

# In His Image

*Genesis 2*

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**Bible Text:** Genesis 1:26  
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In Genesis 1, Genesis chapter 1, I'll read verses 26 and 27. This is the sixth day of creation and in verse 26 of Genesis 1 God says,

26 And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Three times in this passage God says or it's said of God that man is made in the image of God. Verse 26, it's God's purpose, "Let us make man in our image." Verse 27 it says, "So God created," according to his purpose, "man in his own image," and then repeats it, "in the image of God created he them."

Who am I? Who are you? That's the most basic and yet important and relevant question that you can answer every morning when you wake up. Have you ever woken up from a deep sleep, perhaps that deepest of sleeps with the deepest of dreams, and just for a few moments you're not only unsure as to where you are but you're also not certain of who you are. Maybe that dream was one of those dreams and just for a moment it takes a bit of time to orient yourself.

There's nothing as frightening as not knowing who you are. I just read a short book by a preacher and his wife. His wife finished the book and you'll understand why in just a moment. He's preaching, going about his ministry, young man, then suddenly the familiar was not nearly as familiar as it had been. They tried to keep it private for a while, but then telltale signs began to show to others, and so eventually he went to the doctor and eventually the doctors found out and told him, "You have a very early onset Alzheimer's." So he decides we're going to write this book that's called "My Journey into Alzheimer's," I'm going to write this book to help others who are going through this. But then I mentioned his wife had to finish the book because eventually, a lot sooner than he would have wanted, he himself had no idea who he was.

Functionally, not knowing who you are can have tragic consequences, can it? We hear about this kind of things all the time, but just last weekend two young men, seemed to be normal young men, no evil intentions, but they spend their Saturday at the Ole Miss football game, and as many young men do, they spent many many hours of this game in the surroundings just drinking heavily. Eventually they lose track of who they are, where they are, what they're doing, and as they leave a parking lot late late in the evening, they run over two people. Well, because they're still disoriented and probably fearful at this moment, they compound that problem exponentially by leaving the scene. In that moment, who they are, what they've been taught, what they know to be right was lost, was gone and their lives and the lives of two other families, and you just keep on letting those waves billow out are forever changed. In that moment they were just party animals, right? Just creatures of the moment, no greater responsibility, no greater authority in those moments.

Now contrast that to someone who knows exactly who they are. Last Sunday Brother Gunas stood in this pulpit and I told you a little bit about a story, I won't tell you much more about that story today but what stands out about his story is his absolute fixed determination even as he's being told, "You're nothing. You don't have the mental capacity of a normal person. You're already in this lowest of tasks. You won't achieve." And yet, here's a man who spends literally the midnight oil, midnight with a candle in this little village that I've been to studying on his own the English language, and he becomes what he's become because he knew exactly who he was. "You say this about me but God says I'm a child of God. I am made in the image of God, created by God on purpose for his glory, to display his glory, to use my life as a physical representation of the living glorious God." And so this man achieves what this man has achieved. No human box, then, could confine him. Identity. Who am I? This is this is the topic of our day, is it not? As we look around us men and women and children are greatly struggling to answer this question and even know where the authoritative voice to answer this question should come from. There's a philosophical answer to the question of identity that is prominent in our day, it says, "I am who I say I am. I am who I feel I am. I am who I believe I am this." This is expressive individualism, isn't it? That you will be fulfilled by fully asserting what you believe yourself to be.

So ultimately who you are is defined by you, by the self. We talked about this in previous messages. Now you may reject that philosophically. You may say, "I'm not qualified. My feelings are too fickle. I've changed my beliefs about things many times. I don't trust myself to say who I am." But functionally many, many people, many Christians live under the authority of the philosophy I just described. Some disappointment, some life experience, something that occurred to you, many are so wrapped up in themselves that anything that changes, shifts, disrupts what they dreamed of being or dreamed of doing becomes the defining moment of their life, becomes the identifying moment of their life. So many, many, many are trapped in what I'm going to call "identity by victimization," a victim of life, a victim of life's experience, a victim of life's circumstances and their lives become identified by something outside that occurred in their life, many times something that was disappointing.

