

The Image of God in Mankind: Days Six and Seven

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- [0 : 0 0] refreshed myself to see all of these new faces out here today. And one of the reasons that that is so exciting for me is because it means that people are sitting under God's word.
- You have come to hear the truth, not the truth of Jeff. I don't have any truth to give you in and of myself. I'm a sinner just like you, a liar, a coward, a cheat.
- That's my heart. Thanks be to God, the Lord Jesus Christ has done something about that. And so he puts me behind the pulpit to say, thus saith Jesus, not Jeff.
- And that's what I intend to bring to you this morning as we look into Genesis. We have been working our way through the first chapter of Genesis. And it's my intention this morning to finish up chapter one and actually move a bit into chapter two.
- It has been a delight to be in this material. talking through the miracle of God's creative power.
- [1 : 0 7] Everything that we see in Genesis chapter one is a miracle. Working against what we understand to be the laws of nature, God did what he did in six literal days.
- Now, he didn't need six days. We'll see in just a little while why he took six days to do it and what that serves us in. The title of my message for this morning, the image of God and mankind.
- We're going to do day six and we're going to do day seven together. 128 through two, three. Let's go ahead and take a look at those verses together.
- I'll actually start reading in verse 26. Then God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likeness so that they will have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.
- And God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them.
- [2 : 2 0] 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 sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.
- Then God said, Behold, I have given to you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth and every tree which has the fruit of the tree yielding seed.
- It shall be food for you. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that creeps on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food.
- And it was so. And God saw all that he had made. And behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day.
- Thus, the heavens and the earth were completed and all their hosts. And on the seventh day, God completed his work which he had done and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.
- [3 : 3 8] Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it he rested from all his work which God had created in making it.

There are a number of repeated phrases and ideas, concepts here in this brief passage that we want to highlight because that's what the text is doing.

The text is giving us the emphasis that God wants us to hold on to and understand as his people. Now working our way through Genesis 1, we've now come to see that God is making a crucial, a critical distinction between animals and humans.

We could even say between every other aspect of creation and what he's doing in making mankind. Mankind is his crowning achievement. And the Hebrew grammar here is bringing that emphasis to the foreground.

It's bringing it up and holding it in our faces. If we were Hebrews and we were reading in that language, it would be immediately apparent to us what God was trying to emphasize in this critical distinction between animals and people.

[4 : 53] He tells us that he made the plants and the animals after their kind. You guys remember that have been here? That is a repeated statement that we looked at time and again after their kind.

But he made humans in his image, after his likeness, in his image and after his likeness, parallel, parallel truths, emphasizing our uniqueness in God's creation.

Now, this is very important, and I'm kind of belaboring it because as you guys who've been here have heard me talk about, there are many counter theories, counter ideas to the uniqueness of mankind.

Look, there's nothing unique about us if we came from apes. Nothing. We're just a higher animal. We just survived the fittest thing better than they did.

And so we were able to develop, and apes, I don't know, they stayed apes? Did you ever think about that? If we develop from apes, why are there still apes?

[6 : 02] And now I don't know the answer to that if evolution is true. I know the answer to it in terms of what God's word says. God's word tells us we were never primates.

Animals and humans are distinct from each other. And so, of course, Satan wants to use something like that as a lie to take away from the authority of God, confuse people, and they lose hope in the process.

There's no hope in thinking that you're a higher animal and that you were able in your ancestry to overcome all of the odds that were against you. And so the fact that you're sitting here today is a testimony to your ability to overcome.

Well, where does God get glory in any of that? He doesn't. And that's the problem. It's a lie. And we're not ashamed at grace to say it's a lie.

The word of God tells us something very, very different. Now, this is the third message where I'm unpacking what Scripture tells us in Genesis chapter 1 about what I'm going to call this life-defining distinction about us.

[7 : 11] Life-defining. To be made in the image of God is the measure of mankind. That's the standard. That is to say, bearing God's image, bearing God's image, which we've spent some time on, that is the fundamental reality defining and distinguishing us from every other part of God's created universe.

The fact that God made us in His image makes us stand out from everything. That is a life-defining distinction. Now, bearing God's image as a life-defining distinction, I realize that's a bold and potent claim about mankind.

But the Scripture backs it up, doesn't it? We've been seeing that. It certainly flies in the face of other secular notions and other secular explanations about the nature of mankind, about why you are who you are and how to define who you are and how to define where you find purpose in life based on what you understand about your origins, where you come from.

Where you come from has everything to do with helping you define your purpose in life. Why are you here? Why are you, you? Why are you the only you on the planet?

And yet, you share similarities with other yous out there. Other people made in the image of God and distinct in their own way. What an amazing diversity.

[8 : 45] What an amazing complexity to have come from a single cell organism that nobody knows came from where and it just climbed out of the muck and here you are composing symphonies, going to work, ordering businesses, having babies.

