

Leading by Faith

Session #2: Understanding Our Purpose

Review – Welcome Back!

- Why we are teaching this leadership course – the Forces of Fragmentation: Covid, loss of the Senior Staff, Life Transitions of the Boomer Generation
- Vision – Our vision is to train 500 leaders who will lead by faith as the committed core group of the church, preparing Living Faith with the strength and integrity needed to be a faithful Gospel witness on Long Island to the end of the 21st century and beyond.
- Course Overview – Resolving Conflict was #1 choice!
- Walking with God: Biblical background – Eden, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Micah, Jesus, & the Holy Spirit.
- Walking with God: a description – it's a Gospel, Faith, Holy Spirit, Indicative & Imperative, Group, Transformative Way of Life.
- Walking with God: a How-To – thankfully recognize God's presence, humbly listen to his voice, eagerly learn about him & his way of life, candidly share your mind & heart with him, and trust him enough to confess, repent and obey.

Discussion – What was your most impactful take away from the first session? Why?

- Each person 60 seconds or less!
- Most common one from your table.

Understanding Our Purpose

We have a friend in our backyard—a dragonfly.

- When he lands on the porch or the table, it's hard not to get a little startled and even want to kill him, but we don't, because he has a purpose.
- He consumes a vast number of mosquitoes, flies and other pests so that we don't have to exterminate those. He has a purpose.

All creatures seem to have a purpose.

- Bees are pollinators.
- Earthworms are critical for healthy soil.

Wolves regulate animal overpopulation and have a cascading effect on the entire ecology of their territory.

- Sharks do something similar in the ocean.
- Elephants are ecosystem engineers who uproot trees, disperse seeds, create clearings for various plants to thrive, dig watering holes, etc., even their dung is useful to the earth.

Everything created has a purpose. So, what's yours?

- And I don't mean specifically you and only you.
- You probably have a purpose or purposes for your life that are unique to you.
- But each of those individual purposes is all under the umbrella of the broader human purpose.
- God created us all for a purpose.

I was helped by this question in identifying our purpose:

- What is the end for which God created the world?
- When God said, “Let there be light,” etc., what was he ultimately intending to do?

I think the answer to that question is: He created the world so that redeemed and resurrected images of Christ would image him in his New Heavens and new Earth.

- These are pretty deep theological musings, but I’m going to explain them such that you see how your future purpose is to be lived out now.
- Walking with God is a prerequisite to godly leadership.
- Understanding human purpose is vital too because you want to lead people into their purpose, not away from it.
- Here are six statements to help you understand our purpose, and for you to understand yours. First, #1...

1. God created us in his image – He made us to reflect who he is and what he does. Look at Genesis 1:26-27:

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

In the beginning, human beings, both male & female, were created in God's image. What did that mean?

- I think the image of God in mankind is most appropriately described in relation to God's virtue,
- not his incommunicable attributes.

In other words, human beings were not created to be eternal.

- We were not created to be infinite in knowledge, power, or presence.
- There are some ways in which we are simply not supposed to be like the Creator. Don't be like God in those ways. It seems to me the Devil is trying to do that. It is wicked.

On the other hand, God has identifiable, divinely virtuous traits that uniquely originate in Him.

- Only God is capable of demonstrating these attributes in their fullness,
- but human beings were created to reflect these attributes in a genuine sense.

For example, God is joyful, kind, gentle, patient, wise, peaceful, self-controlled, loving, humble, zealous, hopeful and faithful. Without limit and without depletion.

- In the beginning, human beings were created in God's image.
- That is, human beings were created to reflect these attributes – to image God all over God's creation.

It is as if God wanted to be able to look down and see little reflections of him all over the place taking godly care of all he created.

- Knowing only good, not evil, and being good.
- Exploring the good world.
- Forming what they found for even greater good.
- Filling the world with his goodness.
- Multiplying the good of more images.
- Enjoying all the good we learned, found, formed, filled and multiplied.

