

God's Purpose for Man

by Zac Poonen

God's purpose for man is to reflect his image, to be a ruler, and to have fellowship with him, and this purpose can be fulfilled through connection with God through the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 24:46

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Genesis 1:28, John 15:5, Romans 8:14, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 1:4, Colossians 3:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, James 4:7

Topics: "Human Purpose", "Spiritual Restoration"

Description

This sermon delves into God's original purpose for creating man, emphasizing the unique creation of humans with a spirit that distinguishes them from animals. It explores the consequences of sin on man's spirit, the restoration through Christ, and the call for believers to reflect God's image and rule over their earthly desires. The message highlights the importance of fellowship with God, the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers, and the need to align with God's purpose to fulfill His original design for humanity.

Transcript

God had a great purpose when he made man. When we turn to the scriptures, the first chapter in the Bible, we see how God made animals and man on the same day. That was the sixth day.

Many of us know that man was created on the sixth day, but it was on the same day that he made the animals as well. And there was a reason why he did that. In the first part of the sixth day, he made the animals, and the second part of the sixth day, he made man.

In the previous days, he made birds and fish and all, and there's quite a bit of a difference between birds and fish and human beings. But when you look at the constitution, the physical constitution of animals, there's a lot of similarity between animals and men. Eyes, legs, internal organs, made of the same dust.

But there was one significant difference, and that is the thing that makes the difference between animals and human beings. And if we don't recognize that, then man sinks to the level of animals. That was the message which God was trying to convey to man by creating him on the same day as the animals.

From the same dust, very similar internal organs, and very similar external limbs, but yet with one significant difference. God breathed into man, and man became a living soul. That's because God gave him a spirit.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 23, we read that man is spirit, soul, and body. Whereas an animal does not have a spirit. An animal has got a mind, it can think, it's got feelings, you know the dogs have got feelings, just like human beings.

But they don't have a spirit. God breathed into man, and man got a part of him which animals don't have. And if man does not give prominence to that part of his being, which animals don't have, he very soon sinks to the level of animals.

And that's what we see in the world around us. And when a person gives his life to Christ, God seeks to bring him back to that place where Adam was when he was created, with the spirit having preeminence, and the most important part in his life, before sin came. When sin came, man's spirit died.

His contact with God died. And then when man's spirit is dead, he begins to live just like an animal. Because that most important part of his being is dead.

Because of sin. Christ comes to revive that, to bring life into that spirit. And that's what happens when a person is born again, and when God puts his Holy Spirit within man, that innermost part of us gets revived, it becomes alive, it's like a resurrection.

And that's why Christians are commanded to be baptized. Because in baptism, we're testifying that a resurrection has taken place within our spirit. And now, once the spirit has become alive, we find ourselves with a choice constantly.

A choice now to live by this spirit, this breath of God within us, or to live according to the passions of this body of dust, just like the animals. So we find ourselves in between two pulls. We all know that there are desires and passions in this body that pull us downward to the things of earth all the time.

To many things which lead us into sin, and which lead us even to destroy this wonderful body that God has created. At the same time, when Christ comes into us and we open our beings to God's Holy Spirit, we find another pull within us. And if you're a true Christian, you've experienced that.

A pull calling you to overcome these passions and to live for the things that are eternal, for the things of heaven, for the things of God. No animal ever feels that pull. And so we see here in Genesis 1, that when God created man, he said something.

When he created all the other animals, he did not describe a purpose that he had for them in connection with himself. But when he was going to create man, before he created man, he said these words in Genesis 1, 26, God said, let us make man in our image. Here is a statement of purpose before man is created.

Whereas all the other bits of creation that we read of from verse 3 onwards of Genesis 1, it's just that God spoke something, there was light, and God spoke something, and then the dry land appeared, and God said something else, and the sun and the moon appeared, and God said something, and the fish and the birds appeared. But, and the same thing for the animals. Let the earth bring forth living creatures, verse 24.

But, God did not say, let there be a man, or let there be a woman. Like he said for all the rest of creation, man was to be special, more important than everything else that God had created, because he was going to be made in the image of God, which even the angels in heaven do not have that privilege. So we read

here in Genesis 1, 26, God said, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and when man lives according to that, reflecting God's image, he has authority.

Let them rule. Think of that phrase. Let them, that is man and woman, were created by God to be kings.

To rule. To rule over their passions, to rule over everything on this earth. They were to be kings.

But see what happens in Genesis chapter 3, when man sins, he immediately becomes a slave. The king has descended to becoming a slave in a moment, just by one act of disobedience. What Adam did in the Garden of Eden was, there was the voice of God within his spirit, saying that he should not take part of that tree that God had forbidden.

But he didn't listen to that voice. He responded to the pull of the dust part of him. See, you and I also have a dust part of us, and a spirit part of us.

The spirit part is that which pulls us upward toward God, and the dust part is that which pulls us downward to the things of earth. It's not that we can't use the things of earth. In fact, God, when he sent Adam and Eve into that garden, there were thousands of wonderful trees there.