You've come a long way, baby. Nor have you. Life-defining distinction. The scriptures make it very clear that this is true according to God's word.

Now, I'm unpacking Genesis 1, 26, right around 26 into chapter 2, verse 3 today and in the process I'm going to characterize our, if you look here, our image bearing as five gifts of God's grace and which are unique to humankind.

Now, for those of you who've been here and you're taking notes, you'll recognize immediately, wait a minute, he's been saying four. Now we have five. This is your pastor growing with you.

This is me standing before you and saying as I went into chapter 2 and started taking it apart in conjunction with what I'd been studying in chapter 1, I realized I don't like the chapter break.

[10 : 06] The chapter breaks are not authoritative. You realize that. There were no chapter breaks when this was all originally written. Okay. So, we put those in later.

So, we're going to move right through the chapter break and we're going to cover this together and I recognize that, wait a minute, on the seventh day we have a fifth blessing of God giving the fact that we've been made in his image.

Not just four, but five. And it just came as I went into it more. All right. So, five gifts or five blessings of God's grace which are unique to mankind being made in God's image.

It is a gift of God's grace for us to image the Lord in the ways he's designed into every single human being. So, you say, Jeff, is this true even for people who are not Christians, people who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, people who are not trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and trusting in Jesus Christ alone?

Even those people share in these five things? Yes. Because every single human being is precious to God in the sense that he's made them in his image. Every single one of us. Out of the gate.

[11 : 20] That's the truth about us. Boy, that gives us hope. Man, that raises the bar on the measure of humankind. Now, we're careful to step back and say, we're not going to say, well, aren't we all that?

No. We are sinners in need of a savior. We are a fallen people by nature. And we need God to do something about that. And he has in a most miraculous way.

You think the creation story is miraculous. We'll get to the point where we talk about the recreation story. And that'll blow your mind. That God became man so that he could recreate you on this planet and for eternity.

That's astounding. We'll never get our minds around that. But one day by faith, we'll embrace it fully and we'll be with him. All right.

Let me let me just give you a quick review here for those who weren't here. This will be very helpful, I think. So the first gift or the first blessing that we enjoy as human beings made in God's image would be God's gift of ruling.

[12 : 28] Now, another word for this is dominion. Now, I can't re-preach all of this. I can only give you some of the highlights. This first gift concerns our dominion or our rule over the earth as God's co-rulers.

We are co-rulers with the Lord. We have been given that mandate based on what we just read about subduing the earth, having dominion over the earth. So this is about our, listen to this word, stewardship, our management of God's world as his co-managers, co-stewards.

So it is important. Now, we don't worship creation. We don't bow down to creation. We don't worry about creation running out of resources for us. You'll see that in just a little while.

I'll give you that from scripture. We worship the God of creation and because we love the Lord and we know that what he made is precious to him, we help steward it.

We help manage it. All right? That's where we've been in all of this. We image God as we provide co-care for what he's made. I've been speaking about this dominion thing for a couple, three Sundays now.

[13 : 36] I was out in my backyard yesterday and I was with my chainsaw and I was doing dominion stuff and nature fought back and I got this knot right here on my head. A limb smacked me right in the head but it succumbed to the chainsaw dominion rule of the day.

But we're reminded that God's going to curse the earth and it's going to fight back. With Adam and Eve it wasn't like that. It was a perfect world. There was no need for survival of the fittest when God made the original creation.

It was all perfect and harmonious and beautiful and it all perfectly reflected the character of God. And then we messed it up didn't we? And God willing we'll get to Genesis 3 if he gives me breath for life.

Alright, that's God's gift of ruling. How about this one? Excuse me. God's gift of relating. Now we really camped out here put the brakes on and talked about this in terms of verse 27.

And God created man in his own image in the image of God he created him male and female he created him. Boy, that's over and over he created, he created. And especially this male and female idea we camped out there.

[14 : 45] As we saw last week knowing and relating to God are unique to being made in God's image as human beings. In other words there's no other created thing that was made by God to relate to him in the ways that you and I can and do.

Nobody. I gave you a couple of instances I can just give you a quick little thing right now. Language. Language is one of them. Apes don't talk to God. Birds sing beautifully.

We love to hear them sing but they're not talking to God and they have no souls. Language. Think about language. We can communicate with each other. We can even learn the language of a person that lives across the world and communicate with them.

And then of course the unique language that we have exercised already this morning together. Prayer. Prayer. The ability to be able to communicate with this God who did all of this in six literal days.

Amazing. What a beautiful beautiful thing that God has done in giving us this gift of relating to him and to each other. It's a wonderful thing.

[15 : 50] Imaging God's own relational nature is a blessing to us and for us. And this becomes clear in how God has designed us to relate to one another as male and female.