To really drill down into this so we understand the creation image, here are three subpoints to this first point. First...1.1

Humans are the center of God's creation activity. As we read Genesis, we see that all of God's creation has value, but it was all made with us in mind.

- We are the focal point of God's universe project. People are at the heart of his design, the most valuable.
- That truth is hinted at in Genesis 1:2:

²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2 (ESV)

Though we know from Hebrews 11:3 that God created everything from nothing, the creation story in Genesis begins with something that God has already made – deep waters.

And the formation of the Heavens and the Earth from those deep waters started with his Spirit hovering.

- Now, this is a wonderful and fascinating statement.
- The Holy Spirit was hovering over.

That same word, hovering, is used elsewhere in the Bible, Deuteronomy 32:11, to describe an eagle's activity over its nest.

- The eagle hovers to create a nest. Finding a spot in a tree or on a cliff. Building a safe place with sticks and mud and other materials.
- And it builds that nest to give birth, life to its young, providing a home for them to dwell.

Isn't that astounding imagery God's Word uses to describe his creation of the universe!?

- God tells us that his creation of the whole thing is like him as an eagle making a nest for us, his young.
- That's the initial clue that we are at the center of his creation activity.

The story continues from there.

- God creates the Heavens and the Earth, and the focus of the story narrows to Earth.
- From there, God creates waters and land, and the focus of the story narrows to the land.
- From there, God creates vegetation and creatures, and the focus of the story narrows to creatures.
- From there, God creates animals and humans, and the focus of the story narrows to humans.

Soak that in. The trajectory of the creation account is human centric. It narrows and builds to a crescendo with the delivery of Adam and Eve.

- So, yes, the sun, moon and stars are wondrous.
- Sure, the fjords of Norway, the beaches of Fiji, the peaks of the Rocky Mountains, are breathtaking.
- Beauty is evident in the flowers in Holland, the redwoods of California, and even the vines at Wrigley Field.
- I love dogs and cougars and dolphins. But none of it, even all of it put together, is as spectacular as the human being.

All you see and all you don't see, was created for you.

- If you have ever wondered if you matter to God, all you need to do, is read Genesis 1.
- It forcefully proclaims that we are fundamental to God's purpose in this whole thing.
- Humans are the center of his creation activity. That's the 1st statement to help us understand what his image means. Second...

Humans are unlike the rest of creation.

- Not only are we central, but we are also different than everything else.
- Not only was it all made for us, but we have also been made to be distinct from it all.

Obviously, the sun is different than the moon is different than a desert is different than grass is different than a goat.

Everything is different from everything else, but everything, even everything put together, is different than us. There is nothing like people.

We discover that truth in a few ways in Genesis chapter 1.

- For example, each day is referred to indeterminately in the Hebrew – a 2nd day, a 3rd day, a 4th day, a 5th day. But in the day God created humans, it is **the** 6th day. Something different going on.
- Another example...after the rest of creation is made, God described everything as good. But after he created humans, he described us as **very** good. We are unlike the other.
- And the creation phrases provide a clue in this regard too. “Let there be and let the earth bring forth” are used to describe making everything except when it comes to humans. There the phrase is “let us make.”
- These are small indications of our difference when compared with everything else, but the clearest indication is in the use of the word ‘kind’. That starts in Genesis 1:11:

¹¹And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.”

Genesis 1:11 (ESV)

While modern biologists classify creation in a broader system: domain, kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species, the Biblical taxonomy is simpler and clearer.

According to Genesis 1:11, there are many kinds of plants like grass, celery, and spinach. There are also many kinds of fruit trees like apple, pear, and peach.

Throughout the rest of the chapter, that God classification of creation progresses on from plants and fruit trees to fish, birds, reptiles, wild animals, and livestock.

For example, just as there are many kinds of plants and fruit trees, there are also many kinds of...

- Fish – sharks, minnows, and, my favorite, grouper.
- Birds – ostrich, penguin, and sparrow.
- Reptiles – snakes, lizards, and turtles.
- Wild Animals – lions, bears and wolves.
- Livestock – cows, chickens, and pigs.

