

Made In God's Image

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] Genesis, and the passage we are considering this morning is Genesis 1, verses 26 through 31.

! But we'll also be reading Psalm 8. Genesis 1, beginning in verse 26.

Then God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

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. And God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.

[1 : 21] And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit.

You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every grain plant for food.

And it was so. And God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good.

And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day. Now, if you would turn to Psalm chapter 8, and that's on page 450, if you have a church Bible.

Psalm 8. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

[2 : 54] You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Let's pray together. Father, we bow our hearts this morning before you, the creator of everything and everyone.

[4 : 23] And we ask this morning that as we contemplate your word and what you did in creation, God, would you cause our hearts to be affected afresh?

And would you cause us to grasp the truth of this aspect of creation that we are considering this morning?

I pray, Lord, in this moment that you would give us all attentive hearts and minds, and I pray that you would grant me grace to be faithful to proclaim your word.

I thank you, Lord, for the promise of your spirit who convicts us and your spirit who enables us to do all that we do in your name. And so, Lord, would you cause your spirit to come afresh this morning?

upon me and to enable me to faithfully proclaim your word to your people for our good and for your glory.

[5 : 31] We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen. Well, last week we worked our way through the first five days of creation.

And this morning we want to consider the sixth day of creation. We want to consider what God did on the sixth day, the final act of creation.

And what we're able to see as we just read from Genesis chapter 1, what God did on the sixth day was that God created humans. Created men and women.

Created a man and a woman. And it's easy to look at this particular part of the creation account and see it as a purely chronological fact that on the sixth day, God created man.

Created them male and female. But this morning we're pausing. We're taking a slow read and a slow consideration of what God did on the sixth day.

[6 : 49] And what I hope that we are able to see as we consider this passage this morning is that God created humans last in creation to show that he placed them first over all creation.

I pray that is what we see this morning as we consider this account. That God created them last in order to show that he placed them first.

And so this morning I have two very simple points that I've organized the sermon under. And they are number one, humans created last. And number two, humans created first.

So let's consider the first one, humans created last. We saw last week that on the first three days of creation, what God did was he formed the heavens and the earth.

He created the infrastructure, as it were. And then he began to fill them starting on the fourth day. On the fourth day, he began to fill them by his creative word, by his spoken word, where he said, let there be or let there come forth.

[8 : 06] He filled the heavens with stars and the moon and the sun. He filled the sky with birds.

And then we see on the fifth day, he filled the earth with living things. He created livestock. And everything that creeps on the ground. And then on the sixth day, when you read the account, you see that God performs his final act of creation.

We're told in Genesis 1, verse 27, that God created humans, male and female, but in the account in chapter 1, we're not told how he does it.

We're not told like we are told about his other acts of creation that he spoke and things happened. We're not told here in chapter 1 how God created man and how he created them male and female.

We don't know how he did that until we get to chapter 2. And in chapter 2, what we see is that God does not do the same thing that he did in chapter 1.

[9 : 31] In chapter 1, he spoke and created by his powerful creative word. But in chapter 2, we see that what he does is he formed the man out of the dust.

And he breathed in him the breath of life. And he became a living creature. And then we also see in chapter 2 that God later, and it's interesting to take in the account of how things happen because we see in chapter 1 that he created the animals and then we read that he created man, male and female in his image.

But in chapter 2, we see the chronology of that because after God created Adam, he brought all the animals to Adam and asked them what he would name them. And Adam named them.

And then God, and this account really is not so much for God, it's kind of like imagine reading a story to a young child and how we would tend to condescend to the young child so they can grasp the story.

And so the Lord is doing that in this revelation of creation for us as well. And so when there was clearly no companion for Adam, and God helped Adam to see that he was different from all the other animals.

[10 : 58] All the other animals had a companion, but he had none. And then God put him to sleep and took out of him a rib, and from that rib he formed a woman.

So that's the underlying account of what we read here in Genesis chapter 1. Genesis chapter 1 is really just a summary of that where God says, let us make man.

So when it came to making man, when it came to creating humans, God, in essence, has a conference with the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We saw that in the first sermon in this series that creation didn't just happen with God the Father, but there was also God the Son.

