



PART 1: WHY ON EARTH AM I HERE? ACCEPTING OUR ORIGINAL CALL

INTRODUCTION - REPENTING OF OUR GNOSTICISM

GNOSTICISM: The belief (among other things) that matter is bad and spirit is good. Our material existence, therefore, is a prison from which humanity needs to be freed.

Some Signs of Christian Gnosticism...

1. The physical world is de-valued.
(e.g., Why should we care about creation? It's all going to be destroyed anyway.)
2. The physical realm is treated as inherently sinful.
(e.g., Our bodies are bad. We use them to do nasty things like sex... and dancing.)
3. The physical world becomes separated from our spiritual lives.
(e.g., Things that appear overtly spiritual are prioritized over other aspects of life.)
4. Christ's life is robbed of its physicality – his ethnicity, social status, historical backdrop.
(e.g, God couldn't have really become human, since the physical world is evil.)

LIVING A HOLISTIC HUMAN LIFE

- *THE EPIDEMIC OF RELIGIOUS COMPARTMENTALIZATION*

Jesus calls us to live _____ life, starting _____.

1 Peter 1:3, 23; 2 Corinthians 5:17

- *OUR ORIGINAL PLACE – THIS PHYSICAL WORLD.*

Genesis 1:1; 2:15; 9:8-10; Leviticus 25:4; 26:33-35

- *OUR ORIGINAL PURPOSE – BEING “IN CHARGE” OF THE PLANET.*

Genesis 1:26-28

WHY HAVE CHRISTIANS MISSED OUR CALLING?

1. Our emphasis on the temporary nature of creation has led to apathy regarding creation and an emphasis on overtly spiritual pursuits.
2. Because we have not understood power the way Jesus teaches (**Mark 10:42-45**), we have viewed our “rulership” as dictatorship rather than stewardship and servanthood.
3. We became products of culture rather than products of Christ and viewed the Earth as a tireless machine rather than a living community.
4. Because we forgot that the Earth is not divine and so is not infinite, we treated it as an endless resource for fueling human civilization.
5. We have been slow to return to our call because others have beaten us to it, and we are afraid of being confused with them. This unreasonable fear grows out of our addiction to appearance based on a misunderstanding of Scripture (e.g., **1 Thessalonians 5:22**).

CONCLUSION - CHECKING OUR MOTIVATION

Psalm 24:1 VS. Psalm 115:16

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. Let's take an emotional snapshot: When you first heard that we were doing a series on creation care and environmentalism, what was your emotional reaction? Why?
2. Explore and discuss the implications of this quote from Ronald J. Sider: *According to biblical faith, God's plan of restoration includes the whole creation, not just individual 'souls'.*
3. After reviewing this week's message, including key texts, share one thing that most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

4. Critics of Christianity point out that if Evangelicals believe that at any time – and probably within this generation – Jesus will return judge humanity, end the current order of things, and destroy the world by fire, that can be a tad demotivating for investing a lot of energy into the task of creation care. Do you think they have a point?
5. Thinking ahead to next week's focus, read **2 Peter 3:3-13**. a) What verse or phrase stands out to you the most? Why? b) When do you think the “last days” are that Peter writes about? (How do Jesus' words in **Matthew 24:34 / Mark 13:30 / Luke 21:32** effect your opinion on the last days?) c) To what extent and in what ways do you think **2 Peter 3:3-13** is literal or metaphorical? d) Should the role of fire in **1 Corinthians 3:11-15** inform our interpretation of **2 Peter 3** in any way? If so, how?

SO WHAT?...

6. Read **Genesis 1:26-28** and **2:15**. In what ways, big or small, do you fulfill your call to be a responsible steward of God's creation in the daily rhythms and routines of your life? Exchange specific examples and ideas. Pray for each other that we might all grow in our active care of creation.

HOMEWORK...

TAKE A HIKE! Plan a Home Church excursion into nature sometime over the next couple of weeks. Be mindful as you go that you are surrounded by God's artwork. Use the hike as a time of prayer, meditation, education, or just simple enjoyment. Reserve time afterward to talk about your experience together. What aspects of God's heart and creativity have been revealed to you?

BRUXY CAVAY @ THE MEETING HOUSE - SUNDAY, MAY 21 & 28, 2006