

• **Why Am I Here? – Pt. 1 – Finding Humanity’s Purpose**

(Genesis 1:26-28)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Have you ever asked yourself that question?
- 2. Though that could apply to a lot of situations, I want to talk about to the big question of why am I here on this earth?
3. It is a question **most everyone asks** during their lifetime because God created us with a unique nature, with self-awareness, and with purpose, making us far different than the rest of creation.
4. As Christians we need to be keenly aware that the world is asking this question and be *compassionate* because...
 - A. Most people are ignorant of their created nature and purpose and do not know where to find the answers!
 - B. We have been blessed by God to know the answers and where to find them.
 - C. Helping the world, the lost, find those answers is what Jesus our Master has taught us to do (Matt. 9:35-38 – “Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.³⁶ Seeing the people, **He felt compassion for them**, because they were **distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd**.³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.³⁸ Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to **send out workers into His harvest**.”). Folk, **we are those workers!**
5. So, I want to talk about why we, you and I, are here—about finding humanity’s purpose.
 - A. To do that I want to consider the beginning, to creation itself.
 - B. For, properly understanding this event and how to communicate it is vital to our understanding and fulfillment of our purpose in this world and our role as ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

BODY:

- **I. Our creation:**
 - A. All things owe their **existence** to God (Gen. 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”).
 1. For, it was by His great power seen in the **pattern** of “**And God said...and it was so**” that all things, including all life, came to be (Gen. 1).
 - 2. Yet, even in this God made a distinction. For, **mankind’s creation** was **different** from other living creatures of the earth.
 - a. Concerning life in the **waters** and the **sky** (1:20-21 – “Then God said, “**Let the waters teem** with swarms of living creatures, and **let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse** of the heavens.”²¹ God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.”).
 - b. Concerning life on the **dry land** (1:24-25 – “Then God said, “**Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind**: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so.²⁵ God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.”).
 - c. Concerning **mankind** (1:26-27, 31 – “Then God said, “**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness**; and let them **rule over the fish** of the sea and **over the birds** of the sky and **over the cattle** and **over all the earth**, and **over every creeping thing** that creeps on the earth.”²⁷ **God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them...**³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was **very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”).
 - i. Only in the creation of mankind did God’s pattern change.

- ii. For, only here does the Godhead speak among itself and determine to create **in their image and likeness**.
 - B. So, God created humankind, male and female, in His image and likeness.
 - 1. To be made in God's:
 - a. **Image** means each of us **bear a resemblance** to God the creator.
 - b. **Likeness** means we are made in the form, fashion, or similitude of God.
 - c. Though these are similar words with only subtle differences, they reinforce one another, emphasizing the reality of our exalted condition as humans—that we show by our very being the God who created us, being a living expression of the eternal God.
 - 2. Until we think of ourselves in this way, as being the image and likeness of God, we will never fully...
 - a. **Appreciate our value** in this world or that of **our fellow man**.
 - b. **Understand our purpose** in this world and its **relationship to our fellow man**.
 - c. **Fulfill our purpose** in this world, which has not changed since the beginning, but has instead been enhanced by Christ and our life in Him!
- **II. God's image and our purpose (Gen. 1:27-28)** – “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”)
 - A. Upon mankind's creation in God's image, He gave us a unique commission or purpose.
 - 1. This was not the only commission given at creation.
 - a. Concerning the aquatic and bird life it is said, “God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth” (1:22).
 - b. God also gave the directive that plant life on the earth was given to man, cattle, birds, and all that crept on the earth for food (Gen. 1:29-30).
 - 2. Of humankind alone it is said, “**God created man in His own image**,” and based on that blessed mankind, directing us to not only **multiply** and **fill the earth**, adding also to **subdue** it; and **rule** over the **fish, birds, and every living thing** that moves on the earth (1:27-28).
 - a. If you research our unique commission/purpose in commentaries, the internet, etc., you are likely to find many views. Yet, two of them are more common.
 - b. One is the “**stewards of the earth**” view, which says man's purpose is to tend and care for the entire earth, requiring man to inhabit the farthest reaches of the earth.
 - c. Another similar interpretation is the “**continuing creation**” view, which says that when God created humanity, he made us like Him and instructed us to **participate in his work, creating** and **cultivating** life on the world, requiring us to, again, go into the farthest reaches of the earth.
 - 3. Though there is truth in these views, certain problems immediately arise.
 - a. First, for man to only be a **steward** of the earth would mean mankind only **manages**, or oversees, the earth, not that we are to **subdue** (subjugate, conquer) and **rule** (have dominion, prevail against, reign) over the earth as is commanded here.
 - b. Second, though mankind, along with all other living things, **reproduce after their kind**, his is a **result of God's creative work**. Man does not “create” anything.
 - c. Third, and most important, is the fact that these views are **inadequate** in explaining the primacy of our being in the **image and likeness of God** when fulfilling our commission.
 - B. We must understand, live, and communicate to the world that we **bear God's image** as we **fill** and **subdue** the earth, and as we **rule** over all living things (Gen. 1:27-28).
 - 1. In other words, all that we do and the authority we wield must be done with the primary goal of **bearing witness of God**, including **His holiness, mercy, love**, etc.!
 - 2. When people fail to do so, their conquering of the earth and ruling over all living things results in **sin** and **loss** of what God has given! This is clearly seen in...

