

Talk 1. The Image of God

Outline for Participants

Introduction to the course

1. God's purpose for the human race

- a. Adam: the creation of the first human being.
 - 1) Adam was created as the son of God (Luke 3:23-38).
 - In Adam we see the creation of the human race.
 - In scriptural times, the father raised his son to be like him and take his place, even while he was still alive.
 - 2) Adam was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-28; 5:3).
 - Adam was created to be like God, so that he could take on God's responsibility for creation in subordination to his father.
 - 3) By sinning Adam failed in responding to his charge (Gen. 3).
 - As a result, the image and likeness of God in human beings was marred and the human race fails to be what God intended it to be.
- b. Christ: the new Adam
 - 1) Christ is the new Adam, the one who began the human race over again (Rom. 5:14-17; 1 Cor. 15:14-17).
 - 2) Christ is the son of God (Heb. 1:1-4; 3:5-6), fully in his image and likeness (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4), with dominion over creation (Heb. 1:2, 3; 3:5).
 - 3) Christ in his own person fulfilled God's purpose for the human race and restored the race to what it was intended to be.
- c. Christians: sons and daughters of God through the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:25-4:7)

2. What God is trying to accomplish with us

- a. To make us mature sons and daughters of God (Col. 3:9-10; Matt. 5:43-45, 48)
 - We need to grow into the place where we can take the responsibility God has for us.
- b. To make us spiritualized men and women, who live in the image and likeness of God, bearing the fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 5:19-23).
 - 1) We have the Holy Spirit living in us, but we need to be spiritualized.
 - 2) When we handle the various situations in life like God would, we are living in his likeness: this is Christian maturity.

- 3) The fruit is the character traits (virtues) that allow us to act in a way that expresses the image of God.
- 4) The fruit enables us to fulfill the commandments: love of God and neighbor, especially love of one another (John 13:34).

3. Five principles of “spiritual growth”

- a. The new life principle: growth comes from the life inside (1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 6:4)
 - Spiritual growth is not just imposing something from the outside, but maturing of something that is inside.
- b. The communion principle: active relationship with God produces change (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
 - We need to live with him, especially in prayer and study.
- c. The wisdom principle: The Lord passes on his mind, teaches and imparts to us his own wisdom (Prov. 4:1-9; 1 Cor. 2:6-13).
 - 1) In order to know what good character is, we need to know what is right and wrong (commanded by God and forbidden) and what is good and bad.
 - 2) We have good character when we are formed so that we can live in a good way.
- d. The sonship training principle: the Lord trains us like a father trains his son (Hebrews 12:5-10).
 - 1) He uses the events of our lives (especially the difficult ones) to train us.
 - 2) He puts others over us to give us formation.
- e. The imitation principle: we need to imitate the Lord (Eph. 5:1-2).
 - 1) We are not supposed to imitate him in omnipotence, messiahship, or special circumstances, but in character.
 - 2) We are also supposed to imitate those who imitate him (1 Cor. 11:1, Heb. 6:11-12).

Scripture Passages for Talk 1

Luke 3:23-38

Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 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 air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Genesis 5:3

When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Romans 5:14-17

Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:47-49

The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Hebrews 1:1-4

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs.

Hebrews 3:5-6

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ was faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope.

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image [RSV: likeness] of God.

Galatians 3:25–4:7

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.

Colossians 3:9-10

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Matthew 5:43-45, 48

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust...You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?

Galatians 5:19-23

Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.

John 13:34

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

1 Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Romans 6:4

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Proverbs 4:1-9

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight; for I give you good precepts: do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me, and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Get wisdom; get insight. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a fair garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."

1 Corinthians 2:6-13

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him," God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.

Hebrews 12:5-10

And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?

– "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor lose courage when you are punished by him.

For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives."

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Hebrews 6:11-12

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.