



## Thru God's Eye: Life in the REAL World

### **Who Are We? Why Are You Here?**

Crossroads, October 2, 2011 - Mark Bickel

#### TEACHING NOTES



#### Intro:

##### Isaiah 46:8-13

"Remember this, fix it in mind,  
take it to heart, you rebels.  
Remember the former things, those of long ago;  
I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like me.  
I make known the end from the beginning,  
from ancient times, what is still to come.  
I say: My purpose will stand,  
and I will do all that I please.  
From the east I summon a bird of prey;  
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.  
What I have said, that will I bring about;  
what I have planned, that will I do.  
Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted,  
you who are far from righteousness.  
I am bringing my righteousness near,  
it is not far away;  
and my salvation will not be delayed.  
I will grant salvation to Zion,  
my splendor to Israel.

#### **PRAY**

- **Last few weeks** we have dealt with the most fundamental worldview question – **what is the ultimate reality?** Or put more simply – Is there a God? And if so, how would you know who God is?
- Today we turn our look from God to ourselves ... **who are we as humans?** And what does that mean for determining your purpose in life?

#### Recommended Reading:

*Knowing God* by J. I. Packer

*Identity: Becoming Who God Says I Am* NavPress Bible Study

~ Sermon by Taylor Today "Why Are You Here?"

~ Crossroads Series from last Fall "Who Are You? Where Do You Fit?"

## 1) Who Are We?

- **2 Friends who Forgot Genesis 1**

- **Arrogant Andy** - center of universe - can do anything, all about them
  - Andy's Cousin: not overt arrogant - center of attention, or conversation dominate, or one up
- **Depressed Daisy** - no real purpose to life - low self esteem - worthless
  - Daisy's Cousin - nothing to say, not enter conversations, apologize, no way to be involved
- **Me in college**
  - hang around in back of room, awkward, weird ...
  - but if we did find something to talk about - all about me, you not get word in ...

- **Genesis 1**

**Genesis 1:27**

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

- **Created by God** ... Not about me, about God... Live for his glory
  - Psalm 139: Knit together in mothers womb
  - Ephesians 1: God had plan for each of us before creation ...
  - Ephesians 1: ... for the praise of His glory
- **In God's image** ... Character of god reflected in each of us ... Real worth
  - Genesis 1: Man and Woman each created in image of God
  - Genesis 1: we are pinnacle of creation ... very good, rule over all else
  - Genesis 2: God breathed life into man
  - Exodus note: not make graven images ... not worship image, worship true God ... but also God put image not in creation, but us ... and ultimate in Jesus!

## 2) Are we Good, Evil, Neutral, or Genetically Pre-programmed?

- **Good** - born good, evil like Hitler is aberration, all are/ can remain basically good
  - Shocked when good kid turns bad, shooting in suburb school
  - Goal of parent / education is to bring out the good, reward good, protect from evil
  - Goal of prisons - correctional facility - bring out good
  - Goal of religion - tap into inner good, make good enough for god ...
- **Evil** - born predisposed to evil, all of us capable of being Hitler / doing columbine...
  - Not surprised by any evil - every one around us and us capable
  - Goal of parent / educate - learn to suppress evil, take away opportunities
  - Goal of prison - punish evil and remove from society
  - Goal of religion - laws to restrain evil, penance, overcome evil with good

- **Neutral** - all behavior, character is learned
  - Key when see good or evil is find causes, change environment/change person
  - Goal of parent/ educate - provide environment for good to grow (eliminate violent videos and music, promote love, remove kids if bad parent)
  - Goal of prison - rehabilitate, reeducate, give new environment
  - Goal of religion - provide proper environment for growth, eliminate all evil influence and dominate people with good influence
- **Genetically pre-programmed** - you are what genes say
  - Pedophile has been and always will be pedophile
  - Goal of parent / educate - give tools to good for survival of fittest
  - Goal of prison - get weak out of flow population (assure not hard good, and even more note mate and propagate)
  - Goal of religion - organized religion bad, humanism where we promote strong and eliminate weak is what is needed
  - Or religious version - we need to find and encourage the good who are destined for heaven, condemn the evil who are headed to hell
- **Small groups - which is right? Why?**
  - *Note: Drexel Survey – over 90%, including Christians, said man basically Good*

