

*in the world*—His redemptive/restorative mission. This new dimension of God’s mission in the world does not erase or replace the original mission but rather makes it possible.

## Conclusion

"Humans, like all other creatures, must make a difference; otherwise, they cannot live. But unlike other creatures, humans must make a choice as to the kind and scale of the difference they make. If they choose to make too small a difference, they diminish their humanity. If they choose to make too great a difference, they diminish nature, and narrow their subsequent choices; ultimately, they diminish or destroy themselves." (Wendell Berry, *World-Ending Fire*, 160.)



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## LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Explain Chris Wright’s statement: “Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission.”
- How are we to understand the meaning of the words “subdue,” “rule over,” “work,” and “take care of” in Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15? How do they fill out what it means to be God’s image-bearers?
- Why don’t we need to ask which mission (the original) or the restorative mission is more important?
- What impact did the Rebellion have on humanities ability to fulfill God’s mission as image-bearers?
- Why did the Rebellion require God’s restorative mission to enable the original mission to be fulfilled?
- Read Romans 8:19-21 and explain from there how the restorative mission of God will also lead to fulfilling the original mission.
- Why does understanding both aspects of God’s mission matter? How might it adjust our perspective on our work as a church gathered and scattered?

## A Royal Priesthood – A Holy People: *Becoming People of God’s Mission*

Jerry Cisar — April 28, 2024

Text: Genesis 1:26—2:3, 7-8, 15

### Introduction: What is God’s Mission?

Chris Wright? “It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission.” (The Mission of God)

God made humans to bear his image but that is less a statement about who we are and more a calling of how we are to be in the world.

### I. The Original Mission of God

#### A. 3 Forest Observations

- i. God delighted in His creation.
- ii. God is lavishly generous.
- iii. God created the world to be His temple/palace.
  - a) Isaiah 66:1
  - b) God’s kingdom has always been at the center of God’s mission.

#### B. God creates humans to represent Him in this earth (Gen. 1:26-2:3).

- i. “Subdue” & “Rule Over”
  - a) “Subdue” likely referred to horticulture: *causing the ground to bring forth fruit as God did.*
  - b) “Rule over” has everything to do with being image-bearers. He is the king (not us), and we are his agents, ambassadors, priests, representatives, etc.
- ii. What is the character of God’s rule? (Psalm 145)

- C. Eden to the Ends of the Earth (Gen. 2:7-8, 15)
  - i. He made ADAM with dust from the ADAMAH.
  - ii. “Work it and take care of it.”
    - a) The word “work” is (עָבַד) to work, serve, labor. The noun form of this same root is slave or servant.
    - b) The word “keep” is (שָׁמַר) “watch over, protect.” It is “keep” in the sense that you keep something of great value entrusted to you.
  - iii. For humans to be God’s image-bearers means that whatever God’s mission is, it is their mission too!
  - iv. Chris Wright describes mission as “all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation and all that he calls us to do in cooperation with that purpose.”

Ruling as God’s representatives in God’s ways by serving all creation is God’s original mandate and it has never been repealed.

D. Then came the Rebellion.

## II. The Restorative Mission of God

- A. This new dimension of God’s mission is necessary for the original mission to be accomplished.
  - i. Humans must be redeemed and then restored to being God’s image-bearers so the original mission can be fulfilled.

“The Bible’s story is that the God who created the universe, only to see it ravaged by evil and sin, has committed himself to the total redemption and restoration of the whole creation, has accomplished it in advance through the cross and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and will bring it to glorious completion in the new creation when Christ returns.” (Chris Wright)

- ii. The whole gospel effects all creation (**Romans 8:19-21**):

- B. Redemption *addresses (deals with)* the heart of the Rebellion.
  - i. Matthew 16:24-25
  - ii. Mark 10:42-44
  - iii. 2 Cor. 12:20
  - iv. Colossians 3:9-10, 12-14
  - v. Ephesians 4:20-24

*God is recreating the human race in Jesus Christ which restores in us the ability to fulfill the original mission of God once more.*

C. Why does this matter?

- i. Your work matters!
- ii. Because we are being restored to being capable of fulfilling the original mission again.
- iii. When we gather, we are not doing the work of ministry, we are preparing you to do that work all week.

42 Days of Prayer: “Father, impart Your heart for Your creation to our heart as a church.”

The original mission of God was to create a life-sustaining environment for all creatures where God and humanity dwelled together to the ends of the earth. But then came the Rebellion... human anarchy against God’s life-giving ways. *That introduced a new dimension to God’s mission*