We saw that from the Gospel of John chapter 1. And then also in verse 2 of chapter 1 of Genesis, we see that the Spirit was there hovering over the face of the deep.

[12 : 00] So this is a conference with the triune God, the Father saying to the Son and the Spirit, let us make man in our image and in our likeness.

And so God on the sixth day creates Adam and Eve, and this was his last act of creation. creation.

I'm sure most of us have heard that we should always do the important things first. We should have priorities. And whether it's in the area of relationships or financial obligations or work responsibilities, that we should attend to the important things first.

We should make sure we get those important things done. But I think we also know that we don't approach everything in life that way. Sometimes we have very important things to do, but we have many things to do, and we believe that it is best that we get those other lesser things out of the way, and then we focus on that final thing that is really important that we want to give our attention to.

I think those of us who are parents as well know that one of the approaches that we take to parenting, for example, sometimes we have to discipline our children or talk to them about a number of things, and we tend to leave the most important thing for last because we know that if we put that first and then talk about other things, it may get lost.

[13 : 36] It may get lost in the shuffle, lost in the details. And you know they actually tell us that when we write, if you're writing something and there's a list of things that you're stating, that it's always best to say the important thing last because generally the last thing is what people tend to remember.

I believe that when we consider this account of creation, what God did, I think God was intentionally communicating something by waiting to create Adam and Eve last.

God now, yes, in a sense the earth was uninhabitable and he needed to create the environment for them to be able to live, them and animals as well.

But I believe that what we see God doing in creation, if it is not in the fact that he created them last, it is how he created them and what he did as he created them that demonstrates that he placed them first and he placed them over all that he had created.

it. And this is the heart of the sermon. This is really the point of the sermon, the second point that God created, that God placed humans first.

[15 : 19] He created them last, but he really created them last to show that he placed them first. God placed humans first over creation by doing two particular things.

Two particular things. The first thing that God did to show that he placed humans first over creation was he made them in his own image. look again at what it says in verse 27.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. In creating us in his image, what God did was God made us to be personal, rational, and moral creatures.

He didn't have to do that. but he did that. And what is clear is that God, in so doing, made mankind to be his representatives on the earth.

And built into that decision of creating us in his image is that we are accountable to God. animals are not accountable to God.

[16 : 52] Not in a moral sense. The physical creation is not accountable to God. Mountains and trees are not accountable to God.

the only part of all God's creation that has this moral accountability, that has this responsibility before God, are humans.

We alone bear this distinction. And here's the important point that I think should not be lost as we consider this this morning.

it is being created in the image of God that gives us our dignity and our worth. And no creature in God's creation has that dignity and that worth that God has given to us.

And God has given that to male and female. And this is the foundation of how we are to treat people. This is where we get our doctrine of the equality between men and women.

[18 : 08] We get it from here. God created men and women, male and female, with the same dignity and the same equality that is shared as an expression of being made in his image.

he didn't create men superior to women, did not make women inferior to men. And this should inform how we treat women and girls.

Indeed, this should inform how we treat all people. All people have the same dignity and the same worth, God's love.

We should never forget it. It doesn't matter what our race is. It does not matter what the complexion of our skin is.

It does not matter our place of origin. It does not matter what our nationality is. It matters not about any particular attribute about us.

[19 : 19] the only thing that matters about every single person is the breath of God in him or her is that that person is made in the image and the likeness of God.

And that is where worth comes from. And when we treat people otherwise, when a man treats his wife as less than, or even a child as less than, or a person from another race or another nationality as less than, it is a clear indication that we don't understand the foundational truth of what God did in creation when he placed his image on men and women.

Every person, without distinction, without exception, bears the image of God. And this truth should dictate how we treat them.

It is heartbreaking to watch some people treat animals better than they will treat people. It is heartbreaking to watch that there are people who are more concerned about the environment than they are concerned about people.

God created people above all of them, above all the animals, above the environment. people who are not to store the environment. We are to store the environment, but we don't do it to communicate that we value the environment more than we value people.

[20 : 59] God demonstrated that he placed mankind first over all creation by creating them in his image. And here's the reality.

reality. We would not know this except for divine revelation. If all it was that we were on this earth as the creatures that we are, and we look at all the other animals and we look at everything that is created, we could not in and of ourselves know that we were created in the image of God.