According to Genesis 1, there are many kinds of everything, except humans.

- There is only one kind of human. That's what the Bible teaches.
- That's how we are different from the rest of creation in that way.

Important note. We err in an ungodly way when we think that ethnicity, or worse race, constitutes different kinds of humans.

- Inuits, Mexicans, Germans, Nigerians, Mongolians & New Zealanders are all the same kind of human.
- God says, unlike the rest of creation, we are all the same kind.

Racism isn't just wrong. It's based on a wrong premise of multiple races. There's only one kind, the human race.

And, fascinatingly, we have that special classification in common with God.

- There is only one kind of human. There is only one kind of God.
- God is, of course, distinguished even more so from creation than we are, in that God is the only one of his kind.
- There are many humans, but there aren't many gods. Just one.

We aren't as special as God obviously, but our distinctness from everything else is unmistakable.

- If you are struggling at all, confused about the meaning of life and your place in this world, first, understand this was all made for us.
- And second, know that you are a unique kind of being.

There's only one kind of us. Further, amongst the many of our one kind, there's no one like you.

- You are unique amongst your kind, that's part of why you have a name.
- We are the center of God's creating activity and you are unlike the rest of creation in a most remarkable way.

Those are the 1st two statements to help us understand this concept God's image. 3rd on this 1st point...

Humans are representatives of God.

- Creation is for us and we are for God within creation.
- We represent him here as his ambassadors. Look at 1:27:

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

There is some argument for the image of God to be a *structural* reflection of his nature.

- That's our experience with the word 'image,' correct?
- You look in a mirror and see an image of yourself. What do I mean?

You see a structural reflection of your nature.

- It's not you, but it looks like you.
- It reflects your physical appearance. The mirror portrays an image of you.

Similarly, I look at your children and see a structural reflection of you.

- They are not you, but they look something like you. I can see you in them.
- In English, 'image' means *material* likeness.

The Hebrew word can carry that sense, but more so, it communicates *representation*. An image is one who represents a person who is not there.

Now, since, God is *immaterial* spirit, not bodily flesh, it seems wiser to understand us, not as his structural reflection or material likeness, but as his physical representatives.

He is here, of course, in Spirit.

- But he is not here in the flesh.
- Humans were created, then, to represent him, who is a non-material being, in this material universe.

It is as though God wants to look down from Heaven so to speak and see little representatives of himself,

- that is, beings doing what he does in the way he does it. Imitators of him. Images.
- That seems to be what Genesis 1:27 means.

And that is a striking word about us in the Bible, isn't it?

- It is interesting. Romans 1:19-20 explains that God's existence is displayed plainly to us in what has been created.
- In other words, we look at the stars through a telescope and living cells through a microscope and we can only conclude, someone with eternal power and divine nature outside of space and time designed and built all this.
- That's an obvious conclusion just by looking around.

Yet, don't miss what Genesis 1:27 states. It indicates we don't have to look in a telescope or a microscope for proof of God's existence.

All we must do is look in the mirror or look at another human being for there we see the image of God. The reality of God, in other words, is properly basic to the reality of ourselves and the reality of each other.

Humans are God's representatives here. His invisible existence is made plain to us, visible to us, by us.

Further, he intends for his existence to be made plain to the created world whenever the created world experiences us.

- Think of that. How do rocks, oak trees and squirrels know God exists?
- According to Genesis 1, it is meant to be through you. You represent God here.

How does your dog know God? You! You are God's ambassador to the dog.

- We all know that your cat thinks it is God and that you are its servants, but that is a topic for another day, right?
- Your dog knows the Lord by knowing you.
- The beginning of the Bible indicates that all creation is supposed to experience God through humans because we are the image of God.

So, three statements to understand what an image is...we are the center of creation, unique in design and special in purpose. Representatives of him. We were created in the image of God. That's #1 of 6. The rest are a bit quicker. #2...

