

# The Goal of Creation

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, we're going to turn to our Bibles and to Genesis chapter 1. I hope you've still got the handout of that that I gave out last week. If not, there may be some around.

I think Duncan is wandering around with some at the back. If you'd like to have one of those, pick it up because I'll be referring to that a little later. But we're going to read this morning from verse 26 of Genesis chapter 1.

We've read the whole chapter twice over. But now we come to the climax of this first tablet of creation, which is the first chapter of Genesis down to chapter 2, verse 3.

And the climax of creation is, of course, the creation of mankind on the sixth day. And then God's rest on the seventh day.

And by the way, if you look carefully on the handout that I've given you, you'll see that there's a difference marked out in the text, which isn't marked out in our ESV Bibles.

[ 1 : 12 ] And that is that the first five days don't have the definite article. At the end of each verse, it's just there was evening and morning, first day, second day, third day, fourth day, fifth day.

But then you come to the sixth day, and it's the sixth day and the seventh day. So there's something emphatic about that. And we'll be looking at that a little later.

But I'm going to read from verse 26. So God created the man in his own image.

In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And God blessed them.

And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.

And have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth and every tree with seed in it and its fruit.

[ 2 : 41 ] And you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I've given every green plant for food.

And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made. And behold, it was very good.

And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day, God finished his work that he had done. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

Because on it, God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. Amen. May God bless to us this his word.

[ 3 : 46 ] Well, do turn with me, if you would, to Genesis chapter one. And if you can get sight of the handout we gave last week. If you haven't got one, perhaps there will be stewards in the different venues.

Welcome to all of those in Bass Street and in Queens Park. Hope that you're able to have sight of those. It will help you, I think, pick out some of the things that we're going to be focusing on this morning.

Now, the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 15 says that all the Old Testament scriptures were written for our instruction.

And he says that was done so that through the encouragement that they provide, we might have hope. We might have hope. So that means that Genesis chapter one is not a message about past history.

It is preaching to us a future hope. And it was written so that God's people, first of all, under Moses, but also all of God's people in Christ today, that they might have hope in God's ultimate purpose for this world.

[ 4 : 58 ] Now, we've seen already how Genesis one points us above all to the God of creation. To lead us to bow to his person alone as the Lord of all the world. And it leads us also to rejoice in his praise for the glory of his creation.

But Genesis one also is something that points us very clearly to the goal of creation. And that is why it should fill us with hope. It should lead us to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

And I want to focus today on that goal of creation. We've already seen, I think, that the focus in the creation story is on mankind.

God creates an environment of extravagant beauty, of abundance. And he does it for mankind. So that God will rejoice in mankind and be glorified through mankind.

Only when man takes his place as the crowning glory of creation, as the image of God, only then will the goal of creation be accomplished.

[ 6 : 09 ] And that's why only at verse 31 here, following man's creation, is everything at last pronounced very good. Not just good. Only then is the time and the space that God created in day one, is it sanctified and blessed on the seventh day, the Sabbath day, as an arena of rest and rejoicing for God and his image man.

The whole creation account is structured around this great climax, the seventh day that speaks of the ultimate goal and purpose of everything.

God rejoicing in man and with man in his joyful rest. And if you look on the sheet, as I said, days one to five, they lack the definite article.

It's just first day, second day, third day, and so on. But then it's the sixth day. And in chapter two, verse two, the seventh day. Henri Bloesch, in his book, notes that the narrative clearly has two peaks, mankind and the Sabbath day, the seventh.

He says the creation of mankind crowns the work, but the Sabbath is the supreme goal. Mankind has that unique place because, verse 26, we are made in God's image and likeness.

[ 7 : 34 ] So we have to ask then, well, what constitutes this image of God in man? Well, there are certainly many aspects that people have focused on.

Man's intellect, man's reason, mankind's moral consciousness, and so on. But actually, here in Genesis 1, the focus is not so much on what man is, but on what man does.

Look at verse 26. Immediately, it speaks of man imaging God by what he does and how he does it. Let them have dominion. Man is to represent God in the creation by reflecting God's kingly rule over creation.

