

Yahweh, the Community Builder

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- [0 : 0 0] The scripture reading comes from the book of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2. Please follow along your bulletin. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep.
- And the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, Let there be light. God said, There is a light and a light.
- And there was light. God saw the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day.
- And the darkness He called night. And there was evening, and there was morning, one day. Then God said, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.
- And let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky. And over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image.
- [1 : 1 0] In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them. God said, God blessed them.
- And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. And rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.
- Then God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which is fruit yielding seed. It shall be food for you.
- And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the sky, and to everything that moves on the earth, which has life, I have given every green plant for food. And it was so. At ito nga ang nangyari.
- Yes, this is such a chance. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.
- [2 : 1 1] At lubas siyang nasiyahan. Do shunhao. Then in chapter 2, we find this. Then the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone.
- I will make a helper suitable for him. Hindi mabuti ang mag-isa ang tao. Bibigyan ko siya ng angkop na makakasama at makakatulong. Na yun tukoy pat ho, fo'y yuwa it ha, chau yuk o puing ao pong jod ha.
- Out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.
- The man gave names to all the cattle, to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field. Ngunit wala sa isa man sa mga ito, ang nababagay na makasama at makatulong niya. But for Adam, there was not found a helper suitable for him.
- And so the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept. Then he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which he had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

[3 : 23] Ang tajang na ito'i ginawa niyang isang babae, at dinala niya ito sa lalaki. Yehudha wa wa shun, joo yung na yin shun sa soo chui de yito lalaki, zo sing yikyo yin, ling ta do na yin kynci.

The man said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman. Babae ang ito'i ta tawag sa kanya, sapagat sa lalaki shai kinuha.

Ngö yin, yuwa ta si chong namin shun sa chun lai de. Because she was taken out of man. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife.

And they shall become one flesh, eti. Sila'y nagiging isa. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. This is God's word. How you guys doing?

Oh man, you just heard the very first words spoken by God in history. How you guys doing? I understood the two dialects in the back, but I didn't understand the dialect in the front.

[4 : 31] So if anybody could help me. What country is that from? Crikey. Okay. Yeah. Hey, we are, if you're here for the first time, my name is Tobin Miller.

I'm a teaching pastor here, one of the pastors here. And we are going to look at the book of Genesis for five weeks. In your chair, you should have had the book of Genesis we printed out for you.

I love these things. I carry mine around. I like just something I can stick in my pocket. And so the challenge is, is that you would read a chapter a day. Okay.

So we're going to do it for five weeks. We're not going to still cover all of it. But that means by next Sunday, we come back together. You should be at chapter what? Seven, yeah, six, seven, eight.

And I was like, I think it's Jesus. I don't know. Yeah, yeah. Okay. Anyway, but we want to look at this because I think it's one of my favorite books. And I know I say that about a lot of books.

[5 : 30] Actually, it's a book that we think we'll probably cover after we finish Luke sometime next fall. And we want to lay down some tracks, some foundations for everything that we've been talking about in the book of Luke.

I mean, Genesis is the book of beginnings. There's a lot of beginning things here. It talks about creation and fall and redemption and restoration and sin and grace and love and community and man and woman and identity and relationship and journey.

And we talk about journey a lot and the journey begins here for us. And sometimes I think that we forget that. We don't realize when we read the book of Genesis what we're reading and how important it is.

Because 400 years after being in slavery, so 3,400 years ago, Moses leads the people out of a land full of idols. And he leads them to this promised land and he pens a text unlike any other text which is going to influence all of creation and all generations and all cultures forever.

And he begins with the words, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Can you read that for me? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

[6 : 52] You know, I don't think that we realize what those words meant and what they mean. Thomas Cahill, in his book, The Gift of the Jews, says that these words are the greatest gifts that the Jewish people have given to all cultures and societies in the world throughout history.

In fact, he says these words influenced mankind in a way that we will never fully comprehend or understand. Because you see, at that point in time, there was no such thing as a personal God.