- 2. God created us to image him** – What does God do and, since we are his images, what should we be doing? We are to be good, but what does doing good mean? We find the answer to that in what God did in creation.

To do what he did, we need to identify what he did, and again I have subpoints, five of them. First, we are to...

Explore the good he created.

- God created the universe out of nothing.
- We can't image him in that function. We cannot create anything out of nothing. Second law of thermodynamics.

But we can explore all the good he has created.

- And every statement in Genesis about his creation is that it was good or very good, with exception of the time between Adam's creation and Eve's, when he said it was not good for Adam to be alone.
- Besides that, everything is good. Look at Genesis 1:3-4:

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good.

Genesis 1:3-4 (ESV)

God said. Creation came to be. It was good.

- That's repeated over and over.
- And the human being's way to image him is to explore all the good he created. That's why humans instinctively want to explore – the world, the sea, space. #1. #2, we are to...

Form the creation for the greater good.

- We know the Lord created from scratch. That is his creating work. I'm not talking about that.
- I'm referring to his forming work, an extension of that creating work, but its different.

He took what he created out of nothing and formed it into something better.

- Shaped. Molded. Sculpted. He ordered the world.
- And we see that forming work in Genesis 1 mainly through the repetition of the word 'separate'. Look at Gen 1:3-4:

And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Genesis 1:4-5 (ESV)

Do you see that there? The difference between God creating and God forming.

- He created from nothing. There is no light. God says, "let there be light," and light pops into existence.
- That's the work of sheer creating that only God can do.

Then, God formed the light.

- He reigned over it and shaped it.
- He deployed and ordered it. He used it.
- He made into something beyond light by this act of separating and then named it something else – Day.

And that creating and then forming continues throughout the first chapter of Genesis:

- The Lord created sky and used it to *separate* two domains. He named the one above Heaven. In other words, he reigned over sky and formed the atmosphere of our planet.
- God created land. Then he *separated* water and land and called it Earth and Seas. He deployed and ordered them both.
- God created vegetation in the land and *separated* them so that they would be distinct but working together in this new ecosystem he formed.
- God created the Sun, Moon and stars. And then, he *separated* them so that they would govern the Earth with seasons, days, and years. He fashioned these things to make them into something beyond themselves. Through them, he formed time and climate. And on it went.

God created good. And then God formed it into something even better.

- That's what our purpose is. To image him, to be like him. To explore all the good he created and form the creation for the greater good.
- Third, we are too...

Fill the earth with everything good. The earth was without form and void. God formed the formless and filled the void. He shaped the universe and packed it with an astounding plethora of non-living things, living things and living creatures. Look at:

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let birds multiply on the earth.”

Genesis 1:20-22 (ESV)

The language here and throughout the chapter is best described with words like abundant, lavish, copious, ample, and rich. The specific words used are swarm with swarms, blessed, be fruitful, multiply and that summary word – fill.

God filled:

- He filled the earth with non-living solids like iron, copper, platinum, and gold; non-living gases like oxygen, hydrogen, and helium, and non-living liquids like mercury, oil, & lava.
- He filled the earth with living things like roses, Kentucky bluegrass, coral reef, and rainbow eucalyptus; and with living creatures like swordfish, flamingos, chameleons, white tigers and horses.

The list of what he filled Earth with alone seems endless. How much more all over the universe! And as he did, such is our purpose. To carry the goodness of God with us wherever we go, and spread it everywhere, filling our worlds with it. 4th, we are to...

Multiply the good of more images of God. God multiplied himself in the only way possible.

- He didn't create more Gods as that would be impossible.
- He multiplied images of him in Adam and Eve.
- And he commanded them to multiply the good of more images of him. Look at Genesis 1:28:

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:28 (ESV)

Not every individual human will have children, but the human purpose overall includes procreation.

- Babies are a gift from God. Children are a blessing.
- 5th, and lastly on this second point, we are to...

