

Lent 4 – March 11, 2018
Text: Ephesians 2:1-10
Theme: Why am I Here?

If God knew that we were going to fall into sin, why did he create us? That is a common question from all believers. It does not seem reasonable to us to create something that you know is going to fail, so it seems to us sometimes, if we think too much about it, that either God is capricious, dumb or just plain mean. It is easy to view God as the evil Sid, from Toy Story, with a magnifying glass over the anthill watching the poor ants burn, and we're the ants!

I suppose I would agree with that assessment if I did not know, as Paul Harvey used to say, the rest of the story. God did not leave us to burn, that is to be damned. Yes he created us and yes, because he has perfect foreknowledge, he knew that we would fall into sin, but he also developed a plan whereby we would not be damned but live eternally. So from the first moment of creation, God knew that we would mess it up, but he also knew that he would save us from our failure so that in the end, we can be with him as he intended.

Knowing all of that, one of the answers for which human beings often search is "why was I created?" I mean, if God has it all planned out, what's the point of me? What am I supposed to

add to the world? Hence just about every generation has some variation on people finding themselves. From flappers to hippies to emo's and preppies, people are asking the questions, "What am I supposed to do with this life? Why was I placed on this earth?" But it's not really as big a mystery as some like to make it. St. Paul tells us in our epistle for today.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" That's the reason you were created – for good works. You were not created to become famous, rich and powerful. You might achieve any or all of that if it serves God's purpose, but it's not why you were created. You were created to do good for this world. What are good works? Now that is the correct question with which to wrestle.

Our catechism says, and by the way, the catechism is about the best spiritual tool you can own second to the Bible. If you don't have one, ask me. I have a couple dozen on my shelf. The catechism says,

"In God's sight, a good work is everything that a child of God does, speaks, or thinks in faith, according to the Ten Commandments, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his or her neighbor."

But none of that is from you. If it were not for Jesus Christ dying on the cross to pay for all of your sin, you would be a mass of cells bound for hell and it would make little difference what you accomplished or failed to accomplish on this earth. Who cares what you do if after a few decades you go off to spend eternity in hell? But Jesus did die on the cross and the Holy Spirit worked through your Baptism to create faith in you and he has taught that faith through God's Word and nourished it through the body and blood of Jesus and now you are ready to be a conduit for Him in the world. You are ready to do what you were put here to do: good works!

We are all gifted. How you choose to use your gifts is up to you but I will tell you now that true peace and true contentment come when you use your gifts to do good works for God's glory. I guarantee you that he places opportunities in your path every day. It does not matter what your particular role is in this world. Your particular role is just a vehicle for you to use your gifts: teacher, electrician, bus driver, grandparent, aunt, next door neighbor, it does not matter, it's just a vehicle for you to use your gifts. And how do you determine what your gifts are? As Nike so aptly puts it, "just do it." God will open the doors, all you have to do is walk through. As you walk you will know where you are more or less

successful and as you have successes, you will be able to hone your gifts.

Why are you here? You are here to serve God by doing good works. What is a good work? It is anything that you, a person saved by the blood of Christ, do, say or think to serve your neighbor and glorify God. You might make a living at it or not. You might become famous for it or not. It does not matter because during your few decades here on earth, your only task is to glorify God with your good works and when you have done that, you are a good and faithful servant to the one who gave everything for you.

Yes God knew that we would fall into sin when he created us just as God knew that you would be corrupted with original sin when he created you. But he fixed that! Stop focusing on the sin and focus on the gift of God that allows you and empowers you to do good works. I guarantee you that the more you focus on your works, the less sin will rule your life and the more joy and contentment you will experience until the day of the resurrection from the dead when we are recreated uncorrupted and holy. Like most things with God. It's really not that complicated.