

Core pt4- Humanity

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Core / Genesis 1:26–31; Psalm 139:13–16

For followers of Jesus, the Bible is more than a book of collected wisdom and sayings. It is a historical account of the most important part of the history of the universe- the Story of God and His redemption of His creation. But before we needed to be redeemed, we needed to be made. And the part of the story where we enter into history, in Genesis 1, has a HUGE part to play on how we see ourselves and how we see other people.

The term for how we are created is Imago Dei. It's Latin , common across the history of Christianity to explain the passage we will look at today, and to reinforce how we are to see every human being who has ever and will ever be given the gift of life by God. It seems to originally come from the writings of Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century.

Imago Dei means “image of God.” It is a summation of how we, as humans, are unique in God's created order. When you look at all of the other living things God creates in Genesis 1- the poetic description- or Genesis 2- the narrative description- you will see that only humans are given this designation. Further, only human beings are given a role and task in the creation that God makes.

So as we dig in to these passages today I want all of us to have this idea locked into our memories- God made us like Himself, not like anything else, and that makes us special- all of us.

Genesis & Exodus Commentary

Being the image of God means that humans share, although imperfectly, **in the nature of God—that is, they were given the communicable attributes of intelligence, knowledge, spiritual understanding, creativity, wisdom, love, compassion, holiness, justice, and the like.** As the text will explain (2:7), all these capacities were given by the inbreathing of the breath of life. **Thus, humans have the capacity to commune with the living God, as well as with one another.**

(Read Genesis 1:26-31)

So the first thing I want you to see, is that you were created ON PURPOSE! (v26-27)

I know there are a lot of people who would say that the advent of mankind was an accident. A cosmic twist of fate. A random collision of atoms at a precise moment. And I want to say this, as Christians we do not have to be anti-science or anti- intellectual. All truth is God's truth and much of science actually reveals the truths of God. But, this is one area where "theory" and faith come into conflict where we have to hold two truths in tension. There may be ways that human beings have adapted and changed over the years, but their source is not an ascent from another species. We were made in a unique fashion by God on purpose.

Genesis & Exodus Commentary

And although man is the last creature mentioned in the days of creation, he did not evolve from earlier forms, but was separately formed by God. He was made from the dust of the ground, not from earlier life-forms; and he was given the breath of life from God and did not gradually develop the breathing and thinking faculties

For some of you, that is a hard thing to grasp. God made me? He intended for me to be here? I am not simply a random result of the sexual union of two people? Some of us have even been cruelly told by parents or family members that we were “an accident” “a mistake” a “bonus kid.” You may have been a surprise to your parents, but you were not a surprise to God. He made you on purpose.

Second, you were not just created on purpose, you were created WITH A PURPOSE. (v28-30) God made the original people- Adam and Eve- to work the garden and be in charge of the rest of creation. They had a REASON for their being. So do you.

I know many of us struggle to understand what we are supposed to do with our lives. In fact, some of you this very morning were praying and asking God to show you TODAY why you are here or still here. you want to know that your life has meaning.

That is part of being made in God’s Image. God has purpose. He is never not on purpose. He is the prime mover of the universe and He defines ALL purpose. And since you are made in His image, that means you too have a purpose.

We discover our purpose most fully when we are doing what God has told us to do. When Adam and Eve are doing what God calls them to do all is well. It is only when they deviate from God’s purpose that they run into trouble. That is true for us as well. When we are struggling with understanding God’s purpose for us, the best thing to do is to return to what He has always called us to do- first and foremost- which is to do what He has last told us to do, until He changes it.

