

What Does God Want From Me?

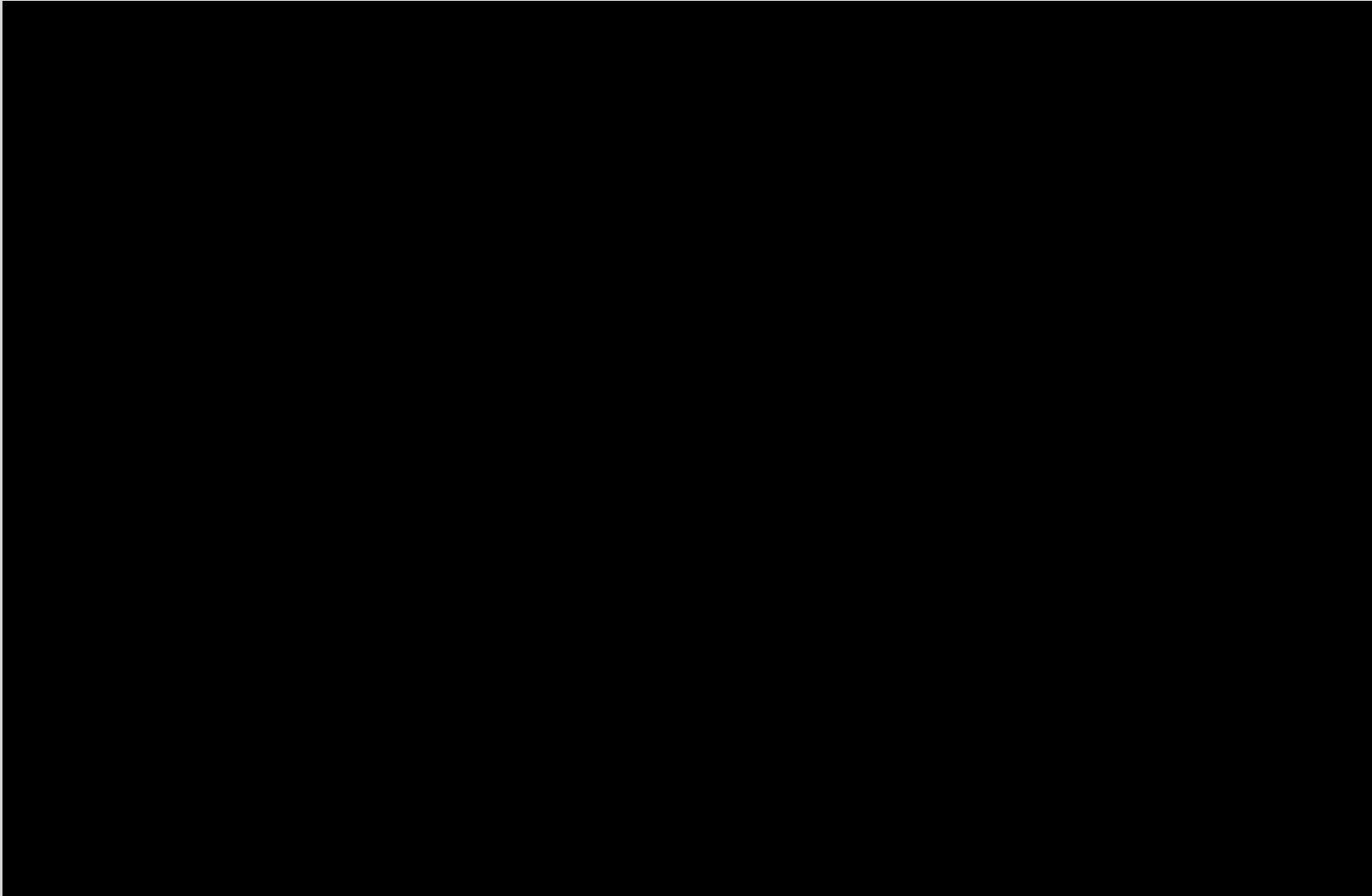
Cornerstone Community Church

Sunday, June 4, 2017

Clay Stidham, Jr.



