

**Sermon Notes of
Assistant Pastor Manuel Hamme's Sermon on November 4, 2018:**

"What's your Function?"

[In today's sermon, Assistant Pastor Manuel Hamme shows that our function or purpose in this life and the life to come is to participate in God's plan for us.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Back in the 1970's, ABC Network created an educational cartoon series called, "Schoolhouse Rock!"
- One of the main characters of the cartoon series asks this question in a printed cartoon, "What's Your Function?"
- Now most people explain their function by what they do, such as "I'm a doctor" or "I'm a lawyer" or "I'm an insurance agent."

- Now many go to college to learn a job profession, which has become very expensive.
- Manny showed a cartoon of a father talking to his son: "You need to apply for student loans so you can go to college and get a good job to pay off your student loans."
- Today, our student loans are at a 1.4 trillion dollar debt.

- The next cartoon is a man applying for a job dressed in his graduation cap and gown: "Until I start getting a paycheck, these are the nicest clothes I have for a job interview."
- Now, we also know that certain jobs have certain requirements.
- So this next cartoon applies to a lot of us today.
- A man who conducts job interviews tells a lady perspective: "We also have some part-time positions available for people who only want to work 60 or 80 hours a week."

- And then there is the other side of the employment story.
- Person who conducts job interviews tells a perspective: "You're a workaholic. You are aware you're applying for a government job, aren't you?"
- So these cartoons are an introduction to the subject concerning our function and role here in Monrovia and in our place with God.

Understanding Scripture:

- Manny was thinking about a book that former pastor Glen Weber talked to him about.
- It was written by Dr. John H. Walton, who is a professor of Old Testament studies and he's written a lot of commentaries and books.
- And one of the things he wrote about concerned the book of Genesis – his premise is that you have to understand the beginning to understand what it is currently.
- One of his books is, "The Lost World of Adam and Eve."

- While Manny doesn't agree with everything Dr. Walton writes about, he has some very good points that Manny wanted to share with us, before we talk about our function here.
- One of Dr. Walton's points is that the Bible is written for us, not to us.

- He also translates the word “good” into “function.”
- He believes this is important to understand this so we can define the “why” aspect and not just the “how” aspect.
- And he shows what function means towards man both in Genesis 1:28 and 2:15.
- And Dr. Walton talks about the fact that God was always with man, helping him with his function and with his purpose.
- And the interaction that man has with each other and with God is a sacredness that’s equivalent to a sacred space.
- And he wraps it up by saying how Jesus is involved in all of this.
- First of all, it’s good to realize that the Bible is written for us, not to us.
- Now we’re just about to celebrate Thanksgiving and if we were to talk about it to people from Europe or Australia or Asia, they wouldn’t understand exactly what Thanksgiving is about.
- In fact, the people celebrating Thanksgiving a few years ago, they understand it in different terms than we do today.
- So, we can’t look at the Bible entirely from the perspective we have today, but we also have to understand what was happening at the time it was written.

2 Tim 3:16 (AMPC), Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God’s will in thought, purpose, and action).

- So, there is a lot of benefit to understanding Scripture.

Rom 15:4, For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope and overflow with confidence in His promises.

- So, we need to understand that parts of Scripture are written symbolically, some are written literally and other parts are written poetically, and so forth.

The Biblical word “good”:

- Dr. Walton discusses what we need to know about the word “good” in Scripture.
- Here is a New Testament example, when people went up to Jesus and said “good teacher”, Jesus asked them this question.

Mark 10:18; Luke 16:16, And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me [essentially and perfectly morally] good? There is no one [essentially and perfectly morally] good—except God alone.

- Now Dr. Walton indicates that the word “good” in Genesis often refers to a condition in which something is functioning optimally as it was designed to do in an ordered system – it is working the way God intended.
- God has a purpose for all the things that He creates.

Genesis 1:1, In the beginning God created [by forming from nothing] the heavens and the earth. 2) The earth was formless and void or a waste and emptiness, and darkness

was upon the face of the deep [primeval ocean that covered the unformed earth]. The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters. 3) And God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 4) God saw that the light was good (pleasing, useful) and He affirmed and sustained it; and God separated the light [distinguishing it] from the darkness.

- After God creates the stars and the moon and the Sun, He explains exactly why they are here – to help us know the times and the seasons.

Mankind’s relationship with God:

- One of the questions that mankind has always struggled with is, “Why am I here?”
- People who don’t know God or have a relationship with God feel that their life is meaningless.
- Now Dr. Walton says there is an answer to explain this.
- God does have a reason for each one and every one of us.

