



Your Future - Talk 1 - Genesis 1:

Start with clip from the Pixar movie, *UP*

INTRO

In the movie *UP*, Carl, the main character, is an old man who has lost all passion for life. Because the woman that he loved since they were in elementary school, dies. And all of their dreams for a wonderful life together went away with her death. They dreamed of going to far away places, they dreamed of having children, they dreamed big dreams. And all those dreams were shattered when his wife passed away. And in this movie, we see how Carl is trying to find some purpose and meaning in his life again.

Have you ever asked “What is my purpose in life? Why do we even have a purpose? Why is that a big deal?”

I’m sure you have asked that at some point. 10 years ago, what did you think your purpose was in life?

(Share personal story about what you wanted to be growing up.)

What did you think you would grow up to be? Share that with someone sitting next to you.

Tonight, we are talking about finding purpose in life. This is important to our future.

At the end of the talk, I will be offering a few ways to respond to what I share tonight. Because we want to be a group who acts on what we learn. If God is speaking to us tonight, then we need to do something about it. We don’t just learn and learn and learn for ourselves. We want to be a community, an organization who acts on our convictions. I hope tonight you will thoughtfully respond.

Let’s go back to the beginning because we can’t understand our purpose in life if we don’t understand how God created us and gave us purpose. We are going to look at the first book of the Bible, Genesis. Genesis is one of the most read pieces of literature in history! There is a lot in this story about chaos and meaning and order and creativity that will capture your attention.



GENESIS 1

V. 1-2

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Everything was empty with disorder and void of meaning. God sees this state of disorder and emptiness and decides to do something about it.

Some of you tonight, if you are honest, your life feels like this. Your life feels like the way the world started. You feel like you are empty, without form or function. You might feel confused and without order in your life. But God sees you and the state you are in. God wants to do something about it. God wants to bring order. God wants to bring meaning. God wants to bring fullness.

V.3-5

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

When God saw the disorder, the chaos, God begins to separate things. Separated light and darkness. Separated day and night. Continues this process throughout the next few days: separates water and sky, separates water and land, etc.

Do you see what God is doing in the first three days? God divided and ordered, he put day into night and sky and sea. He made bodies of land and bodies of water.

God brings order to disorder.

Remember that the earth was formless and empty? God began to form things, but everything that has form is still empty. So what does God do next?

V. 6-25

God fills the sky with stars and planets in the sky. Have you ever stared at the sky away from the lights of a city? Simply amazing to see all the stars in the sky. Sit in wonder at the creativity of God.

God continues to fill the world. He looked at the sky and sea and filled it with birds and fish. He saw the empty land, and filled it with plants and animals. God brought form to the formless and He took empty things and filled them up.



NAMING

God also named things during this process. Have you ever named something? A pet? A car? A child? Talk with a friend for a few moments about something you named and the process that went into it. When you name something, what do you think about? What is the process like?

God gives meaning when he gives things a name. We spend a lot of time trying to create a name for ourselves.

PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story about trying to create a name for yourself.

Maybe you've been trying to create a name for yourself. Maybe it's to be popular in your residence hall. Or to be known in the gym or in student government. Maybe it's to be known in the Greek system.

FIRST POINT

God brings order and meaning to our lives. God sees the disorder of your life and he's going to bring order. God sees the empty places in your life and he's going to fill it. God sees that you might feel meaningless but he knows your name. God gives meaning when you are named. If he can bring purpose to the universe, then can't he bring purpose into your life?

V. 26-31

Now, let's look at what God does when humans are created. God created man, and made them in his own image, in his own likeness. What does that mean that God created us in his image? Do we look like him? Do we act like him?

Philosophers and theologians have been debating this topic for thousands of years... What in the world does it mean that we were all made in the image of God?

After creating people and bringing order out of the whole universe and filling it and giving everything a name and meaning, he looks at the first man and woman and tells them to be fruitful. He charges them to increase in number and fill the earth and subdue it. Take care of this beautiful garden.

SECOND POINT

God instructs us to continue His work.

As we talked about earlier, God brings order from chaos and fullness from emptiness and meaning from meaninglessness. And He asks us to do the exact same thing. He instructs us to go all over the earth and bring order out of disorder and bring meaning to things. What God did in creation, he tells us to go and do.



To be made in the image of God means that we take part in what God started. The Bible informs us what we should be doing as people created by God. We exist to create order, fullness and meaning in the world around us.

