

Sermon Notes

“Man”

Material for this message was drawn from a series of sermons by Dr. Calvin Wittman (2009)

Focal Scripture Reference: Genesis 1:27

As we continue our doctrinal study, we come to the doctrine of man. It is important to realize from the outset, the Bible centers around God and not on man. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to humanity. It is only when we understand God for who He is that we can understand ourselves for who we are.

Our focal scripture reference is a short and simple text, and yet, it is full of significance. Not only does it positively declare what man is, where he came from, and Who it is that made him; it declares what man is not and how man was not made. The Baptist Faith and Message, summarizes and encapsulates the biblical teaching on man when it says,

"Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus a part of the goodness of God's creation.

In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice, man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race.

Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of god, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.

Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love."

We will begin our study by looking at how humanity came to be, then move on to understand something about the nature and state of humanity, and finally we will consider what this knowledge calls us to do.

1. The Origin of Humanity: Where Did We Come From?

The Bible gives us a clear and straightforward declaration about the origins of humanity.

In **Genesis 1:27** the Bible says that "**So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.**"

To the contrary, the theory of evolution claims that mankind is nothing more than highly evolved animals. The biblical account is clearly different. The Bible says that man is the unique and crowning creation of God, created in His own image, with inherent value and worth.

Man is no mere accident, the product of a random process over untold millions of years. Man was created and placed on this planet by God. Man is made in the image of God, and therefore stands above all of God's other created creatures. The Bible clearly tells us where we came from. Knowing this, let's examine what God's word has to say about human nature and our state of being.

2. Human Nature and Our Fallen State

The book of Genesis tells us that in the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, God created Adam and Eve, two individuals, one man and one woman. It also says that He created them in His image. What does it mean to be created in the image of God? To put it simply, it means that when God created us, He gave us some of His own qualities.

A. We Are Created to Know and Be Known

We are each unique, with individual personalities, and we were created with the capability of having personal relationships with others. Mankind, like God, can know and be known.

In our study of the Trinity, we re-affirmed our knowledge that God expresses Himself in three distinct persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each can be known and can know others. So, this is one way in which we have been created in the image of God.

B. We Have Been Created to Be Eternal

The Bible tells us that God has put eternity in our hearts. In the New Testament, we read that at the resurrection some will be raised to eternal life

and others to eternal separation from God. Again, this speaks to the eternal nature of man. Each one of us is made up of a body, soul and spirit.

Animals have bodies and they have the spirit of life within them, but they do not have eternal souls. Of all of God's creations, only man was given an eternal soul. It is this eternal element which imprints us with the image of God who Himself is eternal.

C. We Have Been Created in God's Image with Certain Physical Aspects

There are physical things that God has given us which enable us to be like Him. For instance, our eyes enable us to see. While God sees everything and we see only some things, nonetheless we are able to see, which makes us like Him.

Likewise, God hears all things, and our physical ears enable us to hear some things. Our mouths and voices give us the ability to speak, God speaks, and thus we are, in this way, like Him.

D. We are Created in God's Moral Image

As creatures who are morally accountable to God for our actions, we have an inner sense of right and wrong that sets us apart from animals who merely respond from fear of punishment or hope of reward. In Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis calls this a moral "oughtness." That is, we know what we ought to do and what we ought not do. Of all of God's creations, man alone was given a choice by God to obey or disobey His voice.

The beast of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea live by instinct, and do not possess the ability to reason or rationalize. Man alone was given this ability, and in this we bear the image of our creator, who is Himself the personification of righteousness, justice and moral uprightness. Our likeness to God is reflected in behavior that is holy and righteous before Him and our unlikeness to Him is revealed whenever we sin.

E. We Were Created to Rule

God told Adam and Eve to have dominion over the world. Think about it, before the fall, nature was under Adam's rule. He was the king of the earth. But when Adam rebelled against God, nature rebelled against him and has been in rebellion ever since. So, we can say with assurance that in the realm of intellect and reasoning, in the dominion God has given us over creation, in our spiritual capacity to know God and be in fellowship with Him, and in our physical appearance we reflect the uniqueness of the image of God.

