

Theme: God's covenant of creation calls us to embrace our creation as male or female, the institution of marriage and family, and to recognize the dignity and sanctity of every human life.

I. Intro - HUMANS and Ex Machina

- A. Sci-fi TV show and movie about AI robots
- B. Both deal with the question of what makes us human
- C. Very important question! What is a human?
- D. Humanity defined in the covenant of creation - 3 weeks

II. What It Means To Be Human

- A. Humans are the image of God Himself
Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..."²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26–27
 - 1. Humans alone are created in the image of God.
 - 2. All humans inherently are the image of God. It is not something we strive to attain; it is a gift of God that is intrinsic to our very nature.
 - 3. The image of God is what gives every single human immense intrinsic dignity and value.
 - 4. Our sexuality as male or female is part of the image of God in us as individuals.
 - 5. As the image of the Triune God, the Divine Community, humans are inherently relational, communal beings.
 - 6. How we treat other humans is a central part of the covenant of creation and of what it means to be human.

B. Humans under the covenant of creation

- 1. This is essential because ALL humans are under the covenant of creation.
- 2. This covenant defines what humanity is, and our relationships with other humans is a core part of our obligations in this covenant.
- 3. This is so essential and central there is no way to cover it all in a single teaching, but we will look at a few key aspects today.
- 4. Applying the Word during the points today.

III. Our Covenant Responsibilities To Humanity

- A. The significance of human sexuality
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; **male and female he created them.**²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth...**" Genesis 1:27–28
 - 1. Notice that humans are created as male and female
 - 2. Notice the command to be fruitful and multiply requires male and female
 - 3. This male and female dichotomy and necessity is reinforced in the covenant institution of marriage
The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called '**woman**,' for she was taken out of **man**."²⁴ For this reason a **man** will leave his **father** and **mother** and be united to his **wife**, and they will become one flesh. Gen 2:23–24
 - a. This text reinforces that marriage is the union of a male and a female
 - b. The Hebrew words used here are not generic for humans, but refer to male humans and female humans

- c. The importance of male and female is picked up by Jesus as essential to understanding humanity and marriage

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Matthew 19:4–6

1. Jesus was asked about divorce, but goes to the covenant of creation to answer the question
2. He specifically stresses our creation as male and female for this is foundational to our humanity and to marriage, family, and the human community.

4. There is great confusion over human sexuality today because the enemy wants to distort the image of God within us - and our sexuality as male or female is essential to that image.

5. The LGBTQ+ and sexual revolutions are not side issues - they strike at the very core of what it means to be human, rejecting the image of God and wreaking havoc in the lives of individuals, families, and society at large.

6. Do I embrace and live a biblical view of human sexuality?

B. The centrality of the family

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth...” Genesis 1:27–28

1. Notice all of the plural pronouns, the first command
2. Humans are created in God’s image for community
3. It begins with the community of the family: be fruitful and multiply requires the family in God’s design.

4. This is further teased out in Genesis 2

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”...²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:18, 24

- a. It is not good for humans to be alone - we were created for human community
- b. God gives us family for this need - man, woman, children coming from the union (sexuality again!)
- c. The family as created by God is a covenant institution and is the basis of all other human community
- d. This is why God hates divorce - the covenant of creation creates the family as an integral part of the image of God in humanity. To destroy the family bond is ultimately a distortion of and attack upon the image of God in us.

5. The covenant institution of marriage is ultimately a reflection of Jesus’ relationship with His people, the Church.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”³² This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church.

³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:31–33

- a. Paul is talking about marriage and quotes Genesis 2
- b. He is following Jesus in doing this! (Matthew 19)
- c. Marriage is based on Christ’s relationship with His Bride, the Church. The reality is Christ and the Church; marriage is merely an earthly reflection of this reality.

d. This is why we are not free to alter marriage as we like, for any adjustment from one man and one woman in a permanent bond is a gross distortion of the relationship between Christ and the Church.

