

The World and Everything in it (God)

August 8, 2020

Have you ever seen one of those old cartoons of a tennis match. To be more precise, have you ever seen one of those old animations of *the crowd* at a tennis match? You've seen this—as one player hits the ball over the net, everyone in unison turns their heads to watch the flight of the ball. Then when the other player returns serve, everyone in unison follows the return flight of the ball.

Everyone in unison snapping their heads to and fro.

That is kind of what the first 8 months of 2020 feels like to me.

The Australian Fires are ravaging NSW.

Soleimani killed in by a US drone.

China has this virus lurking in Wuhan.

Trump's Impeachment trial begins

The WHO names the virus COVID-19

COVID-19 makes it to the US

The 2020 Olympics are cancelled

COVID-19 is declared a pandemic

What is a pandemic?

Wear a mask!

Don't wear a mask!

Shelter in place.

Schools cancelled.

Zoom

Economic concerns

How can we just stay home?

Tragic death of George Floyd

Protests sparked nationwide

Some protests get violent

COVID-19 numbers are spiking

More protests

2020 election is the most imp ever

More COVID concerns

Wear a mask

Don't wear a mask!

Trump tweeted what?

Biden said what?

Schools may not open

And as a nation our heads snap back and forth. Many things are vying for our attention. Look here: The voices are getting more shrill and demanding vying for our attention. I'm not saying these are trivial matters. Not in the slightest.

But what I am saying is that if we allow the seemingly chaotic events in our world dictate our priorities, what we care most about, where we give our attention, we will lose our way. More than that, if we let the events we are living through dictate our priorities we will eventually feel engulfed by the chaos.

If we don't make a conscious effort to think Christianly we will give all of our time and energy and focus to what seems urgent in the moment. And not what is of vital importance. If we listen to all the shouting and let the chaotic events snap our heads back and forth we are liable to what we are about and who we are.

Ryken tells us what we need,

"A consistently Christian worldview that shapes our thoughts, forms our desires, guides our words, and motivates our actions." Philip Ryken

I think the answer is to reset ourselves, to allow the Lord to dictate our priorities. Today we are going to begin thinking together about the world that we live in. We are entitling this series the world and everything in it.

As Christians we are going to reset ourselves and revisit the foundations of what we know to be true.

God: Everything is His
Sin: Everything is Broken
Grace: Everything is not lost
Hope: Everything will change

Today instead of swiveling our heads back and forth, we fix our eyes on the word of God and listen. Simple point this morning: This is God's world—we just live in it.

PROP: This is God's world—we just live in it.

You might say that we are going to remind ourselves of our worldview. The first step in a Christian worldview is: This is God's world—we just live in it.

"So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. [24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, [25] nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and

breath and everything. [26] And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, [27] that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, [28] for

“In him we live and move and have our being’;
as even some of your own poets have said,
“For we are indeed his offspring.’

[29] Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. [30] The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, [31] because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” Acts 17:22–31

PRAY

I could not hope to cover everything necessary in these next four weeks, so I am intending to do some teaching via zoom later in the month. I’ll get more details to you tomorrow at our Town Hall meeting at 7p.

This is God’s world.

1. God Created ALL things—

As Paul stood before the Athenians on Mars Hill, the first thing he told them about God is what we need to be reminded of today too.

“To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. [24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth...”

Do you see the logic?

The Athenians have an idol that is to the unknown God and Paul introduces them to the God of the Bible by saying—he is the one who created all things and therefore is Lord both of heaven and earth.

He is Lord.

We throw the world Lord around like it is Jesus’ first name, but to be Lord means to be master. Our God is the Lord or master of the universe because he created all things. His realm is not limited to one geographical place.

The earth is the Lord's and fullness thereof.

He is the Lord or master of all things.

God created all things—even you. We can forget that we are created beings—while we are creatures made in God's image—we are still creatures. And as creatures our allegiance our purpose is to be set by our creator. It only follows that our creator determines our purpose and our identity.

Makes sense, right?

When you create something—you have a right to it.

I'm not someone who can build things with his hands. I'm not very artistic either. But imagine if I were able to make a civilization of creatures that lived in a snow globe. If I created them and put them there, it would be up to me to determine what they should do with their lives. Right?

The same is true for us.

We are created beings.

This stands in stark contrast to the voices in our world. One the one hand many will say that there is no design in creation and we are little more than a collection of random molecules who happened together to come together to make life. If we are the product of chance—who do we owe our allegiance to?

No one. See that?

Richard Dawkins says of creation—

“There is nothing at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.” Richard Dawkins

In other words, do what you want. You should ONLY pay attention to the urgent—the immediate—the now: because nothing else really matters. It doesn't matter if you do good or are good. There is no such thing as good and evil.

Do what you want.

Our passage has a different message. Our God has created all things and he has the authority over all things. God has authority over all things—even and especially you and I.

To understand BOTH our purpose and identity in this world, we must start NOT with ourselves—but with our God. The basic fundamental question is not—what do I want to do with my life?

But what has God created me for?

We do not know either who we are or what to do if we live without reference to God. For clarity, by God we do not just mean God the Father. We mean the Triune God. God is BOTH 3 and 1.

The Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit.
The Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son.

AND

The Father is God.
The Son is God.
The Spirit is God.

This is the God of the Bible. ONE God existing in “three coequal, eternal persons.”

That God did not create us because he needed us for anything.

Vs. 24,

[24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, [25] nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

He is NOT beholden to me.
I AM beholden to him.

He owes me nothing.
I owe him everything.

We need to remember this and let that soak in.

“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.” Colossians 1:16

All things created for him.

I don't think of myself as created for anyone. Do you?

How would our perspective change in these times if we put in the front of our minds that we are MADE FOR ANOTHER?

God created all things.

2. *You are Made for him—*

At times people have said that mankind was made to “Glorify God.”

Glorifying God can sound almost like a catch-all category, meaning both everything and nothing at the same time. Its not.

How?

Remind yourself you are just a creature, put here by another.

[26] *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,*

I belong to him. I am created for him. I have been put here in these days by him. I did not chose these days. You did not chose these days.

As creator and sustainer. He has us here.

I hope you see how this makes a difference. A real practical difference in your life. How do we glorify him?

Not by doing religious things all the time.

Not by becoming a spiritual recluse.

Not by living as a monk.

Not by taking a vow of poverty.

Not by selling everything.

Glorifying him happens in the life you already have.

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.” Psalm 37:3

But by reminding yourself you are here for his purposes.

- Work: It is your ministry for the Lord.
- Family: Love but don't worship your family.
- Education: Learn about God's handiwork

- Leisure: Enjoy his good gifts

We will talk more about these things in the days and weeks to come.

Two common response to the chaos of these days.

Fear:

Anger: