

Business or Pleasure?

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again. Business or pleasure. You may have been asked that by a customs official at an airport. Business or pleasure.

What is the purpose of your journey? Maybe if you're applying for a visa, you need to fill out on a drop-down box or somewhere whether you are going on your trip for business or pleasure. Because almost all overseas trips are one or the other. There are not very many times you're going to go overseas and do both. Nobody really expects that you're going to be on business and having pleasure at the same time because they seem to be quite opposed to each other, those two things, don't they?

I mean, at any moment in time, people are either working to afford to go away on holiday and be at leisure or to stay at home and be at leisure or they're at leisure recharging so that they can go back to work.

So you're either doing one in preparation for the other or vice versa. But imagine, just for a second, that you're preparing to visit the Garden of Eden before the fall.

[1 : 09] What category do you think that trip would fall into? Business or pleasure? Or better yet, how do you think Adam would have described his time in Eden?

As business or pleasure? Well, according to this chapter in Genesis 2, we discover it was both business and pleasure because here Eden is described as a place of great joy and pleasure and yet hard work at the same time.

And the striking thing that we discover is that those two things, work and pleasure, weren't in conflict before the fall. Because here we learn that the home of the first humans was a place of great blessing, but where man was also hard at work.

So start with me from verse 5. Look at how this passage starts. Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth, and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no one to work the ground.

Okay, so here we learn of a creation which still needed a worker. So just by the way, chapter 2 of Genesis is kind of like a microcosm or a, what's the word?

[2 : 31] When you focus in on one particular part of something. And this is focusing on one particular part of Genesis chapter 1. Now remember, if you were here last week, Genesis chapter 1 was the account of the creation of everything.

And the part in day 6 on the creation of mankind, now Genesis chapter 2 expands on and focuses in on. So that's what we're doing here. And we discover that before man was created, creation was still in need of someone to work.

So interestingly, the kinds of plants that are spoken of here, the plants that had yet to spring up, they were, the Hebrew word was something that referred to agricultural cultivated plants.

So crops, produce from the earth, all the things that we enjoy from the earth. Potatoes. Oh man, potatoes can be had in so many different amazing ways.

I love potatoes. Baby potatoes, chopped up, you know, in some butter in the oven. And they get that nice crispy outer layer. Oh man, nothing better.

[3 : 41] But vegetables, herbs and spices, all of these things that God has given us from the earth, but can't be utilized without work, without us doing something to get them from the earth, to work, to grow them, to harvest them.

And so that's why God later says, go down to verse 15 in your Bibles, the Lord took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it or to cultivate it.

So God had all of these amazing blessings, including potatoes, that he wanted humans to enjoy from the earth. And he gives us this picture in Genesis 2 of this rich harvest that is ready to come

out of the earth, but in order for it to produce all of those blessings that God intends for it to produce, it needed to be worked and cultivated, taken care of.

And so what does God do in order for the earth to start to yield its blessings? He makes a creature specially designed to work, whose brain could do more than the mere animals could do, whose brain could create and plan and construct and harvest and problem solve.

And this special creature designed specially to work the earth was called man. Verse 7, Then the Lord formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

[5 : 15] I mean, that verse has so much depth in it itself, just the intimacy, God getting his hands dirty, literally, you know, forming something out of mud.

The verb there is the same as a potter, forming things. So you can imagine God with this muddy man, and then he makes him a living being.

And we're going to get more into that verse than others during the growth groups this coming week. But what I want you to see just for now is that God creates from the earth a special creature to manage the earth.

So mankind is not something separate from the earth. He's part of the earth, and he's there to work the earth. And then God infuses him with life and sets him off to work and cultivate the creation so that it can yield all its blessings.

And so that's the first important lesson we get from Genesis 2. I just want us to pause and think about that. The lesson is mankind, you and me, were made to work.

[6 : 18] Work is our purpose. Work in itself, therefore, is not a bad thing. Work didn't come after the fall. Work was there before the fall. It became corrupted and toilsome after the fall, which we'll see next week.

But work in and of itself, the concept of working, is a good thing. It's a holy thing. It's a godly thing. And you may not believe this, but work is meant to be enjoyable.

And also in Eden, we discover it's not opposed to rest. It's not mutually exclusive from rest.

