

# Identity Matters (TryChurch)

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Genesis chapter 1, verse 26. Then God said, Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.
- So God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them. Male and female, he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number.
- Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it.
- They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food.
- And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And it was evening, and it was morning, the sixth day.
- [ 1 : 3 1 ]     Oh, that's not working, is it? Good evening. So tonight, we are going to think about the very small, unimportant topic of who you are and what makes up your identity. So if that's what you wanted from a Sunday night, that's what we're going to be doing for the next couple of minutes together.
- When you hear these kind of passages, when you hear these ancient scriptures that have been speaking to humans for generations, for thousands and thousands of years, we believe these aren't just old words, but they say something profound to us today, not just because they are words that have wisdom, but because they have a source behind them.
- They have power and authority, and that source is a person. A person is God. But when you hear the question, what makes you you, and how do you identify yourself, you might instinctively just think, well, I know that.
- I know my name. I know where I come from. Basic information about yourself, that if you picked up a driver's license or a passport, I'd be able to quickly figure that out about you. But quite quickly, most people, I'd imagine, think, well, I'm obviously more than that.
- I'm not just these circumstantial pieces of information. And you might start to talk about your hobbies or your job or your character. And then you might think, well, yeah, I am that, but I'm more than that too.
- [ 2 : 3 9 ]     You might start to think of who you want to be. Is that who you are too? And you might start to talk about your dreams, your hopes, your aspirations. All of these different aspects of who we think we may be.
- The question of who I am, for some people, is massively important. It's like right here for them. Because they generally do not know. It feels like something that plagues them.
- And the search to know who they are is something that is present with them every day. Part of what I do is work as a therapist. And a lot of the times in my therapy room is people who have suicidal tendencies.

Now, for a lot of people, suicidal tendencies is something in the brain that can be worked with medicine. For others, it's to do with a deep trauma that's happened in their lives. But in my experience, for a lot of people, that has come from a place of feeling a real deep sense of no value, of no worth, of no purpose.

They come to believe that this world would be better without them. In fact, between June and September of this year, suicide rates in Scotland are 28% higher than they were for the previous year.

[ 3 : 48 ] Over 70% of those people were young men. That question of who I am is massively important for those people. Yet, you also might think those big, giant, existential questions of who I am are kind of pointless to waste your time on.

Just get on with life. You don't need to think too much about who you are. And actually, that's maybe not a very pressing or important question to you whatsoever. Yet, the reality is, I reckon, for myself, if nothing else, we think about that question way more often than we realise.

Whenever you have a question in your mind that arises from a place of doubt or anxiety about who you are, what your worth is, what your value is, that is ultimately a question of who I am.

Am I rich enough? Am I successful enough? Am I attractive enough? Am I lovable enough? Am I popular enough? Those are questions that are usually coming from a place of an insecure identity.

We usually don't ask them if we feel quite confident in those things. Yet, they're not just about the present, they're also about the future. Will I be safe? Will I be secure? Will I be wanted in the future?

[ 4 : 57 ] These are also questions of identity. This is why it matters. It's present in our lives all the time. I think it's exceptionally present at the moment.

I feel it very much at the moment in this kind of not quite post-COVID, post-COVID world we find ourselves in, where I find myself back at normal things, yet I can feel kind of disconnected from my sense of self in some of these places.

Feel a bit more tired, feel a bit more anxious. And so tonight, we're going to look at what Genesis says into some of these situations. I'll try and find a situation where I'll stand also that won't add to your existential crisis by creating an echo as well.

So I'm going to pray and then we'll look at what Genesis has to say to us. Father, we thank you that your word speaks because your word is more than just words.

It is a person. It is your son. We thank you, Lord, that you choose to continue to engage with people like ourselves who are precious to you.

[ 6 : 05 ] And you help us to know the things of why are we figure in the grand scheme of things and why we are so hungry for significance. You have answers to these questions. So I pray, Lord, that you would meet us tonight in this.

That's that in Jesus' name. Amen. I'll also put a timer on so that if nothing else, I'll get off this stage. So the section of the Bible that you had Andy read for us at the beginning there is from Genesis 1.

And as James said, we've been going through Genesis on a Sunday evening. And Genesis, for those of you who don't know, although it's probably quite common knowledge, although I found out recently my mom didn't know this, is the first book of the Bible.