But God revealed it to Moses and he records it for us and he says, when God was creating, he decided to make man, male and female, in his image.

Brothers and sisters, this is divine revelation. This is revelation from God himself that our first understanding, our first hint about God is that we are created in his image.

If you take out this particular part of divine revelation that we have in the book of Genesis, up to this point that we are reading, we don't know much about God.

[22 : 17] But because of this revelation, we have some understanding about God. God is and God is going to do this and we will be misguided if we were to think, okay, so I'm like God, so I can do what God can do.

We can't do what God can do. God spoke and the world came into being. I mean, there are people who think they can do that and they can decree this and declare that and it'll happen. And they've been doing that forever and that has not happened.

God is the only one who is able to speak and bring things into being. And so that should not be what we get from this particular passage.

church. On Friday, I was here at the office and I was preparing this sermon and the doorbell rang and as I approached the door, I saw that it was a gentleman who comes by regularly for food.

He's an alcoholic. He leads a very hard life. He does not keep himself well. And one of the things I do, I get people like him coming by regularly.

[23 : 36] And I really try to communicate my interactions with them that this is someone who is made in the image of God. I try to do that.

I try to do it by my patients. Try to have conversation with them. Sometimes pray for them. Try to be as helpful as I can. I try to do that in an ongoing way. I don't do that perfectly.

But I try to do that. This gentleman normally comes on a Tuesday. But he came on Friday. And I thought, how kind of the Lord to remind me once again, as I am considering what it means to be made in the image of God, that this man, despite his alcoholism, despite the way he looks and the way he carries himself, he is someone who is made in the image of God.

And you look at him and the image of God is marred, it is defaced, but it's not erased. The image of God is as much upon him as it is upon me, or upon you, or upon any other person.

We are all image bearers of God. And brothers and sisters, may God help us to remember this. We're not better than other people because of what we know, or what we have, or what we've accomplished.

[25 : 13] We're not better than other people because of the things we have possessed, or the things we do possess. We are who we are by the grace of God.

And but for the grace of God, there go you or I. We're all image bearers of God.

And we need to remember this. But you know, we need to remember it not just for other people, we need to remember it for ourselves as well. So many times we can find ourselves seeking outside of the fact that we've been created in the image of God to find value and worth in people and things and in all manner of different situations.

We don't get our value and worth from what we own or what we have accomplished. we get our value, we get our dignity, we get our worth from the triune God who made us in His image.

And we are blind whenever we're trying to get value from someone or from something else. Trying to find it in some relationship.

[26 : 42] Maybe it's a young person trying to be accepted and wanting to be a part of some gang or some group, even when you know what they may be involved in is not right because you're looking for value and worth and God has already given that to us in the fact that He created us in His image.

We are special in the sense that we have the dignity that God gives us by creating us in His image and in His likeness.

And so this morning if you're struggling with how you view yourself, how you feel about yourself, be reminded God created you in His image and that's more than enough.

That's an expression that shouts louder than anything else that we ever experienced in this life. That God set His image upon us.

that's where we derive value. And God help us when we lay that aside and we find it in trappings that are transient and that will soon fall away.

[28 : 03] The second way that God demonstrated that He placed humans first in creation first overall creation is He gave them dominion over it.

So first He created us in His image and then He gave dominion over everything. And this granting of dominion flows from having been created in the image of God because God created us as personal, rational, and moral creatures to give us the capacity to be able to manage and to be able to be His representatives in the earth and over all that He created.

And God gave this mandate to have dominion over the earth and over the things in the earth and over the birds in the air. He gave it to males and females.

And it's quite interesting when you read the account, the account would be, the proper way to read the account, the account is not so much that God said to Adam, you have dominion.

The account properly read is that He gave them dominion. And so it would appear from the reading of Genesis 1 and 2 that God did not give this dominion mandate or what theologians called this cultural mandate until Eve had been formed out of Adam's side.