God is the one who had created Adam with a desire for food. Hunger is something that God has placed in the human body, and the desire for food is not something evil or sinful. It is when it is used in a wrong way, that it becomes sin.

So God didn't say to Adam, you shouldn't eat anything, just deny yourself, be an ascetic and fast. No, he said you can go in there and eat anything you want. But, here is something that you shouldn't eat.

And when Adam and Eve stood before that tree, here they would face that pull of the voice of God telling them to live by his standards, and here was the pull of the body pulling them towards that very attractive fruit. In fact, it says in Genesis 3, in verse 6, that the woman saw something in the tree. With her eyes, it was good for food.

It was a delight to her eyes, and something that appealed to her body. Now, if we keep this in mind, because we live in a world where there are so many things that appeal to our senses, and there are things that God has created, which we can enjoy, and there are also things that God has forbidden. And if we allow our senses to respond to things that God has forbidden, and we allow this dust part of us to pull us downward, and we live for that, and do not respond to the voice of conscience within us, pulling us upward, over a period of time, we gradually become like the animals.

You know, when Jesus picked up a little child, he said that that was the closest thing to heaven on the face of the earth. When the disciples asked him, who is the greatest in God's kingdom? He picked up a child and said, this is the greatest, one in God's kingdom. Because a little baby is perhaps the closest thing to heaven that we can see on the face of the earth.

If you look into the eyes of a little baby, you see the purest eyes, the purest thing that we can see on earth, closest to heaven. But as that little child grows up, and responds to the dust part of it, it gradually becomes more and more like an animal. And unless that child responds to the call of Christ, at some time in its life, and allows God to revive its spirit, it will just sink lower and lower and lower, and you see how many human beings around the world do some abominable things, which even animals don't do.

So, when God created man, he breathed into him, and his purpose was, that man and woman should rule. Man should not be a slave. I want to say to you, in Jesus' name, that God never, never intended you to be a slave.

You're not meant to be a slave to guilt, to fear, to discouragement, to sin, to your passions, to the fear of men, or any such thing. God wants you to be an overcomer, to rule over everything. And the only way to do that, is if you respond to the upward call of God, all the time, and ask for his power, to deny the pull downwards.

So, what was God's purpose when he created man? It says here, to reflect his image. Man was supposed to be God's representative, on earth, and that's where he failed miserably. The Apostle Paul uses the word, ambassador, in 2nd Corinthians, in chapter 5. He says, we are ambassadors for Christ.

2nd Corinthians 5.20. Now, you know that an ambassador of a nation, is representing that nation. The ambassador of Thailand, will represent the country Thailand. The ambassador of Australia, will represent the country Australia.

An ambassador of Christ, is to represent Christ, by his conduct, and his behavior. And that's what we see here in Genesis 1, when God said, let us make man, in our image. There were already millions and millions of angels, that God had created.

But none of them, could be his ambassadors. They could be his servants. They could do a lot of things, that God told them to do.

They had some supernatural powers, those angels. But they could not represent him. In fact, in all of creation, there was nothing, that could represent God.

It was finally, when God made man, that he had a representative. He had a man, who could reflect, what he was like. And also, it's because God made man with that, in his image, that man has the capacity, to fellowship with God.

There is a part inside us, which will never be satisfied, till it's occupied by God himself. And that's why man is restless. And that's why a lot of people commit suicide.

They are frustrated. Even people who have a lot of money. A lot of people think in this world, that if you have plenty of money, all your problems are solved.

But there are so many cases, of people who have made a lot of money, who finally commit suicide. Because there is this, we can say a God-shaped vacuum, inside us, which cannot be satisfied with money, or sex, or any other earthly pleasure. You can have position, you can have honor, you can have wealth, you can have everything, but this can only be satisfied, when the creator, who created man for himself, is given that rightful place within.

So what was God's purpose for man? That man should be a ruler, that man should represent him, and he said that he must be fruitful, and multiply. We read in Genesis 1, verse 28. So that there would be, not just one representative, representing God on the earth, not just Adam and Eve, but many, many, that he would have children, who would also represent God.

So when we see God's original purpose for man, we see how terribly man has failed. And even many who claim to be Christians, who say they have received Christ, we can ask ourselves, you and I can ask ourselves, are we representing Christ correctly? I mean, people who look at us, are they able to see something, of what God is like? Unless we see this as the purpose of our life, we're not going to be able to fulfill it. See, we can't fulfill a purpose, until we see what that purpose is.

And I feel that even a lot of Christians, haven't seen clearly, what God's purpose is. They don't seem to recognize, that when they sin, or do something un-Christ like, they are failing God miserably, failing terribly in the purpose, with which God has placed them on the earth. We're not here just to go to church services, study the Bible, and increase in the knowledge of God, and once in a week, go and sing and worship God.

All that is good. But the ultimate purpose of all of that, is that every single day of our life, and every single moment of our lives, we are reflecting the nature of God. Under the Old Testament, this was just not possible.