Because by the end of creation, day seven, we saw last week, we find creation is in a state of rest. But man is also working at the same time. You've got this pleasure and joy and rest and work happening together. And we also find, to fast forward to the end things in the Bible much later, the new creation, which is still coming, is described as a place of ongoing rest, but where people will also be at work.

And so work is something that we were made for. That's the first thing we need to get from Genesis 2. And I think deep down we all know that. I think we would all agree that work, in some sense, is good.

[7 : 42] And it is ingrained in us. I know people who have retired, and any of you who have retired can probably relate to this, who it doesn't take long after their retirement when they start to get restless, right?

And they want to do some project. They want to work on something. As an outlet for this urge we have for work and creativity that God has put inside each one of us.

Okay, so we are made to work. Work is not a bad thing. But what we also discover here is that mankind was not only made to work, but at the same time, mankind was made to enjoy creation. Now, it's worth just mentioning back from verse 7 how God made man from the mud of the earth, the dust of the ground, and the significance of that. There's a lot of significance of that.

But one of the things that makes it significant is that we were never meant to be separate from this world. We were never meant to escape this world to some spiritual state.

[8 : 51] We are part and parcel of this world, never meant to leave this world. And the Bible doesn't teach that God wants us to leave this world. He made us for this world, and He made this world for us.

And we are indivisibly kind of linked, connected to this world. But, as I said, we are to work the world.

We were made for the world, but the world was also made for us. We are to enjoy creation. So look at verse 9. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

Okay, so here, God gives this worker that He has made, this creature that He has specially designed to work, He gives him both pleasure and provision in the garden.

Trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. Now, you might be asking, well, if God gave him all this food, all this provision, God gave him everything he needed, then why did he need to work?

[10:03] Well, the answer is because work isn't just about meeting our needs, which it is in this world. That's the only reason we tend to work, because we need to pay the bills.

But work in creation is actually about fulfilling our purpose and glorifying God and reflecting His character as a worker and as a creator.

And so even though Adam had everything he needed, he still was made to work. And God provides, as He works, God also provides for His needs and gives Him pleasure.

Things that were there to please the eye. And that tells us our second important lesson this morning, which I think we need reminding of. And that is that God desires His creatures to have pleasure.

God made us for pleasure and He wants us to have pleasure. He didn't just make us to be worker bees, but to be recipients of pleasure.

[11:03] And I think that's something people often forget. People somehow have developed this idea that God is opposed to pleasure, that He's there to take away our pleasure. And if we want to have pleasure, therefore we've got to do things that God doesn't want us to do.

But that's not true. God made us for pleasure. More pleasure than we could ever imagine or ever get for ourselves. I mean, if it were true that God didn't want us to have pleasure or that God was somehow opposed to pleasure, then why on earth do we have taste buds?

Have you ever wondered that? We don't need taste buds to be nourished. Taste buds are there purely for pleasure. And God made those on our tongue because He wants us to enjoy things.

He wants us to experience amazing flavors. If God didn't want us to have pleasure, why on earth did He create cocoa beans so that we could make chocolate? Why did He invent music?

Music is not necessary for our survival. It's nothing that the theory of evolution can explain. But the Bible explains it because God is a God who wants us to enjoy and find pleasure in things.

[12:16] And to experience pleasure from the creation that He gave us and at the same time to use our skills and talents to work it and then contribute to the pleasure of others.

That's God's intent. And we contribute to the pleasure of others as we work through art and music and drama and all kinds of things. But even before that, even before any other humans are created, the picture that we get of this place called Eden where man lived in a state of both work and pleasure was a picture of creation as God intended it and humanity as God intended it where we are provided for by God and under His blessing.

Doesn't that sound amazing? Think about it. Just put yourself in that position for a second. A state where you have everything you need.

No anxiety. No unfulfilled desires. And you're working not because you have to but because you want to and you derive great joy from being able to express the image of God in you, in your work at the same time as enjoying all the pleasures that this world has to offer.

Doesn't that sound incredible? That's the ideal life, isn't it? That's the life we're all chasing. You know, whether or not you're a Christian, whether or not you believe this, whether or not you're bored right now and you want to leave or not, the fact is, this is the life that you want.

[13:52] The life that's being described in Genesis 2. Where you don't have to chase after anything. You want to work and you're enjoying all of God's blessings and provision without limit.

