

Humanity

Module 2.5

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...
male and female he created them.”

Genesis 1:27

In Genesis 1, we learn about the One True God, see the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as Creator, and are introduced to the Holy Spirit who has always existed. In Genesis 1, we also learn about the created order that God has made and how He made it. As the Creator He simply speaks, and what was not...becomes. Not only is this true for the planets, plants, and animals, it is also true for all of humanity who are made in the image of their Creator.

In Genesis 1:25 we see that all of creation, at least the various kinds, have been made; and God has commanded these created things to now reproduce themselves. For His glory, they are to fruitfully multiply and fill God’s good creation according to the design with which He created them. Yet, the text hints that something is missing, and as the drama of creation continues to unfold, we learn that it is not so much a *something* that is missing but rather *someones* who are missing.

By the time we arrive at the end of day six, we are told that what God has created is no longer just good, but is now very good (Gen. 1:31). For the pinnacle of His creation has been made; man and woman. They have been fashioned in His image and likeness and have been given a mission together. As hard as it is to fully understand the significance and specifics of being made in the image and likeness of God, it is even more difficult to downplay the significance of this biblical truth. Even though in Genesis 2 we learn that chronologically women were made after men, we first learn in Genesis 1 that women and men were both made as image bearers of the One True God.

Furthermore, we also learn that together they are given the command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over... every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28). This was not just a command given to Adam in which Eve merely plays a supporting role; neither is this a command given to Eve so that Adam is to sit back and passively observe. Rather, they are to work together in obedience to the command God has given them.

Consequently, while there is a complementing distinction of roles between men and women, as Genesis 2 further explains, there is no distinction in value, significance, personhood, imaging, or responsibility. Men and women, in the beauty of their unique designs, each reflect the image of the One True God who has individually formed and fashioned them.

Not only does this doctrine have significance for the way men and women interact with each other, but it also has tremendous significance for the way in which all humanity functions. All

humanity has been made in the image and likeness of God and should be treated in ways that glorify the Creator who made them.

However, the idyllic reality of Genesis 1-2 quickly gives way to a massive fracturing of God's very good creation. This fracturing, resulting from Adam's sin, includes thereafter the invasion of sin into every part of God's very good design. As humanity's federal representative, Adam's sin led to the presence of sin within the universe and the resulting consequence of death. This invasion has affected absolutely everything within the universe from the smallest of atoms to the genocidal ambitions of nation-states.

The marring of God's beautiful creation results in plants not being able to fruitfully multiply as originally created and the untimely death of loved ones. No longer would the man and woman, and all of those who were to follow, live in perfect harmony with God. The consequences of sin that God subjected His Creation to (Rom. 8:20) will now affect everyone and everything until the redemption of our bodies is fully and finally realized (Rom. 8:23).

One of the distinguishing pre-fall characteristics of the Garden of Eden was that the relationship that God had with humanity was unstained by sin. However, because of Adam's sin which has now rendered all of humanity sinful by nature (Rom. 5:15-16), with each person's choice confirming that sinful nature (Eph. 2:1-4), we do not just inherit physical death as a result of sin, but spiritual death as well (Rom. 5:17). Because of the holiness of God, He cannot allow sin or the sinful, to be in His presence. Yet, He did not completely cut off humanity He had just created. Rather, even while giving consequences to the serpent, the woman, and the man, God also gives a gracious promise that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15).

In the Garden, access to God was *unstained* by sin. And as the ensuing drama of God's redemptive history begins to play itself out, we see this access thereafter *restrained* by the tabernacle and temple, *obtained* on our behalf by Christ, and *proclaimed* as the hope of the gospel. Throughout all of redemptive history, God has been gracious to men and women in providing access to Himself for all who would draw near in faith. And while access to God most certainly changes as history unfolds, we consistently see that access to Him is ultimately through faith and trust in His promises.

The good news of the gospel, the mystery that was not understood as clearly in the Old Testament as it is now revealed in the New Testament, is that God provides for us in Christ. He provides through Christ, what He requires of us, that could not be supplied by us. This aspect of God's character is perhaps most dramatically revealed in the Old Testament when Abraham is instructed to sacrifice Isaac at Mt. Moriah. Here, as Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:17-19 record for us, Abraham was convinced that God would provide what He required, either through a lamb for the burnt offering or through resurrecting Isaac from the dead. Through this testing, Abraham is

reminded once again of who God is and names the place (perhaps the specific altar) YHWH Jireh, “The LORD will provide.”

God’s provision for Abraham and Isaac that day on Mt. Moriah serves to foreshadow His provision in that same place years later. Thousands of years later Jesus Christ would also climb that same hill and would die a criminal’s death a few hundred feet from where Abraham laid Isaac on the altar. For God loved the world so much that He sent His one and only Son as the sacrificial Lamb and substitute for our sin. Unlike Abraham, God our Heavenly Father did sacrifice His Son for our sin for there was no other suitable substitute. Yet, like Isaac, God has provided in Jesus Christ for us, what He requires of us, that could not be supplied by us.

Apart from Christ, we are completely dead in sin and unable to do anything to change our spiritual condition. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that, “the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 we learn that the gospel is veiled to those who are perishing because, “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Furthermore, Jesus tells His disciples in John 6:63 that, “it is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.” Continuing in verse 65, He explains further that, “this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

Despite the arrogant protests against this, there is tremendous consistency within the Scriptures regarding the spiritual condition of all men and women before trusting Christ. Left to ourselves we are utterly lost in sin. We have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and deserve only death as the just wage for our sin (Rom. 6:23).

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—” (Eph. 2:4-5)

His glorious grace and unmerited salvation will claim our attention next.