

Article 3 – Man
Back to the Basics

Intro – Dr. Duggan’s Preaching Advice

- Around the summer of 2000, I got a call from my preaching professor, Dr. Stephen Rummage. He knew that I was looking for a pastoral opportunity and called to ask if I would take a position as pastor of Abbotswood Church.
- He explained that Abbotswood Church was a small, non-denominational congregation that met in the Abbotswood Retirement Home on a weekly basis. I was ready to preach to a fence post so I gladly accepted the assignment.
- Upon arriving my first Sunday, I got to know several of the residents. It wasn’t long before I became well-acquainted with Dr. Adelia Duggins. She was the church’s “treasurer” and she made it clear that I was to address her as Dr. Duggins.
- Immediately I started preaching through the Gospel of John. For that reason, I began to stress the importance of being born again (John 3) and that we must repent of our sins and believe.
- I distinctly remember Dr. Duggins taking me aside one day and saying, “Young man, we like your family and you’re doing a good job, with one exception – stop talking so much about sin and salvation. **These people are all old – none of them are sinners anymore.**”
- I was shocked and saddened. She genuinely believed that the residents didn’t need to hear the Gospel because none of them needed it. Clearly, she had **an incorrect understanding** of mankind.

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image.

- We are introduced to the doctrine of man in the very first chapter of Scripture. Genesis 1:1 says, “*In the beginning, God created the heavens on the earth.*”
- The Bible tells us that God created man on the sixth day of his creative work – “*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Gen. 1:26).*

- There are several things that stand out about that verse:
 - “God said, ‘Let US make man in OUR own image.’ This underscores the doctrine of **the Trinity** – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all intimately involved in creation.
 - Men were created in **God’s image**. In Latin, this is called the *imago dei*, and it stands as clear evidence that men are the crown jewel of God’s creative work. Only mankind has been created in God’s image!
 - By virtue of their special creation, man has **dominion** over all the rest of the created. While he is to be a steward of creation, man doesn’t exist to serve the created order – rather creation exists to serve man.
 - As we come to the close of this article, we’ll see the ramification of mankind being made in the image of God. For now, it will suffice to say that **every human being** is worthy of dignity and respect because ALL are made in His image!
 - Many have wondered exactly what is meant by “the image of God.” It shouldn’t be understood as a reference to a physical image, for we know that God is Spirit (John 4:24).
 - Rather, being made in God’s image has to do with our conscience, our souls, and the fact that we can have a relationship with God. Ultimately, only God knows the depths of meaning in His image.
- Gen. 1:27 is clear – “*God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*” It’s been well-said that God didn’t create Adam and Steve, rather **He created Adam and Eve**.
 - Some have critiqued Scripture for having two contradictory creation accounts, but nothing could be further from the truth. Gen. 1 & 2 are not contradictory – they are complimentary.
 - Gen. 1 gives us an overarching summary of creation while Gen. 2 gives us a detailed account of the creation of mankind. From that account, we can learn some critical truths about God & man.
 - Gen. 2:18 – “*And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper **comparable** to him.”* The Hebrew word for “comparable” is *neged* and it carries the idea of equality.
 - That said, men and women have equal worth in the eyes of God. Though men and women are created equal, they have different responsibilities as assigned to them by God.
 - Gen. 2:21-22 – “*And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.”*
 - Having created a helper for man, God said, “*a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*” (Gen. 2:24). Woman was created for man and together they share a God-ordained union.

He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.

- For that reason, we reject any worldview or teaching that permits men to enjoy attraction and conjugal union with other men, or women with other women. God judged His creation design as good and we dare not violate His clear commands.
- Truly, “the gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.” No matter what our culture teaches, **gender is not a malleable social construct** – rather it is a fixed biological sex assigned by God in the womb.
- Christians reject all notions of gender identity that are not expressly limited to biological sex. I can identify as a woman, but I can also identify as a Ferrari, a pot of gold, or a unicorn. **Identity is mental – gender is biological.**
- If someone is having trouble determining their gender, all we need to do is pull out their birth certificate, then help them grow up into a man or woman of God.