- a. **Adam**, who was placed in the garden of Eden and **commissioned to work and keep it**, with injunctions concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:15-17).
 - i. Yet, within that very garden he rejected his mission in favor of his wife, rebelled against God’s command, and **sinned** (Gen. 3:4-6 – “The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, **she took from its fruit and ate**; and she **gave also to her husband** with her, **and he ate.**”).
 - ii. The consequences of seeking purpose/rulership without relationship are disastrous!
 - i) The earth which Adam was to subdue was **cursed** and death/loss became a reality (Gen. 3:17-19 – “Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; **Cursed is the ground because of you**; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, **till you return to the ground**, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, **and to dust you shall return.**”).
 - ii) Adam and His wife were **cast out** of the garden and lost access to the tree of life, being condemned to die (Gen. 3:22-24).
 - b. **Cain and Abel** (Gen. 4:1-7 – “Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.” ² Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. ⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ **If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.**”).
 - i. Adam and Eve were fulfilling God’s directive to be fruitful and multiply, while Cain fulfilled God’s directive to subdue the earth, being a **tiller of the ground**, and Abel ruled over the living things of the earth as a **keeper of flocks** (4:1-2).
 - ii. Now Abel **did so** with his **purpose in mind**, showing God’s image to the world, resulting in God having regard for, or acceptance of, his offering (4:4).
 - iii. Cain, however, failed to do so, resulting in sin (4:3, 5-7).
 - i) His failure to honor this relationship also led to the sin of murder (4:8).
 - ii) And, like his father, Cain’s attempt to subdue the earth without keeping in mind his need to show God’s image to the world resulted in being **cast out** and his dominion over the earth lost (4:9-12 – “Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” ¹⁰ He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground. ¹¹ Now **you are cursed from the ground**, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you cultivate the **ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you**; you will be a **vagrant** and a **wanderer** on the earth.”).
3. We could bring up other examples, such as...
- a. The **world** in Noah’s day that multiplied and filled the earth but failed to be mindful of God’s image and likeness in their lives, resulting in sin and **destruction** of the **world** by water, and the **death** of **every human being** except Noah and his family (Gen. 6-8).

- b. The people of **Babel** who seemed to have no desire to **fill the earth** and **show forth God's image**, but to instead build a permanent city, make a tower with its top in the heavens, **make a name for themselves**, resulting in God confusing their language, the city's construction ending, and mankind being scattered/divided (Gen. 11:1-9).
 - c. In all such cases you will find man seeking purpose without mindfulness of being in God's image **brings harm** upon mankind and our place or position on this earth.
- **III. So, you, and everyone else, have a purpose to fulfill based on our created nature and God's directive (Gen. 1:26-28).**
 - A. This means that as you live your life, move about, work, have a family, etc., all must be done with the intention of displaying in our lives the image of God to all the world.
 - 1. This is the ultimate way by which we glorify Him!
 - 2. It is, as Paul says, our ultimate sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2 – “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”).
 - B. The biggest problem with that, however, is that like Adam and Eve, their children, and the world of Noah's day, we **sin** and tarnish our image before the world.
 - 1. Rom. 3:23 – “for all have **sinned** and **fall short of the glory of God.**”
 - 2. So, our rulership has been lost (Heb. 2:5-8 – “For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. ⁶ But one has testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that you remember him? Or the son of man, that you are concerned about him? ⁷ “You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed him over the works of your hands; ⁸ You have **put all things in subjection under his feet.**” For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.”).
 - 3. But, God sent Jesus (Heb. 5:9 – “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”)
 - 4. Yet, praise be to God and His grace for providing the answer and assuring us **all is not lost.**
 - a. For, those who come to Christ can **regain that glorious image.**
 - b. Colossians 3:9-10 – “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is **being renewed** in knowledge **after the image of its creator**”
 - c. Eph. 4:22-24 - “that, in reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self, which **in the likeness of God** has been **created in righteousness** and **holiness** of the truth”
 - d. In doing we are assured that when Christ returns we will be **changed for eternity into the very image of the divine Son of God** (1 Jn. 3:2-3 – “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears **we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is. ³ **And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.**”).
 - i. All that God intended from creation, but that was lost in sin, is restored in Christ.
 - ii. And in the end when He returns, it will be so with even far more glory, and never to be lost again!
 - iii. So, the sacrifices required to be pure, the different life we live to show the world God's image in our life, all that we must do to fulfill our purpose, will be worth it in the end.

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope I have helped you answer the question of “what is my purpose?” or “why am I here?”

- A. For, how you answer that question affects every aspect of your life here and for eternity.
- B. For, only by a proper, divine, answer can you truly know your **value to God** and **in this world**, what your real **and meaningful purpose in life is**, and how to **live life to its fullest**.
- 2. So, will you determine today to live your life with the ultimately goal of showing the world God's image and likeness in you?
- 3. You can begin that journey today by putting your faith in Christ, turning from sin and to God, confessing your faith and conviction that Jesus is the risen Son of God, and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and salvation through Christ's sacrifice (Rom. 6:3ff.).
- 4. Will you embrace your true nature and purpose today by coming to Christ as we stand and sing?