That's the life you want no matter who you are and that is the life that your ancestor Adam had. But as we read on, we discover something else very important and which I think gets to the heart of what Genesis 2 is about.

We discover that Adam's job was not just to stay in Eden and relax. His job was to spread this blessing and this ideal, amazing type of life beyond Eden's borders.

So remember back in Genesis 1, man was told to multiply and fill the earth. Remember that? And so mankind was meant to spread out, not just to stay in one place.

And then here in chapter 2, we read in verse 10 to 14, a very strange, almost out of place description of four rivers.

[15:02] Remember when Michiel read, just have a look in your Bibles, 10 to 14. And these, this description of these four rivers which kind of flow out of Eden describe Eden as the epicenter of blessings flowing out into the surrounding countries.

That's the picture we're getting here. And so these rivers are flowing out in all different directions to these different lands which are ready to be explored and worked and enjoyed and they are filled with things that man can go and bring out, these blessings man can bring out of the earth.

Okay, so we've got these, there's a number of facts so far. We've got, firstly, Adam in Eden was given the task of working. We've seen that.

Secondly, in chapter 1 he was told to multiply and spread. And then thirdly, Eden is described as the epicenter of blessings for the world. So if we put all these facts together it's quite clear what the point is.

The point is that humanity was meant to be God's specially designed agent to spread Eden's blessings all over the world. That is why humanity was made.

[16:16] And that is what Genesis 2, I think, is here to teach us. Our purpose originally in creation was to be God's representative God's image bearers to spread these blessings all over the world.

But we discover something else in this chapter. So if that's what this chapter is about, man being made to work, to enjoy, and to spread this blessing all over the world, symbolized by these kind of rivers flowing out, then we also discover in this chapter for that to happen there are some necessary requirements which the rest of the chapter tells us about.

For Adam to be God's agent of blessing to the world, he needed some things. And the things that he needed actually frame on either side of this description of the rivers flowing out of Eden.

So do you see what they are? In summary, what Adam needed is two trees and a wife. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to do his job. So have a look at verse 9, the trees.

In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So what are these trees doing there? Well, the first, the tree of life, was necessary for Adam to keep living and not to die, hence the name, life.

[17:36] It was the source of Adam's eternal life. Adam wasn't meant to die, he was meant to keep living. But we discover, of course, later on, that when he sinned and when the curse came, then Adam was cut off from this tree of life and that's why he died.

Now, the reason, therefore, that the tree of life was there is that Adam wouldn't have been able to be a blessing to the world if he was dead other than to feed the worms. He wouldn't have been able to bless the world in any other way.

And so that's pretty obvious why he needed the first tree, the tree of life, to be a blessing to the rest of the world and to take Eden's blessings to the rest of the world. So the second tree, though, that's not so obvious why he needed that.

In fact, it seems to be more of a restriction than anything else. This tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And we have to understand the significance of this tree. It's vital if we're to understand what happens next week.

Because unlike the tree of life, this was one that Adam wasn't allowed to eat from. So verse 17, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die.

[18:52] Okay, so you ate from the tree of life, you lived and didn't die. You ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you died and you didn't live. They were diametrically opposite to one another. So, I guess the question is, well, why did God put that tree there if Adam wasn't supposed to eat from it?

How is that going to help him? And the question also we've got to ask is, well, why, why was not eating from this tree necessary for Adam to be a blessing to the world?

And as I say, we only really found that out in chapter 3 when Adam does eat from it and we see what happens. But even here in chapter 2 we get a clue in the name of the tree, which is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And what does that mean? Well, just knowing things isn't necessarily bad. You know, going to the library and learning stuff isn't bad in and of itself.

But knowledge in the Bible means more than just head knowledge like we think it means. It can also mean experiential knowledge. So, for example, there's a difference between me knowing the theory of how to drive a car and me actually knowing how to drive a car.

[20:13] You know what I mean? There's a difference between the head knowledge and the actual experiential knowledge. And in the same way, Adam eating from this tree would have been not just him knowing about good and evil, but actually experiencing it and even in a way controlling it.

That is, being able to decide for himself what is good and evil. And that is the one thing God said humans cannot do if they're going to do their job properly to bless this world.

They can't start deciding for themselves as they go what good and evil is in the world. They have to take God's word for it and they have to let him be in the driver's seat. And so the point, you see there is a point to God putting that tree there.

