

The Image of God

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Date: 20 November 2022

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. Father, we give you thanks and praise that as the gospel becomes more clear and more dear to our heart, and as we begin to know you better, that we can begin to know ourselves better, ourselves as we truly are, but in a way that also means that we know that we are deeply loved by you.

So, Father, do a wonderful work in our hearts and minds as we think of your word. I ask, Lord, that people will not remember so much what I said, but that they will have your word be more real and deeply held in their hearts.

And I ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Saviour. Amen. Please be seated. Thank you. So, I guess it was in early October, I was working at one of my favourite coffee shops, and a fellow that I'd just gotten to know over the last couple of months, just slightly, I almost said his real name, but his name, of course, is Bob.

Everybody I've talked to, if they're a guy, they're Bob, and if they're a woman, they're Sue. So, Bob, I sit down, Bob comes and sits down, just sort of near me, and he says, George, I have a question for you.

And he doesn't usually ask me questions, so I said, oh, what? He said, what do you think about the fact that the Russian patriarch just said that any Russian soldier who dies in the war in Ukraine will have all of their sins forgiven?

[1 : 3 4] He asked me that question, he smiled at me. Now, I hadn't heard this, by the way. I don't know, I was living in a cave or something like that, but I hadn't heard this. So, without any prompting, I just said, that's completely and utterly reprehensible.

It's completely, utterly reprehensible, and it's an offence to the Christian faith. Now, he was really surprised at my quick and very confident answer.

So, we ended up having this very, very brief little bit of a discussion about it. We didn't get to the forgiveness of sins bit, but we did get to this other part about, he said, well, how, you know, like, how can you say that?

And this guy's a really wonderful guy, research scientist who's now retired. I happen to know, because of some other earlier conversations, that he had no, he's a, you know, just, he's a guy that you'd love to have as your neighbor, friendly, smart, good listener, good conversationalist, you know, and I said, you know, the idea of the separation of church and state, that's something that the Bible teaches, and it's a Christian idea.

And he was very surprised at this, and I said, you know, people think it's something that comes from, like, reason, but it actually doesn't come from reason.

[2 : 5 8] Jesus was the first one who said anything about this. He introduced this brand new idea into human consciousness. He said, give on to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

And he was fascinated with this. He had never heard that in his entire life. He said that he just assumed that that was something that, like, secular people came up with to protect secular people from the church.

And he just, he was blown away. In fact, he asked me if I would send him the Bible text to show that this was, in fact, originally a saying of Jesus. Now, we're going to look at this text, and we're going to look at it in a way that's not just for political geeks, although I know there are a lot of political geeks and nerd types in the room who are interested in questions of public policy.

And we'll talk a little tiny bit about that. But fundamentally, one of the things which is so interesting about this story is that Jesus doesn't just sort of answer this query that comes from his enemies, but he talks about it in such a way that, he talks about this in such a way that he also talks about issues of human identity and how we can have a secure sense of who we are.

So if you were, want to turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 12, verse 13 and following, we'll look at the story. And if you're using these Bibles, it's on page 74. Mark chapter 12, verses 13 to 17.

[4 : 24] And so as you heard just a little bit before this, if you're coming to this just for the sermon, you won't know this, so I'll say it again. This story, this little incident is taking place in the context of the story.

Mark is one of the ancient biographers of Jesus, giving an eyewitness account of what Jesus actually said and did. And Jesus had predicted and prophesied that he was going to die on a cross in Jerusalem.

And then he was going to rise from the dead. And we're now in Jerusalem. And Jesus knows that in a couple of days, he's going to die on the cross. His disciples have heard him prophesy, but they don't believe it.

And in fact, all of the evidence would appear to be the contrary of what Jesus has predicted. Given the massively popular entrance into Jerusalem that he had just had, it would be inconceivable to them that Jesus was going to die on the cross in a couple of days.

Whatever he meant by it, I'm guessing they would have thought that maybe he meant some type of spiritual or metaphorical thing that will happen in the future. But they wouldn't know that they were just a couple of days away from Jesus dying on a cross.

[5 : 34] But Jesus knows this. And just before this, he's had yet another conflict with the elites. The elites. And in a sense, all of the principal elites in Jewish society, he has had a conflict with them.

And the story continues here with verse 13. And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap him in his talk.