Enjoy everything that is good. God created from scratch, fashioned what he made, lit it up, and poured life into it in an overflowing way. Then, he sat back and appreciated it. He kicked up his feet and relished what he did. God so loved the world. Look at Genesis 2:1-2:

¹Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

Genesis 2:1-2 (ESV)

God finished working and then he rested. To understand what is meant by the word “rested” here, we must first understand at least a bit more about God.

God is omnipotent.

- He has an unlimited supply of power.
- He never runs out of energy, never even runs *low* on strength.
- God always has more than is required to do whatever it is he wants to do. There’s nothing he cannot do.

So, he never gets fatigued. Doesn’t tire in the least bit.

- In no way is he ever weary or sluggish or lethargic.
- Therefore, he does not require recuperation after work. He doesn’t need to eat, sit, lay down, take a 20-minute nap or sleep.
- He has no demand for rest as we normally think of that word.

Understanding that bit about God leads us to an understanding of the word “rested” here in this passage.

- Rested is not recovering from using energy, but rather enjoying the result of the energy used.
- God rested does NOT mean that making the universe wore him out and he needed a break.
- No. God created. Formed. Filled. Multiplied. Then, God *delighted* in the outcome. That’s what rested means.

And in that, we gain more understanding about our purpose, don't we?

- Humans are the image of God, noun, and we image God, verb, when we explore, form, fill, multiply and enjoy.

For example, when we explore the earth and discover raw materials, form them into steel, leather, plastic and glass to make a Ford Mustang, filling it with all manner of good features and accessories, and then driving it with the top down on a warm breezy June weekend with our family or friends...wind blowing in whatever hair we have left and the radio blaring our favorite song; just enjoying the ride, doesn't matter where we are even going. That's a minor example.

Humans do that in all sorts of ways. Like when:

- we get married, create a home and have kids.
- Or go to the store, buy all the ingredients we need, lay them out on the counter, cook them all up, and sit down to feast.
- Or when we take paper and colored pencils and create a drawing, a work of art, and then hang it up somewhere to look at and appreciate.
- Or when we take all the tools necessary, cut, trim, edge and blow the lawn, to then sit back on the patio chair and crack open a cold drink to revel in the clean and crisp domain.

There are countless examples of how humans explore, form, fill multiply and enjoy, how we image God, how we fulfill the purpose for which we were created.

Whenever we discover what has been created, take what has been made to shape it into something better, increase it, multiply it with other image bearers and celebrate it, we are living out our reason for existence.

God created life good and very good.

- His forming improved life. It made it better.
- His filling blesses the world. It brings abundance.
- His multiplying spreads the good of his image.
- His enjoyment revels in the good that has been done to OTHERS.

So, as his images, we are to be like him and do what he did.

- Can there be a higher calling? Such supreme purpose your life has!
- To give your brain a bit of break, let's share around the tables.
- Then, we will finish up the last four points and I will give you your assignments.

Discussion – What good do you enjoy and when do you stop to take time to enjoy it?

- Each person 60 seconds or less!
- One from each table.

Our human purpose is to image God, and it doesn't take much observation or life experience to realize that we humans haven't been fulfilling our created purpose very well, have we?

- In fact, the Bible tells us that right after our kind was made, we did the opposite of what God created us to do.
- The first two people, Adam & Eve, rebelled against God and led their posterity into a state of depravity.

3. Sin has distorted God's image in us – We have become a twisted, warped, marred, disfigured image of God.

Whereas God created the world good for us to explore and know only good, we have chosen to explore all the ways the good world can be used for evil.

- Whereas God formed towards order for the greater good of creation, Genesis 3 indicates humans sinned and formed a disordered world that decreased the good for everyone.
- Whereas God filled the Earth with good for the good of everyone, Genesis 6:11 indicates humans fill the Earth with something very different than good, something opposite really...violence.
- Whereas God multiplied the good of images, humans multiply images after themselves, to be like them, not like God.
- Whereas God enjoyed all that he made, formed, filled and multiplied, our insurrection against him spiraled the world and all our lives into pain and misery—the opposite of rest.