Even though Adam wasn't allowed to eat from it, the point was to remind Adam that he could not try to decide what good and evil was for himself.

He had to take God's word for it. He had to trust in God's direction and God's definition of right and wrong. Okay, so that's the second thing Adam needed.

[21 : 20] Even though he couldn't eat from it, he needed that reminder that God was the one who defined good and evil in this world, that Adam was to go and explore and to develop and bless.

The moment he tried to do it for himself, that would have gone haywire. But then there's one final thing Adam needed before he set off on his task to cultivate and develop and bring blessing to the rest of the world, and that was a wife.

And the reason is simple. You can't be fruitful and increase in number without a wife. It's basic biology, right? But there was another reason Adam needed a wife that we're told in this chapter, and that is because he was incomplete without one.

He wasn't fully fit for purpose yet. I mean, he was just a man after all. How far could he have got by himself? He probably would have lost his way without Eve there to kind of tell him where to go, and he probably would have been so irresponsible.

You know how it is with men. men, if you give them a task, and they don't have a woman to help them. But that's the picture we get here, is that Adam wouldn't have been able to do this task of cultivating and blessing and colonizing and exploring the world without his opposite number, which is literally what the word here in verse 18 means.

[22 : 47] So, verse 18, the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. Interestingly, that phrase, it is not good. Remember in chapter 1, constantly when God made something and he completed that element of creation, he said, God saw that it was good.

And this is the first time we have something that is not good. In other words, it's not complete, it's not fit yet for purpose. It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. It's a difficult phrase, helper suitable, to translate from the original. But literally, it means I will make a helper opposite to him. His opposite number, that is, someone who can help him by doing what he can't do.

Someone who is like him, but different from him. You see, the reason that he needed this helper was because God didn't intend humanity to stay where they were in Eden, as you've seen.

He didn't intend Adam and Eve to just sit around. He intended them to grow into a family, which would then grow into a society, which would then build buildings and expand and grow into a nation and cover the earth.

[24 : 00] But of course, as we know, even in our own societies, the fundamental building block of any society is a family. What happens in the family determines what happens in society.

It's something that I think we need to get right in our country and other countries around the world. there's not a whole lot of focus in building good families in our world.

We're trying to fix society, but one of the problems why society is in such a mess is because the families often are, that are the building blocks of societies. Good families mean good societies, and God knew that, but of course God knew as well that the foundation of a well-functioning family is a good marriage between the father and the mother of that family.

And that's why God invented marriage. Marriage was not our idea, by the way, as humans. It was God's idea. He invented it for a reason.

Verse 24 and 25 tell us that. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh. marriage. This is the Bible's description of marriage.

[25 : 17] Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame. That is the Bible's result of marriage. Now, I could preach a whole sermon on verse 24 alone and how right there God gives us the blueprint for a healthy marriage.

I literally could take you through a sermon on what is a good God-ordained biblical marriage, but we don't have time for that. For now, all we need to see is that good human marriage is one of the ingredients of good human society.

And so, in summary, here in Genesis 2, we actually learn all of the elements necessary for the blessings of Eden, the good life, to flow out to the rest of creation. That is what Genesis 2 is about. It tells us that right in the middle of Genesis 2 is this idea of Eden's rivers flowing out to touch the rest of the world, to bless the surrounding creation. And as we read Genesis 2, we read of all the ingredients, the elements necessary for that blessing to flow out well, for the good life to cover this planet, which is humans partnering together, making families, and working the world under God's rule according to his definition of right and wrong, while enjoying the pleasures and provision that God gives them. [26 : 37] That is what is necessary for these blessings to flow out, which is obviously not what's going on, right, in our world today.

We see a huge disconnect between the world we read of in Genesis 2 and the world in 2019. Because instead of trusting in God's definition of right and wrong, what are we doing? We are trying to redefine what's right and wrong to suit ourselves. Every generation is doing that in some way or another, trying to redefine what we think is right and wrong for our lives without considering God's definition of right and wrong. And instead of marrying according to God's blueprint for marriage, which is quite simple and laid out here in black and white, which among other things includes a lifelong commitment and sex reserved for marriage alone, instead of that there is sex outside of marriage, before marriage, marriage, during marriage with other partners, which of course spoils marriages, both sex outside of marriage in adultery as well as sex before marriage and fornication spoils marriages. If you're not married yet and you're tempted to have sex before marriage, be aware that you will in a very real way do great danger to your future marriage if you do that, because that is not God's design.

