

The Story – Adam and Eve

I trust you have done your reading in Genesis this past week. If not, you've still got time to get a reading guide and catch up with us today. We looked at creation last week and this morning we look at our parents, Adam and Eve as we explore the unfolding drama of redemption.

The creation of Adam and Eve is actually told in different parts, each giving us a bit more detail. Let's read the essential verses. "**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.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:26-27**

“The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” Genesis 2:7

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Genesis 2:18-24

There you have it. The creation of Adam and Eve. Once again, as we said last Sunday, this is not a scientific treatise nor is it a medical treatise, it is a revelation of truth to us as to who we are as human beings created by God and in his image. We are not given specific details, but an almost poetic picture of God's intimate involvement in his creation. God fashioned us. God breathed into us. God took a rib from his creation Adam and made his creation Eve. God did this, personally, lovingly, perfectly. Did he actually pick Adam up and blow into his nose to give him life? He could have, but then again, that could be the best way for Moses to explain to us the mystery of us becoming living beings and how it is we have this divine spark within us that sets us apart from all other created things. Although the beasts of the field and birds of the air were, like Adam, “formed out of the ground”, it was only into the man that God breathed the

breath of life and he became a living soul. It is that breath that makes us created in his image, unlike all other living things.

Notice too another distinction between Adam and the animals: God gave Adam dominion over the animals. There was no sense in which any of the animals appeared to be distant relatives or part of the evolutionary chain to Adam. Also the verses we read tell us no suitable helper was found for Adam. Apparently none of those “primate cousins” were close enough to qualify as a suitable helper for Adam. If evolution was happening, Adam and God weren’t willing to wait around for evolutionary processes to bring him a wife! That being said, here are some other things the story of Adam and Eve can teach us.

Remember where we came from: we came from dust! No point in getting all puffed up about who you are and where you came from. You came from dust. No point in thinking you are better than everyone else. We all came from dust. Dust isn’t evil. God made it and called it good, but it isn’t exactly worth much, is it? Matthew Henry in his commentary noted that man “was not made of gold-dust... or diamond dust, but common dust, dust of the ground.” Moses wanted us to remember where we came from so we would not become arrogant. We were to remember that apart from God and his life giving Spirit, we are but dust. God said to Adam, **“For dust you are and to dust you will return.” Genesis 3:19** That will put you in your place won’t it? Don’t forget who you are, where you came from and where the body is headed.

But what about Eve? She was created from Adam’s rib the bible says. Right, which was created from the dust. There is something poetic and mystical about Eve being created out of the rib, out of the side of Adam, from him, along side him, perfectly complementing each other. Once again let me point out, there was no one suitable for Adam because he had been created in the image of God and the animals were not. So God created Eve and notice please the difference. Adam and Eve were different. Equal before God, yes, but the same? No. Equal but distinct and different. Remember the quote from Peter Kreeft last week that **“Masculinity and femininity are not a sinister trick of nature or society but a wise and benevolent gift of God and cause for rejoicing, not for embarrassment...” Peter Kreeft** God created Eve differently from Adam. Don’t try to deny that. God created man in his image, male and female he created them. God created us with difference. *Viva la difference.* Celebrate the differences! Men, explore what it means to be a godly man. Women, explore what it means to be a godly

woman. Appropriately celebrate the differences, but don't try to change what God has created and ordered.

Remember what changed us: He breathed life into us! What extraordinary contrast that Adam was made from the dust of the earth and yet when God breathed into him he became a living being! Dust kissed by the Divine. By the breath of God, which is the Spirit of God, this dusty carcass is made alive and given extraordinary value and worth. And not only would he create us and give us life, he would then give his own Son to redeem us from our sin and give us eternal life! How loved and blessed we are! How we are obligated to God. How dependent we are upon him and upon his breath that gives us life and sustains us even now. The book of Job records, "**If it were his intention and he withdrew his Spirit and breath, all mankind would perish together and man would return to the dust.**" **Job 34:14-15** We are made from the dust of the earth and this body will return to the dust, but we are crowned with glory and dignity by the Living God who breathed life into us and made us a living being. You have worth and dignity and value and importance because God made you and breathed life into you.

Remember the importance of bearing his image. I can't overemphasize the importance of this and we could spend the rest of the day exploring the implications of this one verse "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." We bear the image of God. What does that mean? Does it mean God looks like us or that we look like God? No. Created in his image doesn't mean we represent his physical appearance, it means that in this physical form we represent him. Created in his image implies that we reflect his nature. We have the attributes of personality, self-awareness. We are relational. We are able to reason, to reflect, to think. We have a measure of free will and self-determination. All of these things reflect something of the image and nature of God.

The fact that we are created in his image means that all human life is sacred. It is why we are opposed to abortion, because the human being is created in the image of God and that means from conception to natural death, we are to honor the sanctity of human life. That's why we are to respect the human body and why we are to respect one another, because we have been created in the image of God.

John Walton in his commentary on Genesis states, "**Being made in the image of God confers on us dignity, entrusts us with responsibility and implants in us a certain potential, namely the capacity to mirror our Creator.**" **John Walton** Let's think about those three

things for a moment. **We were created in his image, that means we have been given the capacity to reflect the image of God.** Apart from God's mercy and grace, we cannot be righteous, but the human capacity to excel, to think, to endure, to dream, to persevere, to laugh, to grieve, to overcome, to love, to care, to create, to communicate and to relate to others, even the capacity to communicate with and relate to God has been given to us. Many of those things, those capacities were diminished by the fall; they are broken and diminished by our own choices and sins, but the capacity is there and if we will surrender our life to Christ and experience his redemption, his re-creation, that capacity is restored in us.