Now, again here, there's a very deliberate contrast to all other ancient ideas. In Egyptian theologies, for example, Pharaoh was God's image, reflecting divinity, representing God on earth.

But only Pharaoh for the divine likeness. Nobody else. Well, what a contrast. The Bible says, no, no, no, not just Pharaoh, not just earthly kings, but every human being, male and female, bear God's image and exercise God's rule and carry God's responsibility in the world.

[ 8 : 55 ] God made all human beings as his representatives on earth, created as his image, according to his likeness. Probably better to translate verse 26 there as his image, because the focus is on his role as a representative.

But what does it mean for man to represent God in the created order? That's such an important question. In our world today, when there's so much confusion, isn't there, about human identity. People talking about transgenderism, transhumanism, artificial intelligence, and all these sorts of things. What does it really mean to be human? That's the question.

And Genesis 1 shows us three things that very clearly answers that question. Man is to represent God by reflecting God, in exerting rule for God, and in engaging in relationship with God, and enjoying rest like God.

A man exercises dominion for God, he exists in dependence on God, and he enjoys a real destiny with God. That's the three R's, if you like, of what it means to be human.

[ 10 : 15 ] We bear rule, we have relationship, and we're made for rest. So I want to think about each of these things this morning. First of all, man's dominion.

Man is to reflect God by exerting rule for God. Man can't as a responsibility to the whole realm of earth.

We are created for that dominion for God. Now, we right away have to face up to a charge here, because there are many in the Green Movement today who see this very thing as one of the causes, perhaps the cause, for environmental abuse in our world.

They speak of this Christian arrogance towards nature, the idea that we can do exactly as we please, and exploit the whole of nature entirely for our own whim.

So one writer says this, we must reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence but to serve man. Well, is that a Christian axiom?

[ 11 : 27 ] That everything is only to serve mankind? Does Genesis 1 really bear this burden of guilt for the so-called rape of our planet? Well, no doubt, plenty of people have raped our planet, perhaps even have done so at times in the name of God.

But let's look at what the Bible actually says about all of this. Yes, everything in creation is ordered around mankind and for mankind.

But it's for mankind as the image of God, as God's representative, to rule for God and not against God. It's preposterous to say that Genesis 1 gives any license to destroy the world.

Which of us, if we were giving our entire estate, our business, our affairs, if we were giving it to somebody to look after, are we going to choose somebody who's just going to utterly destroy it? Of course we're not. You want to get someone who understands your values, who's going to act in your best interests. Well, that is what God does with the creation of man.

[ 12 : 38 ] God's command to human beings is to a responsible dominion. To reflect in every way the pattern of God the creator himself. Look at verse 26.

Let them have dominion. Well, that states the general point. Man is to be the ruler over the whole realm of creation. The fish, the birds, the livestock, all the earth and everything in it.

But look at verse 28 then. Do you see how that fruitful dominion is further elaborated? Mankind shows that dominion. How? By both filling and subduing the earth.

Now that is very significant. Because you remember, it speaks of exactly the way that God himself ruled the world. We're to image God himself.

God showed his rule in his creation himself. And you remember the two emphasize. What did God first do? He subdued the darkness, the waters.

[ 13 : 39 ] He brought order out of chaos. He brought formlessness into form and into beauty. God subdued the chaos. And then what did he do? He filled the earth.

It was empty and void, but he made it team with life. And so man is to show his rule imaging God himself, filling and subduing it. What does it mean for man then to subdue the earth?

Well, of course, it means to show the same intricate care and ordering and creativity as the creator. Who created with abundance, with beauty, with creativity, with diversity.

And that's our way. We go on in the pattern that God himself has laid down. That's the very antithesis, isn't it, of a rapacious spoiling of the world for mere greed, for mere gain, for selfishness. We are to subdue chaos and disorder and we are to steward order and form and beauty, all the things that bring glory to God our maker.

[ 14 : 47 ] And what about filling the earth? Well, surely in procreation there's also an echo of God's own creativity. In fact, if you read on to Genesis 5 in the first few verses, you'll read there that we're told again of God's creation of mankind and then we're told that Adam fathered a son in his own likeness, in his own image.

