

1. Our LifeLines verse for May 13 will be 2 Timothy 1:12!
2. Our last LifeLine session for Spring will *probably* be May 20. Your thoughts?

LifeLines May 6, 2024

Today's Scripture: 2 Verses

Ephesians 3:11-12

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that He has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness & confidence through faith in Him.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT (These verses are often referred to as *God's eternal purpose*.)

The believers in Ephesus were distressed about Paul's imprisonment, persecution & suffering on behalf of the church. They were so distressed they were becoming discouraged, even discouraged in their faith. Hearing about this, Paul wrote a letter to them that begins with a beautiful prayer, Ephesians 1:15-23 (Extra Credit if you read those verses!). It was to encourage them & demonstrate his own faith in the midst of his suffering that he wrote our LifeLines verses. He reminded them they were part of God's purpose & plan; therefore, they were to remain firm in Christ, the Son & Source of their faith & to be bold in approaching the Lord who created them. We must do the same.

While Paul preached to anyone who would listen, he was called as a minister to the Gentiles. As such, he wanted Jews & Gentiles alike to know we are members of the same body of Christ & entitled to all the benefits our faith allows. He was both practical & spiritual. So was Jesus! We are to be both, too! It's called being *in the world, yet not of the world*.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV or to versions shown below.)

AMP

This is in accordance with [the terms of] the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness & confident access through faith in Him] that is, our faith gives us sufficient courage to freely & openly approach God through Christ].

CJB

This accords with God's age-old purpose, accomplished in Messiah Yeshua, our Lord. In union with Him through His faithfulness, we have boldness & confidence when we approach God.

ERV

This agrees with the plan God had since the beginning of time. He did what He planned, & He did it through Christ Jesus our Lord. In Christ we come before God with freedom & without fear. We can do this because of our faith in Christ.

GW

This was God's plan for all of history which He carried out through Jesus Christ our Lord. We can go to God with bold confidence through faith in Christ.

MSG

All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God & then executed in Christ Jesus. When we trust Him, we're free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go.

NCV

This agrees with the purpose God had since the beginning of time, & He carried out His plan through Christ Jesus our Lord. In Christ we can come before God with freedom & without fear. We can do this through faith in Christ.

NirV

That was God's plan from the beginning. He has worked it out through Christ Jesus our Lord. Through Him & through faith in Him we can approach God. We can come to Him freely (meaning no sacrifice necessary). We can come without fear.

NLT

This was His eternal plan, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. Because of Christ & our faith in Him, we can now come boldly & confidently into God's Presence.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose... God has an eternal purpose for all things. "In accordance with" means *in agreement with* or *conforming to* that purpose. The eternal purpose mentioned here was for Christ's death to open the door to all Jews & Gentiles. Early believers could hardly believe all this would be possible one day. For them to look more than 2,000 years into the future would have seemed an eternity in itself.

God accomplishes *all* His purposes (Isaiah 55:11). As a loving God, His purposes manifest, or showcase, His love. This wasn't a new plan God dreamed up! He knew we would need redemption in order to live with Him for eternity. Our God is foresighted & thorough!

That He has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord... Jesus' earthly ministry made this possible. Before the world was made, God knew Satan would fall & man would follow him in sin. Being omniscient, God had already prepared a strategy to be worked out in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension & glorification of Christ. The plan was centered *in* Christ & realized *through* Him. The result of His plan was to save us, make us members of Christ's body "the church," conform us to the image of His Son & honor us with access to Him as the Bride of Christ, His Son – throughout eternity! God's plan *has been accomplished in Christ & is still being carried out!* We are the beneficiaries!

In whom we have access to God in boldness & confidence... Believers have free & full access to God. Faith grounded in Christ is the way we gain boldness & have access to God & all He has done for us. Union with Christ gives believers assurance of our relationship with God. We are joint heirs with Christ, & we have confidence that God will never reject us. What a privilege!

Through faith in Him... Faith in God brings with it *His* power, *His* faithfulness, *His* forgiveness & acceptance, *His* righteousness, *His* hearing of our prayers, the fullness of new life in Christ, *His* work of grace, eternal life & entrance into *His* kingdom.

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Verses are NRSV unless otherwise stated. What verses come to *your* mind?)

Genesis 1:26, Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness;"

Genesis 1:27, So God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them;

Isaiah 46:9b-10, "For I am God, & there is no other; I am God, & there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning & from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My purpose shall stand, & I will fulfill My intention,'"

Isaiah 55:11, So shall My Word be that goes from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, & succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

John 1:12-13, But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

John 17:16, They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

Romans 5:2, Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; & we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

Romans 8:29-30, For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom He predestined He also called; & those whom He called He also justified; & those whom He justified He also glorified.

Romans 11:13-14, Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous, & thus save some of them.

Romans 12:2a, Do not be conformed to this world.

2 Corinthians 3:4, Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19a, All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, & has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself.

Ephesians 1:3-4, Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy & blameless before Him in love.

Ephesians 1:11, In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of Him who accomplishes all things according to His counsel & will.

Ephesians 1:20, God put this power to work in Christ when He raised Him from the dead & seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:18, For through Him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Colossians 1:12, Giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness & transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 3:14, For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.

Hebrews 4:16, Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy & find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 6:17, In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath.

Hebrews 10:19-22, Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new & living way that He opened for us through the curtain (that is, through His flesh), & since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience & our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:35-36a, Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance...

1 John 2:28, And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He is revealed we may have confidence & not be put to shame before Him at His coming.

1 John 3:2, Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when He is revealed, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.

1 John 3:21-22, Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; & we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we obey His commandments & do what pleases Him.

1 John 4:17, Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the Day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world.

1 John 5:4, For whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith.

1 John 5:11, And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, & this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Revelation 4:11, You are worthy, our Lord & God, to receive glory & honor & power, for You created all things, & by Your will they existed & were created.

SUMMARY

Did you ever ask yourself what God's eternal purpose was? Think about that for a moment. (Pause.) Our God is a god of purpose. He doesn't do anything randomly or by accident. Our purposes or goals may span a few days, weeks or years, but God's purposes stretch from eternity past to eternity future. His eternal purpose is to work out His eternal will – and He allows us to be part of that! He desired to produce people in His image! Like Him! He wants people who love Him & live for Him. *His* purpose is accomplished in & through the life He gives us & by the access He gives us to Himself. He *works Himself into us* through the Holy Spirit in order to make our spiritual transformation possible. If He didn't make it possible for us to come boldly to His throne of grace, His purpose could hardly become reality. Christ enabled this. This was God's plan from the beginning.

CONCLUSION

We're all part of the same spiritual family. We have a way to the Father through Jesus Christ. Before Christ, only high priests were allowed to enter the holiest place – the Holy of Holies - & only once a year, by making blood sacrifices! Because of the blood of Jesus, we have confidence to enter the holy places, & that confidence brings great rewards. We do nothing to deserve this access. It is a free gift of grace. As Paul said in Romans 6:23, “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When we experience God's salvation, we don't just receive forgiveness & fellowship, we receive the divine life of being conformed to His image. May we know & experience more of His Presence in our daily life through our access to Him & the boldness He encourages us to have & confidence in Him made possible because of our faith. Amen!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!

Let Ephesians 3:11-12 be a *LifeLine* for you.

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that He has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness & confidence through faith in Him.

Take a few minutes to think about this LifeLine & our discussion.

1. Write something you want to remember about this LifeLine:

2. Write one thing you feel compelled to share with someone? Whom will it be?

3. How & when will you share with that person?