It's the start of the narrative of God and his people. And right at the beginning is this poem, Genesis 1, that tells us where things came from and God taking disorder and chaos and putting beauty and meaning and purpose.

And it's got a pattern to it. It often says, God says something because he has authority. It happens. And then every day ends with it was evening, it was morning, the third day, the fourth day.

[ 7 : 07 ] And in the bit we had read for us here, on the sixth day, you see the creation of mankind. Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. And this, actually this bit of the end of Genesis 1 shifts, the pattern is shifted.

So God hasn't just spoken. He starts to consult in the kind of plural, let us. Now that's not an editorial mistake from the writers of the Bible. Whenever you see things like that, especially if it's all existing in the one chapter, it's usually the writer's way of saying, pay attention, there's something different here.

The writers, in talking about everything coming together, where it all came from, they're saying, pay attention, there's something different about humanity. And this thing is, well there's many, many, many different things, but one of them is that they are made after something.

Everything else God says and it comes into existence. But here God says, let's make them after our image. They are a reflection of something that already exists, unlike any other aspect.

You don't see anything in the creation narrative that has this situation. They're reflected after God himself. This is extensively repeated again. It goes on to say, so God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

[ 8 : 28 ] I'm sure if you hear that you get the sense the writer's trying to make a point. He created them and he made them differently in his image. He's trying to emphasize something about the uniqueness of who we are, who the original heroes are, but also who me and you are also.

And that this idea is that they are made in the image of God. They have the imprint of who God is on them. It's not that they look like God, or it's not that they are God, but there's something of who God is resides in every single person.

Now, in the ancient Near East, where Genesis was first coming, came about, it was, this was not the only creation narrative at the time. There was many, many, many stories, in fact, about who we were and where we came from.

And one of them is called the Enuma Elish, which is from the second, if there's a historian, classic student here, you can correct me on this, but it's the second to third millennia BC. And in it, the gods are bored with working.

They don't like working. So they go to Marduk, who's the head of the gods of this in Babylon. Babylon is like the center of antiquity. Imagine Rome in the first century or New York and Paris and London today.

[ 9 : 38 ] It's the center where things and ideas happened. So they go to Marduk and say, look, we're bored of this situation. We don't like working. So Marduk says, do you know what? I've got this ingenious idea. I'll create humans. And this is from the Enuma Elish.

I'll establish a savage man. That shall be his name. He shall be charged with the services of the gods that they might be at ease. The most creation accounts from what we understand around the similar time have these similar ideas.

Humanity was created as either slave labor for the gods or servants or for their entertainment or were kind of some sort of cosmic accident. There was a big battle and humanity kind of came out with it. And so they're a result of some sort of accident.

Work is seen as beneath the gods. It's what the humans get up to. And humanity is just there to serve the women and the needs of the gods. Give us sacrifice things so we can keep entertained. That was the dominant idea of who humans were at that time.

When Genesis comes into the scene and they start, something new is said of humanity is really shocking and really culturally upheaval of the time of the way that people would have used other humans, particularly in forms of things like slavery.

[10:51] This god is nothing like Marduk. Firstly, he doesn't hate work. He seems to enjoy it. And secondly, his work is about creating a place for humanity to experience and enjoy his presence.

The kings in the ancient world, they were seen as like some sort of quasi-divine figures. They were representatives of the gods on earth and acted on the gods' behalf. And some of them would even say, and from what we understand, would call themselves, they would call themselves the image of God.

You see that in the pharaohs. You even see it through to the caesars. They were saying they had some sort of unique relationship with the gods that nobody else could have. And they had the ability to define things. And they had the ability to say what was good and what was not.

They could relate to God in a way that nobody else could. In Genesis, it is saying completely the opposite. It is saying that every human being is deliberate, is deliberately made, and that they are connected with the fabric of who God is himself.

The idea of the image of God in Genesis is hugely subversive and stunning. It claims that all human beings, every single one of them, not just those of royal blood or the kind of oligarchy of the day or whoever the power brokers were, all of them are made with this divine image imprinted on them.

[12:10] This was huge for humanity. It is moving away from, well, God's either over here or he's bored with you or you're in an accident and he has to put up with you to, like, you're deliberately created.

And not just that, you have connection with me. It gives worth, meaning, and value to every single human being. And, like, it's had massive implications, sorry, on world history.