Micah 6:8-Walk Humbly With Thy God



James 4:10-Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord



Before you can understand WHAT God WANTS from you, you have to understand WHY he made you in the first place.

- **BECAUSE GOD IS TRIUNE, HE CAN DESIRE AND LOVE US WITHOUT NEEDING US.**
 - Why would God create us if he didn't need us?
 - **God is a creator.** But that doesn't mean he has to create to be happy. Rather, he creates because he is happy. God has always engaged in a loving relationship with the other members of the Trinity. Jesus said, "Father . . . you loved me before the creation of the world" (John 17: 24, NIV).
- English theologian John Owen (1616- 1683) offered this commentary about love within the Trinity:
 - "God is love." . . . God's love of himself — which is natural and necessary unto the Divine Being — consists in the mutual [contentment] of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. And it was to express himself, that God made any thing [outside] himself. He made the heavens and the earth to express his being, goodness, and power. He created man "in his own image," to express his holiness and righteousness; and he implanted love in our natures to express this eternal mutual love of the holy persons of the Trinity.
 - Alcorn, Randy. Happiness (p. 141, 152). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.
- **1 Timothy 6:15—"God himself, the triune God, is the source of all blessedness and joy. God is self-sufficient, infinitely blessed and happy in Himself."**

THE TRIUNE GOD IS ESSENTIAL

- The concept of the Trinity is difficult for us finite human beings to comprehend.
- How is it possible for one God to consist of three distinct persons, each of whom is God?
- Somehow God has three centers of consciousness distinct enough to allow individual identities and intercommunication with each other, and so unified as to constitute one – and only one – God.
- Theologians and scholars have wrestled with this conundrum for centuries. Yet it's possible to say, “Huh?” to the mysterious mathematics of the Trinity while appreciating its inexplicable wonders.
- A. W. Tozer wrote of the triune God,
 - **“Such a truth had to be revealed; no one could have imagined it.”**
 - Alcorn, Randy. Happiness (pp. 131-132). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.
- **WHILE WE CANNOT FULLY COMPREHEND THE TRIUNE NATURE OF GOD, HE WANTS US TO SEEK HIM AS REVEALED THROUGH HIS WORD. HE WANTS TO RESTORE A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THAT IS WHY HE MADE YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

GOD'S ETERNAL LOVE AND HAPPINESS MAKE NO SENSE APART FROM THE TRINITY.

- Theologian William Shedd (1820- 1894) wrote,
 - “God is blessed [happy] only as he is self-knowing and self-communing. A subject without an object could not experience either love or joy. Love and joy are social. They imply more than a single person.”
- The only way God’s happiness or love could be without beginning is if there exists within God himself a reason for and object of his happiness and love.
 - Baptist pastor and theologian Augustus Strong (1836- 1921) said, “Love is an impossible exercise to a solitary being.”
- God is one, but he is not solitary.
- Since God is loving and happy within himself, he didn’t create the world out of need.
- It’s easy to imagine that a God full of love and happiness might wish to express those emotions in the form of a universe, angels, people, and animals. **They could enjoy his happiness, and he could enjoy them.**
 - Alcorn, Randy. Happiness (p. 132). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.
- **THAT IS WHY GOD CREATED YOU**

God is the Author and Finisher

- **YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PART OF GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN**
- [Genesis 1:27](#) ESV So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- [Job 33:4](#) ESV The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- [Psalm 139:13-16](#) ESV For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
- [Isaiah 64:8](#) ESV But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.
- [Jeremiah 1:5](#) ESV “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
- [John 1:3](#) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
- [Ephesians 2:10](#) ESV For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God is the Author and Finisher

Spiritual Blessings in Christ-Ephesians 1:3-11 (ERV)

- ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in heaven. ⁴ **In Christ, he chose us before the world was made.** He chose us in love to be his holy people—people who could stand before him without any fault. ⁵ **And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ.** This was what God wanted, and it pleased him to do it. ⁶ And this brings praise to God because of his wonderful grace. God gave that grace to us freely. He gave us that grace in Christ, the one he loves.
- ⁷ In Christ we are made free by his blood sacrifice. We have forgiveness of sins because of God's rich grace. ⁸ God gave us that grace fully and freely. With full wisdom and understanding ⁹ he let us know his secret plan. This was what God wanted, and he planned to do it through Christ. ¹⁰ God's goal was to finish his plan when the right time came. **He planned that all things in heaven and on earth be joined together with Christ as the head.**
- ¹¹ In Christ we were chosen to be God's people. **God had already planned for us to be his people, because that is what he wanted. And he is the one who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants.**

What does it mean to be an author?

- Author
 - An author is broadly defined as "the person who originated or gave existence to anything" and whose authorship determines responsibility for what was created. Narrowly defined, an author is the originator of any written work.
<http://www.definitions.net/definition/author>
- Imagine if you could write a story...and you could empower the characters within that story to make their own choices and to deviate from your storyline.
- You gave the characters in your story the ability to “choose their own adventure” apart from the story you wrote.
- There would obviously be tremendous differentiation in the outcomes and consequences for the individual characters who deviated from the original storyline.
- That would be an interesting story.
- That is exactly what God has done.
- **BUT THERE’S A CATCH-ON THE SURFACE, IT APPEARS THAT WE HAVE MESSED UP HIS PERFECT SCRIPT BY CHOOSING OUR OWN ADVENTURE APART FROM HIM.**
- There are clear purposes for why God chose to author His creation in this way. The main purpose is truly amazing, and I will share that at the end of this presentation.

Our Problem: We want to be our own author

- The problems we face in our lives are a direct result of our inherent desire to write our own story apart from the one God wrote for us.
- **Why do we want to do this? Basically one word: PRIDE**
- This first instance of this prideful rebellion against God's sovereign will did not occur within God's human creation. It occurred within the eternal heavenly realm; in His angelic creation.
- [Isaiah 14:12-18](#) describes the fall from heaven of one called "Lucifer,"
- **The reason for Lucifer's fall is found in verses 13 and 14: "You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'" This has always been Satan's desire—to be God—and it is the very temptation he used in the garden of Eden to get Eve to disobey God: "You shall be as God" ([Genesis 3:5](#)).**
- [Ezekiel 28](#) is another passage thought to refer to Lucifer/Satan. Apparently, Lucifer/Satan had a position of guardian angel in heaven. The rest of the passage describes the reason he was cast out of heaven. **Because of his beauty, his heart became proud and his wisdom was corrupted ([Ezekiel 28:17](#)). Pride in his perfection, wisdom, and beauty (v. 12) became the source of his downfall,** and God threw him to the earth (v. 17). This was witnessed by the Lord Jesus in heaven before His incarnation ([Luke 10:18](#)).
- **Lucifer wanted to write his own story.** We are also told that an "innumerable company of angels" ([Hebrews 12:22](#)) chose to rebel with him.
- The entire Luciferian Kingdom is literally hell-bent on spreading this sinful rebellion and corruption through self-exalting pride and willful rejection of God's sovereign will through the whole of God's creation.

Spoiler Alert: We are bad authors.....

- Adam and Eve were living in perfect harmony within God's story for them.
- Lucifer wanted to interject his sinful corruption into their story and he enticed them to choose their own adventure apart from God storyline...**that decision had a dramatic impact on of all our stories.**

Genesis 3 King James Version (KJV)

3 Now the **serpent** was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And **he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?** **2** And the woman said unto the serpent, **We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:** **3** But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, **Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.** **4** And the **serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:** **5** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then **your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.** **6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. **7** And **the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked;** and **they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.** **8** And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and **Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God** amongst the trees of the garden. **9** And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? **10** And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. **11** And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? **Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?** **12** And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. **13** And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. **14** And the **LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed** above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: **15** And **I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.** **16** Unto the woman he said, **I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.** **17** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;** **18** **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;** **19** **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.** **20** And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. **21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the **LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.** **22** And the **LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:** **23** Therefore the **LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.** **24** So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The story we write ends poorly without Divine revision