Male and female. And we really spent some time there. So much so I want to show you this. Every sinful failure you and I experience in how we relate to each other reflects our failure to image God due to our fallen nature that we will get to in Genesis 3.

That failure is the sure sign of our need for God's Savior to redeem our fallen nature. Redeem means free. to free it from its fallenness.

Alright? So, listen. Everything about what we're reading in Genesis chapter 1 moving into how God is creating Adam and Eve and all that's going to take all of that serves as the basis and foundation for what God is going to do in what we call the gospel.

The gospel starts in Genesis 1.1 with God created the heavens and the earth. Everything rests on that. That's why we say that Genesis the foundation for everything.

[17 : 11] Everything we believe about God and can know about God begins here and rests here. Now, finally we'll do three and hopefully the other two today.

God's gift of reproducing in good alliterative fashion. They're all ours for your convenience there. Verse 28. God blessed them and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply.

Now, that's an emphatic. That's a command. Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.

God blessed them and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Now, friends, reproduction is tied to their ability to fulfill their dominion mandate.

Part of the command that God is giving them to be dominant in the earth and to subdue the earth and steward the earth rests on their ability to make more of themselves in order to fulfill that.

[18 : 24] They need to make babies and other humans to go out here and do the subduing. They can't do it on their own. This was always the plan. This is a blessing.

So, exclusively, fundamentally, to being male and female, this is where the male and female becomes critical. The male and female human beings, men and women, are commanded to reproduce more humans who will fill or spread about the earth and subdue it.

This same pattern of blessing followed by the command to fill is expressed in verse 22. Look at verse 22. This is not the first time you've seen this pattern.

Then God blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let the birds multiply on the earth.

Now, what's missing here? He's not telling the animals to subdue anything, is he? This is very similar and yet, there's a critical difference, isn't there? They're not being given the same dominion command that human beings are being given and yet, they're told to multiply and fill the earth with themselves.

[19 : 42] Reproduction was built in to God's design for all of life on the earth. We're glad that trees and fruit trees and plants and animals reproduce in their kind.

If you like venison, we're glad that the deer have babies so we can go out and they grow up and we can eat them. No, no, that's a good thing. That's a good thing.

I'm all about preserving wildlife. They are, they sizzle up just fine. So God's blessing is reflected in their ability to reproduce, now listen to this, abundantly.

Not just reproduce sporadically, God blessed them in a way that they could reproduce abundantly. Now I don't know, people have asked this of other guys and theologians and I don't know the answer. Was it where initially God made it where people were much more fertile, maybe it didn't take as long for babies to develop and so that's why we can explain this great proliferation of human beings on the planet.

I don't know, all I know is that did happen. How God did it, I don't know, he doesn't tell us. But animals and humans spread around the earth very, very rapidly, especially after the Tower of Babel which we'll get into again.

[21 : 01] So I'm just trying to make the point that this is, this reproduction idea is built into us, built into God's design for creation. The same pattern we see over and over again.

So this blessing, this blessing that God is giving as he looks, as he says to them and God blessed them in verse 28 and then God spoke to them.

Now God is speaking directly. God is using language to communicate to these human beings. Before, God had spoken his commands for the animals or the plants or whatever to do what God said and let there be.

And so now there's this generic command to these creatures, to the plants. Now God speaks directly to his creation in a way that his creation is being able to understand and communicate back.

This is the first instance of this. Again, unique. Unique to what's going on with mankind. This blessing then is a gift of the Lord.

[22 : 09] John MacArthur explains that God conferred well-being on Adam and Eve. That's what this blessing means. God is conferring well-being on them.

Now this is important because again, God is building this into who these people are as human beings and their relationship to him. I'm going to confer on you a wonderful well-being in your relationship to each other and back to me.

That is going to be the status quo. That's in your DNA as it were. Boy, what a beautiful, beautiful blessing. John MacArthur says, quote, he caused them to prosper.

He made them happy. End quote. He made them happy. What is he saying? He made them happy to be human.

God made being human joyful. It is a good thing to be a human being and not a monkey or whatever.

[23 : 15] It's special. Well, what are some of those joys that God built in to being human? Well, we have them in the text if we'll carefully look at what's going on.

Look at it with me again. God blessed them and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply. What's inherent in that command? Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over all of the animals and the birds and every living thing on the earth.

What's going on here? One of the joys that we see inherent in the text is sexual intimacy. That is God's design from Jump Street. That is a good and blessed thing in the Lord.

No matter how much the world has cheapened it and made it something vile in so many ways, we hold the standard and the ground that God made sexual intimacy a beautiful, beautiful gift of marriage.

