

In the Image of God (part 1 of 2)

Genesis 1:26-27 New American Standard Bible

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make mankind 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 livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls 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.

Introduction

Begin the sermon with Steven Curtis Chapman’s Song “Fingerprints of God.”

I can see the tears filling Your eyes

And I know where they’re coming from

They’re coming from a heart that’s broken in two

By what you don’t see

The person in the mirror

Doesn’t look like the magazine

Oh, but when I look at you it’s clear to me that...

Refrain

I can see the fingerprints of God

When I look at you.

I can see the fingerprints of God

And I know it’s true

You’re a masterpiece

That all creation quietly applauds

And you’re covered with the fingerprints of God

Never has there been and never again

Will there be another you

Fashioned by God's hand

And perfectly planned

To be just who you are

And what He's been creating

Since the first beat of your heart

Is a living breathing priceless work of art and...

Just look at you

You're a wonder in the making

Oh, and God's not through, no

In fact, He's just getting started and....

Content

We are created in the image and the likeness of God, the Word of God declares (Genesis 1:26, 27, Genesis 9:6). Let's take a time to reflect on its meaning. *Created in the image and likeness of God...* What's that mean? What's that mean to you? Three things we need to remember.

First of all, 'the image and likeness of God' refers to: no physical resemblance between us and God the Creator. It, rather, means that God has built in us divine attributes.

There's no physical resemblance between God and us His creation, because God is Spirit, and the Spirit has no body (2 Corinthians 3:18). God cannot / or shouldn't be boxed in any physical shape or form. That's why the LORD forbids us from creating any image of God, either molten or carved, and worship it. E.g. Listen to the first and second commandments of Ten Commandments: ³*"You shall have no other gods before Me.* ⁴*"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth (Exodus 20:3-4).*

Created in God's image and likeness means everyone is born with God's attributes. God has instilled in our DNA divine attributes

Such as...

- The capacity for *reflection/growth/ and utilization* of God's gifts. We are vastly different from other creations in such areas as *conscience / self-reflection / rationality--* -E.g.1. We blush with shame. E.g. 2. "*I think; therefore, I am*" (Rene Descartes).

Here's more: *Worship* (E.g. No chimpanzees worship their creator). Love that transcends hate and loves even enemies. *Creativity*—we constantly create something (music, art, machines,...). *Free will* that is so free and powerful that even God, the Giver of the very free will, would not stop us from misusing it (E.g.1. Suicide is the act of rejecting one's own life and its very Giver. Yet, God doesn't override our decision. E.g.2. With the same free will, we can choose either to praise God or to renounce and even curse the Creator. Once again, God respects our decision because it is our choice made by free will. To override it against our wish is the violation of the very principle of free will. E.g.3. In order to bring atheists back to Him, God can send thunder and lightning for 30 days in a row, but He doesn't, because love by nature never forces anyone against their own will).

Such attributes of God we have in us.

Next, since God is the Creator of us, it is He alone who determines our worth or how valuable we are. No humans, no money, status, power, or any achievements in life determine our worth. E.g. the world calls "So and so is worth of \$2 million..." We are indeed endowed by God with unchangeable worth. E.g. Remember the Declaration of Independence? "*... all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*"

The material worth of human flesh is less than \$10, someone calculated once. However, if you ask the same question for Jesus, how much you are worth, He will say, you are worth far more than the entire world. In Matthew, He says, *For what good will it do a person if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul? Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul?* (Matthew 16:26).

Implication: we need to respect and treat ourselves and each other with the worth defined by God not by the world. Here's what the Word of God commands us to remember: Whatever we do to each other, we are doing it to God. E.g.1. *Whoever sheds human blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made mankind* (Genesis 9:6). Why is murder bad? Because it violates and destroys the image of God in the victim. E.g. 2. ³⁸ *And when did we see You as a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?* ³⁹ *And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?* ⁴⁰ *And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me.'* (Matthew 25:38-40)

Finally, God has a unique plan and purpose for everyone.

You are not an ‘accident.’ You are not a ‘mistake.’ No one is born “by mistake” or “by accident.” Every child is born with purpose and plan specified by God—E.g. Psalm 139:13 says, *God knits me in my mother’s womb.* Psalm 139:14: *I am fearfully and wonderfully made (by God--kc).* E.g. God’s plan for me to come to America.

God also has a universal plan for all in threefold:

- To have a relationship with God. We are created to worship and love the Creator.
- We are also called to be in relationship with others. To love, to cherish, to encourage and help each other.
- To be a steward of God’s creation (God will hold us accountable. He will destroy those who destroy the earth--Revelation 11:18).
 - Different from secular approach of environment protection.
 - African way of hunting for food: apology to prey / no waste.

Such image of God in us was completely corrupted / compromised in the Garden of Eden. We call the Fall of Adam and Eve.

Next week, I will speak about

- The Fall of Adam and Eve that brought forth depravity in the image of God in us and how God mended it through Jesus Christ. Let us pray.