There was no such thing as a God who cared. There was no such thing as a God who created. There was no such thing as a God who wanted a relationship. If you go back and you study all the myths of creation, all the creation myths, they had certain things in common, but that was not one of them.

They all shared this idea that the universe was filled by many gods. And these were little gods. They were finite gods. They were angry gods. They were limited in power. They were fallible.

They were naughty. They did capricious things. They were corrupt. They were dependent upon man. And so if you wanted to know God, like if you wanted to know Seamus, the son of the God, you would go out and you would observe and look at the sun.

[8 : 07] If you wanted to understand Dagon, the God of grain, you would get drunk. Or that you would go out and look at a wheat field. If you wanted to understand Yamin, the God of the sea, you would go to the sea and you would look at the shore and you would look at the waves and from that you would try to extrapolate what God is like.

And people in that day, they lived in amazing amounts of fear. I don't think you understand this. I don't understand it because I look at it and I read it and I'm trying to understand what it goes, what's happening there.

And I kind of transposed my day on this day. But in those days, it was crazy. The average person walked in fear. They sacrificed things to all these gods.

Often they sacrificed their children to these gods. They left things on idols and they did things and they hoped to be good enough with the hope that they would influence the gods and find the gods' favor.

You know that some of them actually believed that the stars and the moon could control man's destiny. And some of the people would actually shape and arrange their houses and their temples in just such a way that the environment and nature would kind of come to a convergence and there would be incredible peace and prosperity.

[9 : 20] I know that's impossible to believe in today's day and age, right? But in, I'm joking. But in that day and age, that's what people believed.

Humans were looked at as scum. Pawn scum. We were only created because the gods had things they didn't want to do. And so the things were so bad, the gods didn't want to do them, they created man so that you and I would do that.

I mean, life was full of competition. Life was rough. Life was about dominance. Life was brief. Life was violent. Life was about control.

There was no sense of meaning or purpose for a person's life 3,400 years ago when they first heard these words.

Some people would say that's true of us today, that we really haven't changed that much in 3,400 years. But when Moses penned these words, when he said, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, he did something revolutionary, and he started something that changed everybody.

[10 : 31] Do you understand that? He goes on in the first three verses. He says, In the beginning, and he gives this picture of God, and he has this imagery of God creating, and it's powerful.

It's kind of like this dance. God's in this dance, and it's poetry in Hebrew. And when you read it in Hebrew, you're like, Wow, there is something amazing going on there. In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth.

You see God, and the earth was formless and void. It's almost like, I asked Aldrin before, Ornel, if he could play the 1812 Overture by Tchaikovsky, because it's kind of like that. And when you read Hebrew, it's meant to be like, da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da, boom, boom, boom.

And you're watching this fireworks display, and you see day one, boom, boom, boom. And you're like, Wow, I can't get any better than that. And all of a sudden, boom, boom, boom. Day two, you're like, Oh my gosh. And day three, boom, boom, boom. And you're kind of like sitting at the harbor, and you're going, Well, when's this thing going to end?

And if that's not the end, then the next thing's going to have to be amazing, because what I just saw was incredible. And you see this story of God the Father creating. You see this story of the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters, and he's in the same imagery in Luke, that he's this dove, and he's doing his work.

[11 : 38] And then you see this image of God speaking. And he creates with his spoken word. And we know that in the book of John, it's in your bulletin for you, it says, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

And the word became flesh, and it dwelt among us. And the word is who? Oh, come on, guys.

There's only two answers in church, right? God and Jesus, right? The word was who? The word was Jesus. And so we see this story being played out, and we see this fireworks display, and in that day, no one would have ever thought that.

Because when they thought of God, they thought of me. They didn't think of them or us. And so it was always this individualistic person, and the gods created because they had a need.

But what the Bible says, from the very beginning of time, God and three persons equal in everything. God and three persons were together. They were experiencing community, love, relationship, fellowship.

[12 : 42] It was a party, and they needed nothing. They needed nothing. In fact, it says it was so out of control and so fantastic, that all of a sudden, they looked at each other, and they go, wow, this is amazing.

