



## 5 DAY DEVOTIONAL

### Sermon: The Heart Of The Church

SERIES: DIVINE PURPOSE | SPEAKER: REV. CHRIS SMITH | 1/25/2026 | PAGE 1 OF 5

#### Day 1: From Scattered to Chosen

**Devotional:** Have you ever felt like you didn't belong anywhere? Like you were just drifting through life without purpose or connection? Many of us can relate to that feeling of being scattered, living separate lives with little sense of true community or belonging. But God has a beautiful way of taking scattered individuals and creating something extraordinary. What's remarkable is that our transformation from 'not a people' to 'God's chosen people' isn't based on our qualifications or achievements. We didn't earn our way into God's family through good deeds or perfect behavior. Instead, God chose us while we were still far from Him. He saw potential in us that we couldn't see in ourselves. He looked beyond our flaws, our past mistakes, and our weaknesses, and decided we were worth pursuing. This choosing isn't about our merit - it's about His grace. When God calls us, He doesn't just give us a new label; He gives us a new identity. We become part of His royal priesthood, His holy nation, His special possession. This isn't just religious language - it's the reality of who we are in Christ. We matter to the King of the universe. The beauty of being chosen by God is that it gives us both security and purpose. We're secure because His choice isn't based on our performance, so we can't lose our place in His family. We have purpose because He has specific plans for how He wants to use our unique story and gifts. Today, remember that you're not an accident or an afterthought. You're chosen, beloved, and valued by the Creator of everything.

**Bible Verse:** 'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.' - 1 Peter 2:9-10

**Reflection Question:** How does knowing that God specifically chose you, not because of your qualifications but because of His love, change the way you view yourself and your purpose in life?

**Quote:** Seven years ago, we were not a people. We were spread in different directions. I know I knew some of you seven years ago, but many of you I did not know. But today we're a part of a congregation, we're part of a body, part of the church, the local church. And today we are a people that's been brought together by the grace of God.

**Prayer:** Father, thank You for choosing me when I felt scattered and lost. Help me to truly understand and embrace my identity as Your chosen child. Give me confidence in Your love and clarity about the purpose You have for my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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#### Day 2: Born Into the Family

**Devotional:** There's something powerful about being born into a family versus trying to earn your way in. When you're born into a family, you belong from day one. You don't have to prove yourself or meet certain standards to maintain your place at the dinner table. This is exactly how our relationship with God works. We don't vote ourselves into His family through good behavior or religious activities. Instead, we're born into it through a spiritual transformation that happens when we respond to His call on our hearts. Think about the moment when God first stirred your heart. Maybe it was during a difficult season when you realized you needed something more than what this world could offer. Perhaps it was through the testimony of a friend or a moment of clarity during worship. Whatever the circumstances, God was knocking on your heart, inviting you into His family. The beautiful thing about being born into God's family is that it's permanent. Just as you can't un-birth yourself from your earthly family, you can't lose your place in God's family once you've been born again. Your standing isn't based on your performance but on His unchanging love. This truth should bring incredible peace to your soul. On days when you feel like you've failed or fallen short, remember that your place in God's family isn't in jeopardy. You're not on probation; you're His beloved child. Being born into God's family also means you have access to all the family privileges - His love, protection, provision, and presence. You can approach Him as your loving Father, not as a distant judge.

**Bible Verse:** 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.' - John 15:16

**Reflection Question:** What difference does it make in your daily life to know that you're born into God's family rather than trying to earn your way in through good works?

**Quote:** We're not voted in, we're born in.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of being born into Your family. Help me to rest in the security of Your unchanging love and to live with the confidence that comes from knowing I truly belong to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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#### Day 3: God Chooses the Unlikely

**Devotional:** If you've ever felt like you're not smart enough, strong enough, or important enough for God to use you, you're in good company. God has a pattern of choosing the most unlikely candidates to accomplish His purposes. Look around at the people God has used throughout history - shepherds, fishermen, tax collectors, and former persecutors of the church. These weren't the people you'd expect to change the world, but God saw something in them that others missed. The same is true today. God deliberately chooses people who don't have it all figured out, who don't come from prestigious backgrounds, and who don't have impressive résumés. Why? Because when God works through ordinary people to do extraordinary things, it's clear that the power comes from Him, not from us. This means your background, your education level, your past mistakes, or your current circumstances don't disqualify you from being used by God. In fact, they might be exactly what qualifies you for the unique role He has in mind for you. When we get to heaven, there won't be any bragging about our accomplishments or comparing our achievements. Instead, we'll all be united in worship, recognizing that everything good in our lives came from God's grace, not our own efforts. Your weaknesses aren't obstacles to God's plan - they're opportunities for His strength to be displayed. Your failures aren't the end of your story - they're chapters that can bring hope to others who are struggling with similar challenges. God doesn't need you to be perfect; He needs you to be available. He doesn't need you to have all the answers; He needs you to trust Him with the questions.

