

Bridgeway Community Church
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Series: God's Got Your Number
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God's Got Your Number

Three

INTRODUCTION

“Our God is a God of order. He does things in an organized and precise manner that follows mathematical laws that he set into motion from creation.”

We at times can overlook these numbers and symbolic purposes that God has created in scripture and woven even throughout our culture...I think they're maybe less meaningful to us today than the original audience he intended them for.”

The number three appears 467 times in God's word. The number three stands out as one of the most prominent numbers featured in Scripture. The only number appearing more often than three is the number seven which Pastor Gary will speak on in a few weeks.

Simply by it's the amount of times it is used and the volume of groupings of three in God's Word the number three seems to be very important.

CREATION: on day **3** God separated the land from the sea and created vegetation.

PATRIARCHS: **3** righteous patriarchs before the flood - Abel, Enoch & Noah

PATRIARCHS: **3** righteous patriarchs after the flood - Abraham, Isaac & Jacob

NOAH: had **3** sons

ARK OF THE COVENANT: had **3** objects: gold jar of manna, Aaron's budded staff, the tablets with the Commandments

LAW: **3** times a year men had to present themselves at the Temple

LAW: **3** seasons of festivals - spring festivals (Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread), the summer festival (Pentecost) and the fall festivals (Feast of Trumpets, Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles).

ANGELS: **3** angel's named in Scripture - Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer

DANIEL: prayed **3** times a day

DANIEL: **3** of his friends escaped the fiery furnace unscathed

PRAYER: **3** people were allowed to ask God anything - Solomon, Ahaz, and Jesus

JONAH: **3** days and **3** nights in the belly of the great fish

WISE MEN: brought the baby Jesus **3** gifts

JESUS: was tempted **3** times in the wilderness by Satan

JESUS: inner circle of **3** friends - Peter, James, and John

JESUS: those friends wanted to build **3** structures for Jesus, Moses and Elijah

JESUS: Lazarus was in the tomb for **3** days when Jesus arrived

JESUS: said he'd raise the temple in **3** days if it was destroyed

JESUS: prayed **3** times in the Garden of Gethsemane

PETER: **3** times he denied knowing Jesus

PAUL: quotes from the Greek poets **3** times

HEAVEN: God's throne is in the **3rd** heaven.

REVELATION: 1:4, God is described with the **3** characteristics - "which is, and which was, and which is to come"

REVELATION: An angel announces **3** woes to those on earth

REVELATION: we see **3** angels

REVELATION: an evil **trinity**: Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet

REVELATION: **3** unclean spirits will deceive the world to fight Jesus' 2nd coming at Armageddon

REVELATION: The New Jerusalem will be **3** dimensional with **three** gates on each side

GOSPELS: **3** synoptic Gospels which tell the story of Jesus from different perspectives
- Matthew, Mark & Luke

Sometimes **3** is used as an emphatic triplet to describe the intensity of something.

- holy, holy, holy (Revelation 4:8)

- worthy, worthy, worthy is the lamb

- Jesus prayed **3** times to take this cup from me, not my will but yours (Mark 14)

- Jesus speaking to Peter 3 times, "do you love me? Feed my sheep" (John 21)

Of course, we can't look at the number three without looking at the Trinity: God is **3** persons in 1 being: the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6), the Son (Colossians 2:9), and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17).

The Crucifixion:

- Jesus was placed on the cross at the **3rd** hour of the day - 9 a.m. (Mark 15:25)
- There were **3** hours of darkness that covered the land (Matthew 27:45)

The Resurrection

- Jesus was dead for **3** days and nights (Luke 24:46)
- In Jewish culture, **3** days past the time of death indicated they were truly dead. Therefore, Jesus truly conquered death by not rising until the **3rd** day

Thats a lot of threes!

“God does nothing by accident. Number three is not emphasized in the Bible for no reason at all. No doubt it has significance, it has meaning, and it has something for us today.”

Three in the Bible symbolizes completeness or being complete.

Scholars and theologians alike agree that the number three in the Bible most often symbolizes completeness, or being whole. The Bible not only has a lot to say about the number three, but also a lot to say about the being complete or whole.

