

Doctrine

Humanity

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Sam Schertz

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For the past 5 weeks we have been in a sermon series called "Doctrine," and each week we're looking at one of the core truths of the Christian faith. And so we began taking 4 weeks to unpack some of the nature and character of this 3-in - 1 God, this God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Last week Pastor Joel talked about the Bible, reminding you and I of the reliability of the texts that form our modern-day Bibles, reminding us that the resurrection of Jesus is the center point of the story, and that by faith the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to reveal Himself to us and to form us into the image of Jesus. This morning we're going to be talking about the topic of humanity.

If you and I want to know what it means to walk with God, we not only have to know who God is, but we have to answer the question, "Who am I?" What does it mean to be human? What makes us unique and different? What makes me different from a rock, or a tree, or a porcupine? Last week Pastor Joel shared that with his analytical mind he was the perfect guy to talk about the facts of the reliability of the Scriptures, and I'm pretty sure that's why he gave me the message on humanity.

Because as much as I love facts and logic, my life is highly emotional, often a dumpster fire. I can totally resonate with this topic. So I'm your man for Humanity Week. In today's message we're going to be unpacking this topic with 3 main categories, and I just want to give you the 3 of them right up front. They are design, depravity, and dignity.

And when I say the word "humanity," I'm not just talking about certain humans, or humans in this day and age, or fair view, or America. I'm talking about all humans for all time. What is the design of every human being? What is the depravity of every human being? And what is the dignity of all humanity? We're going to be looking to the Scripture for our answers to these questions. That is our ultimate source of truth.

But I'm also going to be reading the summary of those Scriptures that's listed in the Missionary Church Articles of Faith, as we have been each week. But before we do that, I would like to just open us up with a word of prayer for our message today. Lord, I thank You for this time set apart from our week to not hear a speaker speak, or to recite certain words, or to just look at an old book.

But God, we are here to encounter You, the living God, and by Your grace that Your Holy Spirit would speak to us this morning. And so I pray that You would move me out of the way, and Lord, that You would tell us what we need to hear. In Jesus' name, amen. I want to begin by reading the Articles of Faith of the Missionary Church, the category on humanity. It will be on the screen so you can follow along with me.

"We believe that God created human beings, male and female, as co-equal bearers of the image of God. Gender is divinely designed, part of the goodness of creation. Human sexuality is a gift intended to be expressed exclusively in a monogamous, lifelong marital union between one man and one woman.

The Bible also affirms the sacredness of the single state, and that some may have the gift of lifetime celibacy. We believe in the historicity of the first man, Adam, who along with his wife Eve was uniquely created by a direct act of God, as recorded in Genesis, and not by a process of evolution. Made in His image, they are His crowning achievement.

Adam and Eve were created without sin for perfect fellowship with God, and were commanded to be fruitful and exercise benevolent dominion over the earth. Humankind was created for love of God and neighbor, and that love was intended to find expression in every individual and every human institution. Through the misuse of their wills, however, our original parents succumbed to Satan's temptation.

They disobeyed God's command and thus brought sin into the world and became subject to physical and spiritual death. They became corrupt in their nature and have passed on that nature to all their descendants. And so as a result, all human beings, while still bearing the image of God, are polluted in every aspect of their being. They are estranged from God by their sin and thus deserve God's wrath.

And we believe that God desires all human beings to be restored to a right relationship with Him. Redemption, the gracious design by which God intends to rescue humanity from the disastrous consequences of sin, has its origin in the love of God, and it's brought to fruition by His infinite wisdom and might. "Whew, there's a lot there. I want to begin, though, by talking about the design of all humanity.

You are not an accident. You're not the product of chance. You're not a mistake. You're not the result of millions of years of evolutionary processes one day bringing about a human. God didn't make you from a monkey. God fearfully and wonderfully made each and every one of you here this morning.

In Genesis 1, after God had finished creating all the plants, all the animals, the rest of creation, we then read this, beginning in verse 26, "Then God said, 'Let us,'" this is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in His own image.

In the image of God, He created them male and female. He created them. God blessed them, and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" God created human beings in His image to rule over the rest of creation in His authority.

You're not just another type of animal. God created you to know Him, to love Him, and then to be an ambassador of that love to the rest of creation. God created humans male and female. Gender is not up for interpretation. It's God's design. So He alone gets to define what a human is.

And as Christians, we don't hold this view about gender because it's popular. We don't hold it because we're just stuck in our ways, and it's what we've always done, and we're anti-science and anti-culture. We hold this view as an act of faith. It's an act of faith to say, "Lord, if You are the creator of all things and You've spelled out what a human is, then by faith we choose to receive that." Not because we don't have our own struggles.