Shouldn't we share this? Shouldn't we allow other things and other creatures to come a part of this? Shouldn't we allow them to be a part of these things?

Shouldn't we allow them to come into our community or our fellowship? John 17, Jesus praised that, remember? Jesus praised, and he says, dear Father, please allow them to come into the relationship that you and I have, because we want them to be a part of what's going on.

We want them to experience this love, this care, this peace, all of these things. And so we have this story of God creating and God creating.

He creates out of nothing. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Good, good, good. At the end of it, he says, it's good, it's good, it's good, it's good, it's good. And what he's just saying is that's a reflection of God. It's a reflection of his character, and the fireworks are going off, and it gets better, and it gets better, and it gets better.

[13 : 44] And it's interesting, because when you study Hebrew, there's no word in Hebrew for nature. In biblical Hebrew, there's no such thing as nature, because they realize that nothing happens naturally.

The only word that is there in creation is creation, because they realize that everything that is, everything that was, has to be created, it has to be sustained, it has to be controlled, it has to be held up by God's love and his character.

And when the people heard this at that time, 3,400 years ago, it would have been amazing when the psalmist wrote, the heavens are declaring the glory of the Lord.

When you go out tonight, and if you're in a place that you can see stars, look up. And that's what David wrote, and he penned, and he said, all of creation reflects God's image.

And it's so amazing, and it's so wonderful that God wants to bring us in to this relationship. No other world religion, no other world thought, no one at that time ever thought any of those things.

[14 : 51] Man was just to be used. Man was not to share in what God was doing. And then at the end of the 18th, 12th children, Moses, he basically says, he wants to say, okay, it's gonna get better, it's gonna get better, it's gonna get better, and finally he says, humans.

And it's like, dun, dun, dun, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, and you're like, okay, it can't get any better than this. God creates us. Because he wants to be with us, and he wants us to be with him in a relationship so that we can experience everything that he's doing and creating and say, that is amazing.

I mean, you do that sometimes, don't we? You're watching a TV show, and it's so incredible or crazy, you call up your best friend and say, hey, you gotta turn on TV, you gotta watch this right now. I mean, you go outside and you see the stars in the sky, and it's just, wow, there's stars in Hong Kong.

I didn't know there were stars in Hong Kong. I didn't know that until we moved over to the Poc Fulam, and I see stars here, and I hear birds here. And the scripture says that it's so incredible that when we hear it, we yell out, God.

And we wanna call people up and say, hey, you need to come see this because this is incredible. And Moses, in the last first two chapters, the creation of man is so amazing that he talks about it two times.

[16 : 08] Chapter one and chapter two, I have them both written in your bulletin for you, and we're gonna look at them, and what I wanna share really briefly, because this is, I'm just kinda skimming the top. I'm hoping that you'll go back, you'll read a chapter a day, you'll think about what does this mean, what does this tell me about God.

For the next five weeks, we're gonna keep hitting this and hitting this and talking about these themes about relationships and God. And what I see here, very specifically, is this, that God creates you and I out of dust.

Everything else in the passages, day one, day two, day three, day four, he speaks and they pop up, he speaks and they pop up, he speaks and they pop up, and in day six, it says he goes over and he picks up some Adam, the most insignificant, lowly, irreducible thing in Hebrew, and he starts to shape it, and he blows his spirit into it, and he brings out man.

And the fireworks blow off and they go crazy, and as people are reading this and they're thinking of this, they're saying, that makes no sense to us because we've never heard that before. But now that we hear it for the first time, it makes all the sense.

And what I want us to think about and read as we look in this passage, the first section, is what Moses is trying to tell us, what we need to hear, what we need to understand, is that you and I are made in God's image.

[17 : 40] that every person here, every person that ever was, every person that walked the face of the earth, Moses is telling us that we are made in the image of God.

3,400 years ago when the people heard this, there was no way they could comprehend that because no one would have ever said such a thing, but the minute they heard that, Moses went on and says, because you're made in God's image, that you are invested with value, dignity, and worth.

Everyone, look to your left. Just humor me. Look to your left. Made in the image of God.

