

**Seven Words to Life
Why Are We Here?
(First Word: *Creation*)**

This series is intended to explain who Heritage is, why we exist and why we do the things we do. It also hopes to explain why you are here, what you should be doing with your life and how you should do it.

In function, Heritage looks like a lot of other churches but our rationale for who we are, what we do and how we do it is vastly different from the majority of other churches. It should be the same for how you live.

Genesis 1:1 – *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Genesis 1:27 – *So God created man in his own image...*

Genesis 1:31 – *And God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good.*

First: God is Good

Except the first two days, the Bible says at the end of each creation day, “*And God saw that it was good*” until the sixth day when Scripture declares, “*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*”

Everything was originally good because it is a reflection of God.

God is good.

In Eden, creation did fully reflect God and it was good. There is no question that creation no longer completely reflects who God is and we’ll talk about that next week but for now –

Even though creation is no longer wholly good, God still is.

Note: This does not mean creation is not still good. It is good but broken. The theme of Scripture is:

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:15-20)

- a) A created world
- b) A fallen world
- c) A redeemed world

The Bible is the story of God’s promise. Genesis 1-3 describes how God made the world good and made humanity to enjoy His world. He placed us under his good rule – a rule that brought life and freedom. But humanity rejected God’s rule and incurred God’s wrath. The rest of the

Bible is the story of how God sets about restoring what was lost and fulfilling His purposes in creation. At the heart of that is a promise.

- Tim Chester in *From Creation to New Creation*

Rest,

(contrary to the 'bondage, corruption and groaning' of Ro 8)
is God's goal for creation –

"Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:9 & 11)

Incredibly, the Genesis work week is a microcosm of the metanarrative of Scripture.

God is moving toward Sabbath and everything we do as God's image-bearers, should represent that pilgrimage from brokenness to wholeness.

Righteousness is rightly representing God in the world
Sin is wrongly representing God in the world

God is good and God is moving toward the shalom of Sabbath

a) This is why Heritage exists.

IMP: This means we can't just do good works. Good works alone do not redeem the world. We do good works in the name of Christ as a means to demonstrate God's character and God's work in the world so that people will accept the gospel and join God in that redemptive agenda.

This is imperative. We can do the right thing for the wrong reason and it will lack God's blessing and power. It may 'look' good in the eyes of the world, but it is really harmful to everyone.

ILL: Nathan and Amy can heal bodies but if the healed person doesn't understand their healed body is a picture of God healing the world, they will die in hell - eternally unhealed.

Any good work that isn't motivated by and reflect God's redemption is incomplete and misrepresents the gospel

b) This is why you exist as a person, as a parent, as a worker, as a friend, as a brother, sister, etc.

Think about the record of Scripture. It is a map of what God is doing in the world and the way in which humans succeed and fail in working with or rejecting God's redemptive agenda.

Second: God is Great

When you take into account everything God made in the first chapter of Genesis, there is no question that God is great.

Moses accounted for things – v 11 – "lights in the sky" that we have yet to see. And even things we see every day, we don't fully understand.

Note: Why didn't Jesus come in the modern era? We could scientifically prove his miracles and resurrection. Jesus came in the era of absolute monarchies. Even countries who have

constitutional monarchies, like England, limit the monarch's authority with most of it resting in parliament. God is an absolute monarch.

ILL: In a normal kingdom, things can happen that are outside of the monarch's knowledge or ability to stop. But God is unique. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. This means that nothing can happen in God's creation of which he is not aware or able to stop. And yet, the world is fallen. What does this mean in the light of creation and redemption?

There is a common unregenerate but popular way to view the world

- a) God is good but not great and that's why evil exists
- b) God is great but not good and that's why evil exists

But the Bible teaches that God is both and simultaneously good and great. This means that if evil exists, as it does, God must have a reason for it – a redemptive reason for it.

Had it not been for the evil of humanity, Jesus would not have been crucified both

- because of us and
- on our behalf.

In one of the most perplexing texts of Scripture, the Bible says

Acts 2:23 - this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

God was great to arrange the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. He was equally good to do so. And yet at what cost to himself?

Conclusion:

The Bible is

- one story with God as its author,
- Jesus as its hero and
- redemption as its subject.

A great and good God created this world and is redeeming it, at the cost of separation from his son, cursing that son and the death of that son.

- a) If Jesus wasn't safe, no one is.
- b) But God is working through our suffering to demonstrate his reconciling work

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. – 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

ILL – Isabella has four sisters...four other mothers than Stephanie. She is held all the time and lives upright. When Stephanie starts to feed her, she lays down in her mother's arms and for that little moment between the time she lays down and the time the bottle gets into her mouth, she cries. She doesn't understand. She's frustrated. Life doesn't work out for her. She's fearful. But then she understands and for those few intimate moments, it is just Stephanie and Isabella. That moment Isabella endures several times a day is what also we endure daily. God wants us to rest in him as we look forward to a day of everlasting rest.

Band Returns

The world is not the way God created it.
It is not the way it will be.

[Everything is...] according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. – Ephesians 3:11-13)

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. – 1 Peter 5:10-11

It is a world that killed Jesus but by that death God has decisively won the eternal day. And for that reason, Jesus, who at the cost of his life, receives eternal glory. And so, we confidently sing this song –

Community Groups:

- 1 – How does creation teach us that God is good? Think on Gen 1:1 & 31
- 2 – How does the Genesis week of creation reflect God's overall redemptive plan? Read Ex 20:9 & 11
- 3 – How would you explain righteousness and sin using the metanarrative of the Bible?
- 4 – Good works are a good thing. But why is it insufficient for a person or church to do just good works?
- 5 – How do I practically apply this in my relationships, marriage, parenting, work, school?
- 6 – Explain how God can be great and good while evil exists in the world.
- 7 – Explain the difference between a human monarch and God? How does this help explain sin in the world? How does this help us understand and endure evil?
- 7 – Discuss Acts 2:23 and apply that same kind of sovereignty and fallenness to your own life? (Think how Genesis 50:20 helps with the answer)
- 8 – According to 2 Cor 4:7-12, why don't we lose hope in the midst of a fallen world?
- 9 – How does meditating on God's goodness and greatness get us through life?