And, you know, there's an old saying that just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that there's not some time when people are out to get you. And I think most of us here probably don't believe in conspiracy theories.

But sometimes there really are conspiracies. I mean, sometimes there are conspiracies that happen. And we see here Jesus in the midst of conspiracy.

Not that he's involved with this conspiracy. He's the one that conspiracy wants to get. And when it says here, they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap him in his talk.

[6 : 42] First of all, the word trap in the original language doesn't just sort of involve like playing tag after church with the kids and you trap them in the corner and you touch them and you get them.

No, the image is a violent image. It's a murderous image. It's to trap and kill, to trap and to destroy. And the second thing is the they is referring to the elites.

The elites, the intellectual, the cultural, the spiritual, the political, the economic, the elites of that society. All of the elites except one are involved in this conspiracy.

And that final elite in that society will be involved within a couple of days so that Jesus will die on the cross. So the elites have sent these two groups to go as a united front to ask them questions.

And we can't appreciate the significance when it says Pharisees and Herodians, but it would be as if you... I think I've been sort of out of it because I was at a big event for four days and another big meeting.

[7 : 47] I think Elizabeth May. She's become the head of the Green Party again. Is that correct? So to understand this, imagine that you hear that Donald Trump and Elizabeth May go somewhere to ask somebody a question.

Or Trump and Singh, the head of the NDP, or Trump and Trudeau. They show up to ask somebody a question. Now you'll know something weird is going on here.

Right? They don't come all buddy-buddy, high-fiving each other to come and speak to somebody together. And that's sort of... This is completely different groups, generally quite hostile towards each other.

And they've come together from the elite to try to trap Jesus in his talk. I guess another... Anyway, I won't keep multiplying. Ask odd couples. So what do they say? So what they do, of course, is they lie and they flatter.

Because, of course, no matter how much we might say that we don't like flattery, we all love flattery. And so they come to flatter him and they come to lie through their teeth.

[9 : 01] Here's what they say, verse 14. And they came and said to him, teacher, we know that you are true. Actually, they think he's a no-good liar, false prophet, destroyer.

But we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. And they might actually think that was true of Jesus. And that's one of the reasons they hate him. Because he doesn't care about their opinion.

He was a good guy. He would care about their opinion. Right? And then for you are not swayed by appearances once again. That's sort of true.

And that's another reason why they hate him. He doesn't care about appearances. If he did, he wouldn't be doing the things he was doing. But truly teach the way of God, which they believe the opposite.

They don't believe he's truly teaching the way of God. So they flatter him. And then here's the two questions. And by the way, there's at least two lawyers in the room. And I'll try to give a brief analogy about this.

[10 : 03] But they can explain the distinction which is implied here in the questions. It's a very, very clever. You can see that these came from the legal elite.

Sent them to make sure they asked the question in a particular way. And when it says here lawful, by the way, of course it's the law. He means in terms of God's law. So they're not talking about secular law.

It was according to the triune God, according to the God, or not. Should we pay them or should we not? Okay, now it seems like it's two questions.

But what it is, it's the difference between what the law says and what... Oh, I'm going to get this. I should have written it down. It's not just what the law says.

It's the facts of the case. Right? It's both the law and the facts of the case. So you might ask a lawyer, is it lawful to do this or not? And they might say yes. But inwardly they're saying, but the facts of the case mean you don't have to do it.

[11 : 02] Right? So it's a very, very clever question. What is the law? Taxes to him or not? And in the original language, you can't get it in the English. The tax, it's a very specific type of tax which is mentioned.

It's not just taxes in general. It's a tax to the imperial power. So Jesus, these people have conquered us.

They think the emperor is semi-divine, that his dad was a god and his mom was human. They've conquered us. What do you think God's word says about paying taxes to them?

And by the way, given the facts of the case, should we actually do it? So what does Jesus say? They think they've got him, by the way. This is a gotcha question.

This is, I've cornered you. I've got you. This is a question hoping that you see, you know that look when people ask you a question you don't want. It's like the deer with, you know, the deer in the headlights.

[12 : 01] They want to see him squirm. They're hoping that all of a sudden his knee is tapping and there's sweat underneath his arm. You know what I mean. That's what they're hoping. That's what they think they've done. So what does Jesus do?