Further, God has made us not only FOR A PURPOSE but WITH A PURPOSE. And that is a singular purpose- to be in relationship with Him. And folks, that is where it gets complicated. (v31)

I am sure you noticed in v26 that God says “let us” plural. God is in community- Father, Son, and Spirit. They exist in perfect, unbroken community. And when we are created in His Image that community is an essential. We were made to be in relationship with God and one another (that’s why God says it is not good for man to be alone and creates woman- we were made for companionship because God Himself is the perfection of relationship)

That reveals to us a very important truth about not just our lives, but every life in the history of the world. Life is not disposable. Period. One of the greatest implications of the Imago Dei, that we are created in the image of God, is that life is precious. No matter at what stage or age, God sees human life as precious. We see that more vividly depicted on the cross. If we were not important to God, all of us, then Jesus would not have come to die. At no point, does God see us as disposable.

That truth, that has been embraced throughout the history of the people of God, is probably one of the most controversial aspects of our faith at this day and time. We live in an age of convenience, of a focus on personal liberty and preference. Life is often seen as cheap, unless it serves a greater purpose. And when life gets in the way, or is seen as standing opposite of what we want to accomplish, it has become “normal” to say, my life is more important than the life of someone else, so therefore I must remove the impediment.

Jesus stands in direct opposition to this position. It is not a biblical option for those who follow Him. We cannot shy away from what that means for us as followers of Jesus. So don’t think this morning, that this is a call to check neat little boxes in a philosophical chart so you can move on to the next thing. These truths are some of the most disruptive and challenging parts of being image bearers of God.

(Read Psalm 139:13-16)

David puts it all out there for us in this section of Psalm 139. He provides us with the answer to one of the most vexing questions of even our time. When does life begin? For followers of Jesus, science and medicine provide some thoughts and ideas, but spiritually and more important from God's perspective, we see that scripture is clear that our lives begin far before we are born. We are known by God even before we are born. That means for us, that life being precious and worth being protected starts in the womb.

The Book of Psalms & The Book of Proverbs Commentary

This knowledge, presence, and care did not begin when I became an adult, nor an adolescent, nor even a newborn baby. God's knowledge of me, presence with me, and care for me began before I was even born

[Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary The All-Creative \(139:13–18\)](#)

the stanza so far has laid its main emphasis on our pre-natal fashioning by God (13–16a at the least)—a powerful reminder of the value he sets on us, even as embryos, and of his planning our end from the beginning.

Unfortunately, in our day and time this discussion has become more politicized than a part of our theology. Even terms like pro-life and pro-choice have become tied to certain political persuasions and positions. That's foolish and unnecessary. Politics has ZERO to say about when life begins. You can agree and disagree with politicians at every turn. God, however, isn't interested in our opinions in when life begins, because He is the Author of life. And He has plans for that life. A purpose. A meaning.

That means that as followers of Jesus we see, in a womb, a life worth saving and protecting- not a political chess piece to be moved around to get someone elected to an office. We are talking about someone created in the Image of God.

I am going to tread lightly here, because I know that in this room and watching online there are definitely women who have made a choice contrary to this one in their lives. Intentionally aborting a child for convenience is not a valid consideration or something to be celebrated for followers of Jesus. It is a sinful act. It is killing someone God knows.

But something else gets lost in this discussion. What about someone who has had an abortion? How do we relate to them? We love them. We meet them where they are. Just like all other sins, they cannot be undone. But they can be forgiven. I would plead with you today, with all I have in me, if that is a decision you have made, you are not beyond hope. Jesus died for you too. He loves you. His grace is sufficient for you in the same way it is sufficient for me. Do not think, by saying that abortion is not in keeping with following Jesus, we are saying you are incapable of following Jesus. Far from it. I am saying that you are in need of the forgiveness of Jesus in the same way I am, and He is offering that to you. He is not coming to make you guilty, He is coming to give you hope and set you free.

The Church has some issues we have to confront in this discussion. In fact, even though we may give lip service to saying we think abortion is wrong, we are far too often complicit in why it occurs. When we see numbers like 930,000 abortions occurred in the US in 2020 (most recent stat available) we need to take a hard look at ourselves. Why so many? Do you know what the reasons are for many women in our country who choose abortion? Many do not. They see this choice as cheap and one of convenience. It's most often not. Most often, it is a choice of desperation.