Like, I'm not going to go into that tonight because I don't have time, but I encourage you to read this book. I don't actually read a lot of these books, just listen to them all in the background. But Dominion by Tom Holland, not Spider-Man, the secular historian.

And he, yeah, he goes into this really in-depth understanding that a lot of the things we take for granted today and rightly value and celebrate, such as freedom, human rights, equality, that kind of stuff, emerges out of this idea of people being made in the image of God.

He says, the truth is that humans are naturally given to the worship of strength and power. If you look at the course of history, people instinctively feel most comfortable with people who are like themselves.

[13:19] And the great foundational texts of Christianity are opposed to this. Paul, who's one of the first followers of Christ, one of the first leaders of the church, who we'll come back to later, says that there is no Jew or Greek, i.e. there is no black or white.

They are all kind of essentially one. We are all created equally in the image of God. There is a set core equality. So the biblical teaching that the ultimate authority in all of creation, God, who made all things, has the authority over all things, bestows value, worth, dignity, and honor on every single human being in the planet, regardless of their situation, culture, or background, was massively revolutionary.

It was revolutionary then as revolutionary is today. And the fact that this value is a direct result of where it comes from, it is ascribed to them. He is given as a direct result of being identified with God.

It is telling us something about who we are. Our identity comes from someone, somewhere. Now, that, I think, is not just revolutionary for back then. I think it's massive revolutionary for today as well.

I believe in our cultural context, we live in a world where there's an ideology right at the center, which is you create you. Nobody else creates you other than yourself.

[ 14 : 44 ] As individuals, we're kind of constantly fed this message that nobody can tell you who you are other than yourself. you make up your own identity, that you forge your own path, you live out your own dreams, all the capacities in you to make this happen.

It's the message we absorb and hear, and we kind of then form expectations of how to do life off the back of that, don't you? Once you kind of build that in, it sounds really great, and there's some truth in it.

But it's a narrative that gets rid of everything, deconstructs everything, gets rid of all the old systems, all the old ways of being. And some places that's been really helpful. Over human history, there's some been awful things that have said this is who you are, which is completely untrue and unbiblical that we've rightly got rid of.

But ultimately, it leaves most people in a reality where you have to construct your own identity out of nothing. It's just you and what you feel and what you think. We are to define ourselves from our own desires, to create ourselves up for the ground of our imaginations and preferred feelings, and to breathe the breath of life and create our own selves and our own purposes from our own identity.

You've got to do it all yourself. And alongside it is a narrative that you have to be happy with yourself as you do it. And you do this by creating your own rules, creating your own goals, stuff that sounds very good, and there's obviously some good stuff in this, isn't there?

[ 16 : 10 ] But while the whole time being your authentic, the elusive yourself, you have to be yourself in the midst of all this. Do not compromise with somebody else's vision of yourself. You do you.

With this idea that over the top of it it has to make you happy. Whilst at the same time you can't be so unique and distinctive that it excludes you from community, you've got to be unique and extinct in a way that somehow also produces thriving, accepting community at the same time.

And while you're supposed to fundamentally just care about you, you're also supposed to care about everyone else and everything else at the same time. Now I don't know if you hear the tension in that worldview. The tension in most of our worldview is do what you need to do, make it up by yourself, don't let anybody tell you what to do, form your identity, but live in community with a pile of other people doing that too.

And harmony will somehow come up with this. It's often described as freedom, I think, but often the opposite is true. It's oppressive. That's been partly my experience and I think it's the experience of quite a lot of people too.

And one of the problems is it isn't actually making us happier. Now, I would not claim to understand every culture the world has ever seen, so I'll accept that caveat, but we are, by definition, in the West, the most suicidal, depressed, medicated society ever.

[ 17 : 32 ] while at the same time being the most self-reflective, self-analytical, most educationally and medically advanced society the world has ever seen. Our bookshops and browsers are full of self-help manuals and books on 10 steps and how to be the best you you can ever possibly be.

How are those two things conflicting with one another? When you look at that, even from a purely psychological point of view, you'd ask, those things don't add up. You'd ask the question, potentially, why?

And the most common solution to this has been like the kind of self-esteem movement. Now, I'm not against the self-esteem movement. I'm a therapist. I tell a lot of people that they have to have high self-esteem. But essentially, that boils everything down to, well, you just need to think more positively about yourself in this situation and think about the situation differently.

