

## **1 We Believe: Foundations of the Christian Faith**

Session 7: Humanity and the Image of God

## **2 The Westminster Shorter Catechism**

Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Question 10: How did God create man?

God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

## **3 Genesis 1:26-31**

The nature and vocation of humanity

Image of God

Dominion

Unity in diversity - male and female

Fruitfulness

Stewardship

## **4 Genesis 2:1-24**

God formed man from the dust of the ground

Breathed into him the breath of life (reach - animated by God's Spirit)

The man became a "living being"

God put the man and put him in the Garden to "till it and to keep it"

God sets boundaries on what the man can eat

God does not desire the man to be alone but creates a partner/helper

The one flesh union of man and woman is assumed as a creational pattern

## **5 Psalm 8**

A little lower than God (divine beings, angels)

Crowned with glory and honor

Given dominion over the works of God

## **6 The Worldview of the Ancient Near East**

A polytheistic worldview - many gods controlled the physical world

The world was created as the result of a conflict between the gods

Humans were created as slaves of the gods, to do the gods bidding and to keep them satisfied

Kings and pharaohs were the "image" of a particular god; statuary signified the king's role as the god's earthly representative

Human nature was immanent with the gods and nature

## **7 The Worldview of the Bible**

Genesis was a revolution in worldview

One God creates with a word (not out of conflict), bringing order instead of chaos. In Genesis 1, God is building a cosmic temple in which to dwell

God creates humanity on the sixth day in his "image and likeness," a designation given to all humans (not just a king) and given to both male and female

The creation of humanity is a reflection of divine community (The Trinity) - singularity and community, similarity and difference

Humans are invested with the vocation of having "dominion" over the earth - to be kings/queens and priests in God's earthly temple

## **8 The Creation of Humanity**

Humans are embodied, created as a unified person for life and vocation in God's creation

"Dust" and "breath" - material and spiritual dimensions dependent upon one another

Male and female - sexual difference, complementarity, equality

Vocation - not slaves, but royal regents

Embodied life is not a curse, it is essential - "I am embodied, therefore, I am."

## **9 A Unified View of Personhood**

The creation story indicates that our bodies are an indivisible aspect of human personhood

The endgame of humanity is resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15)

What we do with the body matters, including our sexual conduct (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

God as Creator has ultimate claim on how we use our bodies because God made them

## **10 Wesley on the Image of God**

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Natural Image - an embodied and spiritual being endued with understanding, freedom of the will, and various affections

Political Image - to be "governors of the lower world, having dominion over...all the earth"

Moral Image - "righteousness and true holiness"

For Wesley, the "one thing needful" is renewal in the image of God

## **11 The Representative Capacity**

Humans serve as God's co-regents

Adam is the representative of humanity's role in the world - a role broken by sin

Jesus as the new Adam reestablishes the representative role by obeying God and bringing a new dominion of God's rule and reign ("the kingdom of God")

## **12 The Relational Capacity**

We enter into covenantal relationship with God in a way reflected in our covenantal relationship with one another, particularly in the covenant of marriage

All living creatures reproduce, but only humans are enabled to give birth to more image bearers

This reproduction takes place in both physical and relational "new birth" (John 3, Matthew 28)

## **13 The Moral Capacity**

God's Spirit within us allows us to discern right from wrong

Even though our moral capacity was marred by sin, there remains a stunning testimony to the image of God in us in that there is universal understanding of moral categories across humanity

## **14 A Summary of the Biblical View of Humanity**

Human beings are made in the image of God to reflect God's own character in community, in righteousness and true holiness

Humans are embodied and are a unified whole of body and spirit (dust and breath)

Men and women both bear the image of God and in their unity and difference are able to bring forth more image-bearers

Humans are made to be God's representatives, rulers, and priests for all of creation, acting as steward's on his behalf

The ultimate hope for humanity on the other side of the Fall is restoration of the image of God in both spirit (sanctification) and body (resurrection)

## 15 Heresies about Humanity

Pre-modern cultures - a natural and moral order integrated into an overall unity

Modern age (post-Enlightenment) - reliable knowledge is possible of only the natural order, of empirically testable scientific facts

A dualistic view of human life:

Body vs. Mind/Spirit

Body vs. Personhood

Secular vs. Sacred

## 16 The Gnostic Impulse

Gnosticism emerged in the first and second centuries, influenced by Plato's dualistic view of humanity

Belief that all matter, including the material world, is evil, and that only the spiritual realm is good

God is not creator, but rather a "demiurge" created the material world

Salvation is defined as being awakened to this higher knowledge (gnosis)

Gnostics viewed the mind and inner self as captive to the body - a person's "true self" is thus transcendent, while the body is untrustworthy

## 17 Cartesian Dualism

"I think, therefore, I am."

MIND - A free, autonomous self

BODY - a mechanism operating by natural laws

## 18 Kantian Dualism

"Mind is the law-giver to nature."

AUTONOMOUS SELF - free to impose one's own interpretations on the body

PHYSICAL BODY - raw material with intrinsic identity or purpose

## 19 Person-Body Dualism

"Matter does not matter"

PERSONHOOD - emotions, rationality, personality, the "authentic self"

PHYSICAL BODY - utilitarian, material object, machine

## 20 The Christian View of Humanity

Be true to yourself? "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it?" - Jeremiah 17:9

The Creation account - binaries and boundaries - the whole person for the whole purpose of God

The body is a dwelling place for God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

The resurrection of Jesus is the confirmation of humanity's ultimate hope

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Questions?