

Man is Created in God's Own Image

Genesis 1:26-31

Key Verse: 27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Good evening! This evening's theme is: “What is man?” We surveyed the essence of man from a humanistic point of view. Through this message we will study about God's view of man in Genesis 1. This chapter is so important to Christians because it is the foundation of Christian faith. It teaches us about who God is, what man is, and about their relationship. It answers fundamental questions in life such as: “Where do I come from?” and “Why am I here?” This passage answers these questions. It declares that we are created beings made in the image of God. Our origin is from God, and that our lives have eternal value in God. Therefore, may God help us to know what we are, about what God thinks of us, and what we must do with our God-given life! Then we can know “what man is.”

Please let us look at verses 26-27. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” In verses 1-25, we learn that God created all things. The heavens and the earth. The sky and the seas. The land and the vegetation. On the sixth day, he created the animals and finally, God created man as God's final and glorious act of creation. The passage does not say, “Then God created man and it was so” like the other verses. Rather, it says, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him...” This is both very poetic and meaningful. What then does it mean that God created man in his image?

Firstly, man has a spiritual nature. We know well that man has a physical nature. His physical nature is common to the physical attributes of the animals. We eat, drink, sleep, and have babies just as they do. If men were just animals, we would end our conversation here. However, it does not end there. Let us read verse 27 again. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” The animals were ordinary creatures. But God made man to be extraordinary. How was this so? It is because God created man with a spiritual nature. In other words, man is a living soul. Since God is spirit, God cannot be seen with the naked eye. Yet we are spiritual people who

have the capacity to worship God in spirit and in truth. (Jn 4:24) This means that we can have a spiritual fellowship with God. Though we do not see him, we love him and we are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. (1Pe 1:8) We have an inner longing and desire to know God and to worship him. We are in need of spiritual fellowship with God. When we try to worship something else, we miss the mark and cannot be truly satisfied in our souls. One woman wanted a man's love. But she could not find someone who could quench her inner thirst for love. But when she met Christ, Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he." (Jn 4:26) She could find God in Jesus and discovered that her true object of worship was Jesus himself.

Secondly, man has common spiritual attributes with God. Man possesses godly characteristics. I will briefly outline four.

- 1) **Man is holy.** We have the desire to be holy like God. (1Pe 1:15-16) There is something in us that wants us to be holy like God. We want to be pure and we want to be different and not be controlled by the sinful nature.
- 2) **Man can make moral judgments.** In this passage, God determines what is good and pleasing to Him. Likewise, God gave us the capacity of moral judgement to determine between right and wrong. We pray and make decisions based on values and principles. God gave us the gift of conscience as well.
- 3) **Man is creative.** God created all things all in their "various" kinds by His Almighty Power. There are various kinds of birds, fish, and animals. There are all kinds of stars, planets and galaxies. It shows that our God is an awesome creative God. Man is also creative and innovative. They can create various pieces of great art. Man could land on the moon. Man can make cool gadgets like the iPhone. (along with an apps that go with it.) Man has limitless possibilities.
- 4) **Man has the capacity of divine love.** Actually, there are three kinds of love, *eros* (sexual), *filio* (brotherly), and *agape* (God's love). God demonstrated this "agape" love while sacrificing his Son on the cross for the sin of the world. Christ himself when he hung on the cross, he prayed for his enemies when he said: "Father, forgive them." (Lk 23:34) God gave us the capacity to have this divine love of God – agape love. With God's love, we can love our enemies. We are tempted to think that humanists are our enemies, but when we have God's love, we can also love them as well.

Third, man has a mission. We know we are not happy when we are unemployed. We feel an inner craving that we got to do something. When God created the world, he was very busy. For six days, God worked very hard. Then God gave man the command: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” Through this command, God gave man the job to be the care taker of the whole world. To help man, God provided him with all the fruit trees on the earth for food so that he could carry out his mission. (29-30) A man is not a man if he does not have a mission in his life. Without mission, life would be boring. Even when we die and go to the kingdom of heaven, we will have meaningful work to do.

It also means that God opened the door for study so that we can rule and subdue our environment. Our studies at university are important. Jason Northey is studying his PhD in breast cancer research. He has to test a lot of mice in the lab. Often, he works at odd hours. I really hope that he finds progress in finding a cure for cancer. But this is God’s mandate for Jason not for the sake of being recognized, but for the glory of God! Since God worked hard, we must study hard for the glory of God!

Finally, God saw everything and said, “It was very good.” (31) Let us read verse 31 together. “God saw all he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning – the sixth day.” When God made man, he went “Whoa! That’s pretty awesome!” God was so happy to create a living creature made in his image. Man was like a masterpiece like Da Vinci’s “Mono Lisa”. God is happy too when we grow in the image of God. It is because we are growing as a child of God. We become God’s treasured possession. From a human perspective, we might not think that we are that important. But before God, we are invaluable. Though we are one amongst a billion people in the world, to God, we are very precious just as parents toward their children. My children are so cute that I want to pinch them. Likewise, in God, we are so loved. In God, we have an absolute value, and are absolutely necessary while living in this world. Even our Bible students are invaluable because they are the future spiritual leaders of our nation. Perhaps personally, we do not think so. Some young people may ask, “Who me? Why me?” God says, “It is because you are very good.” Let us say this together. “You are very good.” We must seize this faith that we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 2:10)

We learned that a man is a man when he is made in the image of God. The fact is

that when we watch the news, we see so much ugly images of violence and immorality. We see the ugly side of human nature. This happens because man lacks the image of God. How is that? It is sin that distorts and warps the image of God in us. When we are to be heavenly princes and princesses, sin makes us to become like deathly-ill patients. How can we be restored from our spiritual disfigurement? With man, this is impossible. But it is possible in God. God gave us the way to restore the image of God in us through Jesus Christ. When we believe in Christ who shed his precious blood on the cross for us, God absolves all of our sins. In Christ, we become new creations. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" We praise Jesus for his great sacrifice so that the image of God may be restored in us!

Before meeting Christ, I had the desire to know God. So I decided to become a Catholic at the age of 15. In a 1 and a half hour service, I was baptized and became a Christian. However when I went to college, I stopped growing in the image of God. I became very fearful and became a slave to sins of self-abuse and pornography. To escape my shame, I watched a Star Trek movie over 60 times one summer. In reality, the image of God in me was distorted by sin. By the grace of God I was invited to Bible study by a Korean missionary. Through Bible study, God's word in the Bible convicted me of sins of lust, and self-righteousness. (Because of my self-righteousness, I made my poor brother in Christ S. Andrew Christopher lose some of his hair.) But the Bible became a mirror to me and helped me to grow in the image of God. I could find my life direction in Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Through this, God is restoring me and sanctifying me through conviction of my sins and by repentance. When I struggled with God's words, I am changing and am valuing spiritual things. However, I must keep on the spiritual discipline to grow in the image of Jesus Christ so that I can be a blessing to my beautiful wife, my children and for campus students – especially for Rob who has been faithfully studying the Bible.

In conclusion, we learned this evening that man is one who is made in the image of God. We become like God. We possess God-like characteristics: his divine love and holiness. We become very hard-working and a source of blessing for people. May God bless each of you to grow in the image of God through your Bible Study!