6. God's covenant of creation has made marriage and the family foundational for all human relationships and society.

7. This is why the 2nd part of the Ten Commandments deals with family and then all human relationships

8. Do I embrace and live a biblical view of the family?

C. The vital importance of human dignity/the sanctity of life

Then God said, "Let us make man in our **image**, in our **likeness**..."²⁷ So God created man in his own **image**, in the **image** of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27

1. Image is used 3x, likeness once to stress this point

2. This underscores the immense dignity and value of every single human being. There are no "mere" humans!

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

CS Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

3. God takes how we treat human VERY seriously!

"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." Genesis 9:6

a. God is making a covenant with Noah, and it is patterned after the covenant of creation

b. God reminds us that humans are the image of God

c. To kill a human is so serious that there must be severe consequences.

4. How we treat other humans is an essential aspect of whether we violate the covenant of creation.

5. Two key areas calling for human dignity & embracing the sanctity of life (GOSPEL intro)

a. Abortion

1. Sanctity of life Sunday - many focus on abortion

2. But every day is about the sanctity of human life!

3. Human life begins at conception - everything else is just the growth of the human who already exists.

4. This is true biblically - David says our sinful nature begins at conception (Psalm 51:5); John responded to Jesus while both were still in the womb, and Jesus was only weeks old!

5. True historically (Hippocratic oath), logically, scientifically, and every other way one can conceive of it!

6. Capital article Tuesday - euphemisms - "health care; treatment"; expanding to meet a projected increase of 66% over the next two years - may God forbid it!!!

7. Abortion is nothing less than the murder of a human and an attack on the image of God.

8. Abortion is direct rebellion against God's image and His command to be fruitful and multiply

9. To support abortion or those who politically support abortion is sinful and wicked in the extreme

10. Do I have a biblical view of the sanctity of life in the womb, and does it govern my personal actions, prayer, and voting?

11. How can I actively support the pro-life movement?

b. Racism

1. Sanctity of life does not end at the birth canal!
2. Today is also MLK day - to remember the fight against racism!
3. Every human is equally the image of God - there is only one human race!
4. We must grapple with our nation's dark history of slavery, Jim Crow, and racism, which was often justified and supported by Christians, and is alive today!
5. Racism is direct hatred of the image of God and deeply wicked
6. To think, speak, or act in a racist manner, or to give a pass to those who use racist language for political ends is sinful and wicked in the extreme
7. This includes refugees, immigrants, and others attempting to come to our country. Sanctity of life does not end at our border or with our fellow citizens!
8. In our language and actions we must always remember that every single human being is the image of God, and how we speak and act towards other humans is how we are speaking and acting towards God Himself.
9. Do I have a biblical view of the evil of all forms of racism, and does it govern my personal speech, actions, prayer and voting?
10. How can I learn about and fight ongoing racism?

IV. Applying the Word

A. Jesus the Perfect Image of God

1. Adam was created in the image of God but failed
2. We too bear God's image but fail, both in our own actions and in the way we treat others
3. Jesus is the image of God, the 2nd Adam, and He has succeeded where Adam and we failed!

4. In the Incarnation Jesus went through every stage of image-bearing and fulfilled the call of the covenant of creation
 - a. Because humanity starts at conception, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary.
 - b. Jesus was born, grew, and lived in full obedience to God's call for humanity, fulfilling the covenant of creation.
 - c. Jesus not only perfectly lived as the image of God, He perfectly loved that image in every other human, being willing to die even for His enemies.
 - d. In a world of racism, sexism, and nationalism, Jesus loves and draws men and women from every ethnicity and nation.
 - e. In a world that forsakes and breaks covenant vows, Jesus is the Perfect Bridegroom Who loves His Bride even through her unfaithfulness and constantly brings her back to communion with God.
5. Jesus is coming again to complete His work, healing everything that is broken and mars the image of God, and we will eat and drink with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb, the True wedding of which every marriage in this age is only a shadow!

B. Communion: The Covenant Table

The Covenant of Creation - Part 2

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-24

January 19, 2020

Communion

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Teaching keywords: Covenant; humanity; marriage and family; abortion

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else... ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” Genesis 1:26-28

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

¹⁹ Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh.²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:18–24