

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Muskego, Wisconsin  
September 24, 2017

**Understanding Worldview – Yours and Others**

1. Where did I come from? (Sept 17)
2. Why am I here? (Sept 24)
3. What is “good”? (Oct 1)
4. Where am I going when I die? (Oct 8)

**Today: Why am I here?  
(Genesis 2:15-25, page 3)**

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

<sup>19</sup> Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam<sup>[f]</sup> no suitable helper was found. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs<sup>[g]</sup> and then closed up the place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib<sup>[h]</sup> he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called ‘woman,’  
for she was taken out of man.”

<sup>24</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

<sup>25</sup> Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Who or what is your Eliakim?

In Isaiah 22, the Holy Spirit speaks through the prophet Isaiah and foretells that Shebna, a palace administrator or manager, will be replaced by another, by a man named Eliakim, son of Hilkiah.

<sup>23</sup> I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a seat of honor for the house of his father. <sup>24</sup> All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots—all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars.

<sup>25</sup> “In that day,” declares the LORD Almighty, “the peg driven into the firm place will give way; it will be sheared off and will fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut down.”

The LORD has spoken.

So Eliakim becomes the peg upon which the entire family hangs its hopes and dreams. Then God sheared off that peg, and the whole family came tumbling down.

That is a picture for me of what we all tend to do. Our worldview helps us answer questions like “Who am I? Why am I here?” As Christians, the answers should ultimately come from God’s worldview.

But sadly, we are more influenced by the secular worldview than we’d like to admit. We often tend to find our self-image and our purpose by hanging it on someone or something, like Eliakim’s family did.

For example, King Solomon thought that perhaps pleasure or the “pursuit of happiness” would give him a sense of purpose.

I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be meaningless. <sup>2</sup> “Laughter,” I said, “is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?” (Ecclesiastes 2:1-2).

He found pleasure as meaningless... a chasing after the wind. You can see that in the power of addictive behaviors. A little alcohol gives pleasure, but then I want more and more. A little of a drug gives temporary pleasure, but then I want more and more. A little pornography is ok, someone might think, but then you always need the next click and the next video and the next until Satan consumes you with that addiction.

You might hang your purpose in life on success. King Solomon tried that too.

<sup>4</sup> I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. <sup>5</sup> I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. <sup>6</sup> I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. <sup>7</sup> I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. <sup>8</sup> I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a

man's heart. <sup>9</sup> I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

<sup>10</sup> I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;  
I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my labor,  
and this was the reward for all my toil.

<sup>11</sup> Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done  
and what I had toiled to achieve,  
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;  
nothing was gained under the sun (Ecclesiastes 2:4-11).

Success doesn't give us a lasting purpose in life. It can't satisfy. When I was young, I was successful if I had \$10 in my pocket. Then I wanted \$100. Then \$1000. Then when I was ready to buy a car I wanted \$10,000. Then a house so I wanted \$100,000. Now I want a \$1,000,000 in my retirement account. And if I ever reach that, will that be enough?

You can just go on and on.

Can we hang our purpose on a relationship with someone? But what if that relationship dies? What if that person dies. How many of us have been crushed because we inadvertently made a person or a relationship our purpose in life... and then God in his wisdom destroys that relationship, the child grows up, the person dies... and suddenly we are left with nothing to hang our lives on.

Even a cause... as a pastor, I can live for the church. That is a cause worth dying for, isn't it? That is a purpose worth living for.

But what happens when the church that I poured 16 years of my life closes? What happens if God in his wisdom doesn't give the success that we wanted and hoped for? What if I become feeble and have nothing to offer that cause that they want any more? Then what is our purpose.

What are we here for? If we hang our lives on any of these things, they can very easily pull out of the wall, and we have nothing to hang our lives on. There is no purpose. "Meaningless! Meaningless" Solomon said. And we can all agree with him.

What else is there in this secular worldview? If all that there is is what you can see and experience in this life... then what is your overarching purpose?

But the Biblical worldview is different. Paul explains our purpose in life in Romans 12. After talking about the grace of God for 11 chapters, he says, "In view of all this evidence of God's mercy, what is our response? Offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God."

That same message is in Genesis 2. After seeing the love of God in forming him and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, God says to Adam. Take care of the garden.

What is my purpose? It is the vocation... the task to which he has called you. To serve him in whatever job you have, whatever task is at hand, even whatever relationship you have.

Jobs will come and go. Your ability to do work will wax and wane. But what remains unchanging in this worldview is that the LORD God, the Savior God, the God who loves me... he is in charge of my life and he has put me right where he wants me right now. So, as Paul says, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

This is the one constant in our relationships too. So many of you are suffering from broken relationships. It seems that the love you have shown toward your spouse or family member, your child or your parent... that it goes unappreciated. So what is the use? No matter how hard you try, it is never enough. There is always more to do. So there is no lasting purpose is there!

Yet Jesus said, "If you give a cup of cold water to one of the least of these, you have done it unto me... you will certainly not lose your reward" (Matthew 10:42).

This is what we can hang our lives and our purpose for living on. Our eternal God is not a peg that is going to be pulled out of the wall. Our relationship with him makes life worth living.

But how do we keep that relationship at the front and center?

It is amazing that even in the garden of Eden, God made a way to make sure that Adam and Eve and their children would always be able to remember that their relationship with him was most important. He gave them a way to worship him. That is what the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was. It was the church to which they could go and worship him. They could acknowledge that the most important part of their lives was that perfect relationship with their Creator.

What was necessary in the Garden of Eden is even more necessary now. How do we keep God as the ultimate peg upon which we hang our lives and our purpose for living? It is only by going back to the center of the garden, understanding his perfect will, appreciating anew that we have failed and that he sent his Son to be our Savior.

Imagine yourself walking with God in the cool of the day. That is our privilege when we come to him through Jesus. Jesus is that cool breeze on a hot day like today. He comes and cools us with that message... I know how you hurt. I know you have hung your hopes and dreams on success or pleasure or people or things. I know they have disappointed you and you have fallen into a heap. But I've come to revive you, to breathe again into your nostrils the breath of eternal life, to tell you that I love you, that I'll never leave you or forsake you, that I delight in you, and to remind you... I created you for a unique purpose that only you can fulfill... you are chosen by me before the creation of the world to impact the world in a way that only you can... to bring glory to me and draw other people to me.

Let's take time to walk with God in the cool of the day and enjoy this time with him. Let's take the time to let his worldview become our worldview. Amen.