I believe there is a desire in all of us to be whole. We move through life looking for a purpose that fulfills us. We need to belong, we need to significance, we need security (THREE COMMON HUMAN NEEDS) and until we find and stay in those things we can feel like a piece is missing.

“I think we go through life with this messiness of incompleteness, brokenness in us where we're left lacking. We're not whole.”

Questions: How do we become whole? Can we be complete?

Paul talks a lot about being complete and whole in the book of Colossians.

Colossians 2:6-10 NIV

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

The passage says, “Just as you receive Christ Jesus as Lord”. The term “Lord” means the one who is in control, the master, the chief ruler. In this statement Paul is saying just as you received Jesus, remain in him, rooted in him as Lord.

Paul is reminding them of that tendency to stray from Christ as Lord. Maybe you and I have that same tendency to wander, to drift. Christ WAS our Lord that we followed, that we yielded to, but then we slowly drift away. Paul is acknowledging that drift and reminding them to remain rooted, to remain connected.

There are distractions we face that will entice us. Even small things that can lead our souls astray. It doesn't have to be something all that evil. Anything I want to fill my life with other than Christ, something that fills my time.

“Paul talks about not being captured by the philosophy of human tradition. I think our human tradition today, probably the most common one, is that we can do it ourselves. I've got this. We are in control. We're self-sufficient. I don't need anyone else...We work our lives and arrange our lives and plan our lives so that's the case.”

Then a tragedy occurs and we turn right back to God because the truth is God is always there. God is consistent. He is always walking by our side. He's our foundation. We all have had times in our lives when it is only God. There is no where else to turn. We just realize our need of God more sometimes than others.

Paul gives 3 reasons that we can find completeness in Christ alone.

1-Because He is God

Colossians 2:9 NIV

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form

The fullness of God is found in human form in Christ. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is a part of the trinity. There has never been anyone like him before and there will never be anyone like him again.

John 10:30 NIV

[Jesus speaking] I and the Father are one.

“I am God” is what Jesus is saying.

Philippians 2:5-6 NIV

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

Just because Jesus became a man that does not mean he is any less God.

The God that created you, the God that knit you together in your mothers womb. The God that walked with man in the garden the God that Adam & Eve chose to disobey. The God that has pursued and loved, and sought after you is Jesus. Jesus isn't partly God. He is part of the God head. He is God and being fully God, Jesus is enough.

“I think sometimes we feel like we need to help God out. We've got some Jesus in our life, but if I can just organize this area, that would really help God out, the way that I want it. But the truth is God is enough.”

“Christ is enough to complete us and make us whole. We don't need to add anything to it. We don't need to compensate for times when we might doubt him...You can turn to Christ because he IS God...he is the one who can complete you. Jesus is enough.”

I am here to remind to day that whatever you are facing Jesus is enough. In the midst of your illness, Jesus is enough. In the midst of your loss, Jesus is enough. In the midst of your pain Jesus is enough. No matter what you are going through, because Jesus is God... JESUS IS ENOUGH!

2- He has made you whole (believers)

Colossians 2:10 NIV

and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

Paul is reminding them again that Christ has brought them to fullness. Live in the fullness that Christ has brought you to.

“The Colossian believers had experienced Christ. They’d experienced his love. They’d experienced his work in their lives and their body as believers. He didn’t want them to stray or wander from that. He didn’t want them to engage, once again, in philosophies of our world where, ‘Hey, I can do it on my own’ or turning to other gods that maybe around them.”

We can do this as well, it is just that our gods might look a little different - the phone in our hand, the TV that’s in front of us or maybe it’s another person in our life or a house or a car or money. There are other gods we can turn to.

Colossians 1:19-20 NIV

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Jesus is not only able to make you complete and whole because He is God. He is able to make you complete and whole because of what he did on the cross. It’s not just who he is, being God, it is what he has done. Out of his character and love he acted.

3- In Christ is all authority and power

Colossians 2:10 NIV

and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

Christ has the power and authority to make us whole.

Colossians 1:18 NIV

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

“The same power that Christ has that raised him from the dead, the same power that he used to create creation, is the same power that he reaches out to you and me to make us whole.”

Question: “Jesus is the supreme being in the world, but is he the supreme of your life?”

“That takes a yielding, that’s a shift within us.”