If you just change your thinking a little bit, this will all be fine. And it becomes a bit of a one-size-fits-all solution. And again, please don't mishear me. I don't want to have some sort of tirade against people thinking positively about themselves.

That is not the point of what I'm saying. Like, I don't want to affirm going back to some sort of Victorian version of repression of self and that's somehow the solution. That's clearly not what we're heading at here. Because for many people, they have been taught the way to deal with yourself is to think negatively of yourself.

[ 18 : 48 ] Just push yourself down. Just think badly of yourself and that's the best way. And people have confused things like self-deprecation for humility. This is not what the Scriptures are getting at either.

It's important to have a rounded and realistic view of ourselves to have a component of healthy psychological development. In fact, John Calvin, who's a famous theologian who's really informed a lot of what we understand and do in church today, he has this book called The Institutes of Christianity.

Well, that's not what it's called. It's called Calvin's Institute. Anyway, you don't need to know that. One of the first things he says right at the beginning is, to know yourself is to know God and to know God is to know yourself. Which one precedes the other is hard to know.

So this is not the Scripture's way of saying we just don't have any sort of self-awareness. It's about where you derive it from and having a purely self-view is quite crushing.

These questions of value and self-worth need to be started in the context of something bigger, a larger story of identity and purpose and that's what Genesis is saying. Your identity and purpose comes from someone.

[ 19 : 55 ] It's quite a slightly depressing quote I'm going to stick up. I read this week. This is from Ernest Becker in his book The Denial of Death. I don't read just these kind of books.

I do read other books. Like I read a lot of comic books for example, you know, to balance out things. Anyway, he says, self-esteem is a protective shield designed to control the potential terror that results from the awareness of the horrifying possibility that we humans are merely transient animals groping to survive in a meaningless universe.

It's pretty haunting what he's getting at there, isn't it? But essentially what he's saying is that if there is no God, if there is no meaning beyond the things we simply imagine for ourselves, then we indeed are on our own and we just have to actually make things up.

Like he's, there's a logic to that way of thinking. Well, you have to kind of look around you and make something up because otherwise it's terrifying. We have no other option but to construct ourselves the best way we can.

However, if there is a God and he has revealed himself and he has made himself known and more than that he has said something to each one of us about who we are and what that therefore means, that changes everything.

[ 21 : 10 ] Not just about who we are now, but who we are becoming as well. because our identity is not a static thing, it's something that is to be lived out, it is purpose.

So Genesis doesn't just simply give us a sense of value of our identity, but speaks to the sense of the kind of, so what am I here for? Which makes sense because, you know, you think about people and you get to know somebody for the first time, one of the first questions you ask somebody is, so what do you actually do?

And if somebody said, well, I'm a doctor and it actually turned out that person had never set foot in a hospital or never done anything that actually made that identity real, you question, well, have you just told me that or have you just made that up?

Whereas God's sense of value comes with a purpose, the two form identity, who you are and what you do. I recently saw The Green Knight, I don't know if any of you have seen it.

Annoyingly, I went to the cinema to see it, it turns out it was on Amazon Prime the whole time. But anyway, The Green Knight is the story of Gawain who is played by Dev Patel who's King Arthur of Roundtable fame.

[ 22 : 14 ] It's his nephew. And in the film, right at the beginning, you kind of meet Gawain and he's got quite an enviable life. Like, he just kind of does whatever he wants.

He's got status, he's rich, he's got quite a full life of food, sex, and entertainment. He just kind of cuts about Camelot doing whatever he likes. And early on in the film, on Christmas Day, King Arthur, his uncle, invites him to sit at his right hand.

Which is a huge honour for him. So he kind of nervously goes up. And the king says to him, look, I recognise you're my nephew, but I don't really know you and I'd like to change that.

Tell me a story, he says, the king says to him, make for me a gift. Tell me a tale of yourself so I might know thee. Tell me something about your life that will help me know you.

What follows is this kind of painful scene, quite a long, extended silence, as Dev Patel, Gary Owen looks sad and he struggles to even make eye contact with the king.

[ 23 : 12 ] And eventually he says to him, I have nothing to tell you. I don't have anything to say to you. So despite a place in society, an enviable social life, a kind of caring family, depends how you interpret, his mother in particular, it doesn't answer this deeper question.

