



THE JOURNEY CHURCH

SERMON GUIDE 1.30.2022

GENESIS

What is Man?

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18-20

RECAP:

Last week, Pastor Erik talked about man as the mirrors of God. Human beings have been made in the image and likeness of the Creator. This reality has massive implications for how we think about and view human beings. Because man has been created in God's image, we have unique value, worth and dignity.

This morning, I want to continue this discussion by asking the question: What is a human being? What is a man? What makes us distinct from other creatures? How you answer that question will affect everything else you believe, which means we need to hear from God on this issue.

Last week, I came home from church and saw a woman walking her dog right outside our house. It was a black pug. I was immediately drawn to this dog because when I was 9 years old, my mom and dad bought me a black pug for my birthday. I named him Mickey, and I had him for 15 years.

So, I asked the woman walking him if my daughter and I could pet him. She was happy to let us. As we talked with her, she told us that she was considering giving him up for adoption. I told her that my family had been considering getting a dog, and we may be interested. One thing led to another, and on that same day, this black pug, named Barney, came home with us. We were super excited. My childhood memories had been recaptured.

But things didn't work out like we hoped. For six years prior to living with us, Barney was kept at a dog mill and used for breeding. So, when he came to live with us, we had to pin him up when we went to work and school, and he couldn't handle it. He had instant doggy PTSD. Not to mention, the dog peed all over my house. Long story short, he wasn't happy with us, and he wasn't a good fit for our home. So, we returned Barney to his owner. Thankfully, she was happy to have him back. We were a little sad, but it was the best decision for everyone involved.

Now, let me tell you a different story about another creature I brought home about 7 years ago. This creature was about half the size of Barney, but made far more messes, cost way more money, cried and complained infinitely more about its conditions, robbed us countless precious hours of sleep and basically took over the whole house. This creature is our daughter, and she still lives with us today. We didn't give her back. We never even considered it.

Let me ask you a question: Why would we be so quick to get rid of a dog, but not even consider getting rid of a baby? Because babies aren't dogs. Animals have been made by God, but they haven't been created in God's image. Which means they aren't endowed with the same dignity, value, and worth as human beings. Some of you are thinking, "Well duh. That's obvious!" But the sad fact is, it isn't obvious.

Harvard Professor, Christine Korsgaard, authored a book called *Fellow Creatures: Our obligations to other animals*. Notice she calls them "other animals." In the book she argues that humans are not inherently more important than animals, and, therefore, we should never eat animals, wear animals, or experiment on animals. In an interview she said, "Some people think that humans are just plain more important than other animals. I ask: More important to whom?" It's this kind of thinking that led to statements by the founder of PETA. "A rat is a pig, a dog is a boy." *Ingrid Newkirk, PETA Founder*

Worldviews matter. And at the heart of every worldview is how we answer the question: what is a human being? How you answer that question will shape everything you believe and do in this life.

In this message, my goal is not to make every dog owner hate me or for PETA to file a lawsuit against TJC. My goal is to show you that not only does man have unique and inherent value because he has been created in the image of God, but man is distinct from the rest of creation, and we have been called to rule creation.

To help you follow along, I've outlined three points I want to make in order to answer this question: What is a human being?

1. Man is distinct from all creation
2. Man has dominion over all creation

Then I want to add a third point and tie this all to this gospel. So, point three is:

3. Man and creation have a Redeemer in Jesus Christ

Point #1 - Man is distinct from all creation

Genesis 2:18.

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." The Lord made Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. Adam, then, was placed in the Garden of Eden to work and care for God's creation. The man is surrounded by the incredible works of God, and He has fellowship with the Lord.

But even still, the Lord said it is not good that man should be alone. Remember, in chapter one, after God created each thing, He declared it is good. The one thing that wasn't good was man being without a mate.

God could have just told Adam that he needed a female companion to meet his needs and made Eve, but he doesn't do that. Instead, God has Adam name the animals. Look at verse 19. **¹⁹"Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."** If God knew Adam needed a helper (a woman), why would he have him name the animals? Why not just create Eve? Because God wanted Adam to see something.