Well, as we just take a snapshot of society in 2022 in the West in America, there are many descriptors of it, but one descriptor that I think of is just that it looks like the chaos of the aftermath of a Revolutionary War battlefield, the smoke, the smells screams. We live in a chaotic world, don't we? We live in a world that's destroying itself and much of the destruction comes because people don't know who they are. So our world is screaming for an, not many but an authoritative voice to speak into the chaos, to speak into the ruin, and tell us who we are. And so, Genesis 1:26 was written a long time ago and it describes something that happened a very long time ago, yet Genesis 1:26 and 27 is the word for our cultural moment. It's the word. It's refreshing. It's the word for you. As you walk into the church building today, struggling with things that are occurring around you and in you, you need to hear the word from God of Genesis 1:26. Who am I? You are a God imager. You are made in the image and in the likeness of God. Let's listen to this again. Genesis 1:26 and 27, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," isn't that incredible, "and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Now, just before we jump into the thoughts around the image of God, let's just clear up one thing first. You may have noticed, as we're reading this, that God said, "Let us." Let us. Who is God speaking to? What is God doing? Many people have wondered and speculated as to what God means when God says, "Let us." The word God here is plural, Elohim is plural. God says, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness."

So God created man in his own image in verse 27. What in the world is happening here? Well, somebody thought maybe it's the angels God is speaking to and maybe the angels are part of this creative process of God. I'm not going to spend long on this but let me just point you to a couple of thoughts on this. Now this will not be fully revealed here in Genesis 1, but the revelation of God throughout scripture will reveal this. God is speaking in the Godhead here. Here's a verse that will help you with that, Deuteronomy 6:4. Deuteronomy 6 is where God instructs Israel and the leaders of Israel and the fathers of Israel to daily, regularly, continually repeat these words to themselves, to remember these words, to never forget these words. So I'll just read in Deuteronomy 6:3 and 4, "Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey." Now listen here's the words, "Hear, O Israel." Israel, don't lose these words, don't forget these words, "The LORD," that's Jehovah, that's the independent, the eternal, the self-existent God, "The LORD our God," that's Elohim, that's the plural word for God, "The Lord our God is one." Okay? So remember that, yes, God is not unaware of this seeming contradiction in the Godhead that he presents in Genesis 1:26 and 27. He brings it right there together, "The LORD," the one, the Jehovah, "our God," the plural, "is one," okay? Then God, through the writers of Scripture, make it a point to emphasize that God is alone and God is alone in the creative process.

So let me just point you to a couple of passages, one is in Isaiah 40 and the other in Isaiah 44, and then we'll get back to the image of God. Isaiah 40. Here is one passage that talks about God being alone. Isaiah 40:13, "Who hath directed," this is a question that's being asked, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" Now you go back to Genesis 1 and God is saying, "Let us make man in our image." Who is there counseling God about making man in his image? Who is there giving God some feedback and support? Who hath done this? "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" And the answer is, none, okay? So who's God's counselor? He doesn't have one. Who is God's instructor? Who says, "God, this would be a good thing to make man and then to make man in your image"? And the point is there is none. There is none who can be compared to God.

Even more clear in Isaiah 44. I'll read to you two verses of Isaiah 44. We could read many, let me read to you two verses. The first one is verse 6, "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am," I alone, "the last; and beside me there is no God." So there is no other being in the creative act. There is no other being who rivals God.

Now verse 24, "Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things," now notice the emphasis, "that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." What is God emphasizing there? His solitariness. "I alone am God. I created alone. I stretched forth the heavens by myself."