That's another thing God invented here. Do you see that here? Inherent in the text is sexual intimacy and marriage. We've got a man and we've got a woman coming together to be fruitful and multiply, to enjoy being human, to enjoy being a man, enjoy being a female, enjoy coming together and fulfilling God's command to fill the earth.

[24 : 35] It's just a beautiful, harmonious thing. Dadgum that Adam and Eve messing this thing up. And then, you know, I come along and make it even worse kind of thing.

Sexual intimacy, marriage, children, family, that's all here. Right here at the beginning.

God made it all joyful. Friends, sexual intimacy and procreation are blessings. They're gifts of God's grace between a husband and a wife.

A guy husband and a girl wife. That's God's design and it didn't change after the fall. The fall seeks to ruin it and makes it vile when we allow that to happen.

But this is God's design. So verse 28 is introducing God's plan for marriage and the family. This is where it first launches in God's design and where he begins to tell us about it.

[25 : 39] So by God's design and purpose, marriage and family are constituted. That means they are made up of a man and a woman and those institutions are consecrated by God.

What does that mean? Made holy. They are set apart. What humans are as we come together as man and woman to fulfill this mandate is unique to us.

Do other animals multiply? Yes, they don't, not like us. Because when a man and a woman, when a husband and a wife commune together, their souls join.

And God has made that to be a powerful relational blessing like no other creature on the planet can enjoy. None. And that is a reflection of the glory and goodness of God in us.

Now that's precious. That's worth fighting for. That's worth saying to the world and bringing them the hope of the gospel. Because on the tail end of all of that, we've got to then talk about the relationship that God wants to have with us through his son, Jesus Christ.

[26 : 48] You see how all this, it all comes together. It's all important. It's all vital. That's why we stand here and we won't budge. We will not budge from this truth.

This is the basic foundation of how human beings are to understand themselves by God's perspective and design. And when we start going amiss here, it's going to compound as we get further out.

And the margin of error grows. And that error is ugly. And we do ugly things to each other. Because we don't prize each other the way God designed us to prize each other.

This is God's design. Marital intimacy is God's invention. How many ways can I say it? It is a blessed part of God's very good creation, which we'll get to in a moment.

Having children and becoming a family are God's inventions. These are blessings and gifts limited to God's design for marriage between a man and a woman.

[27 : 56] So these are precious, precious things. Precious blessings that we need to hold on to and prize together. It is a privilege for you to raise your kids and have children.

If you've ever talked to a couple who weren't able to have kids of their own, it's a hard thing. It's a blessing to have a family, isn't it? Amen. It's a blessing to be family, to have times of the year when family comes together and then at the same time family drives you crazy, makes you want to pull your head out and run to Alaska and hide.

I get that. Your children will break your hearts and make your heart sore. It's just part of being human in a fallen world, being fallen people.

That doesn't change the reality that God made all of this originally to be very, very precious and beautiful. We need to hold on to that because it makes sin all the uglier.

It helps us put sin in perspective. What did sin ruin? And what did God have to do to correct it? See? That's where all this is headed.

[29 : 06] And we've got to hold on to these basic truths in order to understand that. I think we can say it this way. We can actually say from what Scripture teaches that God made us male and female so that we can enjoy intimacy, marriage, family, children, according to His divine design.

It's part of the mandate that He's given us as people. So He made us people and He made us male and female to do what He commanded us to do, to be able to fulfill it with joy, with joy, with hope.

So, the Scripture says this later in the New Testament. Marriage is to be held in honor among all and the marriage bed is to be undefiled for the sexually immoral and adulterers God will judge.

Hebrews chapter 13. The sinful abhorptions and deviations man invents for these relationships we've been talking about only serve to reveal our rebellious dispositions towards the authority and goodness of God and His designs for us.

That's why we have what we have in the way of these terrible evils that we do to each other in these areas. In other words, this is another way I can say it, mankind's defilement of God's blessings of marriage and intimacy, children, family, reveal our spiritual bankruptcy, our spiritual separation from God in our hearts.

[30 : 39] This is not the way God originally made us. He did not make us to exploit one another and hurt each other and step on each other, manipulate each other, control each other.

pride, lust, greed, fear, fear. These are powerful weapons of Satan to deceive us in the most basic and blessed areas of life as God's image bearers.

Give you another example. The fear, the fear, think of this, generated by outcries about overpopulation, those are baseless. It's baseless.

We don't subscribe to that. We don't buy into that. Overpopulation. Whenever you crowd sinners into tightly packed cities, you get problems.

Overpopulation is not the issue, is it? What's the issue? Us. We're the issue. But Satan uses things like this against God's command for us to be fruitful and to multiply and subdue the earth.

[31 : 48] So, killing girls at birth by the millions. Do you know that's going on? Right now. To this day.

Aborting babies by the millions. Spending billions and billions of dollars on space faring are all spiritually based actions.

