

Humanity in God's Image

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[0 : 00] What we're doing these Sunday mornings is looking through a series of topics, a series of connected points, in which we're looking at the main points of teaching.

So that we will know and be able to tell the difference between what is sound and true teaching and what isn't. And a pastor in Geneva many, many years ago set about a similar thing to instruct his congregation in the Christian faith.

And he started off with a small book and he gradually added to it and it got bigger and bigger. And it became a standard book for Christians to read.

The pastor was John Calvin and the book was The Institutes. And right at the beginning of it he says these words, Nearly all the wisdom we possess, nearly all the true and, that is true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts.

The knowledge of God and of ourselves. And for the last few Sunday mornings we've been just dipping into the subject of the knowledge of God. And we've seen God as importantly the creator.

[1 : 19] And God as Trinity. And God as the ruler. And God as the good God. And for the next few Sunday mornings we're going to be looking to find out about ourselves.

And when you think about ourselves, I don't mean as particular individuals, but what are we? Who are we? It's a very important question. It underlies lots of things that happen in our world, an idea of who we are as human beings.

So are we sort of machines that have come together by a mechanical process of chance, in which things that were lying around as it were in a scrap heap, suddenly assemble themselves into some machine.

Is that really what we are? We're nothing but a machine. Well I suppose that's one answer that is sort of put to us. Or are we actually advanced animals?

[2 : 29] So when we talk, it's not that much different from chimpanzees screeching at one another. And when we make buildings and works of art, it's really not that much different from birds building nests.

I mean is that a fair idea of who we are? I suppose animals are expendable. Does that mean that human beings are expendable? So if they're useless, you can have them put down like you would with animals.

Or are we, as some people would say, are we sort of gods and goddesses? Are we, let's go to the other end of the spectrum, so wonderful that we're like gods and goddesses.

We can do whatever we want. We can make up our own rules. We can begin our lives as we wish and end it as we wish. And we're in charge of our own universe.

What is a human being? What's the right way to think about ourselves? And I don't think that the 21st century has any good answer to this.

[3 : 39] No answer that really works. No answer that's really consistent. And the funny thing is that even without that answer, people still find themselves caring passionately about their fellow human beings.

So I suppose one of the motivations for the parade yesterday was the notion of equality. So people care passionately about all human beings being equal and get very angry when some human beings are treated less than others.

I don't think that view is held consistently because it certainly doesn't seem to extend to the unborn human being. It's only once you're born that people clamor for equality.

But why? Why do so? And, for example, caring for the weak. There are many people who care passionately about the weak, about people whose lives are troubled or disadvantaged or whatever you want to say.

And people do care very much. But why? What is the understanding of being human that makes sense of caring so much for the weak?

[5 : 03] Well, that's what we're going to look at this morning. And I believe that the Bible has an ace card to play because the Bible tells us who we are and why we matter.

And I hope as a Christian you're aware of this and I hope you'll be aware of it by the time we finish looking at this this morning. Because the Bible says, as you will already have gathered, that human beings are made in the image of God.

So I'd like to think this morning a little bit about this. What is this image? And then secondly, why does it matter? And then thirdly, I'm going to ask the question whether Jesus has anything to do with it.

So those are the three things that we'll look at. So first of all, let's look at the whole matter of humankind, humanity in the image of God.

Please open your Bible at Genesis chapter 1, verse 26. This is the sort of source text, which Julia read for us.

[6 : 19] And it goes back to God as creator. What's in his mind? What's his intention? And it says in Genesis 1, 26, then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

And it seems to be a little bit poetic, this, so God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him.

Male and female, he created them, and God blessed them. So that's the source text. Let us make man in our image and in our likeness.

Let them rule. So God made man in his image. In his image, he made him. Male and female, he created them. And that's what we're going to think about.

It's a theological topic. It's to do with what God teaches about himself and indeed about us. So what does it mean to be in the image of God?

[7 : 50] Well, I suppose there's a very short answer, you could say. Like the image on the paper, if you wanted to know what the window was like, you could look at the paper and you could see what the window was like.

So this is saying that for human beings, there's a sense that if you look at a human being, if you watch a human being, you will see what God is like.

