

'God has made us what we are. God has created us in King Jesus for the good works that he prepared, ahead of time, as the road we are to travel.' (translation of Ephesians 2: 10 by Tom Wright)

Read Psalm 139: 13-18 & 23-24

Extracts from this well known and loved Psalm which makes clear that each and every individual has been lovingly created as unique, and as such, God continues to lovingly watch over us all. Using the acronym S H A P E (see inset box) let us look at how God has been directing you in the past and what your purpose is in the present.

<p>S for Spiritual Gifts: Recognize your unique God given gifts and put them to work.</p> <p>H for Heart: God has given you a unique "emotional" heartbeat that races when you think about the subjects, activities, or circumstances that interest you. The things you care about reveal the nature of your heart.</p> <p>A for Abilities: those are the natural abilities you excel at and "love" doing.</p> <p>P for Personalities: your personality type is part of God design. Embrace it and express it for his glory.</p> <p>E for Experiences: by God's grace you have acquired many personal, relational, educational, spiritual and vocational experiences. They will inform and strengthen your purpose.</p> <p>Erik Rees</p>

S – It is difficult to comprehend sometimes that each of us is special, unique in fact. We know this to be fact because God has said that is how He made us. In the realm of God purposes, there are some things that you were specifically made to deliver for Him. How does that make you feel?

H – What are the things that really 'float your boat'? What positive things would you choose to spend your time doing? How do you feel doing these things?

A - Other than you, who does or who could benefit by sharing these positive activities, your skills and abilities? Have you shared them in the past? Did it help those with whom you shared?

P – 'I would just like to be a little more like.....'. Against what benchmark are you assessing your own personality? Is it against what is promoted through media /advertising, or against the personality characteristics of Jesus?

E – Are we not the sum of what we have learnt from our various life experiences, from birth to today? Our response to today's challenges, small or large, are assessed by reference to what life has so far taught us. Where does your relationship with God fit in? Does knowing you were made for a purpose affect your decision making?

Read Luke 5: 1-11

Let's look at the SHAPE of Peter's response to Jesus' call. Peter is a seasoned fisherman, most likely taught by his father from an early age. He knows that fish are most likely to be caught at night and, having been fishing unsuccessfully all night, 'knew' that to start fishing now would be a waste of time. Peter recognises that Jesus is some sort of Rabbi/teacher and, against his better judgement, follows Jesus' instructions. Jesus delivers a miracle which so impacts Peter that he abandons his livelihood, 'leaves everything', in order to follow Jesus.

What do we know of Peter's character and abilities? His likely background, education, worldly status, abilities? Would you have picked Peter as someone to task with delivering a world changing impact? Was Peter uniquely made by God for a unique purpose?

What would be our response if we 'saw a miracle'? Perhaps you can see miracles all around all the time?

How much detail did Jesus give to Peter about what he was calling him to do? Put yourself into the mind of Peter as he makes his decision to follow Jesus. What do you imagine he is considering?

Jesus reassures Peter about his future "Don't be afraid". Does Jesus say the same to you today?

Thought for the week: "In His will is my peace" *Dante Alighieri*

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you prayed to your Father, 'do what you want, not what I want.' Help us to follow your example. Help us to want to do the things that please you and to go the way you have chosen for us, because we love you. Amen

Bible used = NIV 2011 translation

St James Church, Taunton – Roger Fenton - 2022