**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***Ekklesia Series***

 ***God’s Creative Purpose – To Share His Love***

 **May 5th, In the Year of Our Lord 2019**

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**(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)**

**Life Made by and for God**

In preparation for this Sunday’s sermon, I thought about the people who lived through all the ages, the eras we have reviewed over the past few months. Billions of lives have lived before us. Every life had a purpose from birth. How can this be said? Because every life was created in the image of the eternal God to have a relationship with Him. There isn’t any life that was created that was not made by God. With this said, what kind of relationship? With this question, there is a choice to have or not to have a relationship with God. The choice-relationship God intends for us is based in/on love.

**John 1:1-5 1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

 The idea, the belief that every individual was made by God and they count, is a shocking thought through most of world history. Here is a real theological statement. *Man is not junk. Man may turn himself into junk, but God doesn’t make junk.*  God created man to be His crowning achievement but with a choice to acknowledge and love Him. Remember, God loved us first (1 John 4:19). Therefore, each person can choose to live life as God’s crowning achievement.

*So, every morning, get-up and look in the mirror. Say to your image, ‘I am so good-looking; I look just like God’. (LOL)*

Okay, on a more serious note, I see the text in Genesis tells us that we are created in the image of God, meaning that we are created to contain God’s Spirit. Therefore, we are designed to house, to harbor, to maintain God’s presence inside our hearts, our minds, our being. It doesn’t serve any purpose that we physically look like God. This would be limiting to God if He actually has a physical structure. As a group, humans have the same anatomical appearance and at the same time vary in physical specifications.

Throughout the Bible, the presence of God is presented as Spiritual. God communicated through spiritual forms. The voice of God comes to Adam and Eve in the Garden, comes to Abram in Ur, comes to Moses at the burning bush and comes to the Old Testament prophets in a vocal presence. There is an angel of the Lord that wrestles with Jacob. There isn’t any significant event in the Bible where it was necessary for God to bring a physical bodily presence (representation/manifestation) until Jesus.

**God Extends Eternal Life in Jesus for Us to See**

The incarnation is the bodily presence of God. In God’s sovereign power, He chose to extend himself in the likeness of people. This proves that God is not limited in His choice of presentation. God is all powerful and can bring His presence as He chooses. It is beyond a scientific understanding.

 Two main reasons God came as Jesus Christ. **1.)** To go to the Cross to be the perfect one and only sacrifice to pay the price for the sins of the world. 2.) To demonstrate that it is possible for God’s Spirit to indwell a person, so that they can live life as God planned and to overcome death and be resurrected to a new life. There isn’t any other message in the world that speaks to these two actions by God that show His great love for us.

Of course, if people do not decide to surrender, receive, or accept God’s offer then they will not be able to live the life God has planned for them to live. In addition, their free-will choice dictates that they will spend eternity away from God and His people. Their freedom to chose will give them what they want, an existence away from God. God will not make anyone be with Him.

 So, furthering the recognition that everyone has individual rights granted by God to make choices, there was a huge delay in human history for this to become a widespread held belief. Evidence of this is seen in the timing of the freedom documents from France and America in the late 1700’s. It took that long for a nation to formally outline freedom in foundational state documents for the individual to be recognized with personal protection from the government and from private interest. Even with these freedom documents, not every person within these states were recognized.

We see that Paul claimed his individual rights as a Roman citizen (Acts 22:27-29). They listened to his claim, because he was a Roman citizen. However, not all people in the realm of Rome had the same civil/individual rights that Paul was afforded by his Roman citizenship into which he was born.

Man wants, seeks, desires, strives for, and is willing to die for freedom. Given a choice, mankind seeks to be free. This is what God wants. God wants people to be free from destructive forces in the creation.

This includes destructive forces originating in man that were masked with Christianity. For example, the Crusades were destructive forces in that European states took their right to defend themselves and their interest beyond the measures of a just war.

**Jesus Calls for Us to Be Free**

We, Christians, witness the Gospel in certain terms. Jesus proclaimed (in Luke 4) that he came to set the captives free. We take this statement to mean to be free from tyranny and oppression. And, yes, there is a physical and spiritual freedom to which Jesus refers. In the American Declaration of Independence, we see this expression of individual rights granted from the Divine as to have and exercise “inalienable rights”, meaning rights given by God, our Creator. These include the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In additional state documents, “property” is identified as a right to hold. Meaning, once legally obtained, no one can take it from you without a due process of the law. In theory, if everyone, including the temporal ruling powers, adhered to these principals, there wouldn’t be any wars.

**Be at Peace with What God has Provided**

People work and search for the things in life that bring them happiness and peace. Many books have been titled, “Peace with God.” The striving of man to be at peace with His Creator is persistent through the ages. Find peace with God and a person will have peace with their neighbor. God calls for us to surrender to Him and His ways and our basic possessions in life will be provided. Why pursue wealth for the sake of wealth? What are you to do with wealth? God’s plan for us may be to be wealthy. Then He has a plan for the wealthy. God asks for us to pursue Him first and then things will be added to our lives.