Look to your right. Made in the image of God. The boss who you're going to walk into his office on Monday and you really, really dislike him.

Come on! Made in the image of God. Your worst enemy. Women, your husband.

[19 : 20] right beside you. Men, your wife right beside you.

That weird, obnoxious, Texas neighbor who lives next door and he thinks America is the only country and he thinks American is actually a real language.

the terrorist who straps a bomb on his back and he walks in to destroy innocent life.

Made in the image of God. When Moses said those words, no one would have understood those things. The question is, do you really believe that?

Do you believe that the person to your left, to your right, your boss, your spouse, do you really believe that they're made in the image of God? Do you really believe they have value and dignity and worth? The beggar that we're going to bump in today as we walk out of here and he smells and he stinks and he hasn't taken a bath in a long time, do we really believe that he's made in the image of God?

[20 : 39] That God's watermark is on him? God's fingerprint is on him? Do we really, really believe that? When the people heard this passage, they would have understood that no matter how bad I've blown it, no matter how many mistakes I've made, no matter how many times I've failed God, no matter how many times I've walked away, God is still pursuing me because I am made in the image of God.

what would it be like if we were a church and people could walk in here, no matter where they're from, no matter what background, no matter how they smelled, no matter how they looked, no matter how bad they've blown it and they were loved, they were accepted, they were cared for, what would that look like?

I think that's the church God wants us to be. But we'll never be that until we understand made in the image of God.

The passage goes on and Moses says, he says basically that we are made in the image, he says we are mirrors, that we are mirrors that are caused to reflect God. Mirrors are independent, they don't produce their own light, they don't find out their own power, only thing a mirror does is it reflects something.

And that idea of image means that we are this mirror and that we are made to reflect and to take in God's glory, God's passion, and that we derive all of our significance from God.

[22 : 22] That's what the people of 3,400 years would have understood, they would understand that their purpose, they are only complete as they face God as a mirror and they reflect God's image and his power and his glory to all of creation.

But the passage says that something happened, the mirrors got broken and we lose our relationship with God, we lose our orientation with God and still we're empty because we can't fill it up and so what we do is we take our mirror around and we find something that we want to reflect.

We find something that looks good, we find something that brings us hope, we find something that brings meaning to our life. We all do that, don't we? We find something that we want to be about and be like and so we orient our mirrors, our lives, we go into a relationship with our work, with our family, with our friends, with our education, with our relationships, sometimes with our children, we all orient our mirrors towards something and Moses says in Genesis 1, 2, and 3 that we are meant to orient towards God.

In fact, he says that's why we're made and if you're orienting towards anything else, if you're reflecting your university, your job, your relationships, if you're reflecting any of those things in the mirror of your life, in your relationships, Moses says you're incomplete, you're not who you're made to be, you will never function the way you're supposed to be, you will always feel lonely, you'll always feel depressed, you'll always feel empty, you'll always feel hollow because you and I were made for one purpose and that's to have a relationship with God and we're made in such a way that we reflect his image.

So the question is this, what are you reflecting today? What is it that you're orienting your life towards?

[24 : 18] What is it you're trying to find meaning for, purpose for, significance for, what is it in your life that you're turning towards, what is it that you're trying to say this is who I am, this is what I want to be, this is what I want people to see me as, this is what I want to reflect, what is that thing?

Maybe you don't know. And if you're like me, you have to have people around you all the time and you ask them questions like what do you think I reflect today? What's the most important thing in my life? What am I talking about all the time?

What gives me value? What makes me excited? What makes me say, wow, this is amazing, I need to do this. What is it? What is it? What is it? And Moses says in Genesis that if it's anything else but God, then we're not acting the way we're supposed to be, that you and I can only find meaning and purpose and significance in our relationship with God.

And anything else, anything other things that we do, we're living counter to the design that we're made by God. and we'll always feel empty and we'll always feel hard, we'll always feel disappointed. You and I were made to reflect God.

So we're made in his image. We have value and worth and dignity, we're made in his image, we're made to reflect him to everything around us and the minute we don't do that, the scripture says the minute we don't do that, we bring death.

