The God of Creation, Days 5&6, part 3
Genesis 1:20-31
(preached Pine Grove 3/4/18; Sunday PM)

Introduction

In 2014, Pope Francis was addressing an audience at the universe of Molise in southern Italy…

This area of Italy is known for its vast farms and agricultural businesses..

In his address to the university crowd, Pope Francis said this…

Quote…

"When I look at America or even my own homeland of South America, so many forests, all cut, that have become land that can no longer give life. This is our sin, exploiting the Earth and not allowing her to give us what she has within her."

He has also said this about the environment in the past..

"I don't know if climate change is all man's fault, but the majority is. For the most part, it is man who continuously slaps down nature. We have, in a sense, lorded it over nature, over Sister Earth, over Mother Earth. I think man has gone too far."

Two things to take note of there..

One is that the Pope sees the earth as a person..

Sister Earth.

Mother Earth..

Saying that humans dont allow the earth to give us what she has within her..

In a very real sense, the Pope puts this planet on level ground with people…

Yet, the Bible never teaches that anywhere from Genesis to Revelation…

In fact, the Bible teaches that the earth is disposable and will be disposed of and made new in the future…

This planet isn't an authority over us like a Mother..

She isn't even an equal to us like a sister..

Instead, man rules over the earth that has been given to him by God…

Clearly, this isn't the idea of abuse and neglect…

No Christian would endorse that, but it also isn't the idea of us serving Mother Earth so that she doesn't become angry with us….

In fact, Pope Francis even said this..

"We must safeguard creation. Because if we destroy creation, creation will destroy us."

No it won't.

Only God has the power to destroy human life…

Creation can't destroy unless God allows it…

In fact, creation will be destroyed and believers will survive to live in a new heavens and earth made by God…

Now, why does the Pope have a wrong view of the earth?

It is quite simple.

He has long abandoned what the Bible teaches and replaced it with what he thinks or what the Roman Catholic church tells him to say…

And when you leave the inerrant word of God, you quickly adopt the error of listening to man…

Let that not be true of us…

So, let's get a proper view of man's relationship to the earth in Genesis 1 tonight…

For the past few weeks, we have slowed our pace way down in the book of Genesis..

In fact, we have spent a few weeks just on day 6 of creation…

And the reason is simple..

Day 6 was the height of God's act of creating the universe and all that is in it…

Because on day 6, God first created the land animals before finishing up his with the masterpiece of all creation and that is the creation of man and woman…

Last week, we began to look 3 reasons why people are the height of God's creation….

All we got finished with was reason #1 and that was…

Humans are God's masterpiece because of how we are designed…

Simply put, people are at height of God's creation because we are the only part of creation made in his image…

And we talked last week about what it means to be made in the image of God…

It can be seen in our physical appearance, our intellectual ability, our ability to make make decisions, our emotions, our morality, our capacity to have relationships and the fact that we like God have a purpose or function in the world..

In other words, we are simply decorations for God's universe..

We aren't just the highest mammals on the food chain…

Tonight, we are going to explore that idea a little further as we get into the second half of verse 26 and find the second reason we are the height of God's creation…

And that could simply be labeled….

We are a masterpiece of God because of our purpose in the world…

II. A Masterpiece of Purpose

In the original creation before sin entered, man had a purpose given to him by God…

Let's look at verse 26…

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the [ak]sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

There seems to a reason that man is made in God's image…

And that is simple..

He was to act as God's representative as he ruled over God's creation…

One thing I love about Major League Baseball is that the coaches of the team wear the uniforms of the team…

In football, the coaches dont wear soldier pads and helmets..

In basketball, the coaches dont wear the tank top jerseys…

In hockey, the coaches dont wear a mask and carry a stick…

But in baseball, the coach looks just like the other players….

The players go out on the field and do what the coach tells them to do and they even look like him as he stands in the dugout with his uniform on…

That is a good way to envision what man's original purpose was on the earth…

He was made in God's image and he was put in God's creation to do what he commanded him to do…

And in verse 26, part of his purpose was to rule over the earth..

Verse 27 even repeats the image of God in man idea after God gave man his instructions, with one notable exception…

Woman is also included in this task of ruling creation..

Look at verse 27..

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

I think it is clear from this verse and others that woman is included as being part of God's command to rule creation…

But woman is also included here because man's purpose in creation is not just to rule over it, but also to fill the earth with people…

Look at verse 28…

28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the [al]sky and over every living thing that [am]moves on the earth."

God's intended purpose for man was to rule and reproduce…

God wanted man to have children and spread over the earth…

Couple things to consider…

#1- This was a primary reason why God wasn't pleased with man at the tower of Babel…

WE will get there soon, but one of the sins of the tower of Babel was that people were not spreading over the earth but congregating in one place…

Listen to Gen 11..