Did you hear me? These are all spiritually based actions. Stemming from prideful, fearful hearts. What I just reeled off to you in the way of these issues, they're all spiritual issues.

They have everything to do with the way people think about who they are, where they came from, and what that has to do in their relationship with God. Many of them, it's, there is no God. I'm God.

That's a problem, isn't it? All of this that we're talking about right now has everything to do with the way God designed us to relate to each other and to Him. These are spiritual issues in a world that is spiritually dead.

[32 : 52] Right? And what does God do about it? What does God do about it? What does Jesus Christ have to do with any of this? Well, that's the million dollar question.

Let's do this next one real quickly here. God's gift of replenishing. God's gift of reproducing. Now, God's gift of replenishing. Verses 29, 30.

Then God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth and every tree which has the fruit of the tree yielding seed.

It shall be food for you. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that creeps on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food.

And it was so. Now, here is where you and I are introduced to the biblical doctrine of God's providence. We sang a song just a little while ago about God's faithfulness and providing for us and for the earth.

[33 : 55] This is what we're talking about. We encounter it through his faithful provision of food for all living creatures on the earth beginning with mankind.

That's where he started. Let me show you what this is. Divine providence is God's preserving his creation. So divine providence is a doctrine of scripture.

It's a truth of scripture. A teaching. Divine providence is God's preserving his creation, operating in every event in the world and directing the things in the universe to his appointed end for them.

Folks, that's not a problem for a God who just created the world in six days. Not a problem. He can take care of all of this very, very easily. This is the God who is everywhere at once.

This is the God who is all powerful and all wise. And so he can take care of what he's made. No problem. We trust him, don't we? We trust him.

[34 : 54] God designed his world to go on providing for the needs of mankind and to be man's ongoing resource for sustaining an enjoyable life.

Do you hear that? Ongoing resource. Now, does that mean that we can just do whatever we want? Well, of course not. We've already talked about the dominion mandate that puts the onus, the responsibility on us so that we would say we need to be careful stewards of the earth, not worship the earth, not run around in fear that everything's going to run out.

We're all going to not have any oil anymore. We're not going to have any place to live anymore. So Elon Musk or whatever his name is, Elon Musk, Olon, whatever his name is, we got to be a space faring nation.

We got to spend billions to get to Mars because we're going to run out of space on this planet and we need someplace else to live. That's ridiculous. Why is that ridiculous? Because I'm smarter than him?

No. Because I read the Bible and the Bible says we don't have to worry about that. God's going to sustain the planet and he's going to sustain us.

[36 : 03] When the planet comes to an end, it is God who will bring it to an end, not us. Not us. Now we can live in that and trust the Lord.

Again, it does not mean that we do whatever we want. That reality should help us to understand the responsibility that rests on us to submit to God in that truth and to be stewards of the earth and to be careful.

And so we have laws that govern hunting and fishing and the kinds of things you do to the land and the kinds of things that we do when we go out and use the land and places that we go to.

And those are ways that we can be stewards of the earth. This is what it means to have an ongoing resource in all of this. In verses 29 and 30, living creatures are physically sustained by God's design for the ongoing reproduction of what?

What does it say? Fruits, vegetables, trees, plants. And notice, living creatures were vegetarian in God's original design and the earth was designed to meet the need for food.

[37 : 14] Was it ever God's design for us to eat steak? Well, originally no. Would it have been his design were it not for sin and the flood and what he said after the flood about now you can go out and eat the animals?

Was he ever going to release us to eat the animals and have burgers and steaks? I don't know. But he did eventually. So we don't have to feel guilty about that.

If you're not vegetarian, it's okay. Don't let what these people out here with the t-shirts and the banners and everything tell you. It's okay to eat the animals according to the Lord.

We'll get there. You'll see. Right now, though, they're all vegetarian in God's original design. And so God says, I'll give you everything you need. Whatever kind of living creature you are, I'll provide food on the earth for you to have.

I will provide. That's the point, says God. I will provide. The way the world works in its seasons, production, seed time, harvest, that's all God's secondary means for him to preserve and provide for what he's made.

[38 : 22] In other words, God stands behind his provision. God is the first cause, and then there are these secondary means that he uses to make provision so that the earth is replenished and goes on providing.

That's God's design. And we are prideful enough to think that we can stop God's design. How dare we? It should humble us to know that God's designed his world this way and put us in it to enjoy it.

God stands behind this provision. So concerning nature, God is the creator. God is the ruler and sustainer of nature.

Now, friends, the laws of nature are the general normal ways God governs his world and upholds his universe. The natural laws that you and I live by like gravity, that kind of thing.

Those are the normal ways that God governs his world. Yes. But now let's look at this because this becomes very important when we get to the New Testament, especially in the life of Jesus, who is the God man, right?