[25 : 42] And I know that's a hard word and a hard idea but anytime we don't reflect the way we're meant to be, we're bringing death to ourself and we're bringing death to the people around us. Because what we're saying is this is of more value than the God that I'm reflecting.

And the people listen to you and they follow you. You're not bringing life, you're not bringing purpose, you're bringing death to your children, to your spouses, to your family, to people in your office.

The passage goes on in the second part and I'm going to run through this because I want us to think about this. But what he says is not only are we made in the image of God but you and I were made for a relationship, we're made to be a part of a community, we need each other and again 3,400 years ago no one ever would have thought this or heard this.

Go back and read the passage tonight. Think about it, Adam without sin, he's perfect, he's very intelligent, he has all the wealth in the world, he has no competition, he talks to God face to face, he walks with God in the garden, his quiet times must be amazing, right?

Okay God, I'm going to start praying, you can end because you like that part when you say in my name, okay you can do that but he's right beside God and he's praying with God and his relationship with God must have been out of control.

[27 : 16] He was the perfect man, he's the person that we, you and I try to become but the passage says that he was lonely, he needed something, he needed something that God couldn't give him.

All the time I see people walking around and they say well all I need is God, me and God that's all I need? That's what the people thought 3,400 years ago but Moses says no, you don't, you need God in a deep relationship with God but you need a deep, deep, deep relationship with people around you and if you don't have that, if you don't understand it, if you live your life and you just think I'm a me, I'm a me, I'm a me but God says no, we are an us, we're an us, we're an us and if you live your life trying to be a me instead of being an us, you're never going to be made what you're supposed to be made, you're never going to function the way you're supposed to function, you're never going to be used the way God wants you to use, you're never going to grow the way God wants you to grow and be like him. You're never going to know Jesus. You're never going to walk deeply with him if you're only just a me.

Because from the very beginning, God creates and he creates us in us. And there's a deep, deep, deep need for community. There's a deep need for people to reflect back to us how we're really acting and what we're doing in our lives.

It says that it was not good for man to be alone and so he makes a helper for him. And we could talk about this forever. And I really want to come back to this issue but the idea is this, that the man was in perfect relationship with God but he needed something else he was lacking.

And so the Hebrew is easier. It means a person who has what he does not have. I know that there's a lot of terminology going on and people, women get angry when they're called helpers. But you know in the Bible it says there's only four people who are called helpers. It's called God our helper, Jesus our helper, the Holy Spirit our helper, and woman our helper.

[29 : 24] And there was something about man that woman needed to come in and fix. Actually in the Hebrew the word actually means, you're going to laugh, I use it sometimes in weddings and the guys go, but the word means rescuer.

That the woman is the rescuer of the man. That the woman has to be there to make the man complete. And let's just face it guys, women are so much better than us. Aren't they?

Come on. I know I'm going to get in trouble on guys, but I'd rather get in trouble with the guys than with the girls, right? But it's true, women are, because when he says this is bone to my bone, flesh to my flesh, she completes me, she's everything that I'm not.

I'm not doing Jerry Maguire here, but she's everything that I'm not. What Jesus is saying, what God is saying, what the Trinity is saying is that you have needs and you're lacking and I'm going to make you something that can fix you.

And he doesn't clone him and he doesn't make him another man, but he makes him a woman. Totally different. The Hebrew word actually means like but opposite because he needs that to come into that life and he needs that woman to come in there and to fix him and to rescue him and to change him and to create a community.

[30 : 33] So now they're a community and they're reflecting the image of God in community. They're us and us, man and woman. It's interesting when you do mathematics in God's world, it's always one plus one plus one plus one equals one.

The Trinity, one plus one plus one equals one. Marriage, one plus one equals one. The 12 tribes, one plus one plus one equals one, the people of God.

The church, 350 equals one. And what God says is that you and I were meant to be in together with relationships and we need to be so close. We need to be so together that we've fused in community.

And he's not just talking about sexually. It's so much deeper than sexually. The passage isn't just talking about physical intimacy, but it's talking about knowing people well and allowing them into your life.