[28 : 06] Keep the marriage bed holy. the New Testament says. And of course spoiled marriages, which may be in danger because of sex outside of marriage or sex before marriage or many other things, just redefining what God wants to suit ourselves, using marriages, using our marriages for our own pleasure rather than what they're there for, what that leads to is broken homes.

A broken marriage leads to a broken home more often than not. Sometimes God will help his people, even after being victims of broken marriages, to still have well-functioning homes by his grace alone.

But the normal course of things is that broken marriages leads to broken homes, which leads to bad upbringings, which leads to crime and gangsterism and drugs and sex abuse. If you want to know why the Cape Flats is in the mess it's in, it starts in the family and that starts in marriages. That's the source of all the problems, mostly. And I can go on, I can go on talking about the problems and how different we are from this world in Genesis 2 because we are not trusting in God's definition of right and wrong.

We are not following God's blueprint for marriage. But I could go on, but I think you get the point, right? that we are not living according to our design. And that's why we are not a blessing to this world.

[29 : 36] Because we are not following the patterns that were laid out right here in the Bible. We just got to read the Bible and then we work this all out. But basically, today, the rivers of blessing are no longer flowing out.

Right? In Eden, Genesis 2, we get this picture of the rivers of blessing flowing out into the rest of the world because of man doing these things. And today, we see in the world, those rivers are dried up. Am I right? There's no longer rivers of blessing flowing out of Eden. So the question we should be asking this morning is, well, is there any way we can get back into a state of blessing?

Is there any way that we as human beings can again be a blessing to our world? Is there any hope for this world? Can the rivers of blessing ever flow again and restore this world to what it should be? Well, my job this morning is to tell you, yes, they can, and you can be part of it. And I can say that because this is not the last time the Bible talks about flowing rivers bringing blessing to this world.

[30 : 56] Even after the fall, Genesis chapter 3, God still has a plan to bring these blessings back into the world. So we're just going to go on a whirlwind tour through the Bible now quickly.

The first stop is Psalm 46. You don't have to turn there. I'll have the pertinent verses on the screen, but I want you to listen carefully to what these texts say.

Psalm 46. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. Verse 5. God is within her.

She will not fall. God will help her at break of day. Verse 6. Nations are in uproar. Kingdoms fall. He lifts his voice. The earth melts. Okay, this is Psalm 46. Read it at home.

But we read here of a river flowing out of the dwelling place of God even while the world is in a state of chaos. This river starts to flow out of God's dwelling place.

[31 : 57] It's quite exciting, but we don't, in the Psalms, we're not yet quite sure of how this is going to work. So then we read on to Ezekiel 47, which is a vision of Ezekiel, and it goes like this.

Verse 1. The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple towards the east. And then a few verses later, they follow him and this other mysterious guy, follow the stream of water out of the city and they find this.

I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, this water flows towards the eastern region and goes down into the Araba where it enters the Dead Sea.

when it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh.

So where the river flows, everything will live. So this is a beautiful prophecy that we have. A vision of Ezekiel where there's a river flowing out of, again, out of the dwelling place of God and it brings life wherever it goes into the Dead Sea.

[33 : 13] I don't know if you've been there. I've been to the Dead Sea and it is dead. It is really dead. There's no living things there. It's in the middle of the desert. It's the lowest point on earth, in fact, and it's just dead.

But here, we have this river flowing out from the dwelling place of God making even the most dead place on earth alive and lush and full of life. Okay, so we're tracing this idea of this mysterious river flowing out of the dwelling place of God to bless the world just like in Eden and then we enter into the New Testament and we fast forward and we find ourselves in John chapter 4 where Jesus is sitting thirsty at a well and he meets with a woman who is in every way the product of the broken world we live and her marriage is in tatters and strangely enough she's looking for water and Jesus makes them start talking and in that conversation which is recorded for us that Penny read for us in fact Jesus makes this woman an amazing promise and when he does that we begin to realize that all these prophecies in the Old Testament are starting to be fulfilled when he says this