Which is quite a thought. So if you could imagine a man from Mars, it wouldn't be a man, would he?

An alien being who somehow wanted to know what the God who created everything was like, then you could advise him to get in his spaceship, to come to Earth, and to watch you from the moment you got up to the moment you went to bed, and to say, that is the image of God.

God is like that. It's quite a responsibility, isn't it? It's quite a thought. It's quite a thought. Let's try and tease it out a little bit.

So does that mean that if you've got ginger hair and you're six feet tall and got huge muscles, that that's what God's like? So is it the likeness in terms of body?

[9 : 18] And I think we're going to have to say no from that. Because God, as he is in eternity, has no body.

He is incorporeal. I know that the Son of God took flesh, but that's something that happened later. God in himself is not a creature confined to a body like we are.

So it's not to do with the body as such. It doesn't mean that God has a body. And also, sometimes people have said image, likeness, ah, the image is perhaps the physical bit and the likeness is the mental bit.

Or maybe the image is the spiritual bit and the likeness is the physical bit. So, two different parts of the make-up. And again, I'm going to say a no to that. because it seems, I don't think there's a particular difference between image and likeness.

They're more or less interchangeable. You know how in the Old Testament, in Hebrew poetry, you get parallels. So something is said in one set of words, then the next sentence says the same thing but in slightly different words.

[10 : 30] And I think it's like that. Image and likeness, likeness and image, not two different things, but two ways of saying the same thing. So that's a little bit of a wild goose chase that sometimes Christians have gone off on.

So let's see if we can pin it down a little bit. I think it would be reasonable to say this. What is God like in Genesis chapter 1?

Because what sort of God is he? If we're made in his image, then presumably we're a little bit like that. So here are some sensible suggestions from Genesis generally.

The God of Genesis makes things, doesn't he? Am I right? Yes. That's the big thing that God in Genesis does. He makes things and creates things.

So it wouldn't be surprising to find that if he is a creator with a capital C, that creatures made in his image are going to be creative as well.

[11 : 34] And that fits, doesn't it? You say, yeah, that explains a lot actually. If you think back from what you know of ancient history, you'll think cave paintings, you'll think ancient human beings get very confused about all of that.

But one thing is certain, if they were doing cave paintings, which they were, they were creative, weren't they? So I think we could say this is at least part of being in the image of God, that unlike animals, animals don't do cave paintings, human beings do.

And the God of Genesis is certainly a speaking God. In fact, he's doing that all the time. Every day he says something, let there be light.

And God said, let there be an expanse. And God said, let the water be gathered. And God said, let there be lights. And God said, let the water team. And God said, let the land produce.

God is saying something. Every day God says something in Genesis. He's a speaking God. And it wouldn't be a surprise, in fact, it would fit very, very well, to say that human beings are speaking creatures.

[12 : 50] We are, aren't we? We use words. You don't find animals writing the works of Shakespeare. You don't find animals producing sentences.

To be sure, they produce noises. But they don't produce speech. And human beings made in the image of God, well, that might be an explanation as to why you speak.

And how it is that one person can touch another one by speaking. Because that's what happens, isn't it? Your being can touch somebody else.

If you say to them, I love you, you touch them, don't you? If you say to them, I hate you, then you touch them in a different way. But it's all done by words. And God is a speaking God.

And the creatures made in his image speak. The God of Genesis rests. He rests. On the Sabbath day, on the seventh day, he rests.

[13 : 54] And he looks around and he's refreshed and he says, that's very good and that's very good and I'm rather pleased with the way trees have turned out and I'm rather pleased with sky.

That's brilliant stuff. And God enjoys things like that and so do human beings, don't they? We're not just work units made to work, work, work, work, work, work, work.

We're made to be like God at some point to say, hang on a sec, I'm just going to sit down and have a cup of tea and I'm going to look at the wall I've just made. That's a pretty good wall.

I'm going to look at the equations I've been studying. They're actually rather nice equations or I'm going to look at the, I don't know, you look at things and you take pleasure in what has been done and that's like God and I would say animals don't do that, machines don't do that, people do that.

And then I'm going to say that the God in the Bible thinks to himself. He says that in verse 26, let us make man in our image. So he's talking to himself.

