



For This Reason

A Holy Week message from
the Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Davenport, bishop.

Adapted from her sermon on [John 12:20-36](#) at the SEPA Chrism Service, March 26, 2024.

**“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say: ‘Father, save me from this hour’?
No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.” – John 12:27**

Beloved, this Holy Week our point is to ponder Jesus’ answer to his own question: For this reason. For this reason!

In his book *The Purpose Driven Church* Dr. Rick Warren notes that “every church is driven by some controlling force: tradition, finances, programs, events, personalities, or even the building itself.” Yet he emphasizes that a *people-building, inclusive process* will allow a church to grow without compromising its message and mission.

He also wrote *The Purpose Driven Life*, which he summarizes as “a road map for your spiritual journey.” He suggests that knowing your purpose can provide a fresh perspective on how the pieces of your life fit together, by exploring three essential questions: The question of existence: Why am I alive? The question of significance: Does my life matter? The question of purpose: What on Earth am I here for?”

Throughout scripture we witness Jesus’s purpose driven life. John 1:14 -- “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana, teaches fishermen in Gennesaret how to do a big catch, heals the mute, blind, lame, and impaired. Once he fed 5,000-plus women, along with men and children. Jesus calms storms, cleanses lepers, and heals on the Sabbath.

For this reason, is there any wonder why the Greeks want to see Jesus?

Today we are dealing with a war in Israel, over 31,000 people killed to date (over 1,400 Israelis and over 30,000 Palestinians) with no ceasefire in site. In South Sudan, we don’t talk about what is happening with the Sudanese. In Haiti, we are getting the Americans out. The Haitians are trapped.

Systemic racism is on the rise with white supremists attempting to erase our civil rights. With the former president leading the charge: “Now if I don’t get elected, it’s going to be a blood bath for the whole – that’s going to be the least of it. It’s going to be a blood bath for the country.” This divisive presidential election is breathing fear in our communities of color. Beloved, our LGBTQIA+ community is also feeling the pressures of what can be rescinded.

For this reason, people need to see Jesus.

The wealth gap between the haves and the have nots is so vast, do we really have a middle class?

Gun violence is taking or changing the lives of people in one way or another. Recently, Derrick Gant -- a rapper known as Phat Geez -- was caught on surveillance video in front of his home speaking to someone inside the car, seconds later, he was shot. Ironically, he had recently released a song called "Nogunzone" in the hope to use his music to reduce gun violence.

Two weeks ago five people were shot at a SEPTA bus stop. Seventeen-year-old Daymen Taylor was killed when gunfire rang out at a stop on Ogontz Avenue two blocks from Imhotep Charter High School, where my grandson Cristian also attends. Yes, Daymen was his cousin. Then another shooting of eight teens in the northeast, followed by five teens arrested for attempted murder.

For this reason, people need to see Jesus.

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

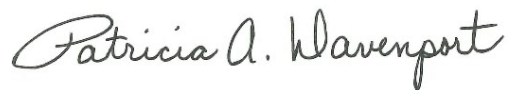
Beloved, we are the fruit of the tree upon which our savior died. Jesus says: Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever would serve me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.

We are the servants who serve to the glory of God. For this reason, people want to see that Jesus in you and me, in those we rally on Sunday morning from the Lutheran Tribe. Seventy thousand people willing to lay down their lives and serve others in the name of Jesus. God’s work being done by our hands, heads and hearts.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said it well: “Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

For love, God so loved the world, and in love Jesus lived a purpose driven life, so that we can have a purpose driven church that glorifies God. We each have purpose, love God and love and serve our neighbor, who is our neighbor, the one in need. In need of God’s grace, mercy and love in whatever form fills the need.

Blessings on your Holy Week journey to the cross and the empty tomb!



The Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Davenport
Bishop



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