 verse 36 is one of my favorite verses totally inconspicuous but God paid David an awesome compliment how I hope one day when I see Jesus Jesus will say you serve my purpose in your generation how many of us aspire for that can I have a show of hands no aspirations you

know how awesome that compliment is that so and so Gary you serve my purpose in your generation you fell asleep what a fulfilled life isn't it

I told Christina chances are I'm going to go to see Jesus earlier than her because the wives usually uplift the husbands I said I told her Christians usually have a Bible verse in their tombstone right and I see the usual selected verses for the good fight that is good but be more original man I told her if she thinks that my life is worthy of that verse of this verse then maybe I can use it for when he served God's purpose in his generation you better see is there anything greater than that I don't know but after

[ 45 : 59 ] I use it you guys can still use it you know what there's no copyright and how I hope and wish one day when we are in heaven that Jesus will say that to all of us that you have served my purpose come home let us pray father we just want to thank you we want to thank you for your word we want to thank you for this inconspicuous verse in Acts chapter 13 that when David served your purpose in his generation he fell asleep father my prayer this evening is that as we look at the world as we look at how much the world needs you as we look at how tormented this world is how broken this world is and how this world is just showing us this side and so gleeful about it that there will be people here in our midst that will put up your hand put up our hands and say

God use me I want to be that man I want to be that person and father as we reflect on our generation as we reflect on the world around us we can't help but acknowledge that the world really is coming to an end soon and we are living in the end times father especially in times like these may we all acknowledge that there's nothing greater nothing more important than to serve your purpose with the remaining of our breath with the daylight that we still have father my prayer for the english church of pcbc that regardless of how young we are what our age is it doesn't matter but we will aspire to serve your purpose we will aspire pray and hope that one day at the end of it all father you will say that when we serve your purpose in our generation we went back home to see you father may this verse continue to speak to us may your holy spirit continue to challenge us challenge us to tell us that there's nothing greater more purposeful more fulfilling more important than to know what you want us to accomplish for you in our generation father we thank you for speaking to us and father my prayer is that you continue to speak to us until we respond to you in jesus name we pray amen amen thank you pastor casey os don't have if no want go ■ and or baby ■ are 50