

# CLEARING THE FOG

## BELIEFS MATTER

"CLEARING THE FOG" WEEK 6 NOTES JUNE 25

### KEY THOUGHTS

- There is incredible fog in thinking about who we are. Consider these ideas found in literature, music, movies, and more:
  - The creature in Frankenstein to Victor Frankenstein – "I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel."
  - Dermot Kennedy, Lost - "If only you could see yourself in my eyes, you'd see you shine, you shine."
  - Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment: "The whole question here is: am I a monster or a victim myself?"
  - Aladdin to the genie: "They wanna make me sultan. No, they want to make Prince Ali Sultan. Without you, I'm just Aladdin."
  - Elliot Page, transgender actor: "I can't begin to express how remarkable it feels to finally love who I am enough to pursue my authentic self."
  - Geena Rocero, model and transgender advocate: "We are all assigned a gender at birth. Sometimes that assignment doesn't match our inner truth, and there needs to be a new place – a place for self-identification."
  - Levin in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina: "Without knowing what I am and why I am here, life's impossible; and that I can't know, and so I can't live."
  - Why is clearing the fog so important? Tim Keller, The Meaning of Marriage – "Have you ever traveled to a mountainous part of the world when it was cloudy and rainy? You look out your windows and you can see almost nothing but the ground. Then the rain stops and the clouds part and you catch your breath because there, towering right over you, is this magnificent peak. But a couple of hours later the clouds roll in and it has vanished, and you don't see it again for a good while."
- To see the beauty of the design of man, we need to look at the original, not the rusted and dented version. Off to Genesis 1. 9 times in talking about the fashioning of plants and animals, we see them created "according to their kind". And it was good!
- In v.26-28 we see a similar pattern but amplified. Two unique characteristics, and this is the picture of the fresh new car on the lot:
  - Subdue and rule over the earth – responsible for the care of creation.
  - Made in God's image, according to His likeness (4 times mentioned)
- While Creation carries the fingerprint of God, we are much more "in His image" (this phrase set alongside of "according to their kind"). What does that mean? Among other things:
  - We are deeply relational.
  - We are creative.
  - We are communicators.
  - We are reasonable.
  - We are moral.
  - We are spiritual.
- Some implications:
  - 1. We are to give thanks for Creation and tend to it well. Why do so many followers of Jesus look down on people (who may not know our Father) who take better care of His gift than we do?

- 2. We are to celebrate and protect human life. This is not an angry political position, but an honoring the manner in which we were designed, the process, and the outcome of human birth.
- 3. We are to celebrate the variety in which God has created us. Our celebration of "diversity" has boundaries:
  - ◆ Traits that are found in Jesus.
  - ◆ Traits that Scripture honors.
  - ◆ Revelation 7:9-10 gets to the heart of the beauty of God's planned diversity.
- 4. We are to celebrate our own specific design.
  - ◆ Psalm 139:13-14, honoring how God shaped us in the womb, was written post-fall. Which means imperfections are taken into consideration when we talk about being fearfully and wonderfully made. God allows "imperfections" (our word), and uses them to shower strength upon us and gain glory for what He does.
  - ◆ 2 Corinthians 9:12 – His strength in our weakness!
- The end of Psalm 139:14 is our challenge. God has shaped us with beauty and wonder. We live in a culture and a day where that is challenged regularly. Verse 14 ends with, "and my soul knows it very well." May that be true!

## SCRIPTURES

- Genesis 1, especially v.26-28
- Revelation 7:9-10
- Psalm 139:13-14
- 2 Corinthians 9:12

## Practical & Reflection

- Do I tend and care for the Creation well? Am I valuing and guarding this wonderful gift that God has set us over?
- Do I value human life in all the circumstances in which I find myself? From conception to tomb?
- Do I appreciate the diversity in humanity? And do I correctly draw the boundaries around what diversity I am to celebrate?
- Do I know, deep in my soul, that God has created me as I am? Am I comfortable with my own "imperfections", recognizing that God's grace giving me strength is a majestic story?