

TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

"I Give You..." Genesis 1:28-31

April 14, 2024

INTRO.: How much do we think about the gifts that God has given us? Why is it easier to complain than to be thankful? A few weeks ago, I shared a gift that one of my sons gave to me that is very meaningful to me. I could easily share something from each of my sons. This is one that is on one of my shelves in my office (2 pictures of the gift). He gave it to me on my birthday one year when he was much younger. It means a lot to me because:

*Who gave it to me (my son)

*The creativity and time it took (pink flamingos)

*The value/cost to him: he gave me his Lego men that he had carefully collected and were important to him

As we look at these last four verses of Genesis 1, we can once again see God's plan, purpose and design. We want to look at 4 gifts from God that, if fully grasped, will change our lives. Verses 28-31 are the conclusion of the sixth day of creation by God. As we read these verses together see if you can find these 4 gifts given by God.

I'm going to begin by reading verses 24-27 and then you will join me in reading v. 28-31.

Genesis 1:24-27 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **26** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

The first gift in verse 28 is the gift of:

I. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

v. 28a

The first phrase that we read is: "God blessed them and said to them..."

God spoke to Adam and Eve. He didn't have to speak to them. I have read this verse many many times and was just recently struck with what a gift it was that God communicated with mankind. He reached out to them. God walked with them in the garden. Sin had not yet happened.

Even when they sinned God still spoke to them.

Genesis 3:8-9 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

God has continued to speak to mankind since then. Look what the book of Hebrews tells us. How did God speak? Do you and I hear the voice of God?

Hebrews 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

You and I can read through the Bible and observe how God spoke through the prophets who were messengers from God.

Jeremiah 1:1-3 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. **2** The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, **3** and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

In the next verse of the book of Hebrews we read:

Hebrews 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Jesus, God the Son, came to earth and spoke the words of God. **Matthew 4:17** From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

How does God speak today? God speaks through His Word, the Bible!

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

This is why, every week, when you come here, you will hear a message from the Bible. This should be the first thing you look for in a church. Do they believe the Bible to be the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God, and do they teach and preach from it?

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20–21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Are you grateful for the Word of God?

As you and I come to the Bible we need to ask the Holy Spirit to teach us. As Jesus tells His followers that He will be leaving them, and that people won't see Him anymore. Throughout the gospels Jesus predicts His death and resurrection, but He assures His followers that they won't be left alone.

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 16:12–13 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

God desires for you and me to have a relationship with Him. What an awesome thought! In that relationship He desires to speak to us through His Word, the Bible. One of the gifts God gives is the opportunity to have a personal relationship with Him and to have Him speak to us through His Word. Another gift God gives is:

II. PURPOSE

v. 28b

ILLUS.: Christian writer and pastor Sam Allberry tells the story of a friend who has a very bizarre spoon in his sugar bowl. It is a bit larger than a teaspoon, but it has a big hole in the middle, so it is unable to carry sugar, salt, cocoa, or pretty much anything for which you would need a teaspoon.

When he has people round, he enjoys watching them try to work out how to use it, and whether they are doing something wrong. Eventually he reveals that it's an olive spoon, and that it is meant to have a hole in it so that you can drain the liquid as you lift the olive to your mouth.

Allberry relates this story to our sexuality. "You can't make sense of the way the spoon is without understanding what it's for." And then comes the punchline: "It is true of my friend's olive spoon and it is true of our sexuality." In other words, you can't understand God's biblical commandments for sex until you know God's design for sex.

Source: Sam Allberry, 7 Myths About Singleness (Crossway, 2019), p.105.

Many people are searching for meaning and purpose in life. Look what God says in the second half of verse 28.

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

*Be fruitful and increase in number/fill the earth

*Subdue the earth: the authority of the physical earth is given to mankind

*Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God is telling them they have a purpose while here on earth. This doesn't mean they treat these gifts from God with recklessness or carelessness. God establishes mankind as the steward over His creation. He (mankind) is to act as a good servant of his Creator in this role. This also points to the truth that man and woman are far different from all the other animals and things that God created.

As you and I study God's Word we can see other purposes that God gives to us. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 2 speaks of how salvation is by grace through faith and not of our own good works. The conclusion of that section of truth is found in Ephesians 2:10.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

"*we are:*" (present tense) we are and will continue to be such.

"*workmanship:*" (poiesis) we get the word "poem" from this word thus a piece of literary workmanship, a masterpiece.

Did you ever think of yourself in this way. People talk much about self-image, but I don't believe we can have a totally true and wholesome self-image without understanding what God has to say about us.

"*We are:*" the Penn State chant which was proudly proclaimed when the university's wrestling team won another national championship. Through Jesus Christ, we are God's workmanship, His masterpiece that He is continuing to conform into the image of Jesus.

"*which God prepared in advance for us*" this gives meaning and purpose to life.