I can have all this stuff, but what does it actually mean for how I live my life? Because one of the challenges of creating your own identity is it actually takes a lot of energy and a lot of time. And results probably, I think, I've seen in my own life and seen in other people's lives, a kind of low-level demotivation, a kind of tiredness, that even if they wanted to change and take action, you get stuck in a very passive form of life.

Viktor Frankl, I kind of probably quote Viktor Frankl too much, but I'll do it again. He was a psychologist who survived the concentration camps, but his family all died in the concentration camps.

And he said this is one of his reflections in life. When a person can't find a deep sense of meaning, they distract themselves with pleasure. Now, Frankl's not against pleasure, but he's critiquing a very Freudian understanding of why Freud essentially said humans exist to maximize pleasure, minimize pain.

And his observations were when you push humans to the limit. That just does not work. It is not very fulfilling. And even when they are fulfilled, it's so momentary that they need to find it again.

[ 24 : 36 ] And the only thing, the biggest thrust he thought was humans need meaning. They need a purpose and an identity beyond themselves that gives them purpose in this world. And so why did God create humanity?

Well, he gives us purpose. This is what it says. God blesses them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish and the seas and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

So why did God create humanity? You and I were created by God as a reflection of something of what he is like so that we may rule. Now, that has massive, huge amounts of implications and you can even listen to previous sermons about what that means if you want to go online and find that out.

But rule and subdue, again, were languages of the kings and queens. It was this regal language and again, God saying, this is now the task of all humanity. And at his most basic definition, which is not very basic because it's quite loaded, but I'll read it, this is to harness the potential of all of creation, including people and community, to care for it and make it a place where even more life can flourish the way God intended.

It's to actively partner with God and taking the world somewhere. This is often referred to the Scriptures as the kingdom of God. The imagery of humanity's relationship with God is not a distant God who's got humans on a string and then he kind of appears from time to time to tell him stuff.

[ 26 : 05 ] It's about partnerships, God's reflected, valued, worthy people in relationship with him in his world that he deliberately created. And then it says, with me, let's take this somewhere.

And the question becomes, well, how will humanity choose to exercise this immense value, worth, identity, and purpose that is being given? God gives humanity a choice as he gives us a choice of how we are going to rule.

Are we going to use this identity and worth and purpose with him for the benefit of others? Or are they going to seek it elsewhere and choose autonomy? Well, if you know the Scriptures at all, then you know the answer is the second.

The result of that choice is a break, is a break, not just in terms of the relationship with God, but creation itself, all of community. And one of the fundamental breaks you see is a break within the understanding of self.

Shame is one of the first results you see of this choice to move away from this narrative of given purpose and identity and to choose something different for your own. And shame is kind of multifaceted, obviously, but in the narrative of Scriptures is this over-awareness of self.

[ 27 : 16 ] That's one of the ways you can describe it because they're in the garden naked, that's the way the language it describes, and then suddenly they become aware of that nakedness and they're not comfortable anymore and they start to hide and make increasingly bad choices off the back of that.

This is the depiction of the human condition that the Scriptures give forward. The humans, this is part of what sin is, it's not the full picture of it, but it's part of it. There's a picture that humans are a walking paradox, deeply insecure and broken and destructive, yet at the same time full of possibility and creativity and value and worth that is given to them by God.

They're made in the image of God. Me and you are made, every single person is, yet we're deeply broken at the same time. And to end, that is not the end of the story.

If you've been around the Christian community any length of time, I hope you know the good news of this story is it's not the end of the story at all. Jesus' earliest followers started to take this language of the image of God and understand that Jesus was the image of God.

Paul, who we heard about earlier, says in one of his letters to the Colossians, the Son, which is Jesus, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, for in Him all things were created, visible and invisible.

[ 28 : 35 ] All things have been created through Him and for Him. In Christ, God binds Himself to humanity. And Jesus, He shows us what it means to truly live and rule as a human made in the image of God.

Because Jesus is God. He is showing us what God is like. He is truly mirroring God to the world. And what this looked like for Jesus was courage, generosity, and sacrificial love.



The tender heart of Christ, when you look at Jesus, you're seeing something of who God is and what He is like. The way He treats people, the way He engages people, He's showing you who God is and therefore, by extension, what humanity who mirrors God was intended to be.