So I'm just going to mention that briefly. If you want to discuss that more later, I can tell you that Genesis 1:26 and 27 is not a problem for God and I think scripture will lay that out clearly as we move on through scripture to show the Godhead as being this Triune Godhead, God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit, and these three being one all a part of the process of creation. And what a blessing it is just to think about that for a moment. This is not just some random moment, but this is a moment that is pregnant with purpose and with planning and with thought. God the Godhead, all contributing, the Godhead all agreeing, the Godhead all together in this purpose to make you. You are not a forgotten afterthought but God speaking here, saying, "Let us do this. Let us do this," what is going to be really the crowning point of all of creation.

Now some of you are full of yourselves today, and some of you are barely making it in here. For some of you you're like, "Okay, sure I'm the crowning point," but you finally noticed that for others who like, "Are you serious? Can this actually really be?" This is how David felt about it, isn't it, in Psalm 8? "Lord, what are you talking about? I'm standing at the precipice of the Grand Canyon right now. I'm standing at the peak of Mount Everest. I am watching the waves billow. I'm scuba diving and looking at all this beautiful sea life that is there. I'm seeing the dolphin jump and dive. I'm seeing the whale blow. And you're saying that I am the crowning point of creation? David says, "Lord, you have crowned man, mankind, it says male and female, you have crowned man with glory and honor? What is man?" Personalize that, "Who am I that you have... I don't quite feel

very respected. I don't feel very dignified. I don't feel very significant. But God, you're telling me Genesis 1 that I have been made in your image, crowned with glory and honor." And we're going to see in just a minute, this is what this means to be made in the image of God.

Well, a view of man outside of or without Genesis 1:26-27 says something like this or functionally says this. On one hand, people are gods. We clamor for autonomy, don't we? "Just leave me alone and let me discover my glory. It's all there. It's held back by religion. It's held back by the strictures of society. It's held back by discrimination. It's held back by oppression. Leave me alone. And even better, if you will, follow this along with me so I can chase my dreams, that would help. So fund me, fund my dreams, but leave me alone otherwise. I'm a god." Well, Genesis 1 and 2 would keep us in the right perspective here, even as we think of the glory honor of man. Listen to verse 7 of chapter 2, "And the LORD God formed man." I'm glad you feel good about yourself right now but listen to this, "And the LORD God formed man," and that's woman too, that's mankind, "And the LORD God," well the woman came from the rib, "And the LORD God formed man out of the dust of the ground." And then man who is from the dust of the ground gives rise to woman who's from the rib, who came from the dust, and so we're all from the dust, right? This is meant to keep us in perspective. We are dependent creatures. We are made by God. He forms man from the dust of the ground. We are not autonomous.. We are not gods. We are not self-created. We are not in control. We're not sustained by self. We're not continued by self. We're not created by self. We are fully dependent. Know that. We're formed from the dust of the ground and when we die, guess what? We're going back to dust, our bodies are.

So people are not gods, not creators, not autonomous. We're very dependent. And sometimes life has a way of showing us how dependent that we are. As we age, we start off being dependent and we end up being dependent. Isn't that amazing? And in the middle we wish we had somebody to come and tuck us into bed at night because we're not really as confident as we like to be, right? "If I could just be independent," is the cry of every 18-year-old or 17-year-old. And then they get it and they're like, "I'm going to pretend like this is great but I really miss my mom." Is that not true? I'm not nearly as sure. I tell somebody, I was a very confident parent before I had children and then I became a little bit confident at about 12 years old, and at 23 I have no confidence at all. She's doing fine, but it's a different relationship now, right? We're not, we're dependent, so so needy.

But on the other hand, the other philosophy is people are nothing. They're just animals. Just like the rest of creation, there's nothing, there's no differentiation. Genesis 1:26 and 27 where there's two main points, you're just evolved from apes. You're just like the rest and there's really two main points that it means to be made in the image of God as broad categories. 1. It means there is differentiation. You are not animals. You're not Praise God for the animals. Praise God for all that's of creation. As we just said the Psalm 8, it blows our minds that God will differentiate us in a level that pushes us up when we consider the rest of creation. In fact, differentiation on it's own is not that hard, but it seems like we're lower than, right, we're less than. But he says, "No, you're elevated.