Jesus answered everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst indeed the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life and note here that he doesn't just say that he will be a spring of water that will bring life but he says whoever drinks this water he brings will themselves be a spring a source of living water to bless others in the world so do you see what's happening here as we trace this idea right from Eden to Jesus we realize Jesus came to earth to start a new humanity who will be the new means by which God causes life giving water to flow from his presence into the rest of the world just like happened in Eden do you see what's happening here we lost what happened in Eden the blessings flowing out of Eden through mankind through mankind who was made for that to take those blessings to the rest of the world we messed that up but God has been promising through the Old Testament to restore that once again to make a new humanity to be a new blessing to flow new living water to the rest of the world and that new humanity is his people the church we are the new Adams and Eves to work for Jesus and enjoy his provision and be a blessing to the rest of the world but of course some things have changed since Genesis chapter 2 we have clothes that's one thing that's changed and a number of other things have changed as Paul tells us in Ephesians 5 again we don't have time to get into it read that at home but Ephesians 5 when he talks about marriage very important passage to understand that the true marriage which is necessary to remake this world is no longer human marriage between a man and a woman useful as that still is of course to make children and have companionship but the real partnership that human marriage was always meant to point to and prefigure is actually the marriage between Christ and his people the church as we submit to his rule and as we partner with him to bring blessing to this world that is the true marriage now we will ultimately do that in the new creation when he returns after he returns and judges his enemies and gathers his people and then once that is all done and sin is done away with and judgment has come and those of us who have washed by his blood have escaped and passed through that judgment and we are alive again then he will set us to work on and to enjoy creation

with access to the tree of life forever and so know

I want you just to have that picture in your mind and know that that new creation is coming but know too that there is work to do in the meantime work to bring blessing even to this broken world one of the reasons we are starting the social action ministry with Dylan on board to help us to start social action and to get involved in those kind of ministries is because we want to be and we realize that we are called as the local church to be a blessing to the world around us just like Eden just like those rivers float out of Eden I hope that rivers will start to flow out of St. Mark's into Plumstead and Southfield and start to really bring blessing into people's lives but we are also as we do that not just to bring temporary blessings into their lives but eternal blessings to bring people into this marriage with Christ by proclaiming the gospel and then bringing blessing and salvation into their broken lives and that is our role as a church to be the new humanity to bring to get these rivers flowing again but if that is our role as a church my question to you is in what way will you be involved in that role as a church individually how will you be involved in that work assuming of course you have come under [38 : 58] Christ and submitted to his rule you can't be a blessing a true blessing if you haven't come under Christ and been saved from your sins you may be able to help people temporarily and put food on the table maybe give them a job but you'll never be able to help them eternally unless you are a disciple of Christ yourself but if you are and if you have become a source of living water as Jesus says you are if you're a disciple then I must ask what are you doing now to bring blessing to this world to bring people to know and trust Christ because that is what we're called to be doing that is our purpose as God's new humanity just as much as Adam's purpose was to bring blessing to the world because today we are the means by which he is building his kingdom and I would finish there but we're not finished our biblical journey yet we've got one last stop with which I will end and I want you to actually turn there in your Bibles turn to Revelation 22 it's right towards the end of the Bible and this is a description

John's vision that God has given him revealed to him it's a description of the world as it is going to be one day after all our work in this fallen world is complete and surprise surprise we find in the middle of it all a river Revelation 22 from verse 1 then the angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city on each side of the river stood the tree of life bearing twelve crops of fruit yielding its fruit every month and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations no longer will there be any curse the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him they will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads there will be no more night they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun for the Lord God will give them light and they will reign forever and ever let's pray

Lord we do thank you for this teaching of our purpose as human beings taken from the world to be in the world and to be a blessing to the world under your rule we think of how we have fallen so far short of that ideal and yet we thank you that throughout the history of mankind you have had a plan to bring us back to bring us back into the land of blessing so that we can be a blessing for the rest of the world through Jesus Christ your son so we do thank you for that we look forward to that new creation but we pray that you will help us in the meantime to really think through and act on how we are meant to be a blessing to even the broken world around us to bring people into relationship with Christ to bring them the hope of eternal life and to bless them practically help us in the weeks and months ahead to know how we as a church can do this to glorify your name to be a blessing to the world around us and to grow your kingdom in Jesus name

Amen