Look at verse 15. And one of the things which is so interesting is that Jesus's answer is grace-filled. Jesus's answer is not only grace-filled.

It's very, very wise. And it opens the door to what it means to be human. Like he doesn't just say, I'm just going to use this opportunity to get them back so they're all look big and they'll look stupid.

No, he doesn't do that. He could have. He doesn't do that. His answer is an opportunity for them to repent.

And his answer is an answer that opens the door to what it means to be human. Like it's a far-reaching answer. So what does he say?

[13 : 03] Verse 15. But knowing their hypocrisy, he's not fooled. He said to them, why put me to the test? And the word test there implies a test you know I'll fail, right?

It's like asking me to jump over the Grand Canyon. That's the test, George. The test is you jump over the Grand Canyon. It's a test I'll fail, right? So why do you put me to a test you think that I will fail?

Bring me a denarius, which is a silver Roman coin. And in that day and age, it was the average wage. It would have been, if you took what the average wage in Canada was, is, okay, whatever that is, and you took it for what that guy would make in, or gal would make in one day, that's what a denarius was.

One day's work for the average working person in the world at the time. It's a silver Roman coin. So he says, bring me a denarius and let me look at it. Okay. And then they say, verse 16, and then it's verse 16, they brought him one, and he said to them, whose likeness, and the original word there in the original language is the word we get icon from.

Okay. Whose icon and inscription, you know that little thing like in, you know, in God we trust or something like that, right? In this one, there's a very clear reference to the gods and goddesses and Caesar's divine power.

[14 : 39] That's the inscription on it, right? So whose icon and inscription is this? And they said to him, Caesar's, the emperor's. And now listen to this answer.

Jesus said to them, render to Caesar's, the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's. And they marveled at him.

Now, this is a, I mean, on one hand, as my very, very secular friend didn't realize, this simple little saying of Jesus was launched into the world and has changed how human minds think.

This uneducated guy who dies under Roman occupation in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago changes how virtually all educated people in the world now think.

Not all accept it. If you were in some parts of the Muslim world, it would be a sign of Christian decadence to make some types of statements like this.

[15 : 59] In totalitarian countries, totalitarian and atheistic regimes, it would be a hateful, wrong statement.

But it's now something that's there. It's natural for human beings to think, if you think about it for a second, why wouldn't, if we know the best, if we know wisdom, and whether that's a spiritual wisdom, whether that's a religious wisdom, whether it's a tribal wisdom, whether it's just ancient wisdom, whether it's secular wisdom, if we know wisdom, shouldn't wisdom rule?

And if wisdom comes from Islam, it should rule. If wisdom comes from Christianity, it should rule. If wisdom comes from Judaism, it should rule.

If wisdom comes from being progressive, it should rule. If wisdom comes from Marx, it should rule. It is just the natural default way that the human mind and imagination works.

And Jesus says the natural way that our human imagination and mind works is wrong. There's a difference, and the difference matters.

[17 : 08] You give to that wisdom, you give to Caesar, what is Caesar's? You give to God, what is God's? It now is seen, in fact, as my secular friend thought, he thought, I guess, I don't know, that Rousseau or Hume or Kant or something like that had thought this up, or Plato or Aristotle, he didn't realize that the idea comes from Jesus.

But he also does something in here which starts to put into... It's also an invitation for him to these guys to reconsider what they're doing.

Because if you think about it for a second, even once you understand that you should give to God, you render to God the things that are God's, and you render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, most of us would say, well, what should we render to God?

Right? It's one of the things which is so powerful about this idea. I'm not going to spend much more time on it, because it's not a... You know, maybe if I was speaking on Parliament Hill or something, or a group of policy geeks, we'd look at it.

Jesus' statement just says there's going to be a division between the state's power and God's powers over it, but the state still has power. But it doesn't actually draw specific... It's not legalistic.

[18 : 17] It works at the level of the imagination and all of that. But even if we think about it at a very simple level, we would say... Most people would say, well, what should you give to God?

Like, probably if you just went to a Tim Hortons or a Starbucks or a Bridgehead or some trendy place that old guys like me have never heard of, because I'm not trendy or hip, you'd say, well, I don't know.

Like, you should... To God? If there was a God? I don't know. You should be... What should you give to God? Well, you should be honest, kind, nice.