1 Cor. 14:33 God isn’t a God of disorder but of peace.

Ephesians 1:4 just as [in His love] He chose us in Christ [actually selected us for Himself as His own] before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy [that is, consecrated, set apart for Him, purpose-driven] and blameless in His sight.

- So, God does have a purpose for us – it’s not just now, it’s always been from the beginning.

Genesis 1:27, So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28) And God blessed them [granting them certain authority] and said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subjugate it [putting it under your power]; and rule over (dominate) it.

- God is beginning to show man’s purpose here by showing that he has authority over the earth and all the plants and animals.

29) So God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the entire earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30) and to all the animals on the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that moves on the ground – to everything in which there is the breath of life – I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so [because He commanded it].

- So, we see the purpose of why God created these things.

31) God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good and He validated it completely.

- So, the next time Genesis refers to man is in Genesis 2:15.

Genesis 2:15, So the Lord God took the man [He had made] and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.

- Instead of saying “to cultivate and keep it”, other translations say, “to farm it and to take care of it” or “to tend and watch over it.”
- As we see, from the beginning God wanted humanity involved in whatever His purpose was.
- God doesn’t want us to sit around doing nothing.
- God wants us to participate in His plan and His purpose.

God always with Humans:

Gen 3:8, And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool [afternoon breeze] of the day.

- So, we see God interacting with humanity in a personal and relational way.

2 Chron. 5:13, Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, 14) and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.

- God has always wanted to be in the presence of His people.

Ezek. 37:27, My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

- This has always been God’s desire.

Matt 1:23, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and give birth to a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” – which, when translated, means, “God with us.”

- God has always wanted to be with humanity with the purpose of Him interacting in our lives.
- God also wants us to be involved with Him, but He’s not going to force us to do that.

Our Function or role:

- Jesus told us what to do to gain eternal life.

Matt 22:37, And Jesus replied to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38) This is the first and greatest commandment. 39) The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself [that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others].’

- Jesus also gave many parables about how to love our neighbors – here is one of them.

Matt 25:34, “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father [you favored of God, appointed to eternal salvation], inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35) For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36) I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me [with help and ministering care]; I was in prison, and you came to Me [ignoring personal danger].’

37) Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38) And when did we see You as a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39) And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40) The King will answer and say to them, ‘I assure you and most solemnly say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it for Me.’

- By showing our love for our fellow mankind, we really show our love to God.
- So, here’s our function – we have a great opportunity to participate in God’s plan.
- And God helps us by giving us the tools that we need to participate with Him.

God in Us:

1 Cor. 12:4, Now there are [distinctive] varieties of spiritual gifts [special abilities given by the grace and extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit operating in believers], but it is the same Spirit [who grants them and empowers believers]. 5) And there are [distinctive] varieties of ministries and service, but it is the same Lord [who is served]. 6) And there are [distinctive] ways of working [to accomplish things], but it is the same God who produces all things in all believers [inspiring, energizing, and empowering them]. 7) But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit [the spiritual illumination and the enabling of the Holy Spirit] for the common good.

- Now we know that we can’t do anything without God in our lives.
- It’s not us loving our neighbors, it’s God in us through the Holy Spirit.

8) To one is given through the [Holy] Spirit [the power to speak] the message of wisdom, and to another [the power to express] the word of knowledge and understanding according to the same Spirit; 9) to another [wonder-working] faith [is given] by the same [Holy] Spirit, and to another the [extraordinary] gifts of healings by the one Spirit; 10) and to another the working of miracles, and to another prophecy [foretelling the future, speaking a new message from God to the people], and to another discernment of spirits [the ability to distinguish sound, godly doctrine from the deceptive doctrine of man-made religions and cults], to another various kinds of [unknown] tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. 11) All these things [the gifts, the achievements, the abilities, the empowering] are brought about by one and the same [Holy] Spirit, distributing to each one individually just as He chooses.

- So again, God shows that he wants us to participate in His purpose and in joy to reach out to others.
- God wants us to participate in our care groups, to participate in prayer walks, to participate in asking people to come to church and learn about their heavenly Father.

God’s Involvement with us:

Philippians 2:13, [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.

Acts 17: 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

A new function for us:

- Dr. Walton says that salvation gets us to the end process; which is a relationship with God.
- And that's what God truly wants.

Rev. 1:5, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- Thus, being "kings and priests" shows that we will have future functions and roles to perform.

Communion:

- We also have another way to participate with our loving God and it's through the partaking of communion.

Closing prayer