In other words, human beings are creating through procreation like God, bringing progeny into the world to reflect God and to respond to God. So according to the Bible, filling the earth with God's images is a good and a beautiful thing.

It's part of what it means to be human. Those who want to decry human procreation today, they're not only defying God, but they're dehumanizing themselves.

We can't see people and procreation as a problem. It's intrinsic to our humanity.

It's a blessing from God that we should be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth. That's why, that's why, by the way, the tragedy of abortion culture is so terrible.

[ 16 : 04 ] It's so dehumanizing to us and to our society. Do you know that out of the hundred million or so people who die worldwide every year in our world, 43 million of those deaths are by purposeful abortion.

Nearly half of all human death. That's a regression. It's not civilization. It's a regression to bestiality. It's a denial of our very purpose as human beings created in this world. Now, as human beings, we are made to represent God in exercising His pattern of rule on the earth with care, with creativity, nurture of this world, to bring beauty out of ugliness, to bring form and order out of chaos.

That's what it means to be God's image. That's what it means to have dominion over the world. So think about that. Think about your own attitude in your work, whatever your work is, in your career, in your life.

Does your life reflect that pattern? Subduing for God. Is that the kind of goals that you're laboring for? Whatever area of life you're in?

[ 17 : 26 ] If so, you are ruling as God wants you to. You're fulfilling your calling. Or think about your attitude to your family. You want to be bearing fruit and developing the image of God in your own children if you have them and in the children that you know and are part of in the church fellowship, the children of others in our communal life together.

We're made to reflect God in sharing and in exercising His rule. We have a responsibility to exercise that dominion in every area of our life, whatever it is that we particularly do.

Anything less than that is to be subhuman. Mankind is to have dominion. But secondly, we're told here very particularly also of man's dependence.

Man is to reflect God in engaging in relationship with God. We're not just to rule on earth but we are to respond constantly to God in heaven.

Human beings are created to exist only in dependence on God. The careful wording there in verse 26, Luke, as our image and after our likeness, that emphasizes both man's uniqueness among all the creatures as reflecting God but also it marks our distinction from God.

[ 18 : 52 ] Human beings reflect God, we correspond to God but we are not God. Now in Egyptian accounts, Babylonian accounts, the kings who represented God on earth, they were equated with divinity.

They were like gods, as gods. But we sang Psalm 8 there. Do you remember? God made man lower than the heavenly beings.

Man is not God and yet he crowned mankind with glory and honor. Man is not just a beast.

Mankind, says the psalmist, is the one that God is mindful of.

He cares for him because we are made for relationship uniquely for communion with God. Look at verse 28. You see how there God speaks directly to mankind.

Be fruitful and multiply. It's the first time he's done that. In verse 20, God just speaks about the waters. Let them swarm with life. Verse 24, let the earth bring forth.

[ 19 : 53 ] But now God is speaking directly to human beings because human beings are made to be with God, to have relationship with God, to respond to God.

We see that more as we come to chapter 2, to live in utter dependence upon God. I think we're to see that this reality is reflected in the fact that we're told mankind's creation creates them not only in relationship with God but in relationship with one another.

Look at verse 27. In the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. Now obviously the animals are created male and female also but there's no attention drawn to that but here God's image is created and we're specifically told that they're created in relationship with one another.

Male and female like one another and yet distinct from one another. And that seems to be something that reflects the very nature of the being of God himself.

mankind is created to mirror and reflect God's own life which is in relationship. God says let us make man in our image not let me make man in my image.

[ 21 : 16 ] Now that requires some explanation. Can't just be the royal we. There's no concept like that in the Hebrew language language or literature. A lot of scholars assume that God is talking there to the heavenly host to the angels in the heavenly court.

But there's no mention of angels anywhere in Genesis 1 there's no mention of a heavenly court it's a bit odd to suddenly import that into the text. Part of the reticence comes from the assumption by many that the so-called Hebrew mind could not conceive of plurality in God and certainly not the Trinity.

But there's all sorts of problems with that if you take the New Testament at all seriously because Jesus himself says Moses spoke about him about Christ. Jesus condemned his own generation for not recognizing his divinity.

