

Sermon Mini Series: Everything You Need to Know About Our Humanity

Sermon Title: What the Bible Says About Man's Creation

April 8, 2018

Theme verse: *Genesis 1:26–27 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. (ESV)*

Introduction: We live in a world where human life is treated no differently than animal life. In the case I am about to share a human child is treated worse than a dog. The poor PA child spilled his morning cereal and for that he was treated so badly, I can't finish the story because of our children. They do not need to hear it. All I can say is that righteous rage welled up in my being and I wanted to do terrible things to this mother and her boyfriend. But, how can a mother treat her own child with such brutality? The answer is simple. Human life has lost its meaning and value. When children are treated as curses rather than blessings, and parents are taught by every media outlet and movie and school that abortion is nothing but the destruction of unwanted tissue then a 4-year old boy who spilled his milk at the breakfast table is nothing more than bigger tissue. The Bible could not be more clear about the value of human life. In this short mini-series we will discuss what the Bible says about God's Relationship to mankind and in this sermon we will focus what it really means to be made in the image of God.

Question #1 How do we define mankind? And, what does that word (mankind) mean?

Genesis 5:1–2 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. (ESV)

- Do we begin our study of humanity scientifically, like a scientist studying a species and examining traits? If so, you would have the doctors telling us how we are made physically and how our bodies function. You would have the psychologists, and historians and sociologists telling us how we behave or behaved in the past and based on their description we might get a very dark and ugly picture of humanity as a whole. How do you define mankind based on the best of the best and compare it to the worst of the worst? Are we nothing more than a collection of Charles Mansons or Timothy LeVeys? Or do each of us carry the spiritual DNA of a Mother Teresa?
- No, that is a futile exercise. If you want to define mankind as God made us there are only two (well 3 actually) humans that you could use as test tube objects. Two of them would be Adam and Eve. Since they are no longer with us, we have only one other option and that is to study Jesus if we want to know a good definition of what it means to be human. After Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus was the only person ever to fully live out what it means to be human as God intended from the beginning.
- As to the word mankind, is that a correct word to use? Why not use the word womankind. Look at the verse above. God specifically chose a word to call the human race. He named us all Adam, which in Hebrew means “man”. We will discuss this more in future message but for now it is very significant that both men and women are labeled under one heading called man. It shows

God's intended headship in the home and in the human race by male leadership and is rightfully symbolized in our society by brides taking on the last name of their husband.

Answer to Question 1: Mankind is the epitome of God's creation and is given a status far above all other creatures because he (mankind) is the only creature to be made in the image of God.

Question #2 What exactly is the image of God in mankind?

Answers:

- The image of God is not physical. We were not made to look like God since God is spirit. Although Mormons say it is since they believe the god we came from has a body.
- The image of God is not just our ability to reason and philosophize. (Even though biologists call us homo (man) sapiens (wise) or the thinking being. This would mean that some people have more of the image of God than others.
- The image of God is not just our ability to feel emotions and to enter into loving relationships.
- Nor is it just the ability to make free moral choices.
- Nor is it the privilege and status of having dominion over creation, both plants and animals.
- The image of God in humans means simply that we are made "like" God. We have many more likenesses of God as humans than does any other creature and no one single characteristic or group of characteristics could adequately picture the depth of the image of God in us. God can think, we can think. God can plan, we can plan. God can contemplate the future, we can contemplate the future. God can love, we can love. God can make decisions, we can make decisions. God can relate to others, we can relate to others. How far do we need to go? Here's an example of what we mean. We are like God just as Seth was made in the likeness of Adam. *Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. (ESV)*
- However, one trait stands out more than all others and that is man was made to be and have an eternal soul. *Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (ESV)*

Because man is made in the image of God (imago dei):

1. We have a purpose no other creature can come close to accomplishing. That is; we were created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. *Isaiah 43:7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (ESV)*
 - Can a deer or a bear glorify God by worshiping God and singing praises to God and obeying God? No, only by looking beautiful or ferocious, traits which are blurry images of God himself.

- The more we attempt to glorify God in obedience, the greater will be our joy. *Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (ESV)*
2. It is a serious crime to take the life of another human being unlawfully (without warrant). Why? Because it is like attacking God Himself. *Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. (ESV)* There is one less person who is able to glorify God on earth by their praise and worship. No wonder Satan and demons are all about killing as many humans as possible.
 3. We need to reflect on how valuable we are as the highest form of God's creation. As amazing as the stars and galaxies are, as amazing as the largest whales are, as amazing as the oceans and mountains and atoms and quarks are, nothing compares to mankind because we reflect so much of the nature of God, even though a good portion of that nature was diminished in the fall of Adam.
 4. We need to value all human life as precious. The poor, the mentally retarded, the elderly, the sick, and especially in our world today the children not yet born.
 5. All men should acknowledge that God is the owner of all that reflects his image. This implies obedience, loyalty, service. *Mark 12:15–17 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 one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him. (ESV)*
 6. We need to see every man as a potential believer in which the image of God can be grown to completeness. Sure the image is distorted in all humans, and in some very much so, but the potential is that it can be restored and brought to completion in Christ, the perfect human. *Romans 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (ESV)*