1. He wanted him to see all the animals God created were made male and female. There were female cows and male cows. Female horses and male horses. So instantly he starts seeing that every species has both male and female, except for him.

2. God wants Adam to see that no creature is like him. Many scholars and theologians believe it would have taken months, if not years, for Adam to name all the animals. God didn't just line them up two by two and let Adam name them at random. "Call that one a pig. Umm...that's a zebra. I guess we can say that's a kangaroo." And God's like, "yes, yes, very clever Adam." No. Most likely Adam studied the animals in their natural habitat. He learned their ways in order to determine their name. And here's what Adam discovered as he observed the animals: not only do all of them have mates, and he doesn't, *but none of them are like him*. He is different from every other creature.

So here is the question I want to ask: How is man different from other animals?

In other words, why don't we consider human beings just another species in the animal kingdom? You have heard that before, haven't you? We're all just animals. That's what the naturalists, atheists and evolutionists want you to believe. Not only are we just another species, but we were also once a different species ourselves. We evolved from microorganisms to fish to birds to apes to what we are now.

But the Bible says we're distinct, and I will give you five reasons why:

#1-(and most importantly) Human beings have been created in the image of God

Human beings have been created in God's image, and no other creature or part of God's creation has. This is why human beings are of more value, worth and dignity than animals.

A few years ago, a professor from SWBTS sat on a panel discussion at Princeton University with Peter Singer to discuss abortion and animal rights. The professor said, "My purpose that night was to try to persuade Singer and the other panelists (who were also animal rights advocates) to consider granting at least the same moral weight to a human embryo as they give animals and, in doing, to recognize that abortion kills a human being. To no one's surprise, I didn't convince them."

That story is sad and shocking, but this is what happens when we don't recognize that man has unique value, dignity and worth because we've been created in the image of God. We elevate creatures to the status where only men belong. This is why we legally protect bald eagles, owls and turtle eggs, but not unborn babies. This shouldn't be so because man has been created in the image of God.

#2-Human beings are moral creatures

Human beings are morally accountable to God. When a human being kills another human being, that's wrong. That's called murder. But we don't say that when a lion kills and eats a gazelle. That's not murder. That's called lunch.

Because human beings are moral beings, we are morally accountable to God. God won't judge a lion, but he will judge humans for our sin. We are called to be holy just as he is holy, and when we aren't, God will take us to account.

Human beings also have a sense of right and wrong. You say, "so does my dog. He knows it's wrong to pee on the floor." No, he knows you don't like it and he feels ashamed when he gets caught. But he has no concept of what's morally right and morally wrong. He's not a moral creature. Humans have an inner sense of what's right and wrong because God has written his law on our hearts. Dogs aren't being unlike God when they tear up the carpet, but we are being unlike God when we sin.

Humans are moral creatures.

#3-Human beings are spiritual creatures

Human beings have been created with a body and a soul. Animals have not. God made them with the breath of life, but there is nothing in Scripture that explicitly teaches us that animals have souls or that they live eternally.

Now, listen, I am not saying you shouldn't care for your pet. You definitely should! Proverbs 12:10 says, ***"Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast."*** The other day, I was driving down the road, I looked out the window at a farm and saw a horse wearing an insulated cover. His owner was helping him stay warm. I immediately thought of this proverb. God wants us to care for them. He wants us to love them. God loves them. Jesus said God cares for the sparrows.

One of the saddest days of my life was when I had to put down my Boston Terrier named Jackson. He was having uncontrollable seizures, and they wouldn't stop. We had no choice but to put him to sleep. I cried for three days over that dog. So, I am not saying that you shouldn't care for and love your animals. But human beings have souls. They will

live eternally either in heaven or hell. That makes them significantly different and more important than animals.

#4-Human beings have superior mental faculties

Human beings have the ability to reason, think logically and learn. This is part of what it means to be created in the image of God. Now, don't get me wrong, there are some very intelligent animals. Chimpanzees solve puzzles. Parrots understand cause and effect. Rodents colonize. Dogs understand human words. Animals can be very intelligent. But they can't work through abstract ideas or engage in reasoning. You will never see a group of racoons sitting around discussing whether it's moral or not to steal and eat human food or eat worms.