Victor Hamilton in his commentary says this it's one thing to say that the author of Genesis 1 was not schooled in the intricacies of Christian dogma. It's quite another thing to say that he was theologically too primitive or naive to handle such ideas as plurality within unity.

Henri Blasche says that the text itself has of course already drawn our attention to the spirit of God. He says God addresses himself but he can only do this because he has a spirit who is both one with him and distinct from him at the same time.

[ 22 : 57 ] Here are the first glimmerings of Trinitarian revelation and they illumine all the more brightly the announcement of the creation of mankind.

That's right. And the theologian Emo Bruner rightly points out the link between the us that's there in verse 26 and the them in verse 27.

He says we are created for life in relationship that mirrors or corresponds to God's own life in relationship. We are created for a relationship with God and therefore also for a relationship with one another.

Our very nature as human being reflects it images or it should do God's perfect relationship within the Trinity. and it reflects therefore the interdependence and the order of the life of God himself. Now that obviously has clear implications for the relationship of sexual differentiation in humanity. The equality of male and female and yet the clear distinctiveness and the complementarity of male and female.

[ 24 : 15 ] But here in Genesis 1 just notice the broader point. God has made us for communion with himself and therefore he has created us for community with one another.

And that means that only in community only in relationships with others can we be truly human. That doesn't mean sexual relations but it means all human relationships of love of belonging. isolation dehumanizes us. We know that don't we? That's why solitary confinement is such an awful punishment.

We know that emotional deprivation of children for example has terrible effects or even stunts their physical growth and development. That's why the lockdowns that have been in recent years have been such terrible things.

So damaging to human health and that's just beginning to unfold in its fullness. See if we neglect human relationships that dehumanizes us.

[ 25 : 19 ] Well how much more if we neglect the key relationship that we were made for which is the relationship with God himself. You see we were created as human beings with relationships with one another to teach us that foundational to the very nature of our being as a human being is to look beyond ourselves for our goal in life in relationships and above all to look beyond this whole world for our ultimate goal in life which comes only through a relationship with the eternal God.

In that sense human relationships are like prophecies. They are living prophecies to point us beyond ourselves and to God. God that's why when we have broken human relationships it causes us such pain.

Those things shout to us so loudly about the great broken relationship between us as human beings and God our maker. Genesis 3 will tell us that that's one of the reasons why God has cursed all human relationships.

It's so that we will never forget the tragedy at the heart of the universe which is our rejection of the one that we were created for to relate to constantly in dependence. Now again we'll come to more of that later but before we go on let's not miss two implications of this.

First relationships are at the very center of our humanity. These are the things that really matter in life. And that's why it's such a tragedy when other things in life intrude to spoil them so that we don't have any time for them.

[ 27 : 01 ] It's such a danger isn't it in our crazy world in our hectic world today of busyness. But we need to ask ourselves don't we is my job or is my study whatever it is is it really worth me missing out spoiling even losing out altogether on precious relationships in life with friends with family and so on.

the Bible's answer is very clear no it's not. Because that's central to what it actually means to be a human being relating to other human beings and of course relating to God.

And as Christians of course we need to ask am I really allowing other things to get in the way of my crucial relationships with others in the family of God. Whether it's my work demands, whether it's my leisure interests, whether it's my hobbies, whatever it might be.

Well again the New Testament is absolutely clear isn't it? Do not give up meeting together. Don't give up meeting together. Don't let other things intrude because you need one another as Christian people and as human beings.

And relationships within God's family are what we are made for not just for this world but forever. relationships are at the center of our humanity.

[ 28 : 35 ] But also you see human relationships above all are to teach us about and to draw us into relationship with God. Because no human relationship even within family, even within a marriage, none of these relationships can be ultimate and no human relationship must ever be something that we turn into our God.

Each one is a gift of God but each relationship is to point us beyond itself and to God himself. Because you see above all to be human is to reflect God himself by engaging in relationship with him.

We're to have dominion, we're to rule for God, but we're to do so in dependence on God, in relationship with God. that is what we're made for.

But thirdly, you see, mankind also is created for a destiny. We're to reflect God by enjoying rest like God and with God.

