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The Purpose of Our Lives Really Is to Glorify God

One of my made-up sayings: "You can't fix what you can't define." Or stated positively, "Define it in order to fix it." What these statements mean is that believers need to have *telos*, that is, to have a clear sense of the goal, the purpose of it all. Ultimately, our *telos* is to glorify God. In what ways are we to glorify God? By doing what he commands (i.e., what He has ordained for our benefit so we can achieve "giving glory to God"). Looking at life and its issues through the lens of giving glory to God clarifies what our spiritual, mental, and emotional responses and actions should be. These responses, then, are not just separate ethical norms but are all part of the reason for our *telos*: giving glory to God. In this sense, the ten commandments are not ten separate duties that we have to juggle; they are the parts of the whole, pointing to what it means "to be holy and as I am holy." Jesus summarizes the ten into two in the Great Commandment: *love God and love others*. To love God (glorify him) is fulfilled not only in worshiping the one true God, but also in ethically loving and caring for those whom God made. So again, it all comes back to God being central and our responses and actions being framed by "glorifying God" and enjoying doing so. Understanding this releases us from acting out of duty to serve out of joy so that all of life is a response to God's glory. ~Dr. Aquila



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We appreciate your regular support to assist us provide the highest quality Christ-centered, biblical and theological education for our students. Thanks to the generosity of individuals like you, we are making a difference in the lives of students as they prepare to serve in vocational ministry here and around the world. You can partner with New Geneva Seminary by mailing your support; you may also give online through a safe, secure and simple manner by going to www.newgeneva.org and clicking on the "Donate" tab at the top of the page. If you would like to consider a special gift to the seminary, contact Dr. Dominic Aquila at daquila@newgeneva.org or 719-573-5395, to discuss your desires.

Fredericksburg Campus Graduation

On May 15 we will hold the Sixth Commencement at our Fredericksburg, VA, campus. There are two graduates: Mary Ferrell will receive her Master in Christian Ministry, and Paul Hepperle will receive his Master of Divinity. We are glad to celebrate this special day with these graduates.

Dr. Aquila—Out of Egypt

The New Geneva extension in Egypt continues to provide biblical and theological education for our students. From April 1-8, Dr. Aquila, along with two other instructors, were in Egypt

to provide instruction. In the Master's program we taught on the Means of Grace, Biblical Anthropology, and the History of Christianity from the Middle Ages to the Modern Period, with heavy emphasis on the Reformation. In the Doctor of Ministry program we taught on Preaching and Hermeneutics, and the Principles and Practices of Discipleship. About seventy students were enrolled.

Dr. Aquila also had the privilege of preaching Sunday morning and evening at the Second Evangelical Church in Assiut, about 250 miles south of Cairo. Located in the Nile Delta, ancient Assiut was founded around 3100 BC.

Was the Thief on the Cross Justified without Being Sanctified?

Sinclair Ferguson, in his book, *Devoted to God*, wrote concerning the dying-thief-justification without sanctification (p. 10):

But what about the dying thief—the criminal who turned to Jesus at the end of his life and asked for a place in his kingdom. Surely, he is the illustration par excellence of a man who was justified without being sanctified? He had no time to be sanctified.

In fact, this anonymous penitent turns out to be a powerful proof of the principle: no sanctification, no justification—no changed life, no changed status. For his justification was demonstrated by an immediate transformation. How so? He confessed his own sinfulness; he recognized Jesus' lordship; his attitude towards him changed from despising him to respecting him; he prayed. Even more than this, he defended Jesus and rebuked his companion for the vitriol he heaped on his new-found Master. In the last moments of his life, he demonstrated that he was a justified believer who was already in the process of being sanctified and prepared to see the Lord in Paradise. He was not justified on the basis of his sanctification but on the basis of free grace. But neither was he justified without being sanctified.

Crisis in Ukraine: A Missionary Perspective

We've all been concerned about the news we're hearing from Ukraine. Recently, Dr. Mark House had the opportunity to sit down with Mel and Martha Pike, who serve in Kiev, Ukraine, with Mission to the World (MTW), the mission agency of the Presbyterian Church in America. Mel is currently working on his Doctor of Ministry degree at New Geneva. The Pikes were in Ukraine when Russia's most recent attack on that country began. In the following excerpts from our interview with the Pikes, they share some of their experiences as they attempted to get to safety once the missiles began to fly. The entire transcript of the interview will soon be available on our website. You can support the Pikes in their work in Ukraine by clicking here: <https://mtw.org/missionaries/details/mel-pike>.

Mark: What tipped you off that the Russian invasion was about to get underway?