And though animals have shown creative abilities, they don't usually improve upon them. Beavers still build the same kind of dams and birds the same kinds of nests that they have made for 1000's of years. They don't advance in architecture, technology or science. Human beings develop culture, make art, and write music. We make policies, create movies and send people to the moon. You will never see a dog create a business for other dogs. But humans do all of these things and much more, because we have been created in the image of God, and we have superior mental faculties.

#5-Human beings are relational creatures

Animals show incredible community involvement and even relational characteristics, but it is nothing compared to people. Men and women get married, have children, attend church and build friendships. These attributes are not only what make us distinct from animals but also angels, who do not marry or have families.

Most importantly, human beings can have a relationship with God. We can know God personally and have intimate fellowship with him. Animals cannot.

These five qualities are not only what make us different from animals. They are what make us like God. God is a moral and spiritual being. God thinks rationally and He relates to others. We do the same because we're made in his image.

What happens when we don't think properly on these issues?

It's important to understand the difference between man and animals. But what happens when we don't? What happens when we fail to make proper distinctions?

#1-Idolatry

Paul says in Romans 1:22-23, ²² ***“Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”*** When man doesn’t understand creation properly, man will worship creation.

This is how you can have a man like Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens reject the very existence of God and believe men are nothing but evolved apes, yet they talk about a black hole and the event horizon with such awe and wonder that it sounds like worship.

When man doesn’t understand creation, he worships creation. Another consequence of not making proper distinctions is:

#2-Misordered Affections

Augustine said, *“A just and good person “is also a person who has [rightly] ordered his love, so that he does not love what it is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less (or love too little what should be loved more).”* Here’s what he’s saying, we not only need to love what should be loved and not love what shouldn’t be loved (like Tom Brady), but we should not have too much love for certain things and not enough love for certain things.

Let me make this really practical for you. It’s okay to love and care for animals. But it’s not okay to love and care for animals above humans. Dogs are valuable. God loves them. But they aren’t equal to or more important than any human being. No animal is.

We must get this right. We must understand man’s value as an image bearer of God and his distinction from all of creation.

Point #2 - Man has dominion over all creation

I want to read 1:26-28 again, but this time I want you to notice two words: Dominion and subdue.

26 Then God said, “Let us make man^[b] 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. 28 And 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 heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

In days 1-5, God makes the heavens and the earth and all that fills them. But on the sixth day God creates man who is specifically designed to rule over what God has made. That's what it means to take dominion over all the animals. The word translated dominion literally means to rule or dominate. God has made man king over everything He has made.

In Psalm 8, David famously says,

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings^[b] and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Man is to rule God's creation. He is also to subdue or bring into bondage. That's what the word means. The same word is used to describe Joshua entering Canaan and subduing the promised land. He takes the land into bondage for man's God honoring purposes.

If you turn back to Genesis 2, we see Adam beginning to do this practically as he names the animals. When Adam names the animals, he's not just learning that he has no helper, he is taking dominion over them. When you name someone or something, you have authority over that thing.

This is why it's good when you go to the State Fair and you see farmers displaying and caring for their animals. It's God honoring for builders to prepare soil to build houses, car dealerships, schools and churches. We make the oceans our source of food, ways of travel and places of enjoyment. The wilderness is where we hunt our game, build our homes and mine our resources. It's good for man to use the earth for his good. This is what God intended. Take dominion!

The theme of dominion is central to the Bible's teaching. Not only were Adam and Eve to take dominion in the Garden. After they sinned, God called a people to Himself and ordered them to take dominion over the promised land. Through those people came the Messiah, and Jesus has redeemed a people for Himself who are now to spread His gospel and His glory all over the face of the earth as the waters cover the sea. And in the New Heavens and New Earth, Christ will return and establish His eternal dominion as the true and second Adam.

Christians, it is still our job to take dominion over the world God has made. As Christians, we not only want to see souls saved. We want to see people bring their homes, work, education and entertainment under the dominion of our King, Jesus Christ.