We're not only to rule for God, to respond to him in relationships, but we're to rejoice like God, in his rest, with him, forever and ever. Human beings are created to enjoy that destiny with their creator.

[ 29 : 56 ] And this, we see, is really getting to the heart of the message, the goal of all God's creative purpose for the world. Because the creation of man, you see, on the sixth day and God entering his rest on the seventh day, they are intimately connected here.

The creation of man crowns the work, but the Sabbath is the supreme goal. And even here in Genesis 1, there's an intimation of something more than just the created order.

There's a destiny, there's a supreme goal of something beyond creation. The whole account, you see, sets forth a pattern for human life, a rhythm of work, but not just work.

A pattern that always leads to the time and place of blessing and completeness and rest. It reminds us that there's something still in the future for man.

God's work in creation is finished, he enters his rest, but man's work is not finished. His work's just begun. Man must rule in relationship with his heavenly father until he has subdued all God's vast universe, put everything under his feet, made everything complete, everything in subjection to him.

[ 31 : 18 ] And only then, when man at last takes his place as God's glorious image, filling the creation with the knowledge and the glory of God, only then will all things be accomplished.

And God is all in all in heaven and on earth, through the glory of his glorious image in human beings. Only then is the goal of creation fully reached.

And only then will man also enter into his rest and rejoice like God and with God in that satisfied rest forever and ever. You see, Genesis 1 is not just ancient history.

Genesis 1 speaks of the future. It speaks of a future hope. It's the gospel. Now just think of Moses' first readers, Israelites in the desert, traveling in hope to the promised land.

Think of what it meant for them to hear that God's whole creation of the world had a goal. That all humanity at last should enter the place of God's glorious rest. What did God say to the Israelites through Moses?

[ 32 : 23 ] What did he promise them? I'm taking you to the promised land, the land of rest. Read Deuteronomy chapter 12, for example. God promises that they'll have rest there from all their enemies.

They'll live in safety. And what will they do? They will rejoice in the presence of the Lord their God. That's the goal of the Exodus Moses was teaching that you will enter God's rest as his people.

But look, he's saying here in Genesis, that's actually the goal of the whole created order. That's why God made the whole world. And as surely as he laid out every detail and every wonder of that, so just as surely he will bring your future to completion, to its climax in the place of his rest.

He's teaching them, to hope in God's purpose. And of course it's an even greater hope for all of us. That the great goal, the purpose of all God's creation in the cosmos is that human beings should take their place as the crowning glory of all of these things.

And that having gloriously subdued all of these things, human beings at last will complete their work and join the rejoicing and the glorious rest of God forever.

[ 33 : 43 ] That's the goal, that is the purpose of God's creation, that's the gospel in Genesis. Of course you might be asking, well how can that be?

Because we know when we read on a few chapters, it happens in chapter 3, that mankind falls and sins, that he's excluded from God's garden, he's excluded from the presence. Of course that's why

we need the rest of the Bible story, this is just the beginning.

But the whole Bible confirms this great goal as God's ultimate purpose. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul says that before even the foundation of the world, before Genesis 1, God chose us in Christ that we should be holy and blameless before him according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time.

God's plan, God's goal for creation was always for it to be fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yes, it's true, this image of everything subject to human beings is God's perfect image. We don't see it yet in our world. But Hebrews chapter 2 tells us we do see Jesus who is now crowned in glory and honor, having tasted death for everyone.

[ 35 : 02 ] He has risen to reign forever. And the whole New Testament tells us that Jesus coming is the real climax of all creation.

It is the recreation of the world through his great redemption. Just as God was recreating his place of rest for Israel through his great redemption out of Egypt.

But that was but a prophecy, that was a shadow of something far, far greater, which is the ultimate goal of the whole universe in Christ. The climax of this story of creation.

That's how the New Testament describes the gospel to us. It's the climax of creation. It begins, doesn't it, in John's gospel, just like Genesis chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word, himself God, and in him was life.

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In Jesus, God said at last, let there be light forever. Remember Zechariah's song in Luke chapter 2.