And let's face it, people in Hong Kong hate that. Don't they? I mean, people wanna sit in the back and they just wanna run out. People don't want to go to things.

[31 : 36] They don't wanna sign up for things. They just say, hey, I don't wanna join things. I'm too busy. Just give me a book. Give me a brief synopsis and I'll do that. Tell me what I need to sign. Maybe I'll send my helper to go do that. But I don't need to go do that.

Let me just stay hidden. Let me stay unknown. Let me stay in the back. And the passage says that you'll never grow. You'll never meet God. You'll never come to Christ. You'll never be the person that God meant you to be unless you have people who are different and they're around you.

Never. You need people. You need community. You need people to reflect around you. You need people to come alongside you. You need people to speak truth to you. You need people to say, no, you're being an idiot.

When was the last time you had somebody in your life look at you and say, you're being an idiot? If it's been a long, long time, then you're not experiencing the biblical community that God meant for you to have. Because you need people who can care about you.

You need people who can come alongside of you. You need people who are committed to your welfare and they want you to grow. I'm going to say something. I'm going to get in trouble, I know. My wife will talk to me later.

[32 : 39] But the passage says, you need people that you can get naked with. I mean, that's what it says. He's not talking about just sex. He's saying, you need people that you can allow to know you.

You need people that can be transparent. He says at the end, the man and the wife were both naked and they were not ashamed. He's not just talking about physically, but he's talking about in so many other levels, spiritually, culturally, their heart, their mind.

He says, you need somebody that you can allow into your life and that they can show you what's going on there. And most of us don't like that. Most of us don't want that. Most of us have this deep fear inside of ourselves that if I really let somebody in, if I really let somebody see me naked, well, I won't say naked.

If I really let somebody see me, because then they probably would run away. But if I really let somebody see who I really am, they would run away. And maybe some of you in here have had that happen to you.

I have. Okay, I really like this person. I'm just going to open it up. I'm going to share my deepest, darkest struggles. And they're like, whoa! Yeah, pastors not think about those things or have sinned or pastors are supposed to be perfect.

[33 : 45] At least I want my pastor to be perfect. And they run away. And in the passage, he says that you and I have a choice every day. Are we going to come into church? Are we going to come into communities and wear a mask and allow people to love us for what we're really not like?

So most of us have people loving us for an image of what we want to be like, but we're not really that thing. Does that make sense? Most of us have people love us for things that we're not really like.

We're just an image of something we're projecting. But we're really not that thing. And the passage here says, unless you have people in your life who can come alongside of you and they can hear you and they can be in communion with you, unless you have that happen, then you're never going to be who Jesus wants you to be.

You're never going to be what God meant for you to be. You're never going to reach your full potential. You're never going to be known. So the question is, do you have somebody in your life like that?

Not just your spouse, but a group of people. Do you have a group of people who really know you? They know you naked. They know your worst things and they love you and they're committed to you and they care for you.

[34 : 59] Genesis says that when God created the woman in that relationship, that was the type of relationship it was. But the problem is that what I see in most of my marriage counseling today is husbands and wives don't even know each other because they're so afraid of showing each other what's really going on in their heart.

Singles really don't know each other. They hang out, they clump out in community groups, they do things together.

But when there's a struggle, when there's a doubt, when there's a fear, when they're facing cancer, when something's going on in their life, when something deep down inside, there's this aching knowledge. And I know it because I was single for 35 years.

There's this aching knowledge that if I really let them know, if I really share this, they're not going to accept me. And I might act weird every time I walk around them. In the past, he says, what would it be like if we were a church that when people came in, they were cared for and they were loved and they didn't have to put on a mask and they didn't have to wear something and they didn't have to act a certain way.

What would it look like if we could be a church that could heal people of that and change people like that? What would it be like if we were not a church that was just a me, but we were a church that was a us and in this us, we reflected God's relationship and his community and people who came in and saw the love, the acceptance, the care that we had for each other.