“Our reflections, our thoughts and the way we act towards God doesn’t change God, but they do impact us.”

God might be supreme and powerful, but he is not going to force his way in.

Galatians 2:20 NIV84

[Paul writing] I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

His power is greater than any other power. His power is greater than the evil ones power. His power is greater than the sin in our lives. It is greater than our shame. Through his power and his authority we are made whole. Through his power and his authority we are given purpose in our lives.

Matthew 28:18-19 NIV84

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Through his power and authority we are called to do His work of making disciples on this earth. There is no greater purpose than what God calls you to. Nothing is more fulfilling than carrying out the call of God on your life.

We often times still find ourselves searching for significance, for purpose, for wholeness. Like the puzzle with a missing piece (or more).

Question: What is it that will make us whole? What is it that will complete us? How can we find fullness?

Answer: YOU complete me. But what is the YOU in your life? Is it Christ that completes you?

I think we look to things around us to make us complete when our faith wavers. When you think about it turning to another person to complete you is an unfair amount of pressure to put on one person. For a person to fill all that is missing in our life isn't fair.

“Sometimes we exchange the good things that God wants to give to us for God.”

We turn to a relationship and say “you complete me.” Some of us don't turn to people we turn to money. If I have enough I will be complete. If I impress other I will be complete. If I get this job I will be complete. If I get this house, that car, that life I dream of.

“I think the reason we turn to those things...is they're physical, tangible things we can see and feel, that are right in front of us.”

In the book of Ecclesiastes we see Solomon trying to fill the void in his life. He says he tried everything and it was all meaningless. He couldn't do it. As hard as he tried he could not make himself whole.

“My challenge you today is to not seek the things that God has given you for fulfillment, but turn to the God that has given you those things.”

We look to the principle instead of the principle one
 The blessings and not the blessing
 The promise and not the promise keeper
 The character not Christ
 The method not the master
 The system not the savior
 The procedure not the person
 The strategy not the sovereign one
 The formula not the faithful one
 The experience not the exalted one
 The change not the changer
 The provisions not the provider
 The comfort not the comforter
 The healing not the healer
 The prophesy not the prophet
 The miracle not the Messiah
 The protection not the protector

“The things that we want to complete us, the things that would make us whole are in a person. They are in Jesus Christ. Apart from him, nothing will complete you, nothing will make you whole.

John 15:5 NIV84

[Jesus teaching his disciples] I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

You don't need to add to Jesus or add Jesus to what you have he is enough to complete you all by himself. Sometimes we try adding things to Jesus. We don't want Jesus to carry the load so we try to share the load with him. WE try to help him out, but he does not need any help.

Dr. Anderson, in his last message before going on sabbatical this summer challenged us to pray "Jesus, What must I do to be whole?" "God desires for us to be whole were broken up were fragmented not only in the body of Christ but also in our own body, spirit and soul. Ask God, help me be whole. It's one thing to be healed, but another thing to be whole."

The Practical applications:

1. Take an inventory of your life

"I think sometimes we coast through life and we can fill our life with other things that we don't even miss God in our life. We don't want to admit our... brokenness and so we constantly have the TV on or the radio on or on our phone or engaged in other things and we do that to numb ourselves. But I want to challenge you: take out a pad of paper and write 'You Complete Me' on it and fill in the blank for the word 'You'...what is it that you're turning to."

2. Look at the God behind what you find

"If God has give you something, if you have something, he's the provider, see God behind it. If God reveals something to you in the taking of your inventory you need to turn over to him, realize that it's God that pointed that out to you and turn to him."

If you seeking God in negative things may sex outside of God's design maybe vices that numb you like alcohol or even things like video games or constantly having something distract you from your everyday realities. Set those things aside, seek help if you need to. But don't distract yourself from God or the reality of your brokenness, because you will never find fulfillment in that only in Christ.

3. **Daily, maybe moment by moment, look to Christ to complete you.**

1 Thessalonians 5:17 NASB95
pray without ceasing

“We constantly in our spirit are saying, ‘God, where do I see you? God, can you fill me? God, what would you like me to do next?’” Until it becomes an ongoing habit that you do moment-to-moment.”

Philippians 1:6 NIV84
being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.