- **With the curse, God changed the entire physics of the original creation.** The current universe is not as God originally created. It has been greatly and intentionally diminished from what God originally stated was 'very good'. **The Bible makes it abundantly clear that this is a temporary state of affairs** and serves a much greater purpose as part of God's eternal sovereign will.
- We are all born into this temporary state of creation. This is the primary reason why we inherit the burdens of this 'original sin'.
- **God's curse was put in place to ensure that this inherent rebellion within His creation would be a temporary, rather than eternal condition.**
- **God's will in our lives is for us to surrender to his sovereignty and permit Him to guide us back into His perfect original storyline in both the temporal and eternal.**
 - Psalm 37:23-24 New King James Version (NKJV)
 - ²³ The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. ²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds *him with* His hand.
- But our fallen, sinful flesh continually revises His manuscript, replacing His storyline with our own.

BUT I'M A GOOD PERSON!

- BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A 'GOOD MAN'?
- In Romans 3, the Apostle Paul states very clearly that there is no such thing as a 'good man'.
 - No One Is Righteous
 - ⁹ What then? Are we Jews^[a] any better off?^[b] No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
- But Paul reveals the Good News in verse 21:
 - The Righteousness of God Through Faith
 - ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
- All God really wants from you is to give up your desire for authorship.
- He calls upon us to trust His storyline using the faith he provides us, and to submit to His sovereign authority.
- When we get out of the way, God corrects our path back to His originally intended storyline.
- This life is a temporary chapter in every person's eternal story
- The focus of this chapter in God's story is ultimately about learning to give the pen back to Him.

Step 1: Look to Him, Step 2: Repeat Step 1

- Hebrews 12:2 King James Version (KJV)
 - ² Looking unto **Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Author and Finisher by [Mark Baker](#)

- One translation says author and perfecter of our faith. Another translation says our leader and instructor.
- I often emphasize the part we have to play in walking out our Christian faith. One of the reasons that I emphasize our end of things more, is because I know that **the Lord always honors His Word**, and will never fail to honor His end of the Covenant. **A Covenant is between two agreeing parties**. Knowing this takes a tremendous load off of our shoulders. We are not in this alone. We can know that He is absolutely faithful to fulfill His promises. **It is never only up to us**. Even when we feel all alone, we are not. His Word says **He will never leave us or forsake us**. He is always there assisting, encouraging, leading, comforting, giving direction, and disciplining, as needed.
- **He created us and He is the One who gives us faith and the ability to walk in it.**
- **Our responsibility is to continue to look unto Him, and keep on looking to Him**. We don't look to Him once, and then that's it. **It is a continual and ongoing process**. Vines say this means -- observe, discern, perceive. This is not a casual glance, but **an intent gaze for the purpose understanding**. **This is also a decision on our part**. We have the opportunity to look at a lot of things as there are always options. Satan will make sure of that. We're always going to have the option to look somewhere else other than to look at the one who is the author and finisher of our faith. I'm making a point of this because **what we look at is what our faith will be in**.

IMPORTANT: God is NOT on a POWER TRIP!

- God doesn't ask us to surrender because he needs to prove his power, authority, or sovereignty. Those traits are self-evident, and immutable.
- **God asks us to surrender so that we acknowledge our inherent sinful, prideful, rebellious nature.** Within the terms of His covenant which was established through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ at the cross, God provided a way to restore a right relationship with Him.
- Under these new terms, we relinquish the pen and willingly surrender our desire to write our own story, seeking above all that God resumes His authorship of our life to complete His intended purpose for which He created us in the first place.
- It's important to understand that **our Author and Finisher has never altered His ultimate storyline.**
- **Sin wasn't a mistake, weakness, failing, or shortcoming of God...it was all part of the original story.**

GOD IS PERFECT. HE NEVER MAKES MISTAKES!