None of which these guys are. None of them are that. They're dishonest, lying scoundrels. Claiming they're serving God where they don't render him a single thing that any reasonable person says they should.

And the irony is that when Jesus asks for a denarius, he has to ask, because he doesn't have a denarius. And these guys who think they're so godly do have an image of the semi-divine Caesar in their pocket.

[19 : 36] They're rendering everything to Caesar and nothing to God. And that's an opportunity for them to go, oh, maybe I should reconsider the path I'm on.

Maybe I should reconsider the path I'm on. Now, in terms of some, you know, pushback... Okay, so...

Oh, here's the other thing about it. No, I'll talk about it in a moment. Okay, George, you might say that Jesus is... That's a really good example.

Like, many people in Canada would say that Jesus is wise, that he was a good teacher. And they'd say, wow, I didn't know that. I didn't know that. Like, that's a really cool idea.

Like, it's a really cool idea. And I didn't realize it came from Jesus. But I've always sort of thought that Jesus was wise, that he was a good teacher. George, the problem is that you go overboard with it.

[20 : 36] Like, you become religious. I'm not religious. I don't see the point of religion. Like, it's fine to have Jesus being a wise teacher and saying a couple of wise things that we can sort of take in, and it's helpful to society and all of that type of stuff.

But, you know, all this other stuff about dying for your sins and him being God, like, that's just not right. You know, the fact is that if you push into most people, the fear they have about worshipping God or knowing the triune God is that he'll crush them.

He'll crush who they really are. Like, why does a... He'll crush who they really are. That he'll make them do things which we hate.

And it doesn't... And it's just a very common... It's a very common fear. Like, it could be the very secular neighbor who says, Oh, gosh, if I become a Christian, I have to get up early on a Sunday morning.

I've got to go to church. I've got to give some money. And I just... I don't know. I can't sit around in my pajamas all afternoon drinking beer and watching football. Like, you'll frown upon it.

[21 : 48] You know, or the trans person, the gay person, the person in adultery. Like, it's a very common type of fear. And for many people in our culture, they think that, you know, something like Christianity just is one of the main things that creates outsiders and insiders.

And that, in fact, it's just a tool of powerful people to oppress powerless people and keep them in their place. And that it creates this type of terrible, boring uniformity.

Like, look at The Handmaid's Tale. You look at series like that. It's just going to crush people. And it creates this uniformity and this sameness which... So it's one thing, George, to think that Jesus is a wise teacher.

I think he's a wise teacher. But that's just sort of where it stops. And to go anything beyond that is to sort of get into a territory which is a little bit creepy.

Jesus, in his answer to the question, opens the door to something that shows how wise and sane and grace-filled and freeing and strengthening the gospel is.

[23 : 02] Two weeks ago when I was speaking at the church in Hamilton, in the context of the sermon, I was praying a lot about how to... In fact, they wanted me to speak on...

Believe it or not, they wanted me to speak on the Bible and the gospel and the LGBTQ plus movement. And I was stressed out a bit about it.

And God gave me a song. I was really trying to figure out how to express it in a way which is both clear and shows the wisdom and the sanity and the grace of the Christian teaching and why once you start to get to know the gospel, there's something very beautiful and powerful about it that we need to try to model better and communicate clearer.

And there's this hymn from the 1600s, My Song is Love Unknown. And I'm just slightly paraphrasing one of the lines that has this wonderful line. I'm just paraphrasing it.

Love came and died for the loveless. Sorry. Love came and died for the loveless, that loved and lovely you may be. Love came and died for the loveless, that loved and lovely you may be.

[24 : 27] And this little incident, Jesus opens up this window to something. And you remember that Jesus is saying this. He knows that in a couple of days he's going to be on a cross dying.

And he knows why he's dying on the cross. He's dying on the cross. He's dying for the loveless, that loved and lovely, you and I, and those people even trying to trap him, that they may be.

And he opens up this little window on his way to the cross. And it's by this simple word, icon.

And for the people who are there listening, they would have instantly known that Jesus is using the exact same word as is used in the very beginning of the Bible. When God says that he makes human beings, he makes every man and every woman equally, in his icon.

That's the very, very, very, very beginning of the Bible. Before there's any sin or evil in the world, God makes every single human being, man and woman, male and female, humanity, every human being, in his icon.

