SERMON NOTES

Find Your Purpose

A Month of Purpose · Part 1 of 4

Isaiah 2:4 · Psalm 139:13

BIG IDEA

Tearing down what's broken is sometimes necessary. It is never the goal. Building something better is the goal, and that takes a tool most of us have stopped carrying.

The full outline for this message, scripture first: The Text, What It Means, The Challenge and Closing. Adapt it freely and add your own stories.

PART 1 OPTION: PRE-RECORDED VIDEO

Instead of preaching this outline yourself, you can play Benjamin Windle's own message for week 1, "Swords and Shovels", written for video. Either way works. The full video script is included at the end of these notes.

01 The Text

ISAIAH 2:4

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

PSALM 139:13

"You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."

02 What It Means

Isaiah preached this to a nation under real threat: Assyria was closing in on Judah. It wasn't a poetic nicety; it was a call to lay down actual weapons. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares" turns instruments of violence and war into instruments of agriculture and growth. It's a vision of the world as it should be under God's reign. And it starts with an honest diagnosis of us: we're all born with a sword in our spirit. Nobody teaches a child how to destroy. It comes naturally, and as adults it shows up as outrage, criticism, comparison. Some of that is righteous; there's a holy "no" to real injustice. But a sword alone can't build a house, craft art, grow a family, or heal a neighborhood. Tearing down is sometimes necessary. It is never the goal.

Psalm 139:13 answers the deeper question underneath all of it. In Hebrew, "knit together" is a weaving image, every thread chosen with care. An assembly line produces identical things. You were not stamped off one. You were crafted, by name, before you ever built or produced anything, which settles the "am I replaceable" fear before it can even start.

03 The Challenge

Challenge: This week, notice every time you reach for the sword (criticizing, venting, tearing down) and pick up a shovel instead: build one small thing rather than critique one more. (Nicholas Winton is a good picture of this: in 1939 he quietly arranged trains out of Czechoslovakia for 669 Jewish children, and told no one, not even his wife, for fifty years. A shovel, picked up quietly.) That's where your Life Signature begins: over the next three weeks we'll name what God has already woven into you: your **Passion** (the fire in your bones), your **Gift** (the strength in your hands), and your **Burden** (the ache in your heart), the unique mark only you can leave. You don't chase it. You uncover it.

Encouragement: You were knit together, by name, on purpose. That's not pressure. That's permission.

04 Closing

> **Response:** Invite people into small groups this week (announce launch details). Close with the question this whole series will help answer: *"What will you replace the problem with?"*
>
> **Closing prayer:** Thank God for the shovel He's already placed in every hand in the room. Ask Him to use the next four weeks to help people uncover, not invent, what they were built to build.

FOR YOUR GROUPS

Groups: the Part 1 group guide works through this same passage. All Part 1 resources, including the bulletin outline and quote graphics, are on the Part 1 page.

Every Part 1 resource: monthofpurpose.benjaminwindle.com/part-1

APPENDIX · OPTIONAL VIDEO SCRIPT

Swords and Shovels

Benjamin Windle's own message for week 1

Isaiah 2:4 · Psalm 139:13

> ABOUT THIS VERSION
>
> Benjamin Windle's own message for week 1, first person, written for video. Not a template for other pastors to adapt; churches can simply play this instead of preaching the general outline earlier in these notes.

01 The Text

> ISAIAH 2:4
>
> *"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."*

> PSALM 139:13
>
> *"You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."*

02 The Moment

Twenty years after my first trip to Los Angeles, I flew back, not as a young newlywed with nothing to lose, but tired, having just stepped away from two decades of full-time pastoring, five suitcases and a dog in a crate, three sons watching to see if their dad could really lead them into the unknown. As the plane descended, one thought pressed in on me: *I'm just one small speck in all this. Does my life, my contribution, really matter?* I didn't sleep well that night. Maybe you've felt that. Maybe you feel it right now, watching everything you thought was solid get automated, replaced, or forgotten.

03 What It Means

I want to answer that with a statue I traveled to New York specifically to see. In the north garden of the United Nations headquarters stands a bronze figure: a blacksmith, hammer raised, pounding a sword into a shovel. It's a Cold War gift from the Soviet Union, and its official name, *Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares*, is pulled straight from Isaiah 2:4. Weapons into tools. Destruction into cultivation. War into peace. Isaiah wasn't giving blacksmith advice; he was preaching to a nation under real threat, calling people to lay down weapons and pick up tools.

We're all born with a sword in our spirit. I remember being five years old, so furious at my older brother that I smashed his favorite toy with a hammer. Nobody had to teach me how to destroy. It came naturally. A sword alone can't build a house. It can't craft art. It can't grow a family or heal a neighborhood. Yes, we should confront what's wrong: that's the sword. But we should also build

what's better: that's the shovel. And Psalm 139 answers the ache I felt on that plane: an assembly line produces identical things. I was knit together, by name, on purpose. So were you. That's the opposite of replaceable.

04 The Challenge

Challenge: Have we become a generation of all swords and no shovels? That bronze figure in New York asks a question none of us can ignore: what will you replace the problem with? This week, notice every time you reach for the sword, and choose the shovel instead. (Nicholas Winton is who I think of here: a young London stockbroker who spent 1939 quietly arranging trains out of Czechoslovakia for 669 Jewish children, and told no one, not even his wife, for fifty years.)

That's where the idea of your Life Signature begins: living with the shovel. It's the unique pattern of purpose God wove into you: your **Passion** (the fire in your bones), your **Gift** (the strength in your hands), your **Burden** (the ache in your heart). Most of us never find this, not because it isn't there, but because nobody ever taught us where to look. You don't chase your Life Signature. You uncover it.

Encouragement: Fame is not purpose. Accomplishment is not purpose. Wealth is not purpose. There's a reason you're part of this series. Over these four weeks we're going to uncover what you were built to build.

05 Closing

> **Closing prayer:** Thank God that He has already placed a shovel in every hand watching. Ask Him to use the next four weeks to uncover, not invent, what each person was built to build.