[36 : 22] Would that be an attractive church? Would that be something that you would invite your friends to? I mean, I think that's some of the reasons some of us come here. Because it's amazing to me what I hear going on in community groups, but I think it's just not enough to have it in one community group.

We need to be doing that as a church together. Father, we were made for community. Until we're involved in each other's lives and talking truth to each other, we'll never be the people God meant for us to be.

I'm going to end here. If you're sitting there like me, when I wrote this, and for many, many years, I realized this just sounds too good.

The Christians say that, but they're really just hypocrites. They say these things, they want to get known, but once they share these things, it's impossible, it's unrealistic, it's not possible, it will never happen.

And the passage says, you're right. On our own, it is impossible. The only way that's going to happen is if Jesus shows up.

[37 : 39] The only way it's going to happen is we start to look at Christ, the only perfect image of God. He was the only man who was the perfect image of God. He came to earth as a perfect image of God.

He left the perfect community. And our Bible tells us that he was scorned, he was rejected, just like many of us feel like in relationships.

He was cast aside. He was crucified. It's very interesting in Colossians, it says, for the joy set before him, Christ endured the cross.

It's the same words in Genesis. The Father and Son are creating, the Holy Spirit are creating, and there's a sense of overwhelming joy and care and love and they want to share it with everybody and so they create so that people can see it, they can reflect it, they can experience it and the relationship is broken and it says, Jesus comes down and he's the perfect man, he leads all these things and it says, in the same way that he had joy in creating us in the very beginning, he has joy in dying for us so that we might come back to the Father.

And until we understand that, until Jesus shows up in your life and you realize everything that he's done, you're never going to be the person God meant for you to be. You never will.

[39 : 08] Your mirror will be focusing on HSBC or Jaguar or whatever it is in your life that brings meaning and purpose. But the passage here is that God created us with a very special purpose and we as God's people need to understand that if we're going to walk and be the people that he wants us to be.

Does that make sense? I've been struggling with that for 40 years. I think I'll continue struggling with it all my life.

The amazing thing about that is as I do, God is faithful. His grace is amazing. He continually meets me wherever I'm at.

Helps me point my mirror back to Christ. Become more and more like the person he meant for us to be. Father, we thank you for this day.

We thank you for your goodness in our life. I pray now as I know that there are people here who, man, their mirror is focused on anything but God.

[40 : 20] Some of them know that and they think that those things will bring them happiness and meaning and significance and some of them have no idea and what I pray for those my brothers and sisters in here right now that you would show them in some way this week that the only thing that's going to bring them meaning the only thing that's going to bring them purpose the only thing that's going to make them be what you created them to be is a relationship with you and you're ready for that.

You're pursuing them. If they're here right now it's very clear your word says that you're pursuing them and the question is do they accept that pursuit or do they hide and reorient their mirror and I pray that they would fall in love with you.

For those of us who are your children and we're struggling in this way as we walk with you and we make mistakes and our mirror is broken and we're trying to capture something that brings meaning and purpose and happiness and sometimes we capture things and they bring happiness but they only bring it for a little while and then we're empty again and yet you're continually there you're continually drawing us back to you you're continually loving us and showing us your son you're continually showing the us in the Trinity as opposed to me as Tobin and Lord I pray for us that we would be people who would just come before you right now and we would just confess we would just repent of our selfishness and our blindness and as your word says that many of us in here we're blind to our blindness we're blind to how blind we are and the only way we can see you is for you to open our eyes so Lord we're so thankful that we're made in your image and that the price tag on every one of us in here and every person that I name the price tag is priceless because we're priceless to you you continue to pursue us and love us and Lord

I pray for us as a church that we would be all those things that we talked about that we would be loving and caring that we would treat people with value and dignity as we go out today and we would treat people with value and dignity as they come to church and that we would show them what true community is and we would show them they don't have to be false or to wear a mask but that we we accept and we love and we care not because we can do it because we can't but we do all these things because you've done it and as we orient our mirrors towards you you change us and you give us the power to be your people and for that we we worship you and we're forever we will never yeah amazing grace so Lord we come before you and we love you and we thank you and we pray these things in your son Jesus name Amen