[15 : 05] He's conscious of himself, speaking to himself. This is what we'll do, we'll make God in our image and you notice the plural as if there is a self and another self. God thinks to himself and so do we.

We think to ourselves, don't we? At least I do. I hope I'm not unique in this. I think, you think to yourself, don't you? You wake up in the morning, you think to yourself, what a lovely day or you think to yourself, what a terrible day or you think to yourself, this is what I'm going to do or this is what I'm not going to do?

I don't think machines do that. I don't think the Google computers, wherever they are, wake up in the morning and say, well what should we do today? Should we do a little search?

They don't do that. They don't reflect. But human beings do. And we could add to the list, let's put this, that God chooses good and judges good.

So in Genesis chapter 1, he's making stuff and as you know, you don't have to look at all the verses, but God sees that what he's made is good. So he chooses to make something good and he

looks at it and says it is good.

[16:19] He chooses good and judges good. And human beings, that's a very remarkable capacity to do that. And human beings too have this capacity to choose good or not and to be judged as good.

There's a moral responsibility that goes along with being made in the image of God. And there's an aesthetic goodness as well.

So the woman in chapter 3 says that she saw the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye. So she's got an artistic eye.

She says that's a very attractive looking fruit. So she could tell things that look good. But I'm just thinking about the moral good. Would you like to flip over to Genesis 9, 6?

Which particularly ties moral responsibility to being in the image of God. It's Genesis 9, verse 6.

[17:26] Now I'm not dealing properly with the context. I'm just picking this verse out sort of plucking it as a rabbit from a hat. But please notice what it says.

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God has God made man.

So all I'm going to say from that is that there is a moral responsibility and a moral value to being human and it's linked with being made in the image of God.

And what I'm not discussing is whether that's still in force exactly and what I'm not discussing is the death penalty. But at least you could say that at this point here there is something so serious about being human that to take human life is a very, there is a big responsibility on that.

And certainly this verse is saying that it is so big that the death penalty is a fair and right penalty.

But no doubt there would be more to be said if you were actually an MP voting on it.

[18:45] So I just say that in passing. So we've got quite a list of things there. And I'm going to say that okay here are human beings who create things.

Human beings who speak. Who rest. Who think to themselves. Who have moral responsibility. Who have a sense of what is beautiful and what isn't beautiful. Is this the image of God?

And I'm going to say yes but. I say yes but those are aspects of being in the image of God.

But not the total thing itself. I want to go a little bit further on that. So that was things from Genesis generally. Let's look at the exact text.

So go back if you would to Genesis chapter 1. And see how God frames this creation. Verse 26. Let us make man in our image.

[19:47] In our likeness. So I think the fact that God says let us is significant. So God is allowing himself to be heard in a sort of plurality.

And the God of the Bible is a plurality. He's not just a single lonely individual God. There is plurality within God and as Christians we know that the plurality is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But that's something that we only realise in the New Testament. We can shed the light back into this text and say that there is a plurality and this is reflected in the image.

So it's an important thing that human beings are capable of community. So human beings are not meant to be lonely individuals in solitude on their own because that wouldn't reflect the image of God.

God says let us and human beings are most imaging God when they're in a community and they can say us rather than just I.

[21:06] and then the text says or at least connects to 126 let us make man in our image and in our likeness let them rule over the fish of the sea.

So at least you could say there's a connection because it's the next thought that comes the idea of ruling and I would like to say that this is an aspect of being in the image of God.

Do you remember in it's in Daniel isn't it that was it Nebuchadnezzar sets up an image in the plain plain of Dura and everybody has to bow down and worship it I'm forgetting but I'm getting the details right but he sets up an image there and I think what he's doing is saying I'm the big boss I live over in Babylon but just so you don't forget here in the plains of Dura I'm going to put a big image of myself and that sort of shows that I'm the boss here and I rule as it were through the reminder of this image or maybe even through the symbolism of this image it brings my rule into this place and I think there's an aspect of that how does God rule this world well partly he rules it via us his image let us make man in our image in our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea so we are meant to be rulers of this world under God so we're not rulers with nobody on top of us so we just

