

Created In His Image

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[0 : 00] Well, would you please take your Bibles and open them up again to the book of Genesis? We're still in chapter 1. Somebody asked me, I won't tell you who, this morning, if it was really going to take 10 years for us to get through Genesis.

Lord willing, will not. But the first three chapters here, as we've said, are so foundational for us that we are going to spend a good bit of time walking slowly through these first three chapters.

And today we're looking at the sixth day of creation, that's Genesis chapter 1, verses 24 through 31. And so when you found that in your Bibles, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's word this morning from Genesis chapter 1, verses 24 through 31, sixth day of creation.

And God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds, livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

[1 : 15] 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.

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.

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

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

[2 : 25] The sixth day. Would you pray with me once more? Lord, what an honor it is to be made in your image and to be remade into your image through your son, Jesus.

And so we pray now as we look to this text, God, would you shape us further into your image through the word by the power of your spirit this morning, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. You may remember seeing the headline about a year ago last week, actually, is January 28, 2024.

And the headline read, Outrage as iconic Mona Lisa painting defaced by protesters. This is possibly the most famous image in the world painted by probably one of the most famous artists ever to live, Leonardo da Vinci.

And apparently a group of protesters wanted to raise awareness about food insecurity in France. And the best way they could think to do that was to cover the Mona Lisa with a bunch of pumpkin soup.

[3 : 33] I threw it all over the famous picture. This isn't the first time that somebody has attacked the Mona Lisa. I read this week that apparently over the years she has been stabbed by a razor blade.

And she's had acid poured on her. She was kidnapped once for two years. Nobody knew where the Mona Lisa was. For two years, an employee of the Louvre kidnapped her and kept her hidden.

She's had rocks thrown at her. She's had mugs thrown at her. She's even had pastries smeared all over her. But amazingly, through it all, some 500 years later, the image still remains.

Last week, we began to look at this first week of creation and we saw God create the skies and the earth and the sea and the sun and the moon and the stars.

He worked like an architect. He was forming this unformed universe. And then he worked like an artist. You remember, he was filling this universe with life and beauty over the first five days.

[4 : 35] But now we come to this sixth day on day six and we see God is doing something different here on day six than the rest of his five days of creation.

God, the artist of all creation, here on day six, makes mankind in his glorious image. This is the most impressive image in all the earth and is made by the most impressive, most glorious, most famous artist in all the universe.

But as we know, over the years, this image has been attacked, has been marred, has been defaced, it has been drugged through the mud.

But even still today, through it all, the image of God remains on every boy, every girl, every man, every woman.

It is so important that we understand this high honor that you and I are made in God's image. And so what I want to do this morning is I want to look to this text and ask the question, well, what does it mean that you and I and everybody else, we are made in the image of God?

[5 : 47] What does that mean? What does that mean for our worth and our dignity and our roles and our responsibility? What does it mean for us to be humans made in the image of God?

And we'll see three answers to that question here this morning. Three answers. Being in God's image means that you were made to resemble him, that you represent him, and that you receive from him your identity and your dignity.

And we'll walk through all three of these together. First, we see being made in God's image means that you and I, in a very real way, we resemble God.

Look there with me to verse 24. And just like on the third day of creation, there are two acts here on the sixth day. These are parallels here.

First, we see God calls for the earth to bring forth living creatures according to their kinds. And he says three categories of these land animals are mentioned as livestock. These are the large domesticated animals.

[6 : 55] And then there's the creeping things. Those are all the animals you don't want in your house. And then there's the wild beasts of the earth. Those are the wild animals. And just as with the rest of creation, everything here is put in its order, isn't it?

Each with its kind. Each in its place. And again, just as with the first five days of creation, God sees what he's made and he declares over it that what he's made is good.

But then we see here that we're showing something happens that's different than what's happened here on the first five days. Something totally unique and distinct happens here in verse 26.

Then God said, let us make man in our image and after our likeness. So, verse 27 says, so God created man in his own image.

In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. This repetition here is intentional. It's meant to draw our attention here that something special, something unique, something important is happening here in the making of man.

[8 : 06] This is the grand finale of the week of creation. This is the end of the fireworks show. That all of this has been building up to this moment, which is incredible.

