

Genesis 1v26-31 Sermon

26 Then God said, 'Let us make humankind[c] in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

27 So God created humankind[e] in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' 29 God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Introduction

There is a nice story in Nick Cranes Clear waters rising. The story of 6000 mile walk across the mountains of Europe, often going days without seeing anyone.

The landscape is amazing, but there is nothing in all creation so profound as a human face. Nothing else conveys so much emotion, meaning, life.

Look at the person next to you (awkward) Behold the image of God.

We talked last week about how important Genesis is. Not only does this story define us, it is foundational for science. The fact that we believe the universe to be ordered and comprehensible - Sir Isaac Newton believed he was reading the mind of God.

But this next idea is perhaps even more important, and in an era of xenophobia, nationalism and racism, fights over human rights, this idea is radical.

Context

The seven day thing. Beautiful true mythology. Not true in a literal sense, true because it makes sense of the world. Creation is a process.

Why 7 days? Good question. Poetic? Is how is this revealed to the author.

John Calvin - who is no liberal - rejected instantaneous creation, and criticised those who contradicted the scientific understanding of the day.

But what it comes down to is this.

In the ancient world there were multiple creation myths - which one do you believe. In our world there are just two. You need to make a choice.

Either life is creation came from nothing, for nothing - life is brief and ultimately meaningless, we came from nothing, for no reason. Or it is deliberate, purposeful and personal.

God is the source of creation. "Let there be light" God makes the sun rise. All things come from God. It is not random, accidental it is.

God is above creation.

This passage challenges wrong ideas about Gods.

God is not part of creation. By getting in touch with nature you don't get closer to God. Though you might understand God better. God is not in the trees or the water. Or most significantly in the sun or the moon.

Note v16 Putting the sun and the moon in their place.

Why are they so insignificant 'lights'.

They are simply 'signs to mark the seasons, days and years'

God is beyond the universe. Pure monotheism.

Creation is good.

God takes pleasure in his creation. It isn't brutal ugly or evil. It is good. It is to be delighted in.

We love nature. A romantic ideal. Echo's God.

We are to celebrate creation, to delight in it, and to respond to God in worship and praise.

v26 The image of God.

26 Then God said, 'Let us make humankind[c] in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

And so we come to perhaps the most important part of Genesis, and one of the most important ideas in the Bible.

You are made in the image of God. And not just you. Male and female, regardless of race, wealth, intelligence, class, you are an icon of the divine, you are a visible representation of the invisible God.

Can you begin to comprehend how radical that is. And radical means going to the root. Every human being has dignity and worth. No human life is without it. In a world of vast inequality, patriarchy, slavery and violence, God counts every human being as of worth.

It of course is a foundational idea in human rights - the modern concept of which predates the enlightenment and finds its source in protestantism.

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

Big question. Reason, relationship, love, free will, creativity,

You are the proof of God.

Irony that we use our god given rationality to explain away God: Genesis 3.

And you have a role. *let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

To rule over does not mean to exploit, as the tyrants rule, but in the image of God to steward, nurture to seek flourishing, fruitfulness, balance.

v31 It was very good.

Agent Smith - 'Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You are a plague, and we ... are the cure.'

Despite everything that follows you are very good.

You have every right to be here you are part of the solution.

Conclusion

The image of God is radical even today. It is true of the refugee, the criminal, the

And we challenge the subordination of human beings made in the image of God wherever we find it. We challenge oppression, violence and exploitation. Because in doing so we give honour to the God who created Humanity in his own image.