

North Summit Church
Genesis 1:26–31; 2:4–25
September 13, 2026
Crowned with Glory: The Image of God

INTRODUCTION:

We're continuing our journey through **In the Beginning: the “Prologue” of the Bible** which gives us “the deep grammar” of who God is, who we are, why we exist, and the problem of Sin and Disobedience — **Genesis 1–11**.

- **Week 1 Recap**
 - God alone is uncreated and sovereign, speaking a very good world into ordered existence by his word alone,
 - with no rival and no struggle
 - and the narrative ends with Sabbath rest, teaching us that the goal of the whole creation week is a world that is created to be enjoyed in right relationship with God and one another.
- This week the story turns from the cosmic perspective of creation to a focused retelling of humanity, the crown of his creation.
- Genesis 1 and 2 together answers the questions that are at the foundation of a Christian worldview: what is a human being actually worth, and why? **Every human being — regardless of ability, age, sex, or ethnicity — bears the very image of the living God, and that single truth reorders everything: how we see ourselves, how we treat and view others, and what marriage and sexuality are actually for.**

Genesis 1:26–31; 2:4–25: again I want to challenge you to spend time in these verses each week.

1. **Crowned with Glory: What It Means to Bear God's Image (1:26–27; 2:7, 18)**

Genesis 1:26–27

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

- **Let Us Make Man**
- Same plurality we noticed last week in the Spirit hovering over the waters (1:2) shows up again here.
- Not a developed doctrine of the Trinity - that argument will only bear so much weight as a proof text. This could actually be God speaking to the host of heaven with the royal “we”.

- What is absolutely certain, is that the only one who can “Bara” - create out of nothing is the Triune God - Father, Son and Spirit.
- **As I mentioned briefly last week** – The Hebrew word behind "image" is *tselem*. In the world around Israel, this was the word for a king's statue, erected in conquered territory as a stand-in for his rule where he himself was absent.
- This tells us that the "image of God" is more than just a claim about our internal faculties — reason, emotion, will — and also speaks to our job description. We are placed on the earth as God's own representatives.
- That immediately reframes "dominion" in the very same verse, not power for its own sake, but rule that answers to the King whose image you carry.
- **Male and Female, Together**
- Both sexes, together, constitute the image of God. Neither sex alone is the fullness of God's image. Keep that in the back of your mind, and we will come back to that in a little bit.

Genesis 2:7

"then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature."

- **Dust and Breath**
- This verse brings to light Biblical Anthropology, it is a statement of both our creatureliness and our unique place in the creation order:
 - Dust — creatureliness, dependence, mortality (weren't they immortal - no they were sustained by God's grace through the tree of life)
 - Breath — God's own life, given as a gift. We are not gods. We are not accidents. We are dust that God breathed into.
- **Our culture wants to ground human worth in something we produce** — intelligence, productivity, usefulness, beauty.
 - Genesis 2:7 grounds it in something we receive from a gracious God.

Genesis 2:18

"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"

- **A Necessary, Corresponding Helper**
- **ezer kenegdo**
 - *Ezer* – "helper" – is the same word Scripture uses of God himself as Israel's helper (Ps. 121:2).
 - It carries zero connotation of inferiority. *Kenegdo* means "corresponding to him" — a counterpart who completes, not a subordinate.
 - That one word corrects both a low view of women and a domineering view of male headship at the same time.

2. Sacred from the Womb: The Sanctity of Every Human Life (Ps. 139:13–14)

Psalm 139:13–14

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."

- If Genesis 1 tells us humanity as a whole bears God's image, David makes this reality personal. You were being knit together, formed, known — before you ever drew a breath.

Genesis 9:6

"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."

- We'll spend a full week in this verse later in the series, but the principle starts today. The entire biblical case for the sanctity of human life — **and the foundation for human law itself** — rests on Genesis 1:26–27. Not on usefulness. Not on cognitive ability. Not on being wanted. On the image.
- This is why we as a church say, in our Statement on Life:

"We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life."

- **A Word About Proposition 1**

- This November, Idaho voters decide on Proposition 1. I want you to know what's actually in it.
- Prop 1 would establish a state right to abortion up to the point of "fetal viability" — but it redefines viability itself, narrowing it to a "significant likelihood of sustained survival...without extraordinary medical measures."
- That language would allow for abortions far later than the standard of the 20–24 week point doctors have used for decades — broad enough to reach well into the seventh or eighth month.
- It also removes Idaho's parental consent requirement for minors, and removes the current requirement that only a licensed physician may perform an abortion.
- So given the foundational truths of if Genesis 1:26–27 is true — if that little one, at every stage, bears the image of God — this isn't a peripheral issue for us as a church.
- Please, leave here informed, praying, and vote your Christian conviction on November 3rd. **Life Choices is here this morning and they would love to answer any questions for you concerning Prop 1 after service.**

3. A Fence Around the Garden: God's Design for Marriage (2:18, 21–25)

Genesis 2:24–25

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

- Marriage isn't a cultural invention that Scripture happens to regulate. It's woven into creation itself — before the fall, before sin, before any brokenness needed fixing. It is very good.
- **"Leave...hold fast...one flesh"** — three verbs, one total re-ordering of belonging: a new primary loyalty, a permanent covenant bond, a union so real Scripture can only call it "one flesh."
- **"Not ashamed"** — the picture of marriage before sin is complete transparency. Complete safety. Nothing hidden.
- **God's design here — one man, one woman, one flesh, for life — isn't a fence built to keep us from something good.** It's a fence built around something precious. We fence the things we value most, not the things we're embarrassed by.

