

Why Am I Here?

Perspectives: Part 1 (9/24/23)

Introduction

Our presuppositions shape our perspective, our perspective shapes our priorities, and our priorities shape our practice (Kenneth Boa, author and president of Trinity House Publishers and Omnibus Media Ministries). In other words, the way we look at life determines how we live it. Our presupposition that shapes how we look at life is biblical Christianity. As C.S. Lewis said: *I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else*. In this series, we will examine our perspective on life as explained by St. Paul in the book of **Philippians**. We will begin by finding our purpose in life, then we will see it's about looking to the interests of others, how the "budget is balanced" in Christ, and finally, dealing with worry. Today, we ask the question, "Why am I here?"

Why?

"Why?" is a big question. It's one of the first questions we learn to ask when we begin to talk. How many of you, as parents, have had this happen? You tell your three-year-old something and they ask, "Why?" You give them the answer and they say, "Why?" You do your best to answer that question and they say, "Why?" Finally, in exasperation, you say, "Because I said so, that's why." As you walk away, you hear a faint, "Why?" Well, you probably said the same thing when you were that age, too.

Why Is the Sky Blue?

As we get older, the question becomes more specific, "Why do things work the way they do?" We are interested in understanding our world and how it works. One of my favorite TV shows is **How It's Made**. But we know the answer to our question of why the world is the way it is can be found in Scripture. I am who and what I am because God made me that way.

Why Evil?

As we gain more life experience and we experience more pain, we begin asking, "Why did this happen?" It's the age-old question asked in the book of Job, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Of course, the Bible gives us the answer to this question as well. First, no one is good except God. But the reason there is evil in the world is one word – sin. Originally, there was no suffering, sickness, pain, or death in the world. It was paradise, a real Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, all that changed. The truth is, people are bad and do bad things to each other. And we live in a fallen world where bad things happen. This isn't a fatalistic view of the world, either. The Bible has the answer to the problem—Jesus, through His death and resurrection, heals the world and will breathe life back into it.

Why Am I Here?

When I visit people who no longer get to lead the active life they once did, I often hear them say, "I don't know why the good Lord hasn't taken me, yet." Why am I here? That's the question for today. What is my purpose?

To Live Is Christ

St. Paul answers that question in our reading today. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21)*. I am here for Christ. I am here because He wants me to be here. He has a plan for my life. I may not know what it is now. But I know He will reveal it and lead me through it if I follow. But what kind of life does He want me to lead?

Fruitful Labor

Paul goes on to say: *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me (v. 22)*. Paul says in **Galatians 5**: *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)*. So, we might think that a fruitful life would be a life exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. But Paul goes on to explain what he's talking about when he says that remaining in the flesh is *more necessary on your account* (v. 24). His fruitful labor is ministering to the Philippians and others. God called Paul to establish churches, but also to nurture Christians in the faith.

Here for Each Other

We can see how that applies to us as well. I am not here to amass a fortune or make a name for myself. I am not here to do what I want to do or just have fun. I am here for others, to help other people learn about Jesus and to help people grow in the faith. We are here for each other. Our purpose is to glorify God. And that is what brings Him glory, when we share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others and help one another throughout our faith journeys.

Perspective in the Means of Grace

If you're looking for your purpose in life, look no farther than the Means of Grace, Word and Sacrament. The Bible tells us why we are here, and Christ, through the Sacrament of the Altar, gives us the power to fulfill our purpose.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