Put yourself in God's shoes if you can.

- As God looked down on creation, so to speak, he didn't see any proper reflection of himself.
- All he saw was human depravity. And it was everywhere on his creation like a cancer. That's Genesis 6:5:

⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5 (ESV)

The creation image had been distorted to an almost unrecognizable degree.

- Sin has devalued humans.
- The rebellion in the beginning, the power unleashed into the world that now dwells in all of us and all our personal sinful decisions that displease have degraded and debased every single member of the human race.

By our nature and our choices:

- We have not retained our original value in our relationship to creation.
- We no longer possess the same worth to one another.
- And most tragically, humans have been corrupted in the eyes of God.

It doesn't take much observation or life experience to realize these things are true.

God told humanity to represent him & his goodness.

- We were created to be loving, joyful, peaceful, self-controlled, kind, gentle, wise, hopeful, faithful, zealous, patient, and faithful.
- Yet, humanity is much more appropriately described as callous, entitled, divisive, compulsive, miserly, abrasive, foolish, pessimistic, self-absorbed, disloyal, apathetic, intolerant and faithless.

Get this clear in your mind, the devastating reality of original, indwelling, and personal sin, is that human worth has diminished from its original state.

- The cosmic stock market price on our existence has been going down.
- Perhaps it has even crashed.

Consider the word ‘worthless,’ like a junk stock, not worth anything, is used about 30 times in the entire Bible to refer to a person or people. The most striking one is in Romans 3 which is meant to be a summation statement of what sin has done to humanity in relationship to God.

¹⁰“None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;”

Romans 3:10-12 (ESV)

Now, that is not an ethical prescription for how we should treat each other, like you are worthless to me and I to you, but rather, it is a description of what we humans have become to God apart from his intervention.

- Sin is why the Lord would be justified in throwing the entire human race into the everlasting trash bin called Hell.
- Sin has devalued us to that degree.

But, thanks be to God, that he decided to do something completely different.

- Opposite in some ways in fact.
- Something miraculous in terms of both its virtue as well as its supernatural events. #4 to understand our purpose...

4. Jesus is the perfect image of God – Though there was an inclination in God to wipe out the distorted images (described in Genesis 6:6-7), he decided even before creation that he would do something much more in line with his character.

His plan was not simply to destroy, but to redeem and resurrect some of those images. And he did that through the perfect image of God, his Son. How?

- After the Fall, humans had become both unwilling and unable to image God.
- This lack of will and capacity created forensic guilt and the just wrath that comes from sinning against a holy God.

In other words, it wasn't simply that they were distorted images not properly reflecting the glory of God. It is that distorted images deserve to be tossed in the trash by the one they are supposed to image.

Thank the Lord, God decided to do himself what humans could not do...

- to become flesh in order to perfectly reflect his character in human form – Jesus Christ.
- Some Scriptures about Jesus in that regard:

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God.

Colossians 1:15 (ESV)

¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Colossians 1:19 (ESV)

³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)

Furthermore, God decided to be fruitful and multiply that image.

- That was his intent in the creation image. He has resolve.
- Since humans disobeyed the creation mandate, he became human himself and pioneered a way to multiply the image of Jesus Christ within human beings.
- He wasn't about to give into our rebellion. It's his universe after all.

So, not only did he do himself what humans could not do – perfectly image himself,

- He also made provision in Jesus Christ for humans to be redeemed and resurrected to image him.
- Jesus lived a flawless life on our behalf, laid down that life to pay the penalty for sin, picked it up again in the resurrection to beat the power of sin and has promised to return to eliminate sin.

Despite our rebellion, the Lord has vowed to create, form, fill, multiply and enjoy a new Heavens and a new Earth,

- and to bring all images here who put their faith in Christ through the suffering of this life and death itself into this new world.
- It is there that we will perfectly fulfill our purpose forevermore.