1 Now the whole earth [a]used the same language and [b]the same words. 2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and [c]settled there. 3 They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.
4 They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

People were made to scatter and occupy the earth…

For the most part, man has been successful at doing that over the centuries…

The spread of the people over the earth has led to nations and cultures and much diversity over the face of the earth…

Now understand this…

When the Antichrist comes, what will he try to do?

He will once again try to unite the world into his Kingdom..

And he will be successful in some way in accomplishing what the people at the tower of Babel couldn't accomplish at least for a little while..

For us, what do the call to fill the earth mean?

It means we celebrate the settling of the earth…

There is nothing sinful about cities or states or nations..

They simply reflect man's obedience to God's original call to fill the earth..

A second note to make about God's call to multiply and fill the earth is this…

Having children is good in the sight of the Lord.

God's call to be fruitful and multiply is seen as families grow..

Now the Bible never calls it a sin not to have children or to have too few children..

Some couples aren't physically able to have children.

Other couples may not be able to have but one child..

In those cases, God has a purpose and the couple is not in violation of any part of Scripture.

But generally speaking, having children is part of fulfilling the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth…

This is another reason why abortion is wrong..

Not only is it taking a life created by God.

Not only is it destroying the image of God in that child.

Abortion also stands in opposition to the command to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth…

Homosexuality is first of all sinful because God calls it sinful, but homosexuality works against the call to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth since homosexual couples cannot have children of their own…

Government policies on how many children a couple can have also stand opposed to this original purpose of man…

For 36 years, the Chinese government had a one child policy that prevented over 400 million births that would have occurred without the law…

Today, China allows 2 children per family, but policies like that work against this original command of God to man to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth…

So, man is created as God's masterpiece of creation…

And we man as the height of God' creation because of His design and his purpose, but there is a 3rd reason that mani the height of God's creation…

I call this….

III. A Masterpiece of Focus

Let's read verse 29…

29 Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the [an]surface of all the earth, and every tree [ao]which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the [ap]sky and to every thing that [aq]moves on the earth [ar]which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so.

As day 6 draws to a close, God simply reminds man that every plant and tree is given to him for food…

In other words, the vegetation of the earth will provide the diet for Adam and Eve…

No, let's take note of a couple of things here..

#1 - At first, people and animals were vegetarians.

Since there was no sin at this point in human history there was also no death at this point in time…

Therefore, there was ribeye steak or a piece of fried chicken at this point in time either…

Man simply survived on the fruit of the trees and the plants of the ground..

Now, take note here….

God didn't create just one kind of tree or one kind of plant…

He had created a variety of both…

There were multiple fruit trees and multiple vegetable plants…

For Adam's sake, the earth wasn't covered with just coconut trees and brussel sprouts…

No, there were fruit trees and vegetables of various kinds and various tastes and various smells…

This is the goodness of God to offer variety in the earth…

There isn't one tree or one bush or one plant, but a variety of all to satisfy all the taste buds in Adam and Eve's mouth…

Though we dont think about it, when you get a menu at a restaurant, it is a reflection of God's goodness to you.

There isn't just one option of a rice cake and a glass of water..

No, there are a variety of tastes on a menu simply because of the grace of God to give us so many ways to enjoy his Earth..

Even as you look around this room tonight, see the diversity of God…

No two faces are the same…

No two skin colors are even the same…

No two fingerprints the same or personalities the same…

God's creativity is limitless…

No two snowflakes the same…

No two cows the same…

Now think about this…

What does the Bible call us to be as the church?

We are called to unity…

One faith, one Lord, one baptism, one way to salvation, one Spirit, one body…

You see, God is glorified in unity and diversity…

God made one race of people but it is incredibly diverse…

In the same way, God made trees and plants and they all share a common unity, but the diversity in trees and plants is for His glory and our blessing….

God made man, who will need to eat…

But God didn't make one vegetable and one fruit for him to eat…

He made a variety of both..

Now, we also see that the animal word are all herbivores or vegetarians as well…

The beast, the birds, the insects are all plant eaters as well..

The second thing we see here is this..

Man is the focus of God's creation…

The end of verse 29 says that plants and trees were "for you."

If we go through the days of creation, every act of creation is to demonstrate God's glory but also serve a purpose for man…

The simple fact that the earth is watery is to ensure man's survival since we will be creatures that are mostly made of water…

In fact, the man speaking to you tonight is roughly 60% water..

The brain that I am using to form there words right now is 73% water and the heart that beats keeping me alive right now is 75% water…

So a water based earth on day 1 of creation was to ensure the survival of man..