In fact, multiple research studies in the last two decades have shown that the main reasons for choosing to have an abortion are an inability to financially provide for the child, a fear of the situation that the child will be born into- abusive or unstable living situation, or the insistence of or pressure from the father.

There are a lot of implications here for our society and nation, and I cannot address all of them- and truthfully what society says or does is of little relevance to the Church- but there are some VERY clear implications here for the Church.

If we believe that the Bible says we are to value ALL lives, and that as people who follow Jesus we are to see each person as created in the Image of God, then we have a mandate, a biblical mandate, to provide homes and safety for moms in need of support and/or their children.

To put it more simply, you cannot say you oppose abortion and think it is wrong and not be willing to take in a child or provide assistance to a mom who has chosen to have her baby, even if she fears she will not be able to care for the child.

In a single verse in James 1:27, God makes clear what He says several times in the OT as well. We are to be providing homes for orphans. Children without parents are to be welcomed into our homes. It is not a discussion or a debate. It is a description of what James calls “pure religion.” It is an extension of Psalm 68:5-6. God is a father of the fatherless and He places the fatherless in HOMES.

We all have excuses of why this is not possible. It is time consuming. It is messy. We have a lot of mouths to feed as it is. There is often trauma in kids who are orphans. Yep. All true. That still does not excuse us from this calling. If we are going to plead with people to have children they do not feel like they can care for, because those children are created in the Image of God, then we are going to have to open our doors to them to live. To do less, makes us hypocritical.

And here is the thing, I was once one of those people. Until Livy entered my life. (Story of how we got Livy.)

But I want you to turn with me back to Psalm 139. This section is often used to talk about the unborn, but it does not stop there. Look at verse 16. Not just the first day, but the last one. Many Christians like to talk about the value of an unborn life, but few focus on someone entering into their latter days. Those who are older, elderly, matter as well.

The senior adult population in the US has increased by 33% since the last census. In fact, by 2034, senior adults will outnumber children for the first time in the history of our country. And their quality of life may decrease as services and health care focused on geriatrics struggle to keep up with the population growth in that age range.

As expendable as some see young life, few are seen as more inconvenient than those who are growing older, and have trouble caring for and providing for themselves. Yet, God sees the old, the aged as just as valuable as the young. Those who are at the end of their lives are also created in His image, and have worth and value.

In our culture, we tend to measure worth based on contribution. Are you working? Earning? Expanding? Yet, God does not measure on our economy. He has a LOT to say about those who are entering into their last years of life.

[Proverbs 16:31](#)ESV

Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.

[Psalm 92:12–14](#)ESV

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,

There is not a time of life when a person ceases to matter to God, or to have something to offer to others. The older folks among us are not burdens or problems. They are men and women worthy of respect and care. They are people we can learn from and people who are still learning from God. They are not beyond the hope of heaven or unworthy of our time or attention.

In fact, Paul had specific commands regarding them for the church in 1 Timothy 5:1-2. We are to treat older men as if they were our fathers and older women as our mothers. As in, how we would treat a good father or good mother. One who had rendered care to us and one we would then reciprocate the care and compassion.

Why? Because they were made in the Image of God and if they are still drawing breath, God has a purpose for them.

Chief among all of this- showing value for people at all walks of life- is the message of the Gospel. That God offers the hope of Jesus to all people at all moments. We value life, because Jesus gave His life, to offer us a chance at real, eternal life. (Gospel presentation here)

So this morning, can I ask you a question- how is your image? How do you see yourself?

Are you an accident? Are you purposeless? Are you disconnected?

God intended for you to be none of those. How does your image need to be restored?

How are you showing value for the Imago Dei at all stages of life. Where does the truths we uncovered in God's Word this morning come into conflict with how you are living your life? What needs to happen in your own personal practice of your faith to bring your actions into alignment with what God calls us to do and be?

We cannot see other people as God does, until we see ourselves as God sees us.