It's only possible after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit has come, in order to fulfill that original purpose, which God had for man, when he created him. Which was frustrated, by the devil coming in, and making Adam sin, spoiling God's purpose, which was once again restored, when Christ came, and lifted man back up, to the place, where the original purpose could be fulfilled. So if we were to draw a graph, of God's purpose for man, it wouldn't be a straight horizontal line, that God had in mind for Adam, it would be an upward line.

Because God's purpose for Adam, was that he should grow, into a knowledge of God. But that upward line, very soon, he never went on that upward line, he fell. So in that graph, you have a big dip downwards, and from here, Christ came, to lift us back up, to the original purpose of God, for Adam.

So if you draw the original purpose of God, as a straight graph line, going upwards, and right at the beginning, there's a serious dip, because of man's fall, and we're here at the bottom now. And when Christ comes to save us, when we are born again, when we are saved, we're brought back up, to that line, which God originally purposed for Adam, and the purpose is, not that we just get stuck there, but that we move along, that original purpose of God for man, represented by that upward line, on the ground. Now many Christians, because they don't understand that, they think salvation is just, being brought up from the pit, up to this level.

And then there they are, forever. And then they think perhaps, God's purpose is, now I must go around, sharing this with other people, and telling other people about, Christ dying for our sins, and get other people to come over there. All that is wonderful.

But the whole purpose of God, bringing us back up to that, top of the straight line, is to fulfill God's original purpose. And if that's not being fulfilled, then we can say, a major part of the purpose of our redemption, is not being fulfilled. If all that we receive, is the forgiveness of our sins, and the cleansing of our heart, the conscience from sin, then we haven't understood, all of God's purpose.

I mean if you have a cup in your dining room, and you wash it nicely and clean it, what's the purpose of, cleaning and washing a cup? It's not for a decoration. We don't keep cups for decoration. A cup is meant to hold, some liquid, which we drink.

It could be milk, it could be water, it could be a cup of coffee or tea. But the whole purpose of cleaning that cup, is so that it can be filled with something. So the whole purpose of Christ coming and, bringing us back and cleansing our heart, is so that, He can finally, bring us back to that place, where the original purpose of God, can be fulfilled in our life, which is described here.

Let us make man in our image. That's where Adam failed. Now Christ has brought me back to that place where, I'm supposed to reflect the image of God.

I'm supposed to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ. I'm supposed to show other people, what Christ is like. Now if I see that as my calling, anytime I fail and slip up, in that calling, I say, hey I failed God terribly here.

It's a serious matter, that I have failed God. I need to come back to that, original purpose and fulfill it. And so I repent, I say Lord I've let you down, I want to, fulfill that purpose which you've had for Adam, which you've restored in me, through the salvation that is in Christ.

So as I said in the beginning, this is these two pulls, the pull downward because of our body, made of dust, and the pull upward which we, all who are born again experience, the voice of the spirit in our conscience, lifting us up to, the things of heaven. And here is where I need the power of the Holy Spirit, if I'm to keep responding, to this upward pull. Paul once said, that he wanted to lay hold of that, for which Christ had laid hold of him.

He knew that Christ had laid hold of him with a purpose. And I want to tell you God's purpose for Paul, was not just that he should, save souls and build churches. God's purpose for Paul was that, he might reflect God's image, that he might be a ruler.

And from that position, he was to serve him, saving souls and building churches. When God created Adam, it's not because he needed a servant. No, he already had millions of angels.

He didn't say, well, we've got a garden here, and we need somebody to look after that garden. No, that's not why he created Adam. He created Adam to have fellowship with him.

And that's why, as soon as he created Adam, the very first day that Adam existed, was a holiday for him. It was a Sabbath. It was the seventh day for God, but the first day for Adam.

And he had fellowship with him. God was trying to tell Adam, listen Adam, the most important thing I want in your life, is fellowship. I want to have fellowship with you.

And it's only then, that you can have, you can reflect my nature. I mean, it's something like electricity. If you want a bulb to burn, it's got to be plugged into the socket.

And when man is in connection with God, then God's nature comes through. Man is like a bulb, you know. He's got the capacity to reflect God's nature, but cannot produce that on our own.

A bulb cannot burn on its own. It's got the capacity to burn, and give a lot of light, like here. But on its own, it cannot give that light.

But when it's plugged into a socket, and the electric power flows into it, it burns. This is a beautiful picture, of the way God wanted Adam and Eve to live. Connected to him, with the life of God flowing into them, and being manifested through them.

And that's where he failed. And so, God's not asking us, to overcome these passions on our own. We have these desires, every one of us has desires, pulling us down, what we call sin.

He says, just be connected to me, allow my spirit, to come and fill your heart. And then, just like that, bulb burns almost effortlessly. The Holy Spirit will be able to give us that power, to live the type of life, that God wanted Adam to live, and that he wants you to live.

God bless you.

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