There are struggles on every topic I'll mention today that happen in the church, and yet by faith we seek to honor the Lord's design. I can tell you, taking the Lord at His word is always worth it. Even when it's not fun, even when it doesn't make us popular, it's always worth it because He is worth it. Adam and Eve were real historical people. The stories from the book of Genesis, they're not just poetry or some kind of allegory.

There are people that will try to say, "Oh, Genesis, you're just kind of getting a broad idea of what happened." No, these are real stories. Scripture teaches that every human being comes from these two common ancestors, Adam and Eve. Some have tried to argue even that maybe God created other humans at

the same time as Adam and Eve and other parts of the world, and I just want to encourage you. That is completely inconsistent with what the Scripture teaches about creation.

In Acts 17:26 we read, "From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth, and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands." And in Genesis 3:20 we read, "Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living." Every human being that has ever lived comes from these two common ancestors, Adam and Eve.

And in God's beautiful design, He created men and women to equally bear His image. Some of you this morning need to hear this: a man is not better than a woman, and a woman is not better than a man. These are image - bearers of the almighty God, and yet in His wonderful creation He has made a man and a woman different.

Different body types, different gifts, different skills, all to give us a different lens through which to see the glory of an almighty God. And marriage then becomes where these two genders enter into a holy union between one man and one woman for a lifetime.

It's this representation of the self - giving love that has always existed between God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in a marriage covenant we see this self-sacrificing, self - giving love. Marriage is not just for your enjoyment or your betterment. Marriage is to point people to a God that loves them. Marriage is also a union which God has designed for sexuality to be expressed and to flourish.

And God sets this up all the way back when He creates Adam and Eve, when He talks about this physical and emotional union. In Genesis 2:21 - 24, "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 then He closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib that He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man.

The man said, ' This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.' That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." It's this expression of joy and trust and intimacy, and it displays the glory of a God who is inviting every human being to experience that joy and trust and intimacy with Him.

Marriage is a giant signpost to our Creator. And then it's the avenue through which we exercise this creating portion of God's image on our lives when we create more humans. I have five little humans of my own. What sexuality is used for is not up for debate or discussion. It's God's design.

And so just as we mentioned about the topic of gender, we choose to uphold this biblical view of sexuality. Not because it makes us popular, not because we don't wrestle with these things in our own lives as Christians. Every one of us in this room, if you say you're a follower of Jesus, has wrestled with your sexuality. And yet we choose to uphold a biblical view of sexuality because it's God's design.

It's an act of faith. I also want to say, as much as marriage is a beautiful expression of the glory of God, singleness can also be a beautiful expression of the glory of God. God can choose to bring glory to Himself through marriage, and He can choose to bring glory to Himself through singleness. Jesus was never married, and He lived the most God-glorifying life ever in the flesh. And so if you're here this morning and you're not married, you are not a second-rate Christian.

You're not a second - class citizen in God's economy. God calls you to respond in faith to bring Him glory in that singleness. So the question is not, "Are you married or are you single?" God can choose to bless you with marriage. God can choose to bless you with singleness, but what is the faith through which you are responding to where God has placed you? You could have a marriage that is not being received in faith, bring way less glory to God than a single person who by faith is all that God has called them to be.

God can choose marriage. God can choose singleness. Faith is our response. So as we think about the design of all humanity, I want to encourage you. Humans are not an accident. We're the intentional creation of a sovereign God. That is the good news this morning. Now I want to talk about the bad news. Next we're going to talk about the depravity of all humanity.

Scripture tells us that Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden when they ate from a fruit of a tree that God had commanded them not to eat from. And this tree was called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And it wasn't named that because Adam and Eve, when they ate it, would somehow gain all this wisdom and their knowledge would increase.

It was named that because, in essence, by eating from it and disobeying God, Adam and Eve were now saying, "We get to call the shots on what is good and evil." We are now in the place of our Creator, and then in a very real experience sense, two humans who had only experienced good would now experience evil. They would now have firsthand knowledge of good and evil. In their pride, they were taking the place of Creator God to declare how creation was to be used.

All humans now descend from Adam and Eve, and so all humans sin, and all humans die, period. Every one of us in this room is going to die one day. Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people because all sinned." Every human being is born into sin.

You can't make something perfect out of something that is imperfect and broken, and so we all find this common ancestry. So we are born with imperfect desires, imperfect selfishness. We call this original sin, and yet it's not the only piece because Scripture goes on to say that every one of us has also willfully sinned ourselves against God.

Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ." And this sin brings about death. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord ." We are dead in our sin. This sin separates us from God. Every one of us is going to experience death in our flesh.

Every one of us is going to experience the death around us in relationships and brokenness. We live with death all around us, and every one of us is incapable of being made right with God on our own. Ephesians 2: 1 - 2 says, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient ." Humans are inherently wicked.

Let me say that again. Humans are inherently wicked. This is a fact that we see all throughout human history. Adam and Eve, the very first man and woman, two of their children, Cain and Abel, we see the first murder as Cain kills Abel. Fast forward a little bit, and by the sixth chapter of the Scriptures, humanity has become so wicked constantly that God destroys every living thing with a flood except for Noah, his family, and the animals in the ark.

Fast forward a little farther forward, and we see the nation of Israel. These were to be the people of God set apart to be holy and righteous, and yet we read stories of idolatry, murder, incest, rape, even child sacrifice. These are not just stories, though, of ancient people groups. I want you to think about the Holocaust.

Even our culture today that runs rampant with things like greed and violence and drunkenness and dishonesty and sexual immorality, this is not even to speak of the more hidden evils in our culture today like human trafficking, child slavery, the occult. These things are happening in America today.

We like to promote this idea in our culture that humans are really inherently good, that if you give a person enough resources and enough fairness and enough freedom, people will choose good things. I'm here to tell

you that the truth is, apart from God's grace, humans will always eventually choose the selfishness and wickedness of their heart.

No human is good. Sin is this untamable beast in every one of us. You can try and fight it, but apart from the grace of Jesus Christ, you will eventually give in to the wickedness of your own heart. This is a proven fact throughout all human history, and I'm not just talking about a small group of bad people in our world.

Each and every one of us, I want you to imagine right now if on this big, beautiful screen your entire life, every thought, every action, every word you've ever spoken was on display for the whole congregation. There's not a person in this room that wouldn't feel totally ashamed, from the least to the greatest. We would walk out that door and never want to see another person in this room.

And that speaks nothing to the offense that our sin is before a holy God. We are all guilty. Romans 3:10 - 12 says, "As it is written, there is no one righteous, not even one." There's no one who understands. There's no one who seeks God. Everyone has turned away. They have together become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one.

Sin is not something you and I just occasionally do. It's a corruption of our very nature. Apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ, this is where you and I find ourselves enslaved to sin, destined for death, deserving the eternal punishment of God, and completely incapable of doing anything about it. This is where the Apostle Paul lamented in Romans 7:24 when he wrote, "What a wretched man I am.

Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" I can resonate with those words. I think every one of us can. Those moments of shame, the things we know about ourselves, when you look in the mirror and you think, "Ah, man. If people only knew." The good news is we do have an answer to Paul's question.

Next week, Pastor Joel is going to be unpacking what is the salvation that is provided to us through Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Paul speaks of it in the very next verse, verse 25, where he says, "Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord ." But apart from Christ, there is depravity in all humanity. I don't want to just stop there, though.

We're going to conclude our time this morning by talking about the dignity of all humanity. As much as we've said that humans are inherently wicked, I want to also speak to you that sin has not erased God's image on your life. Fallen humanity still bears the image of God. In Genesis 9, this is after Adam and Eve had sinned, and so sin was a part of humanity.

We read these words, "Whoever sheds human blood, by human shall their blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made mankind ." And then in James 3: 9, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who have been made in God's likeness ." Every human being, no matter how broken by sin, still bears the image of God on their life.

A sinful, broken human is still more valuable to God than a monkey or a tree or a rock. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't treat people differently at times because of their choices. There's a time to punish evil in society. God has placed humans in places of authority to bring punishment to wickedness and evil on earth. And so there's a time to punish evil with things like fines and community service or prison time.

There's a time to punish evil and protect what is good by using military force. And yet, in all of these things, the image of God must be seen on every human being. Humans, though, are not just image bearers of God. They're objects of God's love and sacrifice.

It says one of my favorite passages in all of Scripture, 1 Timothy 2: 3 - 6, "This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people, all people, to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people ." This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

God's love extends to all humanity. Jesus died on the cross for every human being, and God wants every human being to be saved from sin and death, not because we deserve it, not because we've earned it, not because we even seek God, but because he seeks us out of his love. Romans 5: 8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us ." You may need to hear this this morning, but no one seeks God. No one. By God's grace, he calls us to himself. He chooses us, not us choosing him. And he paves the way for you and I to receive the free gift of salvation by placing our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

And even that faith, which is our decision to receive, it's a decision you and I could not make had God not reached out first to get a hold of your life. And then this is how he's called us to love one another. Even the most broken and lost people, we don't love them because they deserve it. We don't wait to love them until they earn it. We follow the example of God, and we love them because he loved us and died for us first.