do exactly what we want we're accountable to no one but neither are we without authority and dignity in this world we are rulers under God and I also notice that God says or it's said in verse 27 God created man in his own image in the image of God he created him male and female he created them and again it's not it is by way of a connection and there is because it is the next connected thought maleness and femaleness are connected with being in the image of God so we certainly wouldn't want to say that only male gender is in the image of God because it says male and female are in the image of God and it brings us into the whole realm of the diversity and the difference and the richness and the beauty of the way we've been made sexual creatures with maleness and femaleness and this is part of being in the image of God so I ask again have we now finished the list and I'm going to say well they are that's to do with being in the image of God but I don't think it's the thing itself

I think these are aspects of being in the image of God okay am I losing you baffling you this is it's telling us about ourselves so what exactly is this image and likeness business it's connected with all those other things and I'm going to say that to give you an exact and precise and exhaustive definition of what is being in the image of God is not possible because I'm going to say that being human is actually too great in the end to put into words so we can we can get towards it but we can never sort of arrive and say alright now I've understand I've understood what human beings are let me put it this way people who are not Christians people who don't have the Bible and are trying to work this out for themselves and thinking about humanity without God always link humanity with something lower so they say well humans are well they're like monkeys only more or they're like machines only cleverer and that's the way they think they think it's like something less and if you do that in an extreme form you say human beings are nothing but animals or nothing but machines so you're always reducing you're going to what is lower but in the Bible if you want to answer the question what is man you have to go to what is higher and you say humanity is like

[26 : 18] God and we can't fully explain God we can't tie down who God is exactly we can't exhaust the definition and the description of God and people are like him so it means that although we're connected to the world of trees and motor cars and Costa coffee and everything else we are actually creatures that are linked to something above all of that there is something transcendent about every human being which is an amazing thought so I think this should lead us to wonder and respect the psalmist says what is man that you are mindful of him you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings that's a thought that we ought to keep with us here I am wandering around

London Road here are the people I'm bumping into in the open market here are the people coming down from Sainsbury's each one of them made in the image of God what an amazing thing what is man that you are mindful of him you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings we walk in the midst of a million miracles!

because that's what people are and I think for ourselves we could in a humble way be encouraged because sometimes the world tells us all we are is a little bit of rubbish or sometimes we feel that that's all that we are or we just feel that we're worthless or perhaps we feel that we are I don't know but the Bible will never let us think that and the psalmist in Psalm 139 says I praise you Lord for I am fearfully and wonderfully made and that's true of every human being fearfully, wonderfully made and here's another thought about putting God into places via images now I don't know whether you've ever been in the home of a Greek Orthodox Christian maybe you have and you would find that they have little pictures little icons of different saints and these are meant to sort of bring the presence of God into your front room or into your kitchen or perhaps you've been in a taxi in a foreign country where dangling from the mirror the rear view mirror is a little something perhaps a little St. Christopher or a little crucifix or a little something maybe if it's a Hindu god or a little Buddha or something like that and this made up thing this image is meant to bring the presence of God into the taxi or into the kitchen or whatever and the person thinks

I'd like the presence of God so this is the way I'll do it and how should Christians think about bringing the presence of God into such and such a place so let's imagine that you work in an office and you would really like the presence of God to be there what should you do? should you buy a little picture of Jesus and ask to have it stuck up there or a little crucifix or something and I'm going to say that is not the image of God that does not bring anything of God into the workplace but I'll tell you what does it's you that's your job you are the image of God and if people want to look and see what God is like don't ask them to look at a crucifix or a little picture of

anybody a saint they are entitled to look at you and say that's what God's like the presence of God is here because the image of God is here that's what human beings are called to be putting God into places not via images but via image and I remember once when I started teaching having that thought to myself what shall I get to put up in my classroom to show the presence of God and I came to the conclusion

[31 : 16] I wouldn't put up anything in the classroom because the presence of God the image of God would have to be me so let's move on and say why does it matter or yeah why does it matter now next week all being well we'll look at the way the image of God is spoiled in humankind so I don't want to I don't want to get ahead of myself but I do need to say that we're made in God's image but sin has spoiled that image and if you like you could think of a castle there it is in its original form with glorious flags flying and music coming out and everything the grand glorious castle and sadly the ruined and needy castle as it might now be so I would imagine some of the Welsh castles did you Harlach castle bit of a mess yeah is it