On day 2, the water were separated to provide for the earth's atmosphere and outer space…

And both our atmosphere which is rich in oxygen and our placement in outer space at the right distance from the sun was to ensure man's survival.

On day 3 as God separated the water and land on the earth, it was for man's benefit.

He is going to live on the land, and his food is going to come from the land…

On day 4, the lights of the sky, the sun, moon, and stars are created for man's benefit..

They will help him see during the day, during the night, and the stars will help him move about his world…

The fish and birds of day 5 and the land animals of day 6 are all for man's enjoyment and will eventually serve as his food…

It is clear from the creation account that man is the focus of God's creation…

He is designed in a certain way…

He is given a certain purpose…

And the world around man was made to bless him..

If you look back at verse 28…

God blessed them, meaning man and woman…

Though we see the effects of a world where man and woman didn't bless God, we need to understand that God made man and woman to be the masterpiece of creation…

And when he was done with them, note what God says in verse 31…

31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

As God looks back his 6 days of creation, he is pleased with his work..

And he declares all it it, not just good, but very good..

Now, this helps us in a number of ways to put things in order..

First and foremost, this statement rules out the possibility of God using evolution to create the universe as some Christian evolutionists tell us..

Evolution says that things evolve and change over time through death and natural selection…

But God would not declare a world of death as being good…

6 days doesn't mean millions of years or even thousands of years or even a few years…

6 days means 6 literal 24 hours day where God created out of nothing all that we see in the universe…

Evolution was not part of the process no matter what unbelieving scientists and even Christian evolutionists tell us…

If God declared it good on day 6, there wouldn't have been death and disease and survival of the fittest..

And the reason for that is that sin leads to death and no sin has yet to be committed in these 6 days of creation…

Another thing to note her which I think is very important is that evil must not be present in this world at the end of day 6…

How could God call his creation good if Satan were roaming around it like a prowling lion at this point…

Therefore, I think it is a safe assumption to see all the angels still in heaven worship God over his act of creating the world in 6 days…

Now, day 6 and the completion of creation may have pushed Satan to rebel…

Maybe it the glory that God was getting for all he had done..

Maybe it was the fact that Satan wanted a planet and universe to call his own and display his beauty..

Listen to Isaiah 14:12-14..

12
"How you have fallen from heaven,
O [a]star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!
13
"But you said in your heart,
'I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
14
'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.'

The book of Ezekiel also details the fall of Satan….

Ezekiel 28:12…

"You [d]had the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

Skip down to verse 15…

15
"You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created
Until unrighteousness was found in you.

16
"By the abundance of your trade
[h]You were internally filled with violence,
And you sinned;
Therefore I have cast you as profane
From the mountain of God.
And I have destroyed you, O [i]covering cherub,
From the midst of the stones of fire.
17
"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.

It is clear that Satan sinned because he was arrogant and wanted to be equal to God or even rise above God…

And maybe the completion of creation and God setting man over creation was too much for Satan…

Man will even judge angels in the future…

In a sense, the angels had a place of prominence with God until man came along on day 6….

And it is quite possible that Satan could not stand the fact that he was not God's masterpiece of creation…..

Therefore, his rebellion against God soon followed…

Now, we dont know how much time elapses between the creation of man and the fall of man in Genesis 3, but it doesn't appear to be very long…

So, I think it is safe to assume that Satan fell soon after day 7 of creation, and we what happened as soon as He got to earth…

However, none of the consequences of his fall are here on day 6…

Everything at the end of day 6 is not only good, it is very good…

Conclusion

With that in mind, let me end this way…

The struggle of man in a very real sense has been to return to the end of creation day 6…

When we watch the news and see the failing morality of our world, we shake our heads and wonder "what is going on?"

We even say things like, "I wish we could go back to the good ole days."

Most of the time that means a return to the culture of 50s and 60s America, but I assure you that culture was just as sinful…

They were probably much better at just covering it up….

In reality, the good ole days is better seen as the good ole day…

Day 6 of creation.

Where sin was absent and the world was free from its curse…

Now the God news in our struggle to get back to that day is that God also desires the good ole day as well…

In fact, God has been working very but very patiently to get the earth back to a time when everything can be declared very good…

That is why Christ came and died…

Sin couldn't be removed from the earth but it could be forgiven through repentance and faith in Him…

And through that removal of sin, we prepare ourselves to head back to a time when sin wasn't around…

You see, salvation makes it possible to live in the good ole day…

And though we wont go back to day 6, God is going to bring day 6 back to us in the new heavens and new earth…

And the reality of that coming conditions of day 6 is that it will never end for all who are truly saved…

Let us pray.