Matthew 6:30-34

 30 "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!

 31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'

 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**God Created Us to Share the Greatest Gift: Love**

I believe that anyone who **objectively** examines the course of history through the record of paleontology, cosmological and the biological record, will come to the determination that God is the Creator, and we are His crowning achievement. That is, if we choose to be. Above the three sciences listed, we should acknowledge that God’s Word, The Bible, brings all three of these pursuits of man together in one place. These temporal pursuits attempt to explain “**how**” it works. The Bible is a statement from God of “**why**” it works and toward “**what purpose**” does the creation work.

Our purpose is to have a relationship with God. The primary bind of our relationship with God is through love and grace that brings peace. When this happens, we experience fulfillment that ends with our transition to an eternal life. We experience life to its fullest through God’s spiritual gifts (Galatians 5:22ff). Love binds our relationships in life; that is our relationships of family given that marriage, fatherhood, motherhood, being a brother, sister, friend, neighbor, coworker or classmate is a joy of life. Of course, it is planned that we live all of these relationships with God’s plan. This brings fulfillment in life the way God desires.

**The question has been asked, why did God create us in the first place? From experiencing the world around us, supported by God’s Word, I see that God desired to share love with us. The greatest of all gifts from God, who is love (1 John 4).**

 When we experience relationships the way God has planned then we fulfill life’s purpose. Anyone who has loved knows that experience is to be shared. The gift of love is the gift of life in that love is the fulfillment of life.

1 Corinthians 13:2 2 If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

This is one of the most quoted Scriptures in the world. I know most people recognize the words. Today, I ask that you consider the ramifications of God’s words through Paul as he writes to a challenged church in pagan-wrought Corinth. **The reality in our existence put forth here is that love possesses all things and without love you have nothing which is encompassed in the words, “I am nothing.”**

Anyone who has ever been rejected, whose love was extended then rejected, cut-off or abandoned knows that they felt an emptiness, a void that could not be filled, as if life was not worth living. They were paralyzed. All but a few get over these events in our lives, but a few take their own life because for them, once the love was not reciprocated then there was no purpose for their lives.

I want everyone to know that God extends His love through the giving of each one of our lives. He gave us the gift of life. The gift to love. God wants and desires a reciprocal love response. God’s love is greater than this world. This is why He could place His presence in Jesus and go to the Cross and call to us and wait for a response. “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” “It is finished.” These declarations, from the Cross, demonstrate that God’s love is more powerful and overcomes any dissenting voices.

It is important to carefully read, focus, contemplate the rest of the passage in 1 Corinthians 13. This passage defines God. No person can live up to the definition of love provided here. Only God could achieve living this definition. God, as Jesus, did, as evidenced in the Cross. We read with a view to clarify that love is God just as 1 John 4 declares. Consider these words to describe who God is.

Love = God. God = Love.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

 8 Love never fails;

but if *there are gifts of* prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease;

if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away.

 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

 10 but when the perfect comes, [at the 2nd Coming]

the partial will be done away.

 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face;

now I know in part, but then I will know fully

just as I also have been fully known.

13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the **greatest of these is love**. (1 Cor. 13:3-13 NAU)

 **The World Wants God Defined**

The difficulty people have with these statements is the definition of God. We can see and examine what God has accomplished in the natural record through the discipline’s names. But the questions remain for people who do not have eyes to see and ears to hear. Particularly three. These are the questions that all people have. We Believers see these questions are answered by God through what He has made, the Creation. Believers observe the creation as a statement that God exists.

The three big questions:

1. **Is there a God**? For me the question is, “Does THE GOD

exist?” God is not just “a” god. There aren’t any other Gods.

All other spiritual beings are, in our terms, angelic beings. They don’t have any creative powers, and they do not control the end of times.

1. **Are we alone in the Universe**?
2. **Is there life after death?**

Then there is another list of questions that continue to search the minds of every person on earth. The search and understanding of a transcendent being, a god, The God.

1. Does the transcendent being interact and care about people?
2. Are people just to be observed by the transcendent?
3. What does God, our Creator, want us to do with the creation and our lives?
4. What are the parameters we are to live our lives by considering the structures within the creation?
5. Considering our lives now, are there consequences for not living life the way God has planned for us? Is the consequence realized now, in this life? If so, are these consequences spiritual or physical?
6. Considering the actuality of a next life, does the way we live our life here, in the now, have any bearing on the next life?
7. What does the next life hold for us? Is there a Heaven and Hell that separates people?

We as Believers know the answers to all the above questions. It is our responsibility to answer these questions to non-believers. We are called by God to witness who He is. We should acknowledge that God has elected to worked through His Church, His congregations, Assemblies. We are called to be a ready-witness. This means we should be in preparation to witness and seek to improve our knowledge and awareness of God and His plan for our lives.

I believe, the best place to start telling someone about God is to share that God is love. We can read 1 John 4 and 1 Corinthians 13. We can read John 3:16.

 John 15:12-14

 12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

 14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.