1 John 4:19 says, "We love because he first loved us ." Every human being has God - given dignity. They're made in the image of God. Every person you see, even from the worst person you see on the news, is someone Christ died for, someone that Christ longs to save and redeem and to receive that gift of grace by faith. There's a design on all humanity.

There's a depravity in all humanity, and there's a dignity of all humanity. And so I want to finish with this question this morning. What do we then do? How do we make this more than just some kind of fact session where we tuck away some more information and feel more studious? How do we actually do something about it? Maybe this morning you need to be reminded of God's design for your life.

Maybe you've never heard or believed, "I'm made in the image of God," that he created me in his image for a purpose. And you need to realize for the first time, "I'm not an accident. I'm not a product of chance. I have a future that God has planned for me." Maybe it's the ways that you've been using your body or your relationships that go against God's design for your life.

And God is calling you this morning to say, "Put your faith in me. Trust me." Not because it's going to be easy, not because everybody's going to agree with you, but because I know what's best for your life. And you need to say yes in faith to God's design for your life, for your relationships, for your body. Maybe this morning you need to be reminded of the depravity of all humanity.

Maybe you come in here and you've never said yes to Jesus. And if you're honest, when you hear about Jesus dying for your sins, you're thinking, "I don't really feel like I need that. I live a pretty good life. I'm a pretty good person. I don't know what this whole need for a savior thing is ." Maybe you need to hear by the power of the Holy Spirit this morning, "You're not good. You do need a savior." Sin is rampant in all of us apart from the work of Jesus Christ.

And God is calling you by faith to say, "I want to receive that new life." Or maybe you've already said yes to Jesus, and you've forgotten the depravity of your own heart. You read the Bible. You have a pretty good family. You don't do the worst sins that are often exposed on TV and that sometimes are talked about in private groups. And so you think, "You know what? I'm doing okay ." And you need to be reminded, "You are not all that.

None of us are." There's not a person in this room, no matter how long you've walked with Jesus, that has anything going for them except for the grace of Jesus Christ. We are broken, helpless sinners learning what it means to receive the grace of God and walk by faith in response. And maybe you need the humility of the Holy Spirit to wash over you afresh this morning.

Finally, maybe you need to be reminded of the dignity of all humanity, that every human being still bears the image of God and is someone for who Christ died.

It can be so easy as we watch the news and as we hear stories of depravity or maybe even those people over there or those people that do these things or come from this place, and we begin to dehumanize these people, image bearers of the almighty God that Christ died for and Christ said, "I want that one." And we begin to dehumanize them and make them just a category for a political argument or a national stance.

These are humans made in the image of God. I was reminded of this as we took a trip to Chicago, Illinois, a few weeks back. And we went to a place called Little India. It's a suburb or not a suburb, but a part of Chicago. And at this point, it is primarily Muslims. Some Hindus, but primarily Muslims.

And needing to be reminded in my heart, beyond a news article, beyond a political stance, these are humans made in the image of God that we should break for, that our hearts should break for their lost souls and should do whatever possible to preach the gospel of Jesus to them. That doesn't mean you have to agree with what they're doing, agree with their religion. It's wrong.

But these humans still have dignity. Maybe you need to be reminded of that today. Whatever it is, I'm asking that you would say yes to the Holy Spirit's call on your life this morning. We're going to have members of our prayer team at each side of the stage. The alters are always open. If you want someone to pray with you, I encourage you to go to members of the prayer team. They would love to pray with you. Feel free to share what's on your heart or just say, "Hey, I need prayer." If you want to do business alone with God, I invite you to come to the alters.

We will do our best to let you have your moment with the Lord. But today is the day to say yes to the Holy Spirit's work in your life. And may God do that in each and every one of us. Let's pray together. Lord, I thank you for your beautiful and wonderful design and creation and the way you've beautifully and fearfully and wonderfully made humans.

This crowning achievement of your creation, created for love and goodness and authority. And yet, God, I thank you that even in our depravity, the brokenness and hopelessness that we have in sin, that God, you sought us out first, not because we deserve it, but because of your great love. And so, Lord, I pray that we would, one, receive that love afresh this morning.

And then, God, would you open our eyes and break our hearts for those around us that need to feel and hear and receive that love given to them, not because they earned it, not because they deserve it, but because we follow your example. Lord, we love you. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.