I'm sad to hear that but it was still a castle wasn't it you could still see it was a castle but it wasn't in its former glory and it needs a little bit of tender loving care and a lot of funding from the National Trust or something like that that's the way to think of humanity that because of Adam's sin that's transmitted to us and the moment we are born we are not born grand and glorious we are born one way or another different in different ways none of us is grand and glorious we are ruined and in need of tender loving care and the gospel of Jesus Christ is you could you could put it in this way it is that's what it's about it is about restoring the image of God it's about mending us it's about putting us back the way we ought to be and it's a big big job so having said that

I want to say why does it matter well it matters because all human beings whether they're Christians or not all human beings still have immeasurable value now even the ruined castle is a special place so I want to have a list of all sorts of people and say they're all precious they're all valuable because they're in the image of God so I'm going to include sinners and of course that's the big show stopper isn't it sin spoils the image but it doesn't remove it all together and I'm going to say all races are made in the image of God so if you were thinking some races are more valuable than others simply because of their racial difference then the Bible says you've got that wrong because all races are in the image of God and you might think well it's everybody except immigrants so we're entitled to look down on immigrants and see them as less than human and the Bible says absolutely not people who've come from a foreign country they might have different culture to one's own but they're made in the image of God and I'm going to say street drinkers so sometimes when we have our community meetings the topic almost seems to say well street drinkers are a blight on our society let's get rid of them and you know how you get rid of them

I'm not really quite sure but just get rid of them and that can't be right can it because street drinkers are made in the image of God they are not animals to be got rid of or put down they're certainly needy people they certainly cause trouble for themselves and trouble for other people to be sure but they're never less than human and I'm going to say drug addicts so people whose lives are perhaps more obviously ruined or more obviously troubled than other peoples yet they're made in the image of God and I'm going to include people of whatever sexuality they're made in the image of God and therefore because of that and simply because of that have immeasurable value and I'm going to include criminals and I'm going to include the old as they become perhaps you know by no stretch of the imagination productive members of society but nevertheless human to be valued as such and the unborn the child within the womb who can't pay his way or even speak and yet is made in the image of God and I'm going to include your family because you might be tempted to say of your family they're nothing but this they're nothing but that no includes everybody made in the image of God and I'm going to make sure that you've got the point because if you run a business your clients and customers are made in the image of God and you're not allowed to cheat them and you're not allowed to denigrate them and curse them and if you lived in Downton Abbey and had lots of servants then you should treat your servants as made in the image of God or if you are employed by other people then your bosses are made in the image of God and you're not entitled to curse them either and if you're in war your enemies are made in the image of God and you're not allowed to treat them as animals or as subhuman and I think that has a lot to say about the current conflict conflict in the Middle East where I sadly fear that people have got into the situation of thinking that the other side is less than human and that can't be right so this tells us that we're to treat people with care and compassion we're to treat people as made in the image of

God please look at James chapter 3 verse 9 and in his very practical way

[38 : 06] James in chapter 3 verse 9 says talks about the tongue and it says with the tongue we praise our Lord and Father and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing my brothers this should not be so and you see what he's saying we worship God we say good things about God but here are people made in his image and perhaps we feel free to curse them this should not be so we should not be out of the same mouth blessing God and cursing the people made in his image so all people have immeasurable value now and there's huge ramifications to that but I'll just carry on and make that point second thing I want to say about why it matters is that it says something about our destiny so that was to do with how we treat people now whether they're

Christians or not I'm now going to say it has important ramifications about the future and to say that the ruined image is being restored that's what the Christian message is about or that's one of the ways of saying what the Christian message is about please look at Colossians 3 verse 10

Colossians 3 verse 9 and 10 Colossians 3 verse 9 do not lie to each other since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator he says you're a

Christian you are being renewed in the image of your creator that's what God is doing and part of it I don't think the whole of it but at least part of it is knowledge is the way your head works and that's being changed and part of that change in your knowledge in the way your head works is making you back into the image of your creator and he says in a very practical way if that's what's happening don't lie to each other!

