1. He tells us to rule over everything (that’s servant leadership).
2. He has us name things, starting with animals (that’s servanthood in language, organization, communication, and science).
3. He says to tend and cultivate the earth (that’s serving God in the realm of ecology, agriculture and creativity).

C. Why am I talking about Genesis at Lent? Because that’s where God defined our humanity and explained our purpose!

TRANS: Genesis also tells how we failed to live up to who we are by listening to a demon’s voice and failing to listen to the voice of our Maker. Our failure cancelled nothing about our identity as images of God or our purpose as His servants. Lent reminds us to stop feeding on false voices and return to feeding our souls on God’s voice.

II. Lenten Fasting Calls Us Back from a Fatal Diet

A. God had 3 rhetorical questions for Adam, after he sinned:

1. Where are you now Adam? Why are you hiding from Me? — “I was afraid, because You created me naked.”
2. Who told you about nakedness? Have you been listening to another voice besides Mine? (notice no answer... no confession)
3. Don’t tell Me you ate the deadly fruit I warned you about? (Why these 3 questions? God knew the answers already, but He wanted Adam to confess his sin. Instead, Adam made excuses.)

B. God’s questions highlight the purpose of the Lenten fast:

1. Where are we? Have we listened to false voices? Are we feeding on what destroys spiritual life and defiles our personal & moral relationship to God by independent “knowledge of good and evil”?
2. Society has no clue about who we are or why we’re here, so it creates its own standards for sexuality, family values, leadership roles, science & language, ecology & creativity.
3. Lent calls us to halt our intake of this world’s independent diet of morality (“what’s right for me” or “what’s politically correct”), and to feed our souls on God’s voice—God’s will for us.

TRANS: This alone fulfills our true humanity! Jesus became human not to tell us how to be more like God [that was Satan’s temptation], but to show us how to be true-to-God human beings! The God-Man Jesus...
Christ is Trinitarian proof that God is submitted to God. In His own 40-day fast, when Satan tempted Him to act on His own, He answered: “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” In His human Incarnation, Jesus lived dependent on God’s voice. He showed us how to get it right—how to be truly human.

III. Lenten Fasting Calls Us Back to Our True Humanity

A. Humans embody God’s image: We are body-spirit beings, souls in fleshly temples. [My thought during an Ash Wednesday in the past: “Lenten fasting isn’t so much a denial of our bodies as it is a heightened awareness that our spirituality can’t be anything other than incarnational.”]

B. It’s always in our bodies, and usually with our bodies that we follow false voices. So, God’s Word invites fasting as a voluntary withdrawal from the body’s legitimate activity of eating.

1. Physically eating forbidden fruit first got us off track as humans.
2. Spiritually eating every word that comes from the mouth of God can get us back on the path of our true humanity. [Defibrillation: shocking cardiac muscle stops a dysfunction pattern of electrical firing, in hope that the heart will start over with its true rhythm. Fasting calls a halt to self-directed patterns of activity and allows us to refocus on God’s will, and to start over.]

CONCLUSION:

—We fulfill our true humanity by feeding our souls on God’s will.

This is true all year long, but Lenten season offers a special, communal opportunity to curb our diets or limit other forms of usual activity, as a token reminder that our soul’s true nurture is not in worldly voices, not in worldly values, but in the voice of our Maker. Our soul’s true food isn’t at Starbucks’ or Burger King, but in a prayerful feeding upon the Word that comes from the mouth of God. So, let’s pray about what we should stop during Lent, to help us start our hearts beating in tune with God’s rhythm for our lives.