Because when you think about it, you compare us to the rest of creation. And I'm sure you've seen the same images that I've seen of Hubble telescope images of the galaxy.

These pictures of the Milky Way. You've seen images of the stars and of the sun and of the planets. You look up at the sun and how bright and powerful it is. I'm sure each of you has been to some part of God's creation.

It just makes your jaw drop and hit the floor in awe at what God has done. But here we see that all of this is just the opening act.

His crowning work. The grand finale of all his creation is us. Why? Because unlike any other part of creation, man and woman distinctly bear the image of God.

[9 : 15] We are made to resemble him. I do want you to notice here also, by the way, clearly mankind is not a part of the animal kingdom.

I know that's different from what you learn in elementary school science. But clearly here, mankind is set apart in a class of his own.

He's distinct. He doesn't belong in any of these three categories of the land animals. He's set aside in a category of his own. And there's not a hint here that he might just be an elevated, evolved form of any of these creatures.

Or just one of the creatures that just happened to develop a little bit further, a little bit faster and turn into man. From the very beginning, we see mankind is set apart with this distinction.

That he and he alone, out of all creation, is made in the image of God. In fact, verse 26, we see mankind is given authority and dominion over all the rest of the animals.

[10:16] Over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth. Over all the creeping things that you don't want in your house. Mankind is given dominion.

There's an undeniable distinction here. In the value, in the worth, in the role of humanity over all the rest of creation.

He is not one of them. He's certainly not less than them. He's not equal with them. He is in a class of his own.

Why? Because we, in a very unique way, are made to resemble God. I remember growing up. More than once, somebody would tell me that I looked like my father.

I was David's son. There's no denying it. And then I started to lose my hair. And even more, I heard I was David's son. There's no denying it. And then we had Cobb. And here's the same thing.

[11:21] He, in a very real way, resembles me. You look just like your father. You must belong to him. And in a way, he bears my image. But, you know, of course, God has no physical being like we do.

And so we don't share our father's nose or his ears or his eye or his hairline. Right? So how do we resemble God? Well, we share some of his distinct qualities.

Like God, you and I are relational. We can speak and communicate. We can speak and communicate with God himself.

This is a very big part of what it means to be human, is that we can have a relationship with God, speak with him, relate to him. And like God, we're rational creatures, sometimes at least.

Right? And we can think and we can reason. We can understand. We can gain knowledge and gain understanding. We can gain wisdom. We have personality. We have capacity for moral understanding and decision making.

[12:28] We have capacity to understand and obey the law of God. In a reflective sort of way, we can, as his creatures made in his image, we can share and experience and reflect his love, his goodness, his kindness.

We have capacity for holiness and for justice and for graciousness and for faithfulness, for patience, for wisdom. These are all what we call the communicable attributes of God.

Now, that's a big word, isn't it? And all that simply means is those descriptions of God that he shares with those who are made in his image. These are ways that we can be like God.

So when we see these qualities in people around us, even in non-believers, we ought to see them as mirror-like reflections of the glory of God.

We ought to celebrate these glimpses of God's character in ourselves and in one another. And when Christians put these qualities on, and when we pursue these God-like characteristics and put them on, we are showing forth to the watching world what God is like.

[13:44] This is an incredible distinction, an incredible honor that God has given us. Mankind is made to resemble God, which comes, second, with a big responsibility.

Second, being made in God's image means that we represent him. We represent him. Look there with me to verse 28.

Mankind is given a task here. It says God blessed them and he said to them, which that's new, by the way. God hasn't spoken directly to any part of his creation up until now, but now he speaks directly to mankind, blesses mankind, and now he gives us a job.

Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. 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.

So now we see that at least part of our imaging forth of God to the world is in our God-given responsibilities. We're not just meant to look like him.

[14:59] We're meant to act like him. We're meant to function like him. We're meant to work like him, even to work as an extension of him here on the earth.

You know, ancient kings in this time, they used to set up statues on the borders of their territory. They would put up images of themselves on the borderlines of their territory to show, well, this land here is mine.

These images here, they represent me. They represent my rule and my authority. And so now here, in a similar way, God is setting forth his images in his domain.

