

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday October 27, 2019. "Life's Biggest Questions: Why am I here?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Recap.

We kicked off the series; **"Life's Biggest Questions"**, understanding as we go through life there will be things that challenge what we think we know. We want to **replace the lure towards certainty**, protecting our beliefs, **with a posture of trust**. If we can learn to trust in the nature and character of God, we can be okay with not having all the answers. **Knowing God is relational not informational**. Then we talked about the problem of suffering. And we accepted the truth that pain is inevitable, but how we handle it is up to us. We will face moments of suffering and struggle, but if we actually move into it, feel it, we can find God in the midst of it.

Last week we talked about those times in our life when we make huge mistakes that derail our lives and more importantly our relationship with God. Walking through a passage, we saw that even though there are natural built in consequences to our actions, God is there at the beginning of the restoration until the end, with the sole purpose of reconciliation.

This is an important series, because the church is becoming irrelevant to so many people, because it doesn't give a safe space to ask tough challenging questions. And if we can create a safe space for others to ask these questions, then we can become a place others will turn to in order to find God.

III Sunday.

We finished this series with the ultimate what was described 'woo-woo' question. **"Why am I here?"** **"What is the meaning of life?"** Somewhat related to the "Why is there suffering?" question, this question is often born out of struggle, frustration, and more often than not just a general lack of direction in our lives. And we ask this question more in relationship to our life goals rather than as a philosophical question.

Have you ever wrestled with the "Why am I here?" question?

Were you ever able to come to terms with it and how?

There were several scriptures presented Sunday along with an interesting study about the **"Four Pillars of Meaning"** or elements if we incorporate them into our lives to help us find that meaning we're looking for. We'll combine the two, scripture and a pillar of meaning, to show how both the world and scriptures give us basically the same truths of what brings true meaning to life.

1. The original purpose, walking with God and taking care of things. (Genesis 1:27-31).

The first original purpose is at the very beginning of scripture. And that is to walk with God, and take care of all he has given to us. The words used in scripture to talk about our relationship with creation are “*serve*” and “*protect*”. Creation is a gift given to us to take care of, remembering that everything still belongs to God, and we are just stewards of it.

The first “*Pillar of Meaning*” is purpose. People want their lives to matter, to have an impact, and to have something greater than themselves to live for. What better purpose than to steward creation, and create things on our own.

What would it look like to practice taking care of all we see around us in our everyday life?

2. To be loved by God. (Malachi 1:2. Psalm 86:15).

We were created out of an overflow of God’s love, and God wanting to share all of who he is, and the delights of the world with someone. And that someone gets to be us.

These experiences of being loved by God fit the second “*Pillar of Meaning*”, and that is transcendence. Which is defined as experiences that cannot be contained or defined by physical boundaries. And what could be more transcendent than to be loved by an infinite God?

Have you ever had a moment where you felt or experienced something that couldn’t be explained by physical things? What was it like?

How could being loved by God be a transcendent experience?

3. To love others. (Matthew 22:34-40).

When Jesus talked about the two greatest commandments that sum up all of the law, he said that we are to love God...with all we are, and to love others. This is another reason we were created. To share the love we receive from God with each other.

Parents will tell you that one of the greatest joys in a parent’s life is to watch their kids hang out and have fun with each other. Just imagine the joy that it brings God to watch his children loving on each other. And what a great purpose to work into our daily lives.

The third “*Pillar of Meaning*” is belonging, which fits perfectly with creating relationships with others rooted in love and respect. We create community, places for people to belong, when we show this love to each other.

Loving others, creating places of belonging, might be one of the most difficult of the four pillars.

Simply because we struggle to love others who are different AND there are some who are just difficult to love.

Who are some people for you that are difficult to love?

What makes it tough to love some people?

So...what do we have to do internally, what kind of inner work do we have to do, to be able to love others?

4. To help bring others far away from God to him. (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

Lastly, our final purpose, what we were created for, is to share the above three with people who have not yet found their meaning in life. And we are to do this with the; kindness, grace, and truth, that God does with us. We are to share our hope and joy, and live a life bringing others into this intimate relationship with God.

The final *“Pillar of Meaning”* is story which is the ability to build a life that creates a story worth telling others.

What does it mean for you to live a life of a good story?

What would that include?

How does it connect with being other focused?

And all of these not only bring meaning and purpose to life...answering the question; *“Why am I here?”*, but God has also empowered us to be co-creators with him, continuing to create beautiful things that benefit everyone, and add to the beauty of God’s creation.

We have to admit that finding meaning in life may not answer the career, life partner, or any day to day questions like that. But if we can incorporate these four fundamental truths, *“Pillars of Meaning”* into our lives, we can build a solid foundation of purpose and meaning, that can inform and speak into those more ‘day to day’ questions we have.

Closing out this series, we want you to know that NCC is and always will be a safe place to ask those tough big questions of life. We all have those questions that wrestle with real life issues. And we need a safe place to ask those questions out loud, and then have some open non-judgmental conversations as we flesh out what answers for us may look like.

And just know that the answers you come up with will be for your current situation. You will have a lifelong journey of asking more questions and working out your faith and what it means to live for God continually...and NCC will be a great and safe place to be brave asking those questions.