[39 : 31] God become flesh. Look at this. The laws of nature are always under God's sovereign control, complete control so that God retains the right and the power to suspend these laws by miracles.

That's what a miracle is. Creation is God working miracles in his world. God is defying the laws of nature as we understand them as he makes the original creation.

Think of it this way. When the Israelites were in desperate need of water and there was none. Remember when they were in the wilderness wanderings with Moses and they needed water? What did Moses do?

Moses struck the rock and what happened? Water came out. That's a miracle. When Jesus encountered thousands upon thousands of hungry people, he fed them with what?

Five loaves and how many fish? And as they passed the baskets around, the food kept multiplying in the baskets so that they had an abundance left over.

[40 : 37] That's a miracle. That's God defying the laws of nature as we understand them. He has the right to do that and He alone has the power.

I could stand up here all day long and try to command the sun and command the weather and rebuke whatever out there because if Greg and I had our way, it'd be snowing like a big dog right now, right?

70 degrees last week. I know, but we're not complaining. Yeah, we don't have the power to do that. I don't have the power to do that.

The world as we know it is not self-sustaining. Let me put that up there. The world is not self-sustaining.

It is sustained by God, its creator. As the Lord tells us that while all the days of the earth remain, alright? There's the baseline. While all the days of the earth remain, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.

[41 : 47] That's a promise. As long as God is on the throne and the days of our world are what they are, these things will be sustained by God and go on.

Now that's a tremendous, tremendous relief for me. Is it to you? To know that you serve a God like that? Amen. God is concerned and involved with providing for mankind, particularly his people, his chosen ones, his elect, who are trusting in God by faith in his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me show you that just real quickly. This will be the only place we go. Go to Romans, if you would. Hold your finger there in Genesis 1. And let's skip over to the New Testament in the book of Romans, chapter 8.

Let me say this again as my segue into what I want to show you here. Excuse me. God is concerned and involved with providing for mankind.

Yes, in general, that's God's common grace, but particularly God is concerned with providing for his people, that is, his chosen ones, his elect. Those who believe in him and trust in him by faith in his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[43 : 02] That's what we see in Romans, chapter 8, beginning in verse 28. And we, those who know Christ, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

There's the promise. For those who are called or saved according to his purpose, according to his purpose, according to his purpose, because those whom God foreknew, he also predestined, predetermined, to become conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he called. Those whom he called, he justified. Those whom he justified, he also glorified. This is God making us spiritually right with himself.

This is God doing something to take care of our spiritual deadness before him. And this is his promise that he will provide such that for those who love the Lord and are forgiven in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins.

Remember what I said? Jesus went to the cross as our substitute. Jesus hung himself on the cross willingly and became a substitute so that God would lay your sins and my sins on his son as if he had committed them.

[44 : 31] And then he punished him to death. Why? Because sin demands death. And so Jesus took the death penalty in my place and in your place. And God didn't leave it there.

Then they took him off the cross after paying the penalty of death for each of us and suffering in his person, the sufferings that we deserve for our sins. They put him in a grave and three days later by the power of the Holy Spirit God raised him from the dead to tell the world I accept his sacrifice on your behalf and here's the proof.

I'm raising him to new life. And I'm going to treat the righteous life that he lived, the perfect sinless life that he lived, I'm going to treat you and your faith as if you had lived that life.

Jesus got your life of sin. In exchange, you get his life of perfection. And so now you can stand before the Lord by faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in Jesus' righteousness, credited to your spiritual bank account to make you holy.

That is to consecrate, set you apart to God. That's what we enjoy in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's where we are now in this particular issue that we're looking at as God sustains us in himself and promises his people, I will conform you to the image of my son.

[45 : 56] As you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with him, my promise to you is that I will make all things in your life work to the good of making you more like my son.

It won't always feel good. You won't always be able to explain why things aren't feeling good. But you can know behind the scenes I am working the good of making you more like my son.

And that's what counts the most. That is God renewing us in relationship to him. He's taking us back to the original and he's saying I'm giving this to you as a gift.

It cost God his son to do that. That wasn't cheap and it wasn't free. Not for God. But it's offered to us as a gift.

What is? Jesus. He is the treasure. He is the gift. He is the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. That's Jesus. Did you ever think Genesis 1 would teach that?

[47 : 01] Well, it does. It does. This is the foundation for everything. And that's why we camp out here. Wow. Thank you, Lord.

And so again, as long as there's an earth, these kinds of things won't cease. If you look at verse 31 with me back to Genesis. And God saw all.

So this is God looking on all this, making perspective of all this. And God saw all that he had made and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day.

And God saw all that he had made. That is stressing God's careful, authoritative perspective on his own creation. God saw.

And God made a judgment. He made an assessment. He made an evaluation of his work. And behold. That's the next statement in my Bible. And behold. After he saw.