it's a translation I mean there's lots of other ones but I'm just picking that because it's in the exact next sentence don't lie to each other don't tell each other things that aren't true don't try and deceive one another not everybody has access and a right to every piece of truth that you know but don't lie to one another it's very straightforward isn't it and how is that all happening how is that renewal taking place and the answer is it's all to do with Jesus Christ chapter three verse one is all to do with Christ you've been raised with Christ your life is hidden with Christ when Christ who is your life appears you will appear with him it's all to do with Jesus Christ it's through him that this image is being restored and I'm going to say that's a present thing and there's a future likeness which we don't yet know and

I please turn to 1 John 3 2 1 John 3 2 which says it says how great is the love the father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God and that is what we are the reason the world does not know us is that it did not know!

[42 : 08] dear friends now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known but we know that when he appears we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure he says this is where we're heading in this matter of image we're heading to be made into something which at the moment we don't know it's hidden from us we can't cope with it we can't comprehend it what we will be has not yet been made known which is an incredible thought there is something in store for us which is so great that we can't grasp it now but one day we will and then he applies that he says if that's what you're heading for then you should be purifying yourself now and

I ask again how does this happen and the answer is through the future intervention of Jesus Christ it's not automatic it's not to do with just attending church it's to do with Jesus Christ himself so I've got a little picture here of somebody sitting next to somebody else and looking at them and the surprising thing is that this person so this is true of whoever you're sitting next to is either headed for glory in such a way that if you were now shown what this person would end up like I think you would be tempted to worship them amazing glory or the opposite which I don't dare to draw but just to say that's not the only place people are headed if they're becoming like Jesus Christ there's glory ahead and if they're not they're actually becoming something so hideous and so horrible that it doesn't bear thinking about and I'd like you to say

I'd like to ask the question which are you which of those arrows are you headed on that's the most important question anybody could ask isn't it Psalm 73 17 talks about a perplexed believer and one of the things that the believer says is I actually thought long term and then I understood their final destiny so I'm we're thinking at this moment final destiny the final destiny of the redeemed is breathtaking and the final destiny of the unbeliever is appalling and I ask you the question which one are you on which of those lines will you be on now I said that as a third heading I'd ask the

question a little question about

Jesus Christ because he is crucial in this whole matter and what I want to say is that on the matter of image if you think carefully the texts have said we're made in the image or we're made after the image but of Jesus Christ it says he is the image Colossians 1:15 says he is the image of the invisible God so what is true of us in a sort of limited way is true of him in a perfect way he is the image of the invisible God he is the exact image you could say unlike my little illustration image on the paper the window was smaller and it didn't have three dimensions but Jesus is the exact image so he's exactly like

God he's not smaller he doesn't lack a few dimensions that God has he has! that! God has he is the exact image and that's what it says in Hebrews 1:3 the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being Hebrews 1:3 the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being so Jesus is the image of which we are little sort of fragmentary limited copies and if you wanted to pull that straw a little bit further you'd be taken on a thought like this that we became well we became like Adam didn't we we became fallen and in order to come and get us to restore us

[47:46] Christ had to be made like us Hebrews 2:17 says that in this quest for our restoration he had to come down amongst us Hebrews 2:17 says for this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way it doesn't include sin but it includes the humanness in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people he had to come and enter our situation be made like us he had to take flesh not sinful flesh but the likeness of sinful flesh and in particular our redeemer had to die a human death wasn't enough to die sort of like as an angel would or anything like that he had to come and be made like us so on each of those three crosses at Calvary there was a thief and a thief and a saviour a man and a man and a man he had to be made like us so that we could be made like him and 1 Corinthians 15 says as we bore the likeness of the man from earth so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven because of his redeeming work we shall be like him so I ask you the question again it actually although the topic is image the thought leads us to

Jesus Christ it's through him that we're now being restored it's through him that we will one day be made glorious it's through him what about him where do you stand with him what is Christianity to you is it attending meetings is it singing various songs is it a certain feeling or is it Jesus Christ because it is knowing him it is being in a relationship having closed with him that's what this is all about