



SERMON REFLECTION GUIDE

Christian Doctrine, Part 4: God's Images (The Doctrine of Mankind)

Genesis 1:26-2:25 - September 6, 2026

SERMON OUTLINE

Intro - Artificial Intelligence v. Cognitive Disabilities, the question of: is value tied to capacity, production, and/or problem-solving? Are humans a different "category" than everything else?

A. Designed with Dignity

Same: Mankind is created along with other "beasts of the earth" on the 6th day of creation.

Different: "let the earth bring forth" becomes "let us make man"; and "according to their kinds" becomes "in our image, after our likeness".

Defining the Classical Doctrine: *Imago Dei* (the Image of God)

UNLIKELY: rational minds, adaption/growth, free agency, division of labor, use of language
Genesis 2: intimately formed by God (v. 7), possessing a spirit (v. 7), exercising care of God's creation (v. 15), inherent morality (v.16-17), necessary relationships (v. 18)

It cannot be something earned or accomplished, but something bestowed by God. Therefore, the image of God is completely present in all human beings.

"The whole being, the whole human person is in the image of God." - Herman Bavinck

All humans possess a dignity that is derived from their Divine Creator.

This resets the **puffed up**, reminding them that they are *Images* of God.

This resets the **beaten down**, reminding them that they are *Images of God*.

Psalms 8 as a commentary on mankind's place within creation.

This matters greatly because neglecting this doctrine has led to great atrocities against humanity throughout human history.

We must work to recover this doctrine especially in a modern world where AI is exploding and therefore further reducing mankind's capacities for production.

B. Imaging "The Image"

One thing that secular therapy culture cannot offer: an example of **a normal person**. We all eventually think of ourselves as "normal" and everyone else as a little off.

Jesus Christ is the only unstained image of God to walk the earth - and therefore, he's our only model of what true, normal humanity really is!

"Christ, who is the image of God" - 2 Cor. 4:4

"He is the image of the invisible God" - Col. 1:15

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" - John 14:9

To recover and grow more fully into the image of God, we must seek to grow in our Christlikeness.

We are meant to be "conformed into the image of [God's] Son" - Romans 8:29

Both **2 Corinthians 3-4** and **1 John 3** also point to a progressive movement towards proper image bearing that will one day reach culmination when we see Jesus face to face.

Only by acknowledging our value and worth as image-bearers of God can we hope, purpose, and joy regardless of our station in life.

In either suffering or success, pain or plenty, we can seek to reflect God's image to the world, for his glory (**Matt. 5:16**)



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. List some of the ways in which mankind is similar to all the creatures that God made. How and why are those important?
2. List some of the ways in which mankind is different from all the creatures that God made. How and why are those important?
3. Why must we not limit the “image of God in humanity” to capacities or productivity? Why is the image of God something that goes beyond the things that humans are able to do?
4. What does Genesis 2 teach us about mankind that might apply to the “image of God”?
5. How can we fail to see the image of God in ourselves and in others? What are the detrimental effects of this failure?
6. Why does the New Testament say that Jesus is “the image of God”? How is this different from all other humanity?
7. How can we practically grow into Christlikeness, and therefore recover a truer expression of the image of God within ourselves?