

PRELIMS. Last week one of the TV celebrities gave an interview and he said one of the things that fascinated him was ‘Why was he here?’ ‘What is life about?’ - something many people, even the most intelligent and important and rich people ask that question. Ben Foble? added ‘But perhaps I am digging **too deep**?’ Not at all - very important and necessary question to ask ourselves.

Our text gives us the answer! Paul in the **context** of **future** glory, says that **before** we were born, we were **predestined** to become like Jesus Christ! Ie, Jesus Christ is our Leader and Head and *First* of a **fellowship** of true *brothers*! We were created to be in a **real family** with Jesus Christ as the Elder Brother who will **glorify** us! We were created to be like Jesus and to be **glorified** by Him! That was the way it was **intended** to be. At the very beginning, in creation, we were made in God’s, now after the Fall, **re**created in Christ’s image!

We must make a clear **distinction**. We were never meant to be **God**, or even **a god**! The **cults** and the New Age teach that heresy! That is one of the **oldest** heresies, Satan: *you will be like God*!

If we are honest, we **all** try and **play God**. When something goes wrong. When things don’t work out for us, we all try and **control** things to go the way we want. We play God each day! And the **reason** we play God is to **make life EASIER** for ourselves! We are **extremely SELF-CENTRED**! We actually think, and try hard, to make the world **SERVE** us! We try and **control** things for our **own PERSONAL** benefit! Right? Playing God for ourselves. Well, God and His Son **Jesus X** is the **only One** who has that right! Because He was **before all things** - *and in Him all things hold together* [Col 1:17]

The main object of life is not to please ourselves, but how to please our Maker! Many people think life is all about trying to please themselves - that is really **NARCISM** - taken up with ourselves! That is what is wrong with the world. Self-centredness! So different from real Xnity - which is X-centred - **sharing**! \*Even after the **greatest INSULT imaginable** (the Fall) God was **determined**, yes,

**determined** to glorify His **creatures** as well as **Himself!** Do you know that **everything**, yes, **everything** that God created, **glorifies** Him - **except TWO!** There are 2 creatures that have **failed** to glorify God! Even the inanimate things, like **trees, mountains, animals, Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together** [Psa 98:8] Isaiah in reminding us that God's Word **will accomplish** that which **I purpose** says the **mountains** and the **hills** before you shall break forth into singing, and **all the trees** of the field shall **clap their hands** [Isa 55:12] *Sing O heavens...shout O depths of the earth, break forth into singing O mountains, O forest and every tree in it!* [Isa 44:23] *The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus* [Isa 35] We are called to be like the **roe, a gazelle, a dove** to **enable** us to **bring glory** to God! friends, **that** is why we are here on earth - to please God!

But the two creatures that **have failed** to give God glory are the **fallen angels** - and of course **mankind!** Paul said **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** [Rom 3:23] But it was **not meant** to be like that at all! And God out of **His mere good pleasure** was **determined** to **share** His glory with His creatures! So He rescued us!

Now Jesus said *I am come that they might have life and have it to the full (more abundantly)!* As soon as you mention 'having life to the full' or 'having a good life', people immediately think of a 'full realization of their **own personal** dreams, instant **relief** from all suffering and **problems**, comfortable lifestyle, constant happiness, **everything money can buy!** Right? If, so, then **why** do those who **have all that**, ever commit suicide, go on drugs, get depressed? Because **pleasing ourselves** does not bring happiness or fulfillment. That is **not** what Jesus meant when He talked about 'life to the full'!

Many, many people, in hearing the Good News of the gospel, think it means **an easy life!** Many have come forward at a meeting to be prayed for, and make a prayer to Jesus, **thinking** it means that from now on, life is going to be easy! Well, you must know, nothing could be further from the truth. **\*Coming** to X is one thing, **following** Him is another. You come to X **in order** to follow - **wherever** He **leads**

you! When we are born again, a **seed** is planted within us! *since you have been **born again**, not of perishable **seed** but of **imperishable*** [1P1:23] Now a seed **grows/develops**. We have to grow like Jesus X.