You're made in the image of God. You are not animals. You are the crowning point of God's creation."

But secondly maybe the image of God means representation, and this is what should blow your mind. But more than blow your mind, friends, this is amazing truth, amazing truth that is meant to inform every moment, every purpose, every plan, every action. You, listen to this, you and your whole being. So we can't to say it's our spirit. It's our whole being, body, soul and spirit. You, in your whole being, are a physical representation of the spiritual living God. That's incredible. You. It's not as if you sign up for this. It's not, "No, I don't think I want to do that. I just want to be, can I just kind of live...?" No, no. You because of who you are, like it or not, you are a physical representation of the living God.

Sometimes we see a child and they say, I don't do because I can't tell any difference, but sometimes people see a child and they go, "Oh, he looks like his mother." Or said differently sometimes after they begin to see the child grow and do things, "They take after their father." This sounds a little bit different, right? So maybe you can't see, like me, and your child as far as seeing the resemblance, but then you start to see some telltale personality things and maybe even some physical gait, the way they walk, the way they laugh, the way they walk, or the way they say things, the words they say, maybe even some mannerisms like quick-tempered or something like that, and they go, "Oh, he takes after his father." This is exactly what we're talking about. I'm going to say that you are made in the image of God. You were created, that when an observer of you would see you, would see your actions or see your relationships, would see what you do as you tackle life they go, "Oh, they take after the Creator."

Isn't that something? We are beings that correspond to the original being. We are made in the divine pattern, the image of God for a divine representing purpose, dominion, filling, relating. God fills with life. We are to fill with life. God relates in the way that he relates. God has dominion over all. So in the image of God we are given the command to have dominion over the earth, to fill the earth, and to relate to God in a way and to others in a way that is imaging of God, representing God. It's incredible, isn't it? So what are the implications of this being made in the image of God? Let me give you two implications of being made in the image of God.

The first one, this is very important, the first one is dignity. Dignity. Dignity just means someone, it means being worthy of honor and respect. Being worthy of honor and respect. Now answer that question, "What gives humans dignity?" I'm going to ask you not to do this but in your mind just look around the room for a moment and think about how you, we are you going to keep this in our minds, keep it so we stay safe, but think about how you typically assess one another. "Oh, she's old. She doesn't have anything to give to me." Right? Or, "Oh," let me go stop right there. But isn't that true? We have a sinful tendency to assess one another in a way... respect or pulls back from honor, pulls back from respect, assesses in a negative way based upon....

And about every other human being is the factor that...

Re-starting, rebooting earth and life after man has made a tremendous mess of it and he's giving them these instructions about how they're going to live and have dominion over life, and he says this about man, "Whoso shedeth man's blood." So murder, right? "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." Okay? There's capital punishment there, right? "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man," so you go take that man who has shed blood and you shed his blood. Well, why is that? Is that just a control crime? No. Is it to keep society working in a functional way? No. I mean, it has that effect, but it's not the primary reason. What is the primary reason? What gives human dignity? "For in the image of God made he him." Why was that original murder so devastating? Why was it such a travesty? Why was it so wrong? Because he was made in the image of God. So instead of taking his life, he was worthy of honor, worthy of respect just by simply being a human.

Friends, this is not just conversation, this is how we view life, isn't it? Maybe it's how you view yourself. Maybe you're getting older today and you know that you don't have your fastball anymore, and so it sort of makes you shrink away from conversation with young people at church because you know, "I don't have anything to give. I don't even understand what's happening out here right now. I don't even know how to use my phone. And so I'm just going to kind of pull away." And maybe from the other vantage point, as I said earlier, maybe you're a young person and you see this person kind of walking slow into church and you go, "That just makes me uncomfortable."