We were created in his image, that means we have been bestowed with dignity What does that mean? That means we need to treat others with the respect due a special and beloved creation of God. That means we don't demean one another, mistreat one another, belittle others, hurt others, lie or deceive others because they have all been created in the image of God and bestowed with dignity. Think about that before you post your next facebook rant!

You were created in God's image and he has bestowed dignity and worth and value upon you so stop living like that! Get up. Clean yourself up. Stop giving into habits and behavior that demeans you, that diminishes you. Surrender your life to Jesus and live with the God given dignity he has bestowed upon you as his creation and his redeemed child.

We were created in his image and that means we have been entrusted with responsibility. Immediately upon creation, God entrusted Adam and Eve with responsibility. They were to have dominion over the earth. They were placed in the Garden of Eden and told to work it and take care of it. Adam and Eve, and us, have been given responsibility over this planet as stewards. When God said to "subdue" the earth, he didn't mean to harm it, pollute and poison it, but to cultivate it, to harness its power and resources for good and for the benefit of all. As Christians, created in his image, we have a responsibility to care for this planet and its inhabitants – human and otherwise.

As his creation, made in his image, we have a responsibility to accurately reflect his image. Remember the old saying "you may be the only Jesus some people will ever see." What is the image of God we portray? The apostle Paul says "**He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God.**" **Colossians 1:15.** Then he writes, "**Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it.**" **1 Corinthians 12:27** The idea here is that as Jesus is the image of God and as we are the body of Christ, then we are to reflect and portray the image of God to the

world. Talk about a responsibility! We are responsible as part of the body of Christ to accurately reflect the image of God to the world. How are we doing? Are we distorting his image by our sinfulness, by our lack of love, our selfishness, by our lack of holiness, by failing to treat one another with dignity and respect? Are we distorting the image of God by our lust, our anger, our hypocrisy, our conversation, behavior, actions?

Here is the family picture with Adam and Eve and all of us. When the world looks at us, do they see the image of God accurately portrayed or do they get a false idea of who God is and who Jesus is and what the story of redemption is all about?

I know some of you wonder why I keep harping on the issue of marriage. Why do I keep bringing this up, that God doesn't want folks living together outside of the covenant of marriage? Because the bible specifically mentions marriage as reflecting the image of God. Human marriage has a divine pattern to follow and when we don't follow that pattern we distort the image of God he wants us to reflect. Let me show you.

God brought Eve to Adam and the bible says they became man and wife. God instituted marriage as part of his order for the human race. It is how the race would continue, it is how children would be cared for and educated, how the faith would be passed to the next generation. But the God ordained family was and is more than God's method for relaying the faith, it was and is a picture of God's covenant relationship.

In the Old Testament God entered into a covenant relationship with a man, Abraham. That covenant was a reflection to us of the relationship God wants to have with us. Then God entered into a covenant relationship with the nation of Israel. He became like a husband to the nation. If you wanted to see what God's covenant relationship and faithfulness looked like, look to Israel.

In the New Testament the image changes. God enters into a covenant relationship with each individual as we confess our sins and make him the savior and Lord of our life. However, there is an image, another picture he gives us of this covenant relationship. In Ephesians 5 Paul writes that marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. It isn't a haphazard, move in and see how it goes kind of thing. It's not a contract that says, "Keep up your part of the bargain and I'll stick around if I want to." It's a covenant that says "I'm in this to stay" and it reflects to the world, "this is how God loves his people: faithfully, publicly, exclusively. The bible says, "**Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and**

gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word...he who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.” Ephesians 5:25-32

The point is, Christian marriage is to be a picture of the covenant relationship between Christ and the church. We distort that picture when we live together without marriage. We distort that picture when we choose to divorce instead of working through the problems. We distort that picture when we are married but unfaithful to our spouse and our marriage vows or when we are cruel and abusive to our spouse. Do you hear what I’m telling you? We have a responsibility as God’s creation made in his image to accurately and faithfully reflect his image, reflect his faithfulness, reflect his covenant, his nature. We can fix this distorted image by committing ourselves to faithful marriage, to a covenant marriage relationship, being faithful to our spouse, to our vows, following through on our responsibility. Don’t be afraid of commitment. Obey God.

Of course, its not just marriage, but that is one of the images the Scripture specifically uses. The question is, how are we portraying the image of God to the world? Are we distorting his image by our sin, our choices? Adam and Eve did. How are we doing?

Created in the image of God with capacity, dignity and responsibility. Created in the image of God with a responsibility to let his image be seen in us and through us. Created from dust but made alive, made a living soul by the very breath of His Spirit, made a child of God by his grace and mercy. You are somebody. We say it not arrogantly, but humbly. You need to believe it. God created you and intends you to be his very own. Stop running from him and surrender your life to the purpose and plans of the Creator. Stop living your life as you please and start living your life as a proper and accurate reflection of the nature and image of God! It’s time to recognize who you are, God’s creation. It’s time to recognize what you were created for, his glory and his purpose. It’s time to get your life in order, surrendered to him!