We have to be **MOLDED!** Now, it is God's **Holy Spirit** that molds us. The Holy Spirit leads/guides/directs us. We are **made alive** by the Holy Spirit [1P3:18] But, **WE must cultivate** the **fruits** of the Spirit as God's Spirit works within us! God's Spirit works in His people.

God brings us to birth as in the natural realm. He regenerates us. But **WE** after being made alive must **work at** our sanctification! As a child must **work at** eating its food and exercising its limbs, so Xns regenerated by God's Spirit, **must work out your own salvation!** It is **God** who *works in you **both to will AND to work*** [Phil 2:12,13] God **empowers Xns**. Speaking of the various gifts which the Cors had Paul says *it is the same God who **empowers** them all in **everyone*** [1C12:6] Paul said that he ***worked harder** than any of the apostles, though it was not I but the **grace** of God that is with me* [1Cor15:120] The **danger** for Xns is, we must **not grieve the Holy Spirit of God** [Eph 4:30], and we **must not Quench the Spirit** [1Thes5:19]

So we are **responsible** for spiritual growth. **We must attend** to the disciplines of growing in **grace and knowledge**. We are responsible for **adding** and **supplementing** our faith with the fruit of the Spirit!

**Two matters!** (a) many people think that when the Holy Spirit works, they **know** when He is working - and they **feel** it! As soon as you mention Holy Spirit, people think in terms of **miraculous events** and **powerful emotions!** Not so! The Spirit works very often without our knowledge! Sol *As you **do not know** the way the **spirit** comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, **SO** you do **not know** the **work** of God who makes everything* [Ecc 11:5] Jesus told Nic *The wind blows where it wishes...but you **do no know** where it comes from or where it goes. **SO it is with everyone** who is **born of the Spirit*** [John 3:7] Old Jacob said ***Surely the LORD** is in this place, and **I did not know it*** [G 28:16] Did Cyrus in sending Ezra to restore Israel, **know** that God was working in him, not only in his life but in a hugely **significant** and **historical** way? Did the Chaldeans know?

(b) Another matter to note is that God, when He sanctifies us, He uses **THREE means!** One: He uses **His Word!** Jesus: *Sanctify them through Thy Truth, Thy Word is Truth!* The Bible, the Word of God is a **GIFT** to God's people. It **only given** to God's people. *The Word of the Lord came to....Abram...Isaiah...Jeremiah!* All the epistles were written to the Churches/saints/like precious faith, etc

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...is profitable for...that the man of God may be complete/competent/equipped for every good work.* How shall a young man learn? By **taking heed to Word!** **APP** We must **grow** in the knowledge and **obedience** of God's Word

**Second Means: God's People!** God uses His people to **help/assist/encourage/rebuke** - but mainly by **FELLOWSHIP together!** We **need** one another. (This week some of us had **problems!** We prayed at the BS in 24hrs a lot of the problems were improved. We were able to pray and help one another). Nowadays, we have CDs, mp3s, texts, emails, Skype, Facebook, Twitter - all very good. It was **technology** that brought the reformation (printing) - but there is nothing like **face to face contact** with one another! Jesus spent **3yrs** with His disciples speaking, teaching, and fellowshiping with them. A Church is a **community** of like minded believers who **interact with each other.**

Apollos was a great orator *eloquent...mighty in the Scriptures...instructed in the way of the Lord...fervent in spirit* - but he did not know it all! He needed the **help** of Aquila and Priscilla who showed him the *more accurately!* **Ethiopian Eunuch** needed Philip's help! *How can I unless some man help me?* We need one another.

**Third Means: Providences/Circumstances!** God works through circumstances - usually **adverse** ones! God works through **problems** - He **specialises** in turning tragedies into blessings! **APP** You **cannot** grow without being **tested!** It is a **privilege** to be tested! Testing means: God is **wanting** to **USE** you! When you have a problem be **excited!** *Count it all joy my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness...that you may be perfect and complete* - that you may be conformed to the image of God's Son!