Because when we fail to do this, society suffers. Look at our homes. Consider our schools and the government. All of these areas, by and large, are not actively subduing the world for the glory of God, and as a result people suffer.

So, we've learned that to be a human being is to be an image bearer of God. It is to be distinct from the rest of creation. And it means we must take dominion over all the earth. Now, let's ask, how does all this point to the gospel?

Point #3 - Man and Creation have a Redeemer in Jesus Christ

#1-His miracles

The ministry of Jesus validates the points made above. Think about Jesus' miracles. Christ demonstrates the value and dignity of human beings through His healing miracles. Jesus clearly shows His concern for the whole man. His actions prove that man's soul salvation is only part of God's work. Jesus cares about the whole man—body and soul.

Consider Matthew chapter 8, when Jesus heals the leper. The leper threw himself down before Jesus and pleaded for mercy saying, ***"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."*** ³***And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed***" (Matthew 8:2-3). Jesus didn't have to touch this man. With a word, He could have healed him. But Jesus' compassion moved Him to show this man care. This was a man who felt like less than a man because of His condition; yet, Jesus put His hands on him to show him his value to God.

Friends, it doesn't matter what a person's status is, if they are created in the image of God, they have value, dignity and worth. Jesus showed that by not only coming to save the soul but to heal the whole man.

#2-His Atonement

Jesus particularly showed this at the cross. Jesus didn't die for animals. He didn't make an atonement for racoons. The Savior died for men. He took our sins upon Himself and died in our stead. And I realize that the primary aim of Christ's death was the glory of God. And I also realize that man in the eyes of God is utterly sinful. But it would be foolish to say that Christ's death doesn't highlight how significant man is to God.

#3-His Dominion

It would be equally wrong to miss the point that Christ's death is redeeming all of Creation.

Colossians 1:19-20, ***“¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*”**

Romans 8:18-22, ***“¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.*”**

Christ is going to redeem all of Creation. I can't promise that your specific dog will go to Heaven, but there will be animals in the New Creation. Isaiah foresaw a day when,

⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. (Isaiah 11:6-8)

Creation will be restored to the days when animals didn't kill each other or attack humans. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. The lion with the cow. And the little child will play with them all, even snakes.

All will be ordered and peaceful because Christ will take full dominion. In the New Heavens and New Earth, Christ will bring all the earth under His rule. This highlights what we call the already, not yet eschatology. There is a sense which Christ already rules and reigns. But not in His fullness. There is a day coming when Christ will bring all under His dominion, and Christ will do what Adam should have done in the Garden. Therefore, Jesus is called the second Adam. Where Adam failed, Christ will succeed.

I am sure most of you remember a few years ago when a three-year-old boy fell into the gorilla exhibit at the Cincinnati Zoo. The child was immediately seized by a 500-pound gorilla named Harambe. Harambe played with the boy and held him close. He didn't harm the boy, nor did he appear to desire to do so. But authorities couldn't take any chances. They knew tranquilizers wouldn't work fast enough and any rescue opportunity might jeopardize the boy's life. The only option was to kill Harambe to save the boy.

Of course, people were outraged. Many people couldn't understand why Harambe's life was considered more important than the boy's. But you understand, don't you? The boy has been made in the image of the Creator. His life has value to God.

And so does yours. No matter what your life looks like now. No matter who you used to be, you matter to God. Your life has meaning and value. And God wants you to be with Him eternally. God so loved the (human beings of) the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

QUESTIONS:

1. How is man different from other animals? Discuss the 5 different reasons Pastor Brandon highlighted.
2. Why is man morally obligated to God? How does being made in the image of God require punishment when we sin?
3. How does our creativity (Ephesians 2:10, Exodus 35:30-35) and relational needs (Romans 5:8, Revelation 3:20, John 1:12) reflect the image of God?
4. What happens when we don't properly understand the difference between man and animals?
5. What does it mean for man to have dominion over the earth? How is this different from what culture tells us on this subject?
6. What actions of the Redeemer show that man is distinct from all other creation?
7. How has this teaching challenged your view of man in comparison to animals?