

Christ the Very Image of God (subtitle: In the Image of God—part 2 of 2)

2 Corinthians 4:4 New American Standard Bible

⁴ *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of **Christ, who is the image of God.***

Colossians 1:15-20 New American Standard Bible

¹⁵**He is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation: ¹⁶ *for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.* ¹⁷ *He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.* ¹⁸ *He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.* ¹⁹ *For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,* ²⁰ *and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

Introduction

Let me do the recap of what I spoke about last Sunday. I said, ‘*we are created in the image and likeness of God.*’ The sentence has three implications.

God has endowed us with the capacity of conscience / self-reflection / rationality / creativity / love / free will.

Nobody but God (or nothing else but God) determines our worth, which is more precious than the entire world. Do not believe a lie that you are worthless. You are a priceless creation of God.

God has a unique plan and purpose for us. No one is an accident.

Content

The Fall of Adam

In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve with such awesome and beautiful attributes of God.

After God created Adam, He established the first covenant relationship with him (Genesis 2:16-17): ¹⁶ *The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

In the following chapter, Genesis 3, the covenant was broken by Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They fell into a temptation to be like God (Genesis 3:5). We call this the Fall of Adam.

Consequently, they were driven out and kept out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23-24).

The Meaning of Death

Let me take you back to the original covenant. God said to Adam, “... *on the day that you eat from it **you will certainly die.***” (Genesis 2:17). Not long after that, Satan, in the disguise of serpent, approached Eve and directly contradicted what God had said. The serpent said to Eve, she “... ***will not surely die***” (Genesis 3:4).

- One may wonder: Did Adam and Eve die at once as they had been told by God? No, they didn't. No death ensued right away after their disobedience to God's command.
- Two explanations for it. I accept them both.

One: God never said “when.” In other words, physical death indeed came to them, maybe not immediately, but eventually. It falls on humanity ever since.

The other: What God also meant was spiritual death.

Death in Spirit

Let me explain spiritual death a little more.

The Greeks understood humans in three parts: *body, soul, and spirit*. The outer being is body (*soma*). The inner being has two parts: soul (*psyche*) and spirit (*pneuma*). The ‘Soul’ is the seat of emotions/will/reason, heart/mind, and the ‘Spirit’ is “*the realm of relations between God and human beings*” [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 601]. **Spirit is where our communication with God takes place.**

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, even though their body didn't die right away, something devastating happened in their spirits. Sin came in through their disobedience, and it brought forth brokenness / corruption / depravity of God's image in them. Their relationship with God was estranged. No more free access to God. Sin blocked their access to God. They were kicked out of the Garden. The communication between their spirit and God was totally cut off. Their spirit became dead in God's sight.

Such death in spirit was handed down from Adam to all of his descendants and continues among us today. The Bible puts this way: *And you were dead in your offenses and sins* (Ephesians 2:1). Not physical death. But dead in sins. Dead in spirit.

Dead Spirit Becomes Alive

Before we came to know Christ, we were outside salvation. We lived outside the LORD following the principles of the world (Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 2:13). We had no peace with God. No communication with Him, either, because our spirit was dead.

The loving God wanted to change it. He wanted to restore His relationship with us. He called us back into His fold.

Yet, sin was still in the way. Sin, the very culprit that caused Adam's Fall, had to be dealt with. It must be removed. God's solution? His own Son, Jesus Christ: ¹⁹ *For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him (Christ--kc),* ²⁰ *and **through Him to reconcile all things** (us included—kc) **to Himself**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, **having made peace through the blood of His cross** (Colossians 1:19-20).*

God made peace with us through the blood of the cross. He took care of our sins once and for all by sending His only begotten Son Jesus to the Cross. The Righteous suffered for the sins of the Unrighteous. The Sinless paid the wages of sin for the Sinners. Christ cancelled our sins by nailing them to the cross through His own death (Colossians 2:4).

The outcome? The wages of sin have been paid. Nothing stands in the way. The relationship is restored. Our dead spirit becomes alive again. Communication is re-established and the restoration of broken image of God in us is begun. What a joy!

Christ the Very Image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Let me read to you today's text one more time: 2 Corinthians 4:4: **Christ, who is the image of God**, and Colossians 1:15: **He (Christ--kc) is the image of the invisible God**. Christ is the very image of God.

Now, that Christ dwells in us (*Jesus standing at the door, knock, invite, come in, stay with you--Revelation 3:20*). What is He doing in us? He is not asleep or idle. In fact, He is diligently working within us to restore the broken image of God in us to its original state, to its fullest and best capacity. The end outcome would be a new creation in Christ. *Anyone in Christ is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Conclusion

When we become a believer in Christ, God's restoring work of His image in us begins right there and then. First, in our spirit. Then, in our soul. Then, in our body. In all areas of our being (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The indwelling Christ relentlessly works in us until the broken image of God is fully restored. We call this process sanctification. Yes, we have a long way to go. We are God's work for perfection in progress. Until God reaches that point, He will not stop working on us. He is fully committed to this work. You can count on Him. He is not finished with us, either. He has just begun.

Amen.