Ephesians 5:31–32

"'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."

- Paul reaches all the way back to Genesis 2:24 and tells us what it was pointing to the whole time. Marriage was never ultimately about us. It's a living picture, written into creation itself, of Christ's covenant love for his people.
- This is why our own Statement on Marriage says:

"Biblical marriage consists only of a faithful, heterosexual union between one genetic male and one genetic female, and biblical marriage is the only legitimate and acceptable context for a sexual relationship."
- Sanctity of life and God's design for marriage and sexuality aren't two unrelated topics we happen to be covering in the same message. Both flow from the same doctrine: the body is not raw material to be redefined at will. It's given, designed, and image-bearing — from the womb to the marriage bed.

[Garden Illustration]

4. Crowned to Serve: A Preview of Our Calling (2:8, 15)

Genesis 2:15

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it."

- Eden was not just a garden. Its description — gold, onyx, a river with four heads (2:10–12) — echoes the same language later used for the tabernacle and temple. Adam wasn't only a gardener. He was a priest-king, tending God's own dwelling place.
- That identity was shattered at the fall — but it was not erased. Hebrews calls Jesus the truer, better image, the one who does perfectly what Adam was made to do (Heb. 2:5–9).
- Colossians calls him "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). And in him, we are being remade after that same image (Col. 3:10) — called, in Peter's words, "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9). The vocation given in Eden, lost in the fall, is handed back to us in Christ.
- Next week we're going to slow all the way down here — what "work it and keep it" actually calls us to build, and what it looks like to create culture that reflects God's goodness rather than our own name.
 - **You were made to represent, to rule wisely, and to reflect you King to a watching world.**

Application: Living as Bearers of God's Image

Here is what I believe this passage is calling us to:

1. See Every Person as Image-Bearer First

- Before you notice ability, age, appearance, politics, or usefulness to you — the first true thing about every person you meet this week is that they carry God's image. Let that be the first thing you see, especially in the person easiest to write off.

2. Contend for the Sanctity of Life — With Your Prayers and Your Vote

- Pray specifically for Idaho this fall, for the unborn, and for mothers in crisis pregnancies who need the church to be a real answer, not just a position. Then vote your convictions on November 3rd.

3. Guard the Fence Around Your Marriage — or Your Future One

- If you're married, name one specific way you've let the fence around your marriage go unguarded, and repair it this week. If you're single, guard the same design in your own life now, ahead of time — and know that singleness itself is a whole, complete way to bear God's image, when we give ourselves completely to the one that we were made to reflect.

4. Receive Your Body as a Gracious Gift

- Whether the pressure you feel is to perfect your body, to be ashamed of it, or to treat it as infinitely reshapeable — Genesis 1–2 says your body was given, designed, and called good before your Instagram feed ever told you that it wasn't.
- Receive it as a gift, and steward it like a prized possession not something to be abused or transformed for your own purposes.

5. Prepare Your Heart for the Calling Ahead

- Meditate on the fact that you were made a priest-king or priest-queen in a garden-sanctuary before you were ever made a worker with a job title. Let that reframe your work this week, and come back next Sunday ready to go deeper into what that calling actually requires of us.

Benediction Prayer

Father, you looked at dust and breathed your own life into it, and called what you made very good. You made us in your image, to represent you, to rule wisely, to hold fast to one another, and to tend the place you put us.

Forgive us for the times we've treated people as less than image-bearers, for the times we've been careless with the sacredness of life, and for the times we've torn down the fences you built around what you love.

Remind us this week that our worth was never something we earned, and that the same is true for every image-bearer — the unborn, the aged, the vulnerable, our own spouse, our own selves.

Go now in the peace of the God who formed you on purpose, who calls you very good, and who is remaking you even now into the image of his Son.

Amen.

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Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Bearing the Image

"Image of God" in the ancient world meant a king's representative, standing in for his rule — not just a set of inner faculties like reason or emotion.

How does thinking of "image-bearing" as representation and rule, rather than starting from ability or achievement, change how you see your own worth — and how you see someone whose abilities look very different from yours?

2. Sacred from the Start

Genesis 9:6 grounds the sanctity of human life directly in the image of God — not in usefulness, ability, or being wanted.

Where is it hardest for you, personally, to actually believe that every human life is sacred because of the image, not because of its circumstances? How should that shape how we as a church love people in crisis, not just how we vote?

3. A Fence, Not a Cage

God's design for marriage in Genesis 2 — one man, one woman, one flesh — is presented as a gift given before the fall, not a rule added after sin appeared.

What's one "fence" in God's design for marriage and sexuality that you've been tempted to see as restrictive rather than protective — and what would it look like to actually trust that it's there because it's guarding something precious?

4. Made for More

Eden's description echoes the tabernacle and temple — Adam's calling in the garden was priestly as much as agricultural.

What would change about how you approach your work, your home, or whatever's been placed in your hands this week if you saw yourself as a priest-king or priest-queen tending God's dwelling place, rather than just an employee getting through a task list?