You might be seeking professions that do this. Maybe you are striving to be a lawyer or architect or managers to bring about order wherever you are. Or you might bring fullness by being producers or farmers or even artists. Or you might bring meaning by being a teacher or professor. God can use it to bring about order, fullness and meaning.

It doesn't matter what you do in this world if you don't have purpose. All you will have is an occupation, but never vocation. Occupation is what you do to occupy your time; vocation is what you feel called to do. If you don't grasp that God has called you to do something with his purpose in mind, then everything you do will simply take up your time.

God has given us purpose and direction in our lives, but since those first days in the garden with God, people have rebelled against him. We've chosen our own selfish goals, our own desires and that's how we have ended up with our current situation in the world. A world where there are bombings, destruction, and evil perpetrated against each other all the time. I'm sure all of us could share a story of how we have seen the brokenness of the world in our lives within the past month.

Death and destruction is not God's intent. Death and destruction is the unnatural state when disorder, emptiness and meaninglessness come together. Death has pushed back on what God has ordered.

But God decided to put death in its place. God could have just given up on us. Instead God got involved. God sent his son Jesus to live on the earth and die. So death won in that moment, but Jesus defeated death and actually came back to life. He completely came back to life. So what does that mean?

Jesus is proving to all of us that he's bringing order back. His death is the culmination of disorder. But when Jesus came back to life, when he was resurrected, he rolled back disorder, he rolled back emptiness and meaninglessness.

While Jesus is confronting the forces of disorder and emptiness, he turns around and looks at us and says, "I'm holding these forces back. How many of you want to join me? How many of you are with me?" Each of us has the opportunity to bring order, meaning, and fullness.



THIRD POINT

Jesus invites us to push back death with Him. We want to see the places and the people that are empty and fill them up with something again. We want to see the people that have no meaning in their lives and fill them with meaning again. That's what it means to have purpose in life.

Jesus looks at us and asks "How many of y'all are with me?" I've just flipped the script on death and I'm asking every one of you to join me in the revolution of the ages. I have destroyed death. Come with me to bring back order. Those of you who want to be doctors and engineers go be that and push back darkness everywhere you go. Those of you who want to be missionaries and InterVarsity staff or pastors go do that but push back darkness as you do it. For those of you want to be professors and teachers and lawyers, go do that but push back darkness.

RECAP

Through looking at this passage, we see that God is doing something amazing. Even when we don't see it every day, even when life throws junk at us, even when we think that things can't get any worse, God is doing something good.

PERSONAL STORY

Share from your heart a short personal story of seeing God at work.

1. God brings order and meaning to our lives.
2. God instructs us to continue his work.
3. Jesus invites us to push back death with him.

So, friends, I hope you feel freedom tonight whatever it is that God has wired you to do. It does not matter what anyone else's opinions are. If you do that and you bring back order the places that there are disordered, if you bring back fullness when places are empty. If you bring back meaning in the places that thing meaningless, you're living your purpose.

Ask for one song of worship to reflect on what you have learned tonight.

Like I said at the beginning of the talk, we are going to have an opportunity to respond to what we have heard. We want to be people who hear God and respond to Him. We want to do the things God is asking for in our lives. So tonight, I'm going to offer three ways to respond.



CALL TO RESPONSE

1. First invitation - If you want to declare that you want to push back darkness no matter where you are. Maybe this means that you will use your skills and talents to combat an evil in the world today. Maybe this means that you want to use your major to find new ways to share the gospel of Jesus. If you want to bring meaning and order and fullness in whatever environment or organization you are a part of, raise your hand and look at me. You might not know exactly where you are going to go, but you want to participate with Jesus in pushing back darkness and evil.

2. Commit to Jesus - Some of you tonight may have realized that you want to accept Jesus' invitation to have a relationship with him and allow Him to be in control of your life. Maybe you haven't made your own decision to follow Him, and tonight, you sense God in this room wanting you to make that decision. We often think that we can become better or change the world with our own power, but our brokenness gets in the way. We need to invite Jesus into our lives and our brokenness to transform us in every way. If you would like to make that decision tonight, please raise your hand and make eye contact with me.

3. Become a seeker - If something that I said tonight about Jesus captured your attention, you should do something about it. Take time to explore Jesus. Look at the things he did on the earth and read what he taught. If something piqued your curiosity to investigate him further, make a decision to seek him, then raise your hand and look at me. You don't have to be ready to give your whole life to him or anything like that, but you are interested in exploring Jesus further. You might have heard of Jesus for a long time, but never examined his life and teachings carefully. Please raise your hand and look at me.