[29 : 42] Look at verse 28 again and consider the second act that God did. And God blessed them and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

That is a cultural mandate that God gives to men and women that he gave first to Adam and Eve and then he told them that they were to be fruitful and they were to multiply and they were to fill the earth and so God's idea was that the whole earth would be filled with men and women and boys and girls who bore his image and who were managing as stewards.

over his whole creation. Notice that God does not give dominion over people. He gives dominion over birds and beasts and creeping things but there is no dominion given over human beings.

He did not give Adam dominion over Eve and vice versa. He didn't give Eve dominion over Adam. and this is why husbands do not legitimately have any dominion over their wives.

They have no legitimate right to control their wives and again vice versa. Now don't you aware of this continuing debate that we're having been having it from 2009 about forced sexual intercourse and marriage and when you think about that and you talk with some men in particular what it comes down to is that they really believe that marriage gives them the right and the authority to have their way over and above the will of their wives.

[32 : 03] And brothers and sisters that is so contrary to that is that is contrary to the initial revelation that we get about men and women here on the first page of the Bible. And it is only amplified as we get through the rest of the Bible.

And what's sad about this is there are some who would name the name of Christ and who believe that they have a right to override a person's will because that person happens to be their spouse.

Brothers and sisters that is a betrayal of the revelation that we have in Scripture of God creating men and women in his image and God giving men and women dominion over everything except one another.

God created us with a will. God created us with a rational mind to be able to think and to decide.

And brothers and sisters that should be respected under every single circumstance and especially in the context of marriage. Because marriage more than any other human relationship is the context in which God decided that he would communicate to a watching and a needy world the love of Christ.

[33 : 26] The love of Christ for his people. He decided that he would let that be on display in marriage. And Christ never dominates us and beats us to the ground and violates us in a dehumanizing way.

He never does that. And so no husband has the right to do that as well.

But brothers and sisters, any honest reading of this account, any honest reading of this account that God has given men and women dominion and rulership over the earth, dominion over the plants and dominion over everything that he has put the life of breath in, you read this account and you survey the world and you have to ask the question, what happened?

what happened? The honest assessment is that what we see and what we're experiencing is not this mandate that God gave to men and women.

The gentleman who came on Friday, he was being dominated by a plant. alcohol comes from a plant.

[35 : 15] There are people who are being dominated by other drugs that come from plants and that's not God's design. And so it raises the question, what happened?

God did this, but we're not seeing that lived out as we look around in the world in which we live and as we listen to what is happening all around the world.

There are many people who do not reflect God's image. And when we consider what happened, we're going to consider that properly when we get to Genesis chapter three.

But when we consider what happened, in a sense, it's kind of like, have you ever seen a banana when it falls to the ground and gets bruised and it's defaced and it's blackened, it has blemishes all over it?

What happened is man fell. Man fell from what God ordained him to be and called him to do.

[36 : 39] But in spite of all of man's fallenness, in Psalm 8, the Psalmist David takes up this contemplation about man and he asks a particular question.

In verses three and four, he says, when I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man?

That you are mindful of him and the son of man, that you care for him? Notice that David states that God is mindful of mankind and he cares for him.

David is actually saying that God, I don't understand it. I look at the splendor of the heavens that he was able to see to the extent that he could see and David obviously couldn't see what we are told exists in the heavens and with all the instruments that you can now see and behold what is in the heavens.

But David was just looking from the naked eye and the beauty of the heavens, the splendor of the heavens, stars and the moon and the sun. And he says, God, what is man that you are mindful of him?

[38 : 13] Over all of that, Lord, you are mindful of man. David was making the point that God is more mindful of man than he is of all of that. And directly what David is saying is, God, you made man special because you think about him, you're mindful of him, you're considerate of him.

And he is really nothing compared to the majesty that I see in the heavens. David goes on in verse five, he says, you made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands. You have placed him, you have placed under, sorry, you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

But the psalmist does not directly answer the question. He leaves the question hanging as it were, where he says, what is man that you're mindful of him?

But we need to pick up the question. We should not leave it hanging. We should try to consider, Lord, what is man that you're mindful of him? Why did you place your image on him?

[39 : 40] Why did you give him dominion over all that you created? brothers and sisters, any lack of contemplation of this question is really a sign of thoughtlessness or just arrogance or both.