What gives dignity? Athleticism? Intellect? Wealth? Status? Power? Color of skin? You think back through how society has dealt with different kinds of people through time, and it all comes back to this point right here, doesn't it? What about things that seem to make sense? You know, we could save some money. You know, our economy is in tatters. We could save a lot of money if we would stop trying to let these old people keep on living. I don't want to become political, but you heard out of the voice of a candidate this last week that the issues of inflation and gas prices and abortion are married. Here's what she said. She said these are married issues, these are issues that are on the same par, that people would not be worrying so much about high prices if they didn't have these children that they didn't want. This is a candidate who is speaking this thinking it's going to help her be elected, and maybe it will. I don't know, but friends that runs right in the face of what God said in Genesis 1:26 and 27. You're telling me that the solution to people worries about inflation is to allow people to do what they want to do with human life? May God help us, friends. May God help us.

Birth defects. What does a Down Syndrome person have to add? We have to care for them. We have to, their development is slowed. They might make us uncomfortable. I don't know how to talk to them, how to play with them. They can't run as fast as me. They can't play, they can't stay in the game the way I stay. Friends, again, dignity, worth, respect comes from every single one of us being made in the image of God. Do you think that your intellect approximates God's and a Down syndrome child's is less? Are you kidding me? Do you think too highly of yourself? Right? Friends, again, this is not

hypothetical. There are countries who want to just get rid of the idea of having any birth defects by just moving them out of the gene pool.

"Made in the image of God, male and female, created he them." I'm going to leave that alone now. We can talk about homeless. We can talk about the homeless. We can talk about immigrants. But a lot of things worth dignity comes from being made in the image of God. Now secondly, here's the other big implication, dignity and then responsibility. Have you ever said to your son, "Son, you're not an animal"? Maybe at the dinner table or maybe looking at his room. And it's true, animals act according to one main driver. Nature. Animals lack the ability to love in the way and have rational abilities the way that we do. So since we've been given this rational nature that is in the image of God, hear this, thank God your dignity but your responsibility just went up by infinite an number over the animals. This is why we say you can and you must control your impulses. Well, there is the impulse to eat. Or the sexual drive. Or your anger. Or your whatever it is. There's a higher calling to you and to me because you have been made in the image of God.

Now really quickly three sort of off-shoots from this, that image that directly images God. 1. Ethically. Ethics. Morals. God is a moral being, is he not? It is God that said, "And it was good, and it was good. God saw that it was good and it was good." God's a moral being. God has authority over what is right and what is wrong. God has an opinion, and more than opinion he declaratively says what is right and what is wrong. God's a moral being and so since God is a moral being, you also are a moral or immoral being, but you're not an amoral being, okay? You may be immoral but immoral just responds to an expectation of morality. Amoral means you're outside of the box of morality and you're not because you're made in the image of God.

So for example, a couple of quick things. What we do, the things that we do every day is measured and mandated by who God is. Think about that. It's not just what will be good for family unity. You are measured by something higher than that. You're being measured by who God is.

A couple of examples. 1 Peter 1, "Be ye holy," why, "for I am holy." Do you see the difference? Be ye holy is the good thing to do. No, be ye holy because you're made in the image of God and I am holy.

1 John 4:7-8. Brothers we should love one another. 1 John 4:8, "for God is," what? "Love." Why should we love? Why are human beings called to be loving beings? Because they're made in the image of God and God is, that's who he is, he's love. And we could keep going through a lot of different ethical things, moral things in scripture, right and wrong, and it's directed to you because of who you are in relation to God, okay? So ethics.

2. Relationships. Relationships. God is relational. He pulls this into this verse, "Let us make man." Who is the "us"? It's not the angels, it's the Godhead. Where Jesus would say in John 17, "Father, the love that you had for me before the world was, I want them to see



it, the glory we experienced before the world." There is this harmony, this love, this beautiful relationship in the Godhead and guess what? You and I are made in the image of God, so since God is relational, it's not am I good relater, you are relational, you are a relational being, you are a social being.