This truth has a profound impact on the way that we as Christians should view every other human being.

We oppose abortion because God is the giver of life and every child, from the moment of conception, is created in the image of God. We oppose homosexuality because God created male and female. From the very beginning, God designed and defined the roles each gender was to play in the family. Homosexuality runs contrary to God's design, not to mention that God specifically condemns it in His Word. We oppose euthanasia because all people, regardless of their age or physical or mental capacity, have dignity and worth.

Make no mistake about it: the theory of evolution is more than simply a theory about how humanity came to be. It is rooted and grounded in a philosophy which seeks nothing less than the denial of God's existence. And, if there is no God, then man is free to follow his instincts, after all, he's just doing what's natural. The godless theory of evolution has a moral side to it, and it is a dark side. Evolution champions a theory known as the survival of the fittest, which simply means that in a world where natural selection is the law of the land, only the fittest should survive. In the moral universe of the evolutionists, there is no room for handicapped children, for unwanted pregnancies or for feeble or sick seniors.

This is why, as Christians, we need to make sure our voices are heard and the truth about our Creator is defended and proclaimed. Not only are we created in God's image, but in the beginning, we were also created without sin. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lived in the perfection of God's paradise on earth and they were morally innocent and without sin.

Genesis 2:16-17 tells us, " ¹⁶ **And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;** ¹⁷ **but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."**

Genesis chapter 3 goes on to tell us how Satan tempted Eve and how Adam and Eve both yielded to temptation and ate of the forbidden fruit, willfully and knowingly defying God's moral law. Adam and Eve had the ability to choose between obeying God or disobeying Him and of their own free will they chose to disobey Him. Because they chose to rebel against God, He not only cast them out of the Garden, but, through their sin, sickness and death came into the world and the entire earth became hostile to humanity. Once Adam and Eve sinned, all of humanity, all of their descendants came under the condemnation of sin.

That means that you and I and every other human being is born with a sinful nature. We are born bent toward sinfulness. That's why the Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Jeremiah 17:9 says, “**The [human] heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.**”

If you do not believe this, think about it in this sense – Children have to be taught to behave, not to misbehave. They know how to misbehave. Children have to be taught to be nice, not how to be mean, which comes all too naturally to them.

The one and only exception to this is Jesus Christ. What sets Jesus apart from us is that He resisted every temptation to sin, thus succeeding where our ancestor Adam failed. That's why Jesus was an acceptable sacrifice for our sins. Because He was innocent of sin, He paid the penalty for our sins with His blood, shed on the cross in our place.

God, in His great love, desired so much for us to be restored into a right relationship with Him, that He sent His only Son Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could have forgiveness of our sins and once again be in fellowship with Him. So, now that we understand our origin and something about our nature and our fallen sinful state, what do we do with this knowledge?

3. What are We to Do?

Allow me to suggest four practical suggestions as to how we can apply this teaching in our lives.

A. Live in Relationship with Your Creator

If you have never come to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you've never placed your trust for eternal life in Him, God is inviting you today to be in fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ the Son.

B. Live in Accordance with Your Creator's Purpose

The Bible tells us that our purpose in life is not to glorify ourselves, or to seek our own pleasure, but to glorify God. When we come to Jesus, when we allow Him to restore us to fellowship with God we can once again live in accordance with our Creator's purpose. Since we were created for His glory, our greatest joy and our greatest fulfillment can only be found in glorifying God through our lives.

C. Live in Accordance with your Creator's Principles

Simply put this means allowing God's truth to govern your thoughts and actions. For so many Christians there seems to be a disconnect between what we do at church on Sunday mornings and what we do throughout the rest of the week in the world, but this should never be the case. Through our lives, the world should be able to see that Jesus is real and that our God lives and reigns.

D. Live to Advance God's Kingdom

As Christians, we should make advancing the Kingdom of God and His righteousness the central and dominant focus of our lives. Knowing what we know about humanity and knowing that Jesus is the only cure for their sin sick hearts, you and I have the responsibility to go and tell others how they can be reconciled with their Creator and how they can live within His divine purpose for their lives.