And he says, go fill the earth with my image. They're commanded to go fill the domain of God. Now, I want you to think about these commands here.

Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it. In light of what we've seen God do already in the first five days of creation. Because this is a command to continue the work of God as his representatives here on earth.

[16:06] Think about it with me. All of this, all of this is reproducing God's own creative activity. You remember last week, right? How God was busy giving shape and form to the formless.

And then he was filling up the emptiness. And he was ruling over his creation by the power of his word. And now, what does he say? He says, you get to go be a part of this.

You get to go represent me by continuing my work in the world. So go give form to the formless. Go maintain the structure and the order of the earth. Go rule over creation.

Go subdue creation. Go have dominion. And order all things by my word. You get to work as God's representatives here on earth. You know, I think this really, it gives shape to the way that we think about work and vocation and labor, doesn't it?

Work in and of itself and labor in and of itself isn't inherently bad. You think about this tomorrow morning when you go clock in to work, okay?

[17:16] Before sin enters the world and makes work difficult and bears thorns and thistles, it's hard for us to do labor. Before any of this happens, work in and of itself is a gift of God.

It's a blessing for the glory of God. And so Christians are called to whatever they do, they're called to work heartily as for the Lord and not for men.

And whatever work we involve ourselves in, it's meant to be an extension of the work of God. As we form the formless, order all things by His word.

And then we see here this command to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, subdue it. That's a command to work as God's own representatives and see that the ends of the earth are filled with His glory.

We're called, like God, to fill the earth with image bearers. Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth.

When a husband and a wife come together and they say, let us make a child in our own image, who does that sound like to you?

[18:21] They're representing and extending the work of God. And in a beautiful act of creation, an eternal soul is now formed and brought into the world.

An image bearer is formed. And God's image is multiplied on the earth through this blessing of childbearing. There's another spiritual dimension to these commands here that I want us to see, isn't there?

Because some of y'all are tuning me out. Some of y'all who think that you're past the age of childbearing have already stopped listening. I want you to come back to me, okay?

And some of you who have retired from your day jobs have already tuned me out and stopped listening. So you come back here with me too because there's work for you to do still. Listen to this. Remember again how it is that God brings beauty and order out of chaos.

How was it? It's through the power of His Word, right? How is it that He forms the formless and He fills the earth with beauty and with life?

[19:28] It's through the power of His Word. How is it that He rules over all things in His domain? It's through the power of His Word.

So how is it that you think that we as His representatives are to continue this work of God and to rule over all things and to bring order out of chaos and to fill the earth with His glory?

Well, it's through the power of His Word. Spiritually speaking, on this side of the fall into sin, on this side of the chaos of sin in the world, one of the main ways that we rule over and subdue the world is by making certain that the world doesn't rule over and subdue us.

And how do we do that? We guard ourselves by the power of His Word. It's by living according to His Word in our own lives, not letting the chaos of sin rule in your life, but instead you rule over it by the Word.

Not letting the weeds grow in your mind and in your heart, but fighting for the purity of Eden in your own heart and in your life. Not letting the chaos rule over your family and rule over your marriage, but instead making the Word of God central in your marriage.

[20 : 51] This is how we bring form to the chaos here on this side of the fall. Letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, and then out of that, letting the Word shape and form your life at home and at work and wherever you may go.

Also, on this side of the fall, one of the main ways that Christians, all Christians, young and old, can be fruitful and multiply is not just by having lots of babies, although that's good, it's by going and making disciples.

Bearing spiritual children. Investing in the next generation of believers. Sharing the Gospel with those who don't know the Lord.

And when they come to faith in Christ, guess what happens in them? They are reborn as children of God. The best way for you to fill the earth with the domain and the rule and the reign of God, to fill the earth with His image, is to share the Gospel and make disciples.

And pray that through your faithful evangelism, the Lord would bring many spiritual children into the world by faith in Christ. This is God's means, ultimately, of filling the earth with His image, with His glory.

[22 : 19] Church, each one of us has been given this responsibility to rule and to reproduce. To order all things by His word and to fill the earth with His image.

This is a high honor, is it not? Finally, third, being made in God's image means that we receive from Him our identity and our dignity.