It's a fantastic, beautiful picture of humanity. But more than that, Jesus demonstrated us what it means to live like this.

Jesus had a firm identity and purpose Himself. There's a beautiful bit in John's Gospel where it says, Jesus, knowing where He came from and knowing where He was going, got on His knees and washed the disciples' feet.

[ 29 : 40 ] He ruled by seeking the best for others. And not only that, but Jesus confronts all the evil, brokenness, and sin that is created by all the different messed up ways we've attempted to rule and subdue in selfish ways.

And He takes it and lets Him kill Him. So when the New Testament writers look back on the resurrection of Jesus, they see a whole new future of humanity. opening up.

And again, in the same letter, Paul picks up this idea of image of God again and says, you have taken off the old self with its practices and put on a new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge of the image of its creator.

Here, there is no Gentile or Jew, slave or free, which is the bit Tom Holland was talking about. So Paul understands that Jesus in His resurrection doesn't just show us what it is like to be this new humanity because when we connect ourselves to Him, He is restoring this image within each and every single one of us who put faith and trust in Christ.

Jesus shows us and leads us and does something for us we could never generate and create for ourselves at all because it would be impossible. The good news starts with the truth that me and you, all people everywhere are made in the image of God and through the resurrection of Jesus, we are brought into a new restorative relationship with God, redeeming and renewing that very image in every single person that we would never be able to do on our own.

[ 31 : 13 ] It's a fantastic picture of this innate beauty of what it means to be made in the image of God, given to every single person, recognizing it is broken, that Jesus moves closer to that and says, I see that image and I want to call it back to life in the fact that he resurrects from the dead.

He does something that we could never do in and of our own strength. So how would you form your identity? Why is it important? It's important because your identity and who you think yourself to be probably impacts literally every single decision you ever make in every place and every time because you operate out of a sense of who you think you are.

And the story of understanding more of who you are counterintuitively actually starts with thinking about not yourself first but where identity has come from. Understanding the answer to the question actually starts by not looking at yourself but realizing that ultimately there's something else at the center of the story.

This is something, someone far more concrete and reliable and good than my fragile ego. I wouldn't want my fragile ego at the center of all reality. It is crushing on me and it would be crushing on everybody else.

That's often the thing we're often told to do and build on top of that. The Genesis story is saying your value and worth is fixed in me because it is God, it is given. And whilst it is broken and it has gone off on a different path Jesus then stands in a gap and says and I will restore it and reaffirm and give a new identity onto every single one of you.

[ 32 : 38 ] As people who are loved, accepted, forgiven, redeemed and are brought somewhere new. This changes and if you reorientate your life around those firm foundations of identity and purpose, it doesn't just change you, it changes the people around about you.

Can you inherently stop thinking about all the kind of slightly narcissistic things that make me feel better in the moment to, so my purpose is here as a representative of God is to take this created order somewhere knowing that the brokenness of the past is reshaped because of the promises of the future.

this is humanity living with God in freedom, genuine freedom, freedom because the anxiety behind those bigger questions are actually taken away and not replaced with nothing but with the authority of the biggest thing in all of creation because this is where creation came from and it doesn't just say here's some things about you, it says here's who you are and here's what I've got for you and all of humanity to do and to do it with God.

it's full of identity and purpose and as the passage ended when God saw all that and when God sees that at work he sees that it's very good and that is the idea of our identity being redeemed because it's been given it's been broken and marred sometimes we do that to ourselves sometimes it's done to us but Jesus moves closer in compassion and says come to me all you who are weary and tired all you people who have been constantly trying to take on the yoke of creating your own structure and your own identity come to me and I will give you rest because he has a new way for us to do life.

I'm going to pray and then James will come up music will come up music will come up Father, thank you that when we read that we are being renewed in the knowledge of the image of your creator you Lord that takes away all the divisions that we often see in the world but more than that it calls us to something new a new and firm identity and purpose would you help us to know what that means for our lives I pray Lord for wherever we are struggling to know what it means to have value and worth would you help us to take our eyes off ourselves and back onto you who says these beautiful and true things wherever there is insecurity about what that means for our lives would you remind us of what you have called us to something far bigger than we could ever manufacture on our best days and we thank you Jesus that you renew the most broken and lost people Amen