**Genesis 1:26-31**

I. Who we are: Creatures created in the image of God (v. 26-27)

A. The author wants to really impress us with this idea that we are created in God’s image. So the story slows down, we get inside to God’s own self-deliberation in v. 26, and we get the Bible’s first poem in v. 27

B. What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

1. “Image” = used for a solid/physical representation of something

2. “Likeness” = some that is similar to, or resembles something else

3. So we are a physical, concrete expression of an invisible God, and we resemble him

4. There are many things that distinguishes us from the rest of the animals (we are moral, rational, language producing, relational, creative, soul creatures)

C. Practically, this reflects the utter value, worth, and dignity of every human being

D. Even after the fall, we are still said to be made in the image of God (Gen 9:6)

II. Why are we here: to fill God’s earth with God’s image and rule God’s creation as his representatives (v. 28)

A. God could have chosen to rule over the creation himself, but instead he entrusted his rule to his image bearers

B. God’s plan was that His glory would cover the earth because his image bearers would fill it and rule it well

C. This command refers to our physical care for the land/earth

1. See ch. 2:8, 15: Adam and Eve were called to be the gardener to cultivate and guard Eden

2. Most likely the idea was that Adam and Eve were to spread the blessings of Eden to the entire earth.

D. This command also has implications for all of our endeavors

1. Think of the connection between “cultivate” (garden) and “culture” (human society in general)

2. This has implications for all types of work and all areas of human culture and society (family, leisure, arts, government)

3. It’s fun to imagine what human culture might have looked like if the fall never happened (arts, science, government, cities, etc.)

III. Consider the Fall and God’s plan of redemption

A. The fall

1. God’s image bearers try to be God and their hearts are filled with sin

2. They fill the earth with sin and violence instead of God’s glory

B. Redemption

1. God sends his son to be the true image bearer (Col 1:15, Heb 1:3)

2. When people surrender their lives to Jesus, his Spirit enters them and starts to conform them to his image (2 Cor 3:18)

3. They are sent out into the earth to fill the earth with disciples who bear his image (Mt 28:18-19)

Conclusion

I. How are you treating people?

A. What types of people are hard for you to love? What types of people are easy for you to objectify? (a certain race, gender, political leaning, socio-economic level, etc.)

B. In what types of situations do you tend to objectify and vilify image bearers (on the freeway, in politics, on the internet, at work, etc.)

C. Let’s remember that every single human being is created in God’s image and therefore worthy of love and care

II. How are you ruling over the segment of the world God has entrusted to you?

A. Consider your job, your home, your neighborhood

B. How can you use the authority entrusted to you to spread God’s glory in the spheres of influence you’ve been given?

**Discussion Questions**

1. In the past, what have you assumed it meant to be made in the image of God? How did Sunday’s message add to your understanding or stir any new thoughts in that regard?

2. On Sunday we considered how we treat people who are made in the image of God. Is there a specific type of person or situation you want to be more mindful of as you consider the fact that every human being is made in God’s image?

3. Consider the final question posed on Sunday: how are you ruling over the segment of the world God has entrusted to you? What specific area comes up for you as you consider that question, and what does it lead you to want to do differently?

4. Discuss this question: compared to the average secular person, do Christians have a higher or lower view of people?