Mel: I was feeling increasingly uncomfortable about what I was seeing. When the Israelis emptied out their embassy in Ukraine and the Russians moved in portable crematories and were putting in more medical stations along the border. All this clearly seemed like serious preparations for war.

We had made a commitment to Ivan, the Pastor of the International Church there in Kiev, to help him with preaching while he recovered from some oral surgery. Our last Sunday with church was February 13. I preached, and we had communion with the saints, and we announced then that Martha and I were going to go to take a break. Our plan was to go to Lviv, which has always been a relatively safe place, and just monitor the situation from there.

We bought tickets from the Lviv airport to Munich and then to Denver. That was on Wednesday, and on Thursday they shut down air travel in and out of Ukraine. Soon missiles began to fly over Lviv, and we began hearing air raid sirens. Then the missiles began striking—I think the closest one was about seventy-five kilometers away. The Lord spared us from bullets and bombs; we never experienced explosions or anything of that sort, but we certainly heard a lot of sirens and witnessed a lot of panic and anxiety.

They have a regular train that goes across the border into Poland every day. So we got tickets to board that train. But when the bombs started coming on Thursday, that train was also canceled.

We began to see if we could hire a driver to take us to the border, but with gas rationing and the dangers of the war, drivers weren't exactly anxious to leave. And by then, we saw in the news that the lines at the Polish border were already indescribable.

So finally, I said, "Well, if the Polish border's impossible, let's try a border that may not be so heavy. So we got train tickets to go to this little town near the Hungarian border. To board the train at 6 a.m. the next morning, we had to wait at the train station overnight. And it was so jammed full of people that we literally stood most of the night. But the train never arrived.

Then I called Doug Shepherd, the MTW team leader in Lviv, and found out that the Lviv team had decided to divide the team, and Doug would drive the mothers and children to Krakow, Poland. We were invited to caravan out with them. We were initially hopeful to go directly into Poland, but that didn't work out, so we travelled south to Slovakia. That was also overcrowded, so we went on to Hungary, which was also swamped. Finally, we found a place in Romania where we could cross the border with just a few hours wait.

In Romania we were met by a Baptist group that had offered to take care of us. So we drove to this little town where they

fed us pizza and a few homegrown things that Romanians love. Then they farmed us out to different houses for the night. The next morning, as we gathered at the church, the town's mayor came in while we ate breakfast and welcomed us to Romania.

After that, an MTW missionary from Slovakia, Dan Gregory, arrived with two other drivers with big vans and lots more refugees. There were 30 people in all in the group, plus the three drivers. So we hopped in with them and crossed the border into Hungary and then into Slovakia, where we stayed the night as guests of a church there. Then, the next morning, after a three- or four-hour drive, we made it to Krakow, Poland. The church there had set up hotel accommodations for all thirty of us. We spent a couple of days just resting up there, then we purchased tickets back to the U.S. We decided to fly to Phoenix to spend a few days with Martha's family there.



Mark: So, looking forward, what do you anticipate? I guess you can't really tell at this point. But what are your hopes?

Mel: Our sincere desire to get back. We have not retired; we've not said, "Oh, I guess the Lord shut that door." Our desire is not necessarily just to recoup the things we left behind, it's to get back to the ministry that we left, the people that we were associated with, and the work we committed to doing. However, with all the changes

that have happened, we see that we're going to have to go back as new missionaries in this sense—we're going to speak English and learn Ukrainian, because the people no longer want to hear Russian.

A more immediate need is that I have a meeting scheduled with the session of the Trinity Church in Montrose, Colorado, on Monday. They're possibly going to need pulpit supply in the meantime. So there may be an opportunity for at least the immediate term.

Mark: Can you share with us some major prayer requests so our readers can pray for your ministry?

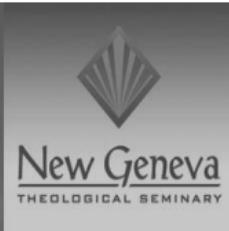
Well, I think obviously, the first one is that this war would be over. Pray that the Prince of Peace would invade Ukraine.

We would also love just to see a great awakening there. We've been praying for years that God would move and bring many to faith in Christ and Ukraine, and that the Prince of Peace would bring the ultimate peace between God and His people.

Pray for us, that we will just be patient. We want God to tell us where we're going and what we're going to do. Also, pray for us in the meantime as we begin to learn Ukrainian.

Then, please pray for the folks that are left behind. Families have been split apart. Pastor Ivan's family is with him, but his sons are of an age that the military could take them. Most of the men there have sent their wives and children beyond the border of Ukraine. The men are left behind. Pray that God would protect them as they're separated from their families.

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