[ 36 : 05 ] about Jesus coming birth. The sunrise from on high has come, giving light to those in darkness and in the shadow of death. Do you see what he's saying? In Jesus, the new creation at last is moving towards its goal, where man is the true image of God, imaging his glorious rule in this world.

That's what we read in Colossians chapter 1. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, the first born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Man as God's glorious king. And just as God's word of power went forth to bring order and beauty out of chaos, to make the whole creation fruitful, and to grow gloriously, Paul tells us in Colossians chapter 1 that the gospel of Christ is even now bearing fruit and growing in the whole cosmos, subduing the world for him.

It's happening now. We are living in the day of new creation. Wherever human beings, men and women, receive the word of the gospel, Paul says, if anyone is in Christ, there is new creation. New creation. And as surely as God ordered and perfected his creation as a place of beauty in which to dwell with humankind, so the gospel of Christ declares to us that God shall at last declare the same for his new creation.

[ 37 : 44 ] Revelation chapter 21 speaks of a new heaven and earth, a place where there is no more sea, no more chaos and darkness, nothing but God's land.

The place of his dwelling with his people where every tear is wiped away, every mourning, every crying, every death, all the pain because the former things have passed away.

And this is the place where it lasts. God declares, behold, it is very good. All things are new. Good as new. And not only does he then enter his rest forever, forever, but he says human beings will enter that rest with him.

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. They shall be his people forever and ever. That's why Hebrews chapter 4 in the New Testament tells us that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

That's why he urges us to enter that rest. That is the goal of creation. That's where it's been going since the very beginning. In fact, since before the very foundation of the world.

[ 38 : 54 ] And Jesus Christ came at last to make that rest ours forever, to finish his new creation. Come to me, he said, and I will give you rest.

The rest of God promised since the foundation of the world. But right here in this very first chapter of the Bible, we have that hope of that rest. Because Genesis 1 tells us that the goal of creation will only be complete at last when man takes his place as the crowning glory, as the perfect image over all things.

And God will at last announce, behold, it's very good. Come into my eternal rest. What a great message of hope that must have been for those beleaguered Israelites traveling in the desert with

all their struggles.

To have before them that goal of this promised rest of God. And to be reminded weekly, every single week by the Sabbath day, that there is a future, there is a rest that God has promised. Here is a foretaste, but this is what you were created for. And what a great message of hope it is for you and me today. You sometimes doubt if God really is in control of this world.

[ 40 : 12 ] You sometimes doubt if God even cares for your life. you sometimes discourage and wonder, well, is it worthwhile struggling on in this life of faith?

Friends, Genesis chapter 1 points us to that goal of creation. It's here to renew our hope in that sure and certain purpose of God. Every time you look around, you see the trees, you see the flowers, you see the beauty of creation, the sun, the moon, the stars.

The love relationships that God has given us. These things are to force us to look up to the risen Christ in glory, the firstborn from the dead, one who is now crowned with glory and honor.

And to realize that is God's goal for creation. And that is God's goal for every one of us who is in Christ. And as surely as God finished his work in creation, as surely as he entered his rest on the seventh day, just as surely God our Savior will appear on the last day to usher in his new creation, to bring us into his rest forever.

Paul says to the church in Corinth, doesn't he, that Christ's resurrection is the first fruits because the final day, New Month, has begun. Then, he says, at his coming, all those who belong to him will certainly join his rest.

[ 41 : 46 ] Then comes the end, he says, the goal of all things. When he delivers the kingdom, subdued to his father, filled with his brothers and sisters whom he has saved by his own blood.

That's the goal of creation. That's the purpose for which God created this whole universe, at last accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ. The true man, the perfect image and glory of God.

Genesis 1 is not just about past history. It's all about that future glory. And it's written to lead us in hope in that glorious eternal purpose in Christ.

Well, amen. Let's pray together. Come to me and I will give you rest. Lord, how we thank you that through our Lord Jesus, at last, the eternal goal of all things is assured for all who are his, for all who hear his voice calling them into that great destiny.

The ultimate goal of joyous fellowship with you forever and ever. So grant us, Lord, to find that joy in Christ forever.

[ 43 : 18 ] And live now with that goal filling our minds and hearts all the time to the praise of his glorious grace. For we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.