[25 : 44] And this, just if you think about it first, there is no greater equity imaginable than being made in the icon of God.

There is no greater equity imaginable than being made in the icon of God. What is this saying? Doesn't matter if you're born in Africa, America or Asia or North America or Europe.

You're made in the icon of God. It doesn't matter if you are the world's strongest woman or man. It does not matter whether you are the world's fastest or most brilliant human being, or if you have Down syndrome.

You are made in the icon of God. It does not matter if you are 107 and you don't have very many days left, or if you are a baby in a mother's womb.

You are made in the icon of God. And the strongest and wisest and most beautiful and most powerful are not more in the icon of God than the weakest.

[27 : 00] The baby in the womb, the Down syndrome child, the severely handicapped infant. I just overheard just a terrible, terrible, tragic story.

I was in a two-day meeting before the conference at which I helped organize in an indirect way and spoke at. And we were going around the room getting to know each other because we're talking about this potential venture, hopefully, that is of God that could help spread the gospel in Canada.

And we're going around and one of the fellows shared how, I won't tell all of the details to protect the privacy of them, but basically a month or two before the baby was born, they discovered that the baby had a severe, severe medical issue that meant that within hours of the baby being born, the baby would die.

And so he told us the date that his baby was born and the date the baby died. Bill Gates does not bear more of the image of God than that baby.

There is no more profound equity than this teaching. Your identity, and here's the thing, your identity and worth comes because you are made in the image of the triune God.

[28 : 35] The dignity and greatness of human beings is because they are made in the image of the triune God. And it explains so much about human experience because the Bible, if you go and you'll look from Genesis 3 and then the Bible teaches something which is the most true thing about human beings.

And that is that we do evil, that evil comes from within us, that we choose to do what is wrong. And the Bible says that what that means is that the image of God, the icon of God that each one of us, in a sense, bears, that it's bent, it's twisted a little bit.

And so we do evil. And you see, here's why it is that we're so often a mystery to ourselves. First of all, we're a mystery to ourselves because we have a sense of the greatness and the dignity and the worth and the value of every human being.

We have a sense about that. Even when people try to shame us or people say that we're losers or we're not good or we're outcasts, that we know that there's something within us, that those are lies, that that is not true, that we don't have the grammar and the logic of most people in the world to understand what the Bible teaches, that they are sensing something is true, that we are made in the icon, the image of God.

And at the same time, we can't just look within to figure out what our true identity is because if we look within, we cannot distinguish just by looking in from that which is bent and broken within us and that which is truly and utterly of God.

[30 : 08] We need God to speak to us from outside to clarify these things. And if you and I are made in the icon of God, we will never know who we are unless we know the God in whose image we are made.

You will never know who you really are if you're made in the icon of the true triune God unless you know the one in whom you were truly made.

People might say, but, okay, well, George, that's, wow, I didn't sort of get that in the text. And remember what I said, love came and died for the loveless that loved and lovely you may be.

And so people wonder about Jesus. Well, here's the wonderful thing. Jesus is putting this idea in the apostle's mind a couple of days just before they go and they go, he goes to the cross and he's reminding them of the fact that human beings are made in the icon of God.

And what they're going to understand later on after the resurrection is that when they're looking at Jesus dying on the cross, they are looking at the one in whose icon we are made, dying for all who bear his icon.

[31 : 21] And if you think about it for a second, there is no way that Jono dying on the cross, that he could cover anybody's sin or Alex or Victor, Harold, Victory, or George.

I'm just, we're just one bloke or one gal really only dying for ourselves. But if every human being is made in the image of God and that very one, that the image itself that we bear, only the image itself can stand for all who bear the image of God.

And that is why only what Jesus does in his life and death and resurrection can stand for people in Africa, for people in United States, for people in Asia, for people in the first century, for people today, for babies in the womb, for the aged.

His death can stand for all. I mean, if you think about it for a second, there is no greater inclusion than Jesus died on the cross for you.

There is no greater inclusion. We receive it by faith. Even how we enter into what he has done for us, not all of us can answer complicated crosswords.

[32 : 52] Not all of us can run a four-minute mile or many of us probably couldn't run a ten-minute mile or answer complicated math questions. But you know what?

Everybody can be humble. Everybody can receive. But what about this idea that he crushes?