David rightly took up the question, God, what is man? Why did you do that for him? it seems though that David answers the question in how he begins and how he ends Psalm 1, Psalm 8.

He begins, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens. He ends the same way. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

You have set your glory above the heavens. Why was God mindful of man? Why did God place his image on man and give him dominion over all things?

God did so to point not to man, not to man being special, but to God, who was all majestic and who was all glorious and who set his image on man.

[41 : 16] And so God's plan was that being his image bearers, we would point back to him and not to ourselves. That we would bring glory to him and not to ourselves.

And so rightly the psalmist begins by saying, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. And he ends by saying, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Because as image bearers of God, we are to mirror him and we are to point others to him.

Our lives are to be a picture that takes attention from ourselves and turns it to God.

God's love to God. But we fell short. And many times we still fall short. Many times people look at us even as those who have come to Christ and belong to Christ, they're not reflected back to God.

They're not pointed to God. Adam failed and we likewise failed. God's love to God. And yet, the psalmist takes up this contemplation with man.

[42 : 29] And I don't know the point at which we don't know that the psalms are in any chronological order and so we don't know whether many of the trials and troubles and the sins that David committed had already happened at this particular point.

But I think David understood his own sinfulness as we understand our own sinfulness as well. And yet he takes up this contemplation about man and how God placed his image upon him and gave him dominion over all things.

But the first Adam failed and likewise all of his descendants failed and we failed to be the true image bearers of God.

We failed to rightly point to him and how we have lived our lives in his world. And so what God did was God sent the last Adam.

He sent the last Adam who would bear his image and who would perfectly keep the law and who would perfectly honor and obey God and who would perfectly reflect the glory of God.

[43 : 49] We read in Hebrews 1 that he was the exact radiance of the glory of God. He is the only one who rightly and perfectly reflected the image of God.

God. And in Hebrews chapter 2 the writer to the Hebrews does something very interesting. He picks up Psalm 8 but he attributes it to the Lord Jesus.

He picks up Psalm 8 and he attributes it to the Lord Jesus because the Lord Jesus is the only one about whom Psalm 8 is really true.

He is the only one who has fully and perfectly reflected the glory and the image of God as he lived life in this earth.

And so the writer to the Hebrews rightly picks it up and attributes it to the Lord Jesus Christ. And brothers and sisters we who belong to Christ we who have been born again we're no longer in the first Adam we are now in the last Adam.

[45 : 11] And God's will for us in the last Adam that we read in Romans 8 is that he will conform us he has predestined that we should be conformed to the image of his dear son.

that we might reflect the image of God and that we might point to the true and the living God.

God created us last that he may place us first but we failed in that representation. but now through Jesus Christ we can be better image bearers of God and point everyone else to look to him and not to us.

And I pray this morning that this will be increasingly true for all of us. and I also pray that when we in our weakness in our sinfulness when we fall short of this I pray that we would have the presence of mind to remember that Jesus he perfectly bore the image of God in every respect and he did it for us.

He did it for us. It doesn't mean that we are not to seek to live faithful lives bearing the image of God. Yes we must but we don't depend on that. We depend on the one who perfectly bore the image of God for us and the one who through his death indeed through his life has caused us even desire to live that way.

[47 : 12] he is our true and our final Adam who we are associated with who we belong to and it's on that basis that ultimately we are accepted before God and pray together.

Father we thank you that you are mindful of mankind.

We thank you that you set us over your creation. You've given us dominion over it all and though we fail Lord you were merciful in sending your son to enable us to be true image bearers that you have called us to be.

I pray that you would help us to remember that no amount of defacement can erase the image of God that you have placed upon us.

Actually please join along as we sing O Great God. O Great God.

I face and you are worthy to be praised with my every thought and deed and o great god of highest hell glorify your name through you are worthy yes you are worthy to be praised with my every thought and deed and o great god of highest heaven glorify your name through me father that is our prayer that you will glorify your name through us lord help us as we are daily conformed more and more to the image of the lord jesus christ to be better image bearers of you in a dark and a broken world i pray lord this morning i pray lord this morning that you would help us to lean upon your grace to do that lord also that we would lean upon your grace that we may have eyes to see all people as those you have created in your image and in your likeness

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