- **Bible**

- **Creation** – Image of God
  - Thus there is a grain of truth in the belief there is a some good deep in the heart
  - BUT ...
- **Fall** – Man sinned, and is not sinful
  - Psalm 14 & 53 and Romans 3 – all sinful, all turn against God
  - Romans 4 & 5 and Ephesians 2 – very nature is sinful

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

- Theological term – **total depravity** (not absolute, but total - we are not as bad as can be, BUT sin taints everything in every person – nothing left untouched!)
- So primary view of Scripture – **Man is, by nature, Evil**

- **Redemption** – Christ recreates us
  - Romans 6 & 8, Ephesians 2 – new life, new character, new you

**Ephesians 2:4-5**

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved.

- So in Christ, we are both forgiven of sin and given power to resist sin!
- Given a new nature – we are now basically Good
- Note: not saved because Good, saved while bad but now that saved nature changed!

### 3) What is Your Purpose for Living?

- **Answers from other religions**
  - **Humanist (evolution)** – survival of the fittest ... so determine what best for you to survive ... but why? Nothing lasts! (note: comment last week on hawking – he says no afterlife, so enjoy this life ... pity no hope of a better life later)
  - **Cambodian (reincarnation)** – reincarnate in current state as fate ... don't try to change, embrace and live out so as to get a better state next time
  - ...
- **Answers from Genesis 1**
  - **Love and serve creator**
    - Note: He gives man all world but one tree ... so this is not slavery, groveling, appeasing, harsh ... this is loving, caring, personal God to love and serve
  - **Image God**
    - Vice-regents – rule, under God ... be creative, knowing, powerful, loving ... understand we are not all-knowing, all-powerful... but we have significance and a significant role to play ... with real significant consequences!
    - More on living with the consequences next week: Problem of Evil
  - **Subdue and fill earth**
    - Creation: Form (1<sup>st</sup> 3 days), Fill (2<sup>nd</sup> 3 days)
    - Man: Form Eden, Fill with Man ... and Woman
    - Us: Go out and subdue world, forming into Eden ... Fill with more people
    - God's Kingdom: expand to cover more places and more hearts
- **Answers from NT**
  - **Love and serve God**
    - First command – Love God ... all heart, soul, mind, strength
    - Also second – Love others
  - **Image Christ**
    - Grow in character, attitude to be like Christ
    - Live for and like Christ
    - Just as Christ is the image of God, so we are to be the image of Christ
  - **Go make disciples of all nations**
    - Great Commission (Matt. 24) – Go make disciples of all nations...
    - Form – go everywhere, preach Gospel, baptize those Christ has saved
    - Fill – No just “make Christians”, but “Disciples” – teach all Christ commanded
    - Example: Paul – go to each nation and preach ... then disciple, grow kingdom
- **Ultimate Purpose – Glorify God**
  - Westminster Confession - The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever
  - Piper variation - The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying him forever

- **Practical Example ... from Philippians**

- **Philippians 2:2-8** (same attitude as Christ ... image of God, is God, humbled self!)

then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, **being one in spirit and purpose**. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in **humility consider others better than yourselves**. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

**Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:**

Who, being in very nature God, **did not consider equality with God something to be grasped**, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, **he humbled himself** and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!

- **Philippians 1:12-30 (selected verses)** (Paul's purpose – live as Christ, for the Gospel)

**12** Now I want you to know, brothers, **that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel**. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly...

**21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me...

**27** Whatever happens, **conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ**. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, **contending as one man for the faith of the gospel** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. ...

- **Philippians 1:3-6** (Confidence – God, who has begun work, WILL COMPLETE IT!)

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, **that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus**.

- **Conclusion**

- We Are Created by God, In His Image
- We messed that up, and became by nature objects of His wrath
- But now, in Christ, we have been redeemed, re-imaged, so we can live with a new purpose
- In full confidence that God himself will see us through to completion!

**Pray**

- **Benediction (Jude 24-25)**

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.