[48 : 06] What does that mean? Behold creates expectation. Exclamation. And God saw all that he made. And behold. And it kind of grabs you.

What? What? What? What's happening? Well, what is happening? What does it say? It was very good. This is God's way of helping us to step back a little bit so that he can say, and it was very good.

Because up to now, what has it been? What's the assessment been? And God saw that it was good. Now it's very good. Mark and I were talking about this a couple of weeks ago, weren't we, brother?

What does all this mean? And it was very good. Folks, this rich... Do I have a thing for that? There it is. There it is. This rich and powerful declaration from the mind and, as it were, the mouth of God puts an end to all long-age theories about Earth's origins.

This is the death knell for all of those evolutionary ideas of millions of years and all that nonsense. Why? Because each of those theories, every single one of those theories in some way or another, include death, suffering, and destruction long before mankind entered the scene.

[49 : 35] But the Bible tells us that sin, death, and destruction came after God made everything very good. Well, you can't have it both ways. Is it very good?

Or is there sin, death, and destruction? Which is it? Well, God says it was very good from Jump Street. So you see, you can't have sin, death, and destruction under very good.

It doesn't work. This is the truth. This is the truth. Flies in the face of all of the other nonsense. All right, let's do this last one real quickly together here.

God's gift of resting. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their hosts. And on the seventh day God completed his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it he rested from all of his work which God had created in making it. Now the Hebrew grammar here friends is structured differently for days six and seven.

[50 : 38] And they do that to offset them as special, unique. So I want to show you the literal Hebrew rendering of what this would be. Again, if you were a Hebrew reading this and Moses was reading it to you or telling and you got the scroll or whatever, this would be immediately apparent to you.

Not so much to us. The New American Standard does a good job of bringing this out if you have the NASB, New American Standard Bible. Alright? So here's what it looks like.

This is how each of these ends in the Hebrew. Day one, then a second day, a third day, a fourth day, a fifth day. When we get to the last two days, he puts an article in there.

A day the sixth, a day the seventh. Emphasis. Highlight. Everything about this is screaming into our faces the goodness of God and his power in creating.

God did it. God did it. God did it. And he did it for these reasons. This is what this is doing for us. In 131, chapter 1, verse 31, that verse completes creation.

[51 : 52] And then chapter 2, verse 1, definitively closes creation. You say, what's the difference? Look. Can you see this up here?

At the bottom of the screen? Genesis 1, 31, completes creation. That's what we're being told. Then in Genesis chapter 2, verse 1, we have this definitive closing of creation.

What is all of this saying? Chapter 2, verse 1, is simply a summary of chapter 1. God made it all in six days so that his work was comprehensively complete and lacking nothing.

There's no evolution. There's no process. There's no need. God made the world what he wanted it to be from the very beginning. And the world was made mature.

And the world was made in the sense of operating right off the bat as God designed it to be. So chapter 2, verse 2, begins, and on the seventh day, the number seven being the Hebrew number of surprise, completion, or perfection.

[53 : 10] God completed his work which he had done. emphasize those things because that's what the text is emphasizing by repetition. This phrasing then reemphasizes the comprehensive completeness which God had designed into his creation.

Folks, I'm telling you, just a normal reading of all of this just soars right at you to say, God did this thing, he did it in this amount of time, and he did it in this perfectly complete way.

And it was a complete package as God did it. Now we'll get to Genesis chapter 3 where man's rebellion brought God to then judge that rebellion and curse the earth, didn't he?

And then things changed. Things really got ramped up in the judgment that when we fast forward through and see that God then brought the flood. And the flood was a catastrophic worldwide event and changed the face of the earth forever.

These are things that we need to hold in our mind. We need to understand here that all of this is in perfect harmony. God is doing a complete and perfect thing in all of these areas.

[54 : 23] And so the phrasing again here is emphasizing that comprehensiveness. Then notice, and he rested, notice the text, and then he rested, God rested, on the seventh day from all of his work which he had done.

Well, God was tired, right? Does God get tired? Does God sleep? Does God slumber? No. All right, so we know what it's not, right?

We know that it's not that our God got tired. He's not, whew, I'm exhausted. Holy Spirit, Jesus, let's go over here and get a, you know. No. His rest is the rest of satisfaction at the completion.

The comprehensive, this is why the text is making this such a point. The comprehensive completion of all of this as the text gives it to us, says, I'm satisfied.

God is satisfied with his divine designs on his universe. He's not tired, he's finished. He's done. He's done what he wanted to do.

[55 : 32] So he steps back and he looks it over and he says, this is very good. It's time to stop because his designs and purposes in creation are complete.

All is fulfilled according to what God purposed. That's the point. Look at, look at how the text reads. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed and all their hosts.