**Bible Verse:** 'Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.' - 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

**Reflection Question:** What areas of your life do you consider weaknesses or disqualifications, and how might God want to use those very things to demonstrate His power and reach others?

**Quote:** The streets of heaven, those golden streets, Brother Bill, are not going to be filled with bragging, gonna be filled with worship. We didn't get there on our own works. We didn't get there because we was mighty or powerful or extra smart.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank You for choosing me despite my weaknesses and imperfections. Help me to see my limitations not as obstacles but as opportunities for Your strength to shine through. Use my story, including the difficult parts, for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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#### Day 4: Living Stones in God's Building

**Devotional:** Have you ever watched a skilled mason work with stones? Each stone is different - some are large, some small, some smooth, others rough. Yet in the hands of a master builder, these diverse stones come together to create something beautiful and strong. This is a perfect picture of how God builds His church. We're all living stones, each with our own unique shape, size, and characteristics. Some of us are naturally outgoing leaders, while others are quiet encouragers. Some have dramatic testimonies of transformation, while others have stories of steady faithfulness. Some are new believers full of enthusiasm, while others are seasoned saints with deep wisdom. The beauty is that God doesn't try to make us all the same. He celebrates our diversity while creating unity. Just as a stone wall needs different sized stones to be strong and beautiful, God's church needs different types of people to be complete and effective. Your unique personality, experiences, and gifts aren't accidents - they're part of God's design. The church isn't complete without your specific contribution. When you're absent or not fully engaged, something is missing from the whole structure. This should give you confidence that you belong and that you matter. You're not trying to fit into someone else's mold; you're being shaped by the Master Builder to fit perfectly in the place He has designed for you. It should also give you appreciation for others who are different from you. Their differences aren't problems to be solved but gifts to be celebrated. Together, we create something more beautiful than any of us could create alone.

**Bible Verse:** 'As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' - 1 Peter 2:4-5

**Reflection Question:** How can you better appreciate and celebrate the unique gifts and personalities of others in your church community, recognizing that their differences contribute to the beauty of the whole?

**Quote:** Notice the analogy of a stone, not a brick, a stone. And when you go to that riverbank, you see all sizes of stones. Big stones, little stones, medium sized stones. So imagine making a structure out of those stones. They vary in size, but yet that mason, that rock mason we'll call him, he puts it together where there's a harmony, where they work out and it makes something beautiful.

**Prayer:** Father, thank You for making me a unique living stone in Your spiritual house. Help me to embrace my role and to appreciate the diverse gifts You've given to others. Show me how to contribute to the beauty and strength of Your church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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#### Day 5: Your Story Has Power

**Devotional:** Do you ever feel like your past disqualifies you from being used by God? Maybe you've made mistakes that you're ashamed of, or you feel like your story isn't impressive enough to make a difference. If so, you're missing one of the most powerful tools God has given you - your testimony. Your story, including the difficult and messy parts, has incredible power to reach people that others can't reach. The person who has struggled with addiction can speak hope to someone currently battling that same demon. The person who has experienced divorce can offer comfort to someone whose marriage is falling apart. The person who has wrestled with doubt can encourage someone who is questioning their faith. God doesn't waste anything in our lives. He takes our pain, our mistakes, and our struggles and transforms them into tools for ministry. What the enemy meant for evil, God uses for good. Your scars become your credentials to minister to others with similar wounds. This doesn't mean we should be proud of our sins or minimize their seriousness. But it does mean that God's grace is so powerful that He can take even our worst moments and use them to bring hope to others. Your testimony doesn't have to be dramatic to be powerful. Whether your story is one of dramatic rescue from a life of rebellion or steady growth in faith from childhood, it has value. Someone needs to hear exactly what you have to share. Don't let shame or feelings of inadequacy keep you from sharing your story. Your testimony is a weapon against the enemy's lies and a beacon of hope for those who are struggling. When you share how God has worked in your life, you're proclaiming His praises and pointing others toward His light.

**Bible Verse:** 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.' - Romans 12:1

**Reflection Question:** What parts of your story - including the difficult chapters - might God want to use to encourage or help someone else who is facing similar struggles?

**Quote:** Well, I've had a rough past. Guess what? There's a crowd of people that you can speak to that a lot of other people can't. I've made a lot of mistakes. We live in a world that's made a lot of mistakes and you can relate to them. You can share your testimony.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to see my story through Your eyes. Give me courage to share my testimony when You open doors, and help me to trust that You can use even my mistakes and struggles to bring hope to others. Make my life a living sacrifice that brings You glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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