I wanted to shift gears here for a minute away from what we're called to do and instead focus here on this last point with who we are. With our identity in Christ.

The fact that you are made in God's image. This is the building block for our identity. You realize this? And this is the foundational building block for who you are.

Mark chapter 12. You don't have to turn there with me, but maybe just mark this down for later. The Pharisees and the Herodians, they come to Jesus. You may know this story. And they ask Him a question.

[23 : 26] It's a trick question. They're trying to trip Him up. They're trying to catch Him. And they say, Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.

So here's the question. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them or should we not? But knowing their hypocrisy, He said to them, Why put me to the test?

Bring me a denarius and let me look at it. And they brought Him one. And He said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this? Whose picture is on this coin?

And they said to Him, Caesar's. And Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

What's the point? Well, the coin bore Caesar's image. And so in a way, the coin belonged to Him. Jesus had no problem telling people they should pay their taxes.

[24 : 36] I know we don't like to hear that this time of year, right? He said that belongs to Him. It bears His image. But there's a bigger point here that Jesus is making. Render to God the things that are God's.

Well, what's that? What bears God's image? You do. And so what does that mean for you? It means that you and I belong to Him.

He gets to determine who you are. He gets to determine your identity. He gets to give you, and He gets to determine your value and your worth.

You belong to God. This is the fundamental identity shaper that we all need to understand. We bear His image, so we belong to Him.

Everything else around us, you realize this, don't you? Everything else around you is competing with God for that place of being able to shape and form your identity.

[25 : 40] Everything around you is wanting to boot God out of the way and have the main voice in determining who you are. Everything around you wants to help shape your worth and your sense of

identity and belonging and being.

One of my professors used to say, the most important part about you is not who you are, but it's whose you are. It's to whom do you belong?

Church, I think we need to cling to this as the foundational roots for our identity, and especially so because in our time, and especially amongst younger generations, there is one primary identity shaper that's taken over just about everything else, and it's sexual orientation and gender identity. I believe that this is one of the main cultural issues that we face, and we really need to understand what God's word says about this because it's not silent about this, is it? Look with me to verse 27 again.

God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him, male and female. He created them. We learn here that from the beginning, God created us, male and female.

[27 : 10] We are embodied, gendered beings. Sexuality is a good part of God's design. We bear God's image as embodied, gendered beings, as male or as female, and it's good, it's very good, he says, that we're made in his image, male and female.

Humanity here is created binary, which means, if anybody is confused about their gender identity, our response as Christians, we shouldn't encourage them to be who they feel like they are. Instead, we ought to graciously, lovingly, patiently, and clearly point them back to God's good design, how they were created.

We receive our identity from our creator. You belong to him. But not only this, look here with me, I want you to see this. All of us also receive our dignity from our creator.

Our sense of worth and our value, our dignity comes from the fact that we are made in the image of God.

[28 : 26] You remember Israel read this text as they're coming out of Egypt and heading to the promised land and they knew that in Egypt, Pharaoh was considered to be the image of God.

Pharaoh was the embodiment of God. He was very God in the flesh according to the Egyptians. But here in Genesis, Genesis corrects this on two levels.

For one, nobody is God in the flesh here. And none of us are the full embodiment of God. It brings everybody down to the same level. But at the same time, it raises all of us up with this incredible dignity that all of us are made in the image of God.

So you Hebrew slaves, guess what? You share the same level of dignity and worth as Pharaoh himself. You women here who had little to no status in the ancient Near East, you are just as valuable and dignified as men.

He made us in his image, male and female. He created them. This message is completely radical in this context. All mankind bears the image of God.

[29 : 36] Which means that all people are owed our utmost honor and respect as men and women born in his image. This means all people.

All people born and unborn are made in the image of God. Those inside the womb or outside the womb, your location doesn't change your worth.

They're still image bearers from the moment of conception. People with and people without all sorts of disabilities, equally made in the image of God, equally valuable and worthy of honor and respect. People of every race and every color of skin that doesn't change your dignity and worth. Every ism that you can think of is shattered right here, isn't it? Because the image of God is upon every person.

Ageism, sexism, racism, any type of attitude that might put you above somebody else, it gets shattered here. Because our dignity as a human race at a basic level is not determined or defined by our usefulness to society.