You see, that's once again the brilliance and the wisdom of his answer. You see, he doesn't say, I mean, what's going on here is that, so this little coin, it bears the icon of this guy who thinks he's semi-divine, but he's not.

He doesn't bear the image of God any more than you or I. And the people listening to this all know that the Bible is telling them that they walk around bearing the icon of God.

That's who they are. Icon bearers, so to speak, of the triune God. And Jesus says, but he doesn't say that Caesar doesn't have a place.

[34 : 01] You see, it isn't that when you put your faith and trust in the triune God that God's desire is to crush diversity. Not at all.

He's saying, you know what? I always intended, in a sense, that there'd be lots of diversity. That's why I made people with different hair colors, eye colors, skin colors, heights, ages.

This beautiful diversity. And in my kingdom and under my rule, it's not that I squish and quash diversity. It's not that all of a sudden I'll take away all of your fingerprints being unique and make them all the same.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. There's going to be governments. There's going to be families. There's going to be marriages. There's going to be churches. There's going to be single people. There's going to be big families and small families.

There's going to be babies. And you know that we're having all this diversity? Yeah, good grief. There can be a stamp collecting club, which isn't a thing anymore, I guess. That's like an old-fashioned analogy. And you know, there can be a mountain biking club and there can be a quilting club and there can be all this diversity.

[35 : 15] And it doesn't... Jesus doesn't sort of come to squish us and make all of us like identical marbles or all like identical little Lego pieces all the same color.

In his answer, he's saying, no, there's going to be government. And in fact, actually, if you think about it in his answer, he's even saying, listen, he's looking down the ages and he says, those of you in Canada, you're going to have your Caesar.

Those of you in China, you're going to have your Caesar. Those of you who are my children in Iran, you are going to have your Caesar. Those of you in Florida, you're going to have a seat.

He's calling us to be... He knows that he's going to call ordinary people out of every tribe and nation and language group.

We're not going to have a Mecca. We're not going to have a Jerusalem. We're not going to have a Moscow or a Washington or an Indian subcontinent upon which our identity is based and it's not going to be the case that real followers are all going to learn the same language.

[36 : 27] Keeping our language, keeping our culture, these things are all reformed and reordered and rejuvenated in God's kingdom.

It is a most excellent and most awe-inspiring diversity. One of the things, just in closing, that's so wonderful, if you ever have the privilege of going to Jerusalem, not because Jerusalem, on one hand, is the center of the Christian faith, but it is interesting to go there and know that it was on stones underneath us that Jesus walked.

But one of the things which is more wonderful than that is seeing the Christian pilgrims from China and Nigeria and India and England and Australia and Argentina and Chile all coming to see where Jesus had lived.

And hear the wonderful dozens and dozens and dozens of languages of people who called Jesus their Savior and the Lord. There is no greater diversity.

There is no greater equity than in the gospel. There is no greater inclusion than in the gospel. And there is no greater diversity than in the gospel. And he wants to include you. I invite you to stand.

[38 : 04] Bow your heads in prayer. Father, you know, we confess that sometimes we get worried about equity or we get worried about inclusion and we get worried about diversity.

And Father, I know that on one hand there are certain ways that that's talked about in our post-post-modern world that should worry us. That some modern forms of diversity actually create sameness and some modern forms of inclusion actually create exclusion and some forms of modern equity do in fact create disequity and disorder.

But Father, we give you thanks and praise that in your gospel you call us to a true and deeper and greater equity and inclusion and diversity, Father. And we ask, Lord, that you would help us to be so gripped by the gospel that it would be so real to our heart that we would have a secure identity, Father, in you, that knowing that you have made us to bear your image and your son died for us and that he is now, when we put our faith in him, he is our savior and our Lord and he is fitting us for a new heaven and a new earth that he is not going to erase us or destroy us or crush us.

He will take away our sin and our idols and our shame and make us more fully and truly ourselves, beginning to understand the mystery and riddle of who we are as we understand you better and can look at ourselves more clearly in light of the gospel.

And we ask, Lord, that you would do this wonderful work of the Holy Spirit deep within us to make the gospel more real to our heart that we might live free and unafraid in this world for your glory.

[39 : 48] And so, Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would do this wonderful work within and we ask this in the precious name of Jesus, your son and our savior. Amen. Amen.