

Revolving around God
June 8, 2008
Genesis 1: 1-7, 14-19, 26,27
Colossians 1: 13-20

Copernicus studied the heavenly bodies. He lived at a time when people believed the sun and moon and planets revolved around the earth. They saw them rise on one side of the horizon and set on the other side, every day or every night. It made perfect sense that the earth was stationary and the sun and moon and stars and planets revolved around them. The belief was connected to the belief that God made earth and people as the center of the universe. We were the most important, and therefore the most loved by God of all the creation. We gave the meaning and purpose to all the rest. It existed for us.

(Demonstrate sun and planets revolving around earth)

But there were still a lot of questions unanswered. Why the change in the seasons? Why did the heavenly bodies come and go in different parts of the sky in different times of year?

So Copernicus studied, and found that the sun and planets were not revolving around the earth, the earth and planets were revolving around the sun. When he published this, religious leaders were horrified. If the earth were not the center, then humans have no purpose. We are no better than any other planet. It hurts our pride to find out we are not the center of the universe. Maybe we are not so important to God. If the sun was the giver of natural light, heat and energy, then maybe God is not so important. So religious people didn't want to hear about science because it messed up their beliefs about God and their own pride.

(Demonstrate)

But we found it was true. The earth and planets orbit because of the gravitational pull of the sun. The sun is the source of energy. And we found that the life of our planet earth depends on it revolving around the sun at just the right distance. The position gives just the right amount of heat and light and energy for plants and animals to live.

And when we found it was true, then a whole lot of other mysteries suddenly made sense. Many other scientific discoveries were made possible by Copernicus' revelation. Gravity, physics, geology. Civilization got to be a lot more exciting when we admitted the truth.

When we are babies and little children, we figure that the world exists for us. The purpose of adults is to feed and shelter us. The purpose of other kids is to play with us. The purpose of animals is to entertain us. Everything exists for our sake, including God. Some of us grow up and never lose that logic. The purpose of my spouse is to meet my needs. The purpose of kids is to help in my business or make me proud. The purpose of God is to save me and bless me and heal me. After all, I am the center of the world.

(demonstrate this with people in a circle)

But that leaves a lot of mysteries. If I am the center, how could someone else disagree with me? How could they cut me from the team or flunk me? Why don't they love me like I want them to? It doesn't make sense. If I am the center, why does the world go on when I lose someone I love? Don't they know it's the end of the world? Why do I feel empty inside, not knowing why I am alive?

But some of us find out we are not the center of the universe. We find out that God is. And we find out that our purpose is in revolving around him, not the other way around. When we give our life over to Christ, he shows us our real place, the place we were created to be in. He is the source of our energy, our purpose, our life, not we ourselves. At first that hurts our pride. Why would God love us if we are not the most important thing there is? But then we find that there is a lot more life and a lot more love, when we are in right relation to Jesus, our God.

(Demonstrate)

Do you know the force that keeps us in our proper position? It is love.

Now we know that the earth is just one small speck in a vast array of galaxies, suns and planets, trillions of them. Some people have interpreted this to mean that human kind, earth dwellers, are insignificant, no meaning or purpose.

But as scientists learn more about this universe, many are finding that it is extraordinarily amazing, how there could be life on this planet at all. The odds that each of the chemical and physical forces necessary for life could have come together in just the right ratio are so astronomical, that they would be impossible, if not for a plan. They can't be explained by chance. We live on a privileged planet. In the 10:00 hour, I'll show you some extraordinary pictures along with stories of how the only reasonable explanation for life, cannot be chance, but a guided purpose and plan. It's a DVD called "The Privileged Planet".

We are each not the center of the universe, but we are each still very valuable and have a great purpose.

When God becomes the center, my will is not my own. I sincerely desire what God wants. There's a big difference. When I am at the center, I pick the parts of the Bible I agree with, to see that God agrees with me. But when God is at the center, I search the whole Bible for my guidance, whether I agree with what it says or not.

When I am at the center, I vote based on which candidate will benefit me. When God is at the center, I seek God's plan for the world and vote for the candidate most likely to do it.

When I am at the center, and I lose someone who was precious to me, it's the end of the world. He or she was the one who was holding me together. Now what will I do? With God at the center, when I lose someone precious, I look to God for where life is coming next.

When I am at the center, I don't change, I don't learn anything new. With God at the center, I look for the new faith God is showing me.

When you die, the world will still go on.

You are important, you are valuable, you are loved. Just because the world doesn't revolve around you, doesn't mean you are not important. You have been gifted with all the resources to make life and make life good for others.

What a relief not to have to be the center in order to be loved.

Even after we give our life over to Christ, even after we realize our right position, that God is in the center and we are not, it is still easy to fall back into the old way of thinking. After all, it still seems like we should be the center in order to be important. And then the symptoms of trying to be God show up. The need to control our kids, the need to fix people who are broken, the need to be perfect, the need to be right and get people to agree with us. The belief that I can judge by my perceptions without needing to check. My intuition is always right. Defensiveness, hiding from people who disagree.

Those are the signs that I am trying to get back in the center. Why do we do it? To get love? God does not love us because we are right, or perfect, or have the right beliefs. And that's not our purpose. You are valuable, you are loved, you are important.

What would happen to the earth if it got closer to the sun? Heat would end the life.

What would happen to the earth if it went further away? Cold would end the life.

What happens to the person who wants more of God than God intends to give? Burn out.

What happens to the person who wants to go their own way? Freeze out.

You were created for a special place, to revolve around God. You were created for a special purpose. That purpose is love.

After you get your coffee and cookies, come back in here to see the beautiful pictures of the earth and hear about how we can say, there is a plan and a purpose for creation.