- In his infinite wisdom God knew that rebellion would always be a byproduct of choice.
- God does not coerce His creation to love and obey Him. Coercion would ultimately deprive His creation of the pure joy and unbound happiness of choosing to love and worship rather than being programmed or forced to do so.
- Choice creates potential for deviation. Deviation from God's will carries inherent consequences of separation from Him.
- God allowed for the conditions of rebellion to exist and he also provided a way for rebellion to be completely eradicated ETERNALLY.
- How did he make that happen? That's the most amazing part of His Divine authorship.
- God injected himself fully and directly into our broken storyline. He took upon Himself the full weight and burden of the curse He placed on creation, and provided the permanent course correction.
- Redemption, Eternal Resurrection, Perfection. Those are the terms of His covenant. That's what we receive in exchange for our willingness to HUMBLE OURSELVES and surrender our rebelliousness towards Him.

FREE GIFT: SALVATION-APPLY INSIDE

- John Piper says,
 - “God is the one being in the universe for whom self-exaltation is not the act of a needy ego, but an act of infinite giving. The reason God seeks our praise is not because he won’t be fully God until he gets it, but that we won’t be happy until we give it. **This is not arrogance. This is grace.**”
 - Alcorn, Randy. Happiness (p. 141). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.
- The gift of salvation is freely given, but in John 3, Jesus clearly states that surrender means that a man must be **“Born Again”**.
- The phrase “born again” literally means “born from above.” Nicodemus had a real need. He **needed a change of his heart—a spiritual transformation. New birth, being born again, is an act of God whereby eternal life is imparted to the person who believes** ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Titus 3:5](#); [1 Peter 1:3](#); [1 John 2:29](#); [3:9](#); [4:7](#); [5:1-4, 18](#)). [John 1:12, 13](#) indicates that being “born again” also carries the idea of “becoming children of God” **through trust in the name of Jesus Christ.**
- The question logically comes, “Why does a person need to be born again?” The apostle Paul in [Ephesians 2:1](#) says, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins”** (NKJV). To the Romans he wrote, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** ([Romans 3:23](#)). **Sinners are spiritually “dead”**; when they receive spiritual life through faith in Christ, the Bible likens it to a rebirth. **Only those who are born again have their sins forgiven and have a relationship with God.**

How does that come to be? [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) states, **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”** When one is saved, he/she has been born again, spiritually renewed, and is now a child of God by right of new birth. **Trusting in Jesus Christ, the One who paid the penalty of sin when He died on the cross, is the means to be “born again.” “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!”** ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

The rest of the story.....

- As I mentioned earlier, there is a critical reason why God authored His story the way He did.
- God temporarily allowed sin and rebellion to enter His perfect creation because those are natural by-products of also allowing volitional choice.
- The natural consequences of sin and rebellion are separation from a perfect and Holy God. Separation of creation from Creator results in suffering. To ensure that this did not become the permanent, eternal state of creation, death was introduced.
- God then expressed His love for his creation by bearing the consequences of our prideful rebellion upon Himself.
- Through this process, He provided the whole of His creation an opportunity to experience sin and rebellion, and a means of rejecting those things eternally.
- This is how He creates a permanent, eternal state that will never again experience sin, rebellion, suffering, death, imperfection, or separation from Him.

What Does God Want from You?

Mark 12:30-31 English Standard Version (ESV)

- ³⁰ And you shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.** ³¹ The second is this: ‘You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Romans 10 English Standard Version (ESV)

- ⁶ But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹ because, **if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For **“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER

2 Peter 3 English Standard Version (ESV)-**The Day of the Lord Will Come**

- 3 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that **scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.** ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” ⁵ For **they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,** ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But **by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER

2 Peter 3 English Standard Version (ESV)-*The Day of the Lord Will Come*

- ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,^[a] not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies^[b] will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.^[c]
- ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise *we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

(BECAUSE EVERYONE THERE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE CHOICE AND HAS REJECTED REBELLION!!!)

- ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

• HUMBLE THYSELF IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD...AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP!!!!