

Beloved Mud

“Being Human”

Woman had left her family, but now her lover left her – don’t mourn for me, I’m not even human anymore.

Celebrity downstairs leads crowd in the chant – I am God, I am God.

Here is the irony of being human

Last week we talked about why we should study Genesis – when things spin out of control, you reach for the owner’s manual.

When we read the manual, we expect to find out about God. We are surprised to find a book about us. God reveals himself to us, through stories, through history, and through our very makeup. Genesis and indeed the bulk of the Bible, is about us. People fascinate God. We will be studying throughout the summer, what Genesis says about people. Who are we, why are we made, why are we here, how should we get along.

The first thing I want us to see: in our very creation, you can see that we have great dignity, and great humility. But we are special, because of how much we are loved.

1. Bestowed with Dignity

A. Why we were made

26 Then God said, “Let us make man [\[8\]](#) in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

There is a pattern to creation. You could say God created the Earth in three steps,
First light and darkness,
Then the waters and sky
Finally the dry land.

Then in the second set of three days, he created rulers for each:
Sun, moon and stars to rule the day and night.
Birds and Fish to rule the waters and sky.
Finally, animals to roam over the land.

Then in a special act of creation, God again went to work and set above all these things, his vice-regent, to rule for him. He made into his image. Like making a lump of clay into a vase.

Why did he make us? To Rule over the Earth, so that everything would see us and worship

We are the statues of dignitaries

Why did the Iraqi citizens waste so much time destroying pictures and statues of Hussein? Because they were symbols of his rule, and they were celebrating being free from him, and showing their hatred of him.

The reason why humans exist, is so everything would know that God is in control, that he is the king.

This partially solves the riddling question of evil. If you were here last week, you heard me read part of an article from Salon magazine about the Va Tech shootings. He kept saying the whole thing was meaningless. That is not entirely true, there is a clear meaning – that man hated God, and wanted to be free from him.

Why do people hate other people?

Why does violence feel satisfying?

Why is the history of man the history of war?

Doc Holliday – look it's Johnny Ringo, should we hate him? Oh I know him, I recognize those eyes, that hand, those fingers, he reminds me of somebody, he reminds me of me and I hate him.

B. How we were made

Our dignity rests not only in why we were made, but also in how.

With special counsel, after his own likeness. God began to talk to himself, and took special care with this creation. By comparison look how much time he spent on the galaxies: "And the moon and stars"

He made us in a way that our make up would reflect his character.

Primarily with the capacity and need to love.

With the dignity of awareness, true power, language and most importantly morality.

We live in a time when everyone seeks to degrade humans, and take from them their right of determination. The bible commands us to believe that our own hearts, not our dna, not the treatment we have received, causes us to make the choices we make. We are free.

Does it surprise you to hear a Presbyterian tell you of freedom. Don't the WCOF is very careful to limit God's sovereignty with the words: neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established

What does that mean? It means you are responsible for the way you act and respond.

I know you have been sinned against, but that gives you no right to grow bitter and sin against others.

You have no right to turn your blessings into an occasion to sin – just because you make money gives you no right to be smug, or greedy.

You have no right to turn neutral things into sin – weather, or baseball games.

2. Humble Mud

A. Only Images

Don't get too smug about being so specially made. Sometimes we humans forget that we are only images of God

Robin Williams in "Night at the Museum"

You are The President, you built the Panama Canal, you stormed San Juan hill
No, I am a wax statue, I never did any of those things.

You look like God – but you are not God. Now it may be tempting for me to start in on the New Agers or other Eastern Religions that claim we all have a touch of the divine. But that is not where you live.

We begin to act like we are God when we attempt to form our own morality.

Or when we begin to feel entitled.

Basically whenever we act like a two year old. (God wants me to be happy.)

B. Only Mud

Isn't it funny the material he made us out of? We are just of the dirt of the ground. We are later told of all the fine materials around Eden, gold, juniper, onyx – but he made us of dirt.

This teaches us our equality

Egyptians believed in a hierarchy, those on top were made of precious stuff, therefore they could look down on and mistreat others. But we know better, we are all just dirt.

This desire to see ourselves as more important than others is a hard one to shake

Southern Presbyterians used evolution to explain why it was a waste of time to try and educate the Africans. Etc. etc.

We must be careful, because we apply our ideas of meritocracy to this habit of superiority – so we look down on the poor, and assume they must deserve to be that way.

This fact also teaches us our frailty. After all, mud melts in the rain.

We were never created to live apart from God, we were never made of strong enough stuff to be independent.

3. Beloved Mud

So where does this leave us, are we special or not? On one hand we are Images of God, but on the other, we are just images of God. Does the Bible give us anything more than this kind of humble contentment. Sort of special?

Oh Yes.

1. More than Angels?

What if I told you that you are even more special than angels? Does it seem blasphemous? It's true, you see, God himself never took the form of an angel.

And when the angels fell, God simply gave them Justice, he let them fall. But he thinks we are special, he can not let us go.

2. Because He Loves Me

And here is the true source of your importance, the true source of your confidence and esteem, you are important because God loves you.

I liked that bug

Daddy is I pretty

Please understand – your daddy thinks you are pretty, he thinks you are fast, he loves you because you are his.

This is not just simply some feel good kind of love, it is a love that is deep and powerful. He loved you so much that he gave his only son for you.

Not a mark of self-esteem, “see how much I’m worth, God himself was the price.”

Well, okay, we are offering 20 million dollars of Osama Bin Laden, is that how much he is worth? No, that is how bad a criminal he is.

When we see the price, we see our fine, we see how much trouble we were in. So the sacrifice is not how valuable we are, it is how much we are loved.

Hippo hunter.