[30 : 42] It is not determined by our ability or by anything in us at all. It's determined by the image of God upon us.

I love how Derek Kidner puts it. He says that this requires us to take all human beings infinitely seriously. It requires us to show honor to all people as God's own royal representatives.

I wonder if we see people this way. I wonder if we speak to people this way. Not just one another.

We love each other here in this room. I get that. People that we don't know. Is this how we treat and honor and speak about people that we don't know? How about how you treat and honor and speak to people online?

It's real easy to be mean online. How about how we speak and honor and treat people that we don't really like too much? That we disagree with?

[31 : 53] That we didn't vote for? There's a basic level of honor here that's owed to all people. Because all people bear the image of God.

God this is the most glorious image in all the earth imprinted on us by the most glorious creator and artist in all the universe.

Look what he says about it here in verse 31. Over and over and over and over again throughout this week as he creates he says it was good it was good it was good and now for the seventh time God says it was good but not just good what does he say?

It was very good but not for long. As we'll see in just a few weeks something has happened that has defaced this very good image.

Sin has entered into the world and corrupted this very good image. Sin didn't destroy the image of God it's still there but it has smeared it and dragged it through the mud and thrown rocks at it and tried everything that it can to make it almost unrecognizable at times so that now it's defaced the image.

[33 : 18] Something is off we can agree about this can't we? If something is terribly off the image is distorted so none of us fully resemble God like we should there's parts in all of us that you got all this other stuff mingled in there's anger that shouldn't be there there's greed that shouldn't be there there's attitudes of the heart that just are nasty and prideful there's lust that shouldn't be there and none of us represent him fully as we should we don't rule over the world we become slaves to sin we let the world rule over us the question that we come back to time and time and time again is how can this tarnished image be restored back to his original glory is it possible and the good news of the gospel yes it can Christ Jesus has come to restore us fully into the image of

God this is the good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ has come to restore what was lost and broken and tarnished by sin and it is in him and him alone that there's hope that this image of God that's so hard to even recognize at times can be brought back to its former glory and preserved for the rest of eternity Christ alone can do this because Colossians 1 tells us he is the image of the invisible God no one has looked more like God than him all of the glorious attributes of God his kindness his faithfulness his gentleness his mercy his grace are on full display in Jesus Christ he perfectly resembled God because he is the image of the invisible God and he and he alone has totally perfectly ruled over the chaos of this present evil age he's ruled over and conquered sin and darkness and even the grave so to him is given dominion over all things in heaven and on earth all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him and now what's he doing he's filling the earth with children of

God who are remade in the image of God by faith in Christ this is why Christ came this is the eternal plan of God for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the first born among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified and our future hope our confidence through the resurrection of Christ is that just as we have borne the image of the man of dust so we also shall bear the image of the man of heaven Jesus came so that any ruined broken dirty sinner like me who trusts in

Christ would be remade into the image of Christ who is the image of God friend if you're not a believer I have good news for you there is a way for you to be restored back to your original design to be forgiven totally of all the many ways you don't look like God and to begin to see his glorious image restored in you and it's this would you come to Christ and repent of your sin and trust fully in him and believer you are called to be conformed to the image of his son you are called to exercise dominion you are called to put sin to death and you are called to fill the earth with the image of God by multiplying and making disciples of all nations and so we have to ask ourselves don't we how are we doing here are we putting on what looks like our father are we representing him in our families and in the world are we allowing anything else to define us and give us our worth and shape our identity other than the glorious good news that we belong to him through faith in Christ to be made in his image is an incredible gift what an honor and when we think about this take the time to meditate on this our response ought to be like the psalmist in psalm chapter 8

I want to close by reading this to you oh lord our lord how majestic is your name in all the earth 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 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 yet 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 the fish of the sea whatever passes along the paths of the seas oh lord our lord how majestic is your name in all the earth let's pray father god what a incredible privilege that we would bear your image what an incredible responsibility that we have to represent you here on earth as your royal representatives in all creation and what an incredible gift it is that the image of god himself came to remake what's been broken and lost in the fall we love you lord we pray that we would honor you as your image bearers we ask this in jesus name amen■