Now, of course, we have different personalities, there are some that are more introverted, some more extroverted, but you're not a-relational, okay? You are relational just by being who you are so God calls you to live in relationship. We are relational, first of all to who? To God, right? Our first relationship, the first one is to God. You're made in the image of God. You can't get out of a relationship to God. It's just there.

Then we are relational to man, and so God speaks about this. Here's an example, Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." Why? Why? Because, first of all, your relationship to God, "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." So we are relating to one another in kindness and forgiveness because we're first of all relating to God as God for Christ's sake. Now that's, of course, because of redemption, but it's also true just in creation. "Do not shed man's blood because you're made in the image of God." Okay?

3. So three things, ethics, in terms of responsibility, ethics, relationships, and then pursuits, what we do. Our activity. So who we are as moral beings, how we relate and then what we pursue, what we do. We'll talk more about this later. We're talking about work right now, not just career but work. We all are workers whether you have a job title, whether you are employed or not, that matters not, you are a worker. What I mean is you wake up in the morning and do something. Okay? It might not be a lot but everybody wakes up in the morning and does something. God is an active God. He's an active being. He's a creative being, and so we also are active and creative beings.

We'll hear about this a lot more later, but we are called to have dominion over the earth, right? We're called to fill the earth. We're called to subdue the earth. We're called to cultivate and care for and protect the earth. I'm going to mention some of that and the message on the environment.

But you're a relational being. In other words, friends, you don't have the autonomy to wake up and say, "I'm going to do whatever I'm going to do." You can do that and we have done that, I have done it many times, but the reality is I can't do that disconnected from my image bearing. In other words, God is standing over this, so what I actually do is not just for myself, but what I actually do is in relation to God. I'm either imaging God or I'm not imaging God, right?

Okay, that's what it means. Now let's think through this very quickly and we'll close here in just a few minutes. What a thought, I am made in the image of God. I hope that just fuels into your heart both humility and purpose. I hope that it fuels into your heart's dignity both for yourself and for others. Of course, I'm not about self-esteem. We know that can be way, way, way bastardized. But friends, we need to esteem ourselves for who we are. Satan is the accuser of the brethren. Satan would love to tell you that you are

nothing, that you are worthless, that you've wasted time, that you have misused your time and that there is just no point. Friends, let me speak to you from God in Genesis 1: you are made in the image of God, so you are bearing the image of the Creator. There is a great dignity, a great worth, a great respect into every single person under my hearing, and every single person on the globe. But the fall, right? But Adam and Eve ate the fruit and we know that when they ate the fruit, something dramatically changed. So here's just two thoughts. One of them is this: the likeness, in one sense, survived the fall. Don't forget that. Yes, it's a tragedy beyond what we can even describe but you, yes, in your fallen state, you still bear the image of God, okay?

And we see this in different ways. This may sound kind of strange, but I see it in prison life. It's fascinating to me to see how industrious and what ingenuity people who spend long, long, long years in prison can do. Now it may not be for good but some of them, weapons that you see that are created out of things that I would never think of, are in some way a demonstration that the image of God to have dominion and subdue and create are still there. Now that's on the extreme end of the spectrum, right? But it's there. It's there.

Human society is, the fact that humans can live together in society. You say, "Oh, our society is broken." It's breaking but it's not broken. Friends, we still have an expectation that when we pull up to the red light, most likely people are going to stop. Now we're going to look both ways, but you all drove here today. You drove here because you expect that you're going to be safe from getting here. Am I not right? You may be a little bit less comfortable by going to the grocery store, you might go at a certain time, but you still eat, you still engage in society? Why? Because there is a retaining of the image of God that is still there as people know that they're relating something that's bigger than them