

Anthropology *The Doctrine of Man*

Recap: Last week, we discussed the doctrine of creation. We looked at Genesis 1 and 2, understanding that God created everything in seven literal days and that He created all things good. We also saw that at the pinnacle of God's creation was mankind, as we are made in His image. God created man and woman, and He did so, good. Today, we are going to look a bit closer at that.

For centuries, many have asked the question, "what does it mean to be human?" The Psalmist, amazed at God's great creation, asks "what is man?" Philosophers and scientists have sought to understand this for as long as they could think.

This issue in particular is one of the most crucial issues in the church at this point in time.

Society cannot answer the question "what is a woman?" When you ask someone what qualifies as a human life, they resort to personhood rather than the *imago Dei*. And usually, because of our lack of education and discipleship, the Church is left clueless and has no idea how to answer these questions.

Well, today, we are going to see what the Scriptures teach and what the Church has held to historically so that way you can have an answer.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism: What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

"We glorify God *by* enjoying Him forever." - John Piper

Unlike the rocks and animals, we get to actively choose (by the strength of the Holy Spirit) to glorify God because **we are made in His image**.

"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 sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:26-27, NASB 1995).

- Because we are made in the image of God, we have inherent dignity and worth.
 - In the ancient world, dishonoring the image of a king was equivalent to dishonoring the king himself. In the same way, how we treat other image-bearers reflects how we treat God.
 - This is why the second greatest command feeds off the greatest: We love others as a fruit of our love for God.

Main Views of the Imago Dei:

- **Substantive View:** There are some characteristics in humanity that reflect God's being.
 - The ability to reason is the most commonly used example; however morality and will are also commonly included.
 - Many Theologians hold to this view and say that there is no need to isolate just one trait.

- **Relational View:** Like the triune God who exists eternally in relationship, we are created for community.
 - God's image is expressed in both male and female; neither alone is a full expression.
 - Critics agree relationships matter but argue the *Imago Dei* is broader than this aspect.
- **Functional View:** Based on God's commands to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it, humanity serves as God's representatives on earth.
 - As God created spaces for life to flourish and filled them, we are called to do the same. This is the cultural mandate.
 - Both men and women are needed to fulfill this view.
- **Holistic View:** Humanity should be viewed as a whole. All three above contribute aspects of what it means to bear God's image.
 - Before the fall, we reflected God perfectly; after the fall, sin damaged every part of us. Christ, the second and better Adam, accomplished what Adam-and we-failed to do.
 - "But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).
 - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Human Nature: Though we are made in God's image and reflect His attributes, we remain infinitely different from Him. God is Creator; we are created. He is eternal and infinite; we are finite and limited.

- God is one substance. Humans have both a material and immaterial component. Some people will over emphasize the material component (naturalists) and others will over emphasize the immaterial component (platonists and philosophers).

Two major views of what a human is...

1. **Dichotomy:** Humans are composed of two parts, body and soul/spirit.
 1. Body: Physical / material.
 2. Soul/Spirit: The Immaterial aspect of who we are.
 3. Our soul and body were never supposed to be separated, however, because of sin, we face death where they will be separated for a while. At the resurrection, Jesus will raise our bodies up in glorified form and our soul will be rejoined to our body.
 4. Matthew 10:28... proves we are both body and soul.
2. **Trichotomy:** Humans are composed of three parts, body, soul, and spirit.
 1. Body: Physical component of existence.
 2. Soul: Seat of our mind, will, and emotions.
 3. Spirit: Aspect of our nature that responds to, relates to, and communes with God.
 4. Based off the context of Scripture, soul and spirit are used synonymously (talking about the same thing).
 5. Some will take this view and lead into heresy where they say (as Kenneth Copeland did), "you are a spirit, you have a soul, and you are in a body." We reject such notion because it is unbiblical.

Something to Avoid: Platonic Dualism

Something that has plagued the church for centuries is the influence of the Greek philosopher, Plato. His view of what it means to be human is anti-biblical, and yet many believers adopt his view without even looking.

How many of you have heard or even said this... “I’m just passin’ through.” “I can’t wait until I fly away to heaven!” “My body is not me, my soul is the real me.” “It don’t matter what happens to my body because one day I’m going to shed this thing.” “He’s done gone home!”

These things, and the attitude behind them, are nowhere in Scripture! These are beliefs of Plato that the historic church would condemn as heretical and false.

Here is what Plato teaches: Your soul existed before you were made, but when you were born, your soul indwells your body and makes you a person. The whole time you’re on this earth, your soul is yearning to *go home* in the upper realm and escape this physical misery here in our bodies on earth. When you die, you will shed your body and will truly be you again when you return to the upper realm.

That sounds awful close to what many in the church have grown up hearing, doesn’t it? The problem: it is simply not biblical. Our bodies have great value (1 Cor 6; 15). That’s why Jesus physically died and resurrected... He is not just saving our souls, but saving us as entire beings.

The proper view of humanity is this: Human beings are equally composed of both a physical body and an immaterial soul, made in the image of God, to glorify Him. Our image is broken, however, as Christians, we are being restored by Christ to bear His image perfectly. One day, when He returns, we will be bodily raised to do so.

Any questions or thoughts?

Let’s Pray!