In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race.

- As the creation story unfolds, Genesis 3 makes it very clear that “man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice.” When God completed His creative work, God decreed that everything was good – perfect.
- Knowing no sin in the Garden of Eden, we learn that mankind was also given “freedom of choice” – what we often call a free will to choose good or to choose evil.

- Sadly, it was “by his free choice man sinned against God.” Adam and Eve willfully sinned together – “*when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband **with her**, and he ate*” (Gen. 3:6).
- Adam and Eve disobeyed the clear command of God and in doing so they “brought sin into the human race.” The remainder of Gen. 3 explains the result of what we call The Fall of Man – pain in childbirth, cursed creation, thorns & thistles, and even death for them and all future mankind.
- We need to be clear – sin not only affects the human race – it actually has tainted **the entire created order**. Things such as disease, disaster, disorder, and death did not exist until the Fall.
- Now, all creation is crying out for the re-creation of all things – “*The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*” (Romans 8:19-21).

Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation.

- It was through the serpent that “man transgressed the command of God.” By violating God’s clear command in the Garden, man “fell from his original innocence.” Consequently, “his posterity (all those who come after) inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.”
- The great tragedy of Adam’s sin is that the consequences have passed to every human that’s ever lived and all yet to live. All of us are created with an inclination to sin and rebel against God.
- Consider these verses:
 - Psalm 51:5 – “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” A sinner from birth!
 - Psalm 58:3 – “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.”
 - Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”
- Not only are we sinners by nature, but we live in an environment with many other sinners – a world of temptation where it’s very easy to live in rebellion toward God. Human history reveals a litany of idolatry, immorality, and paganism.
- With that being the case, “as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation.” We’re saying that humans are under judgment and bound for hell once they willfully sin against God.
- We would call this an “age of accountability” – only those who are capable of understanding their wickedness are in danger of eternal damnation.

- For instance, evangelicals have historically held that infants and children are safe under the mercy of God until they reach an age of moral accountability. We would say that our little ones are what the Bible calls “innocent blood.”
- Speaking of Israel, God said, “*They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, 38 And shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.*” (Psalm 106:37-38)
- Evangelicals have long believed that innocent blood includes those who are not yet capable of moral choice, repentance, and placing their faith in God. Though not fleshed out in Scripture, we believe God has a plan for our little ones.
- Once a person comes to understand the difference between right and wrong, “they become transgressors and are under condemnation” – bound for hell apart from faith in Jesus.

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

- As fallen sinners condemned under God’s judgment, there’s only one way for man to come into a right standing with God – “only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship.”
- Paul said it so well – “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast*” (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation comes ONLY by God’s grace through faith in Jesus!

- Through God's grace, we come into a right standing with God through the imputed righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:3). Through the spirit of adoption, we relate to God no longer as simply creation, but as child (Rom. 8:15).
- Paul even explains that it's the grace of God that enables us to fulfill God's purpose for our lives – *"we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"* (Eph. 2:10).
- It can be well-said that God has a plan for every life. It's His perfect will for everyone to be saved, though His permissive will allows many to reject His grace. All those who receive His grace have the power to fulfill their God-ordained purpose.

The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

- Why do Christians believe that every person of every race and every clime of life is "worthy of respect and Christian love?" First, because **every person is made in God's image**. In that respect, no one is better than anyone else – we're of equal worth and value!
- Furthermore, "Christ died for man." And not just a few members of the human race, but the entire human race! John said, *"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world"* (1 John 2:2). God so loved the WORLD – **Christ died for everyone!**

- The fact that every human is made in God's image and that Jesus died for every person that has ever lived should be all the evidence we need to **love every other human being the way that God has loved us**.
- A great reminder to end on – *"We love because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). Every person, everywhere, should be viewed as my neighbor and someone I need to love with the love of Christ.