In the meantime, we wait here. We don't just sit around. No. #5 to understand our purpose...

5. Jesus is redeeming his image in us – On the Cross, Jesus became sin for us. He took the punishment we deserve. Then, he beat sin by rising from the grave thereby securing the power to pardon sinners.

At the moment we placed our faith in Jesus, his objective victory in human history was applied subjectively to us in our current experience by the Holy Spirit.

Our earthly faith is evidence of the reality of our heavenly pardon, but Christ's work is much more than a pardon.

- The Spirit unites Christians with Jesus in Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension so that we become more like him in terms of his virtue.
- Our past is his past. We died with him. Our flesh has been crucified by his work.
- Furthermore, we rose with him and are seated with him.

As a result, we no longer live, but Christ lives in and through us.

- That is, the life we genuinely live now, we live by faith in our union with him.
- It is not an inner mysticism or the result of a life of contemplation, but rather a positional reality with ontological implications.

From the first moment of our conversion, we are no longer in Adam, but in Christ.

- We were decisively transferred from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit.
- We have put off the old man and put on the new man.

Though sin remains in our life, the reign of sin is officially over.

- The power of its dominion has been broken.
- We are under the governance of the Holy Spirit.

We are new creations in Christ, regenerated fallen humans. We are no longer distorted images. We are now redeemed images. Not perfect but restored. Colossians 3:9-10 puts it this way:

⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices, and ¹⁰have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Colossians 3:9-10 (ESV)

Though we can't perfectly reflect his glory, we can indeed genuinely reflect his glory.

- We can, in some measure, image the invisible God.
- We can grow in our virtue.

Since we have been changed at the level of our position with God, not merely theoretically changed, Christians experience genuine personal change from depravity to virtue. We are redeemed images and Jesus is redeeming his image in us.

God has forgiven us and dethroned sin from the power position in our life so that we get a foretaste of the next life now. Jesus is reigning...creating a new human race, forming his church, filling us w/his Spirit, multiplying churches & enjoying us as redeemed images.

Christian, you can image God now. We can glorify the Lord somewhat.

- You experience a bit of fulfilling your purpose whenever you victoriously explore, form, fill, multiply and enjoy the goodness of God.
- And can add redeem for good to that list – heal, enable, forgive, preserve, repair, renovate, etc.
- And there's much, much, much more to come.

6. Jesus will resurrect his redeemed images to fully and permanently image him in a New Heavens & New Earth –
 Although the Spirit has taken up residence in us to grow us into Christlikeness, that is, we are indeed genuinely new creatures, it is important to point out that we are not totally new.

We will not be totally new until our glorification or complete sanctification or our resurrection. About this aspect, the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:49:

⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the earthly man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:49 (ESV)

Just as we were born distorted images of God, images of Adam, so too we will be reborn, resurrected to bear the image of Jesus in his glorified body. Romans 8:29-30 puts it this way:

²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:29-30 (ESV)

Before the world was created, God purposed to restore and resurrect and a group of rebellious image bearers at the cost of his own Son's blood.

Jesus condescended to venture through natural human life and death into a supernatural glorified human existence of perfectly imaging God.

- Thus, he opened the way up for others, those whom God loved in eternity and determined would follow him.
- He is the firstborn of many resurrected images.

So, what is the end for which God created the world? I suspect he created the world so redeemed and resurrected images of Jesus Christ would fully and permanently image him in a New Heavens and New Earth. That is our purpose!

Okay, for our assignments these next two weeks.

- You are going to be here on Oct 12th to focus on knowing yourself.
- The assignments are related to that, and you will receive links in your email to be able to complete some assessments.

All are free except one.

- Meyers Briggs on Personality
- DiSC on leadership style
- Working Genius on vocational energy which is \$25 but well worth it.

You will bring that info to fill out a one-page profile of yourself during our 90 minutes together.

- Leaders walk with God and understand human purpose.
- Leaders know themselves.