



The Key To Human Freedom

Key idea:

The key to human freedom is recognizing and embracing our inherent nature as we were created by God, including both the God-given dignity and limits of that nature.

Key text:

Genesis 1:26-31

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.”²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.

Genesis 2:15-17

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Key points:

1. The universe was created by God and therefore does not exist in a random, purposeless manner, but rather has a definite structure and purpose defined by its Creator.
2. The nature of reality is that structure, distinctions, separations, and limits are good, and that any attempt to live apart from them leads to chaos, not blessing.

3. Human beings are the apex of creation and have inherent dignity because they are created in the image of God Himself.
4. Human beings are created in such a way that we are given definite limits, do not determine good and evil for ourselves, and must obey God.
5. Our culture falsely thinks freedom is found in defining and living our own reality and creating our human nature as we desire it to be. However, the key to human freedom is embracing our given nature and the nature of creation.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. What is the difference between the state of creation in Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 1:31? What is that meant to teach me about the nature, purpose, and direction of creation?
3. Jeremiah 4:23 is the only other time the Hebrew phrase for "formless and empty" is used in the Bible, and it refers to the state of the promised land after the coming judgment of God. When I think of this, as well as the general direction of God's creative work in Genesis 1, what does it teach me about the nature of creation? What does blessing look like? What does the curse look like?
4. Why is the fact that humans are created in the image of God so important? What is lost if this is denied and humans are seen as merely another animal or random bits of cosmic dust?
5. What does Genesis 2:15-17 teach us about our relationship to God and His commands? What happens if we reject God's authority and disobey?
6. Why do I think the specific tree in the test is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Do humans have the ability to determine good and evil on our own? Why or why not?
7. Can I think of examples in which our culture is denying the reality of a given, fixed, human nature? Why do we want to deny this fundamental reality?
8. How would I answer someone who agrees that physical laws and limits exist, but denies the reality of moral laws and limits?
9. How is my creation in the image of god related to moral limits to my behavior? How does this relate to what will actually cause me to flourish and live in joy?
10. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For Further Study:

[God's Goal for Creation](#) (March 18, 2007)

[The Covenant of Creation \(Part 2\)](#) (January 19, 2020)

[The Covenant of Creation \(Part 3\)](#) (January 26, 2020)

[Know Limits](#) (May 28, 2019)

[Restrained In An Indulgent World](#) (October 20, 2013)

[True Freedom](#) (July 2, 2017)

Preview of next week: Freedom: Body and Soul (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7)