"*to do:*" to walk in

The whole chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 is a defense and proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since the resurrection is true, those who know Christ as their Savior and Lord will also be resurrected. Christ's resurrection changes everything! It confirms what Jesus said on the cross as He declared, "It is finished." Because we have this sure hope, the Apostle Paul concludes the chapter with this verse.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

"*be:*" present tense command

"*steadfast:*" carries the idea of being seated, firm

"*immovable:*" similar meaning but more intense; motionless

"*always abounding:*" (present tense) over the top, going beyond the requirements

"*in the work of the Lord:*" there's never a time when I get to say, "I've done my part. It's time to sit back and let others do it."

"*knowing your labor in the Lord is not in vain:*" it's not empty or useless.

God truly gives meaning and purpose to our lives! It matters what I do!

God's gifts include the opportunity to have a personal relationship with Him, purpose to life, and:

III. PROVISION FROM HIM

v. 29

Genesis 1:29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

God tells Adam and Eve that He is giving them every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree with fruit on it. God is assuring them He has provided for them. In the following verse he declares that He has provided green plants as food for the animals.

At this point mankind is vegetarian. Why is this so? Sin has not entered the world yet and neither has death. All the animals are getting along. Can you even imagine what this was like?

Throughout Scripture we see examples of God providing for His children. God provided for the Israelites, His chosen people, in the midst of their constant complaining while they were wandering in the wilderness. They didn't have food, so they complained to Moses and Aaron. God provided manna (literally means, "what is it") that fell from the sky daily except on the Sabbath. In the evening God provided quail for them to eat. They complained they didn't have water. They cried out to Moses and He cried out to God, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." (Exodus 17:4) God tells Moses to strike the rock and water will come out. It happened just as God said it would.

The testimony of God's care for His people when they wandered in the wilderness because of their disobedience. **Deuteronomy 29:5** During the forty years that I led you through the desert, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet.

Look at what Jesus says about God's care and provision for the birds:

Matthew 6:25–27 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? **27** Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

Video of the bird at our house

Look at what He says about the flowers in the same chapter.

Matthew 6:28–32 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. **29** Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. **30** If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? **31** So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them."

Here's Jesus' conclusion:

Matthew 6:33–34 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

When I'm in those difficult situations I want to just go and work everything out. Do I stop and pray? Do I believe that God will provide for me? Have I seen Him do it in the past? Why do I doubt God? God gives the gift of His provision to Adam and Eve in the garden. Adam was given the responsibility to tend the garden. Can you imagine how much nicer it would have been without weeds, thorns, or thistles?

We see God's gift or personal relationship, purpose, provision, and finally:

IV. PERFECTION

v. 31

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

What was God's statement at the end of the sixth day of creation?

"*It was very good.*" The rabbis declared that the adverb *very* is added to denote that the perfection of the total creation exceeds that of its separate parts. When it states: "*it was very good*," it is not only for the sixth day, but also for all six days. (Fruchtenbaum)

Henry Morris (The Genesis Record): Six times before, He had seen that what He had made was "good"; but now that it was complete, with every part in perfect harmony with every other part, all perfectly formed and with an abundance of inhabitants, He saw with great joy that it was all (literally) "exceedingly good." There could have been nothing that was not good in all creation: no struggle for existence, no disease, no pollution, no physical calamities (earthquakes, floods, etc.), no imbalance or lack of harmony, no disorder, no sin and, above all, no death!

Sin disrupted and destroyed the perfection of God's creation. Some day there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. **2** I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. **4** He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Other promises for the believer:

2 Corinthians 5: absent from the body is to be present with the Lord

We will be like Jesus:

1 John 3:1-3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

I must stress to you that this will not happen while we are alive on this earth. Things are not going to get better here but they will be all better in eternity for the follower of Christ. We have this hope which is a sure hope.

SO WHAT???

I go back to my opening illustration of the birthday gift one of my sons gave me (picture of the gift). Why is it valuable to me?

*Who gave it to me (my son)

*The creativity and time it took (pink flamingos)

*The value/cost to him: he gave me his Lego men that he had carefully collected and were important to him

Think about the gifts God gave in Genesis 1:

*Personal relationship

*Purpose

*Provision

*Perfection

God has made these gifts available to those He has specially created in His image and likeness. Through Him we have meaning and purpose. Sin disrupted and ruined that relationship with Him, but at a great cost to Him in the death and resurrection of His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, He has provided the only way to have that relationship restored. This is the only way to be totally like Him when we pass from this life into eternity. God promises the gift of providing for His children. The application of these truths is not possible without God's Spirit living inside of a person. The Holy Spirit comes to reside in a person at the moment of belief!

So, what is my response?

*Trusting Christ to be my Savior and Lord

*Worship of Him with my lips and my life

*Reading, studying, and living His Word

*Living, loving, and sharing Jesus to those around me