Now look, and on the seventh day God completed his work which he had done and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it he rested from all his work which God had created in making it.

It's so emphatic. It's beautiful. What does verse 3 connect with this emphasis of completion? What is verse 3 adding to this idea of comprehensive completion?

[56 : 38] Well look, four times in four verses once in verse 31 twice in chapter 2 verse 2 and once in chapter 2 verse 3 the text emphasizes God's authorship.

That's what I just read. God's authorship of all this complete creation. In other words, once again God stands behind and above what he's made. God is not in his creation.

God's not in the trees. He's not in the flowers. He's not in the animals. The only sense that God is in his creation is through redemption by the miracle of the Holy Spirit coming to live in us as redeemed people.

And that's a miracle. But God is not in that stuff out there. God stands above all of that. He is above creation and yet he is involved in sustaining it.

This is the bigness of our God. We need to preach a big God doing a big thing. A miraculous thing. God's handiwork in creation I think I'll put this up here for you.

[57 : 43] God's handiwork in creation is complete in that it now perfectly reflects his character in just the ways he designed for it to do. The original creation then it was a masterpiece reflecting its master crafter.

That's what it was. This is especially true for mankind made in God's image. God blessed the seventh day. That is just like before when we spoke of blessed God assigned the seventh day special honor.

He set it aside from the other days. God's design and he wants this day to reflect his own satisfaction with that very good assessment that completed work.

So the seventh day screams God's design is perfect. God's design is very good and God himself was satisfied with what he had designed and done and completed.

that's powerful. I think that if God is satisfied I can step back as little old Jeff and say yeah I'm good with that.

[58 : 53] I'm absolutely good with that. If you're good with it I'm good with it and that's where we need to be. Later this is going to be the source this seventh day later not now this is going to be the source for the Sabbath in the law of Moses.

But in Genesis it's very important for us to understand this. In Genesis this day is not the Sabbath. This is not the beginning of the Sabbath. No one is commanded to observe this day in any special way prior to Moses and the law.

That came down off Sinai. Right? So in Genesis that's not what we have here so don't make this the Sabbath yet. That's going to come. Alright? Here's what we need to take home from this and then I'm done.

Creation week is the basis for our work week. God took the time that he did six days six days to create and the seventh to rest because God was establishing the cycle of our weekly endeavors for us.

This is for us. Even in a perfect world this was going to be God's design. Beloved, at the very least you and I need to accept this biblically affirming, this very rejuvenating basis for the seven days of our week of work.

[60 : 13] Work is needed and work is good as God designed it to be. And listen to this. Let's add this real quickly. Rest.

rest. Your rest from work to reflect on God's goodness and on his completeness in himself is also necessary and good for us.

We need to take time to do that. You see, I understand the same thing that you face, I face. And that is that we get out here and we get living our lives and there are so many things that want to distract us from what's most important.

what's most important for us is to relate to God through Christ. Amen. Every day being conformed to the image of Jesus and bringing God glory in Christ.

That's what's most important. We miss it. We get the world all over us. We get so involved in our jobs and in our lives and in things going on in problems that come our way. God's established this seven day thing so that we can stop in our tracks and reflect on the reality that God is a complete and good God.

[61 : 20] Doing a complete and good work in you as you trust the Lord Jesus Christ. We need rest because we're physical beings and we need to recharge our bodies and then finally we need rest because we're spiritual beings.

We need to refresh our souls. So taking in the measure of God's wisdom and grace and giving us a seven day cycle to live by. Live by is a very very good thing for us and it's what God established.

It's just one more way that God shows his blessings. So now where are we? By God's grace we have the foundation we need to fill in the details God wants you and I to know about living as his image bearers and most especially as his redeemed people if indeed you are redeemed.

Thank you for your kind attention. That wraps up chapter one. I don't know how many sermons I preach probably 52. Something like that. But it was a good and rich time for us to pause and look at these different realities about God and about who he is as he made us to relate to himself.

Let's pray together. Father I thank you so much dear Lord for these souls that are here today. These friends and family members. Thank you for the way that you are working your work to help us understand better who you are and who we are and what you want us to know about relating to you.

[62 : 50] What is the priority of life? What is the highest rule measure and standard of living on this planet? Why are we who we are? Why did you put us here?

All of these questions and more are answered in the very first chapter of the Bible and we are so grateful to you Lord for making us in your image so that we can reflect who you are to each other.

We pray you would help us to do that in Christ Jesus as we trust in him for the forgiveness of our sins as we look to you to be our God and our king and to teach us what it means to be your image bearers.

Thank you for your grace your undeserved favor. Thank you for your mercy the way that you withhold from us what we deserve. Thank you for the love of your heart that you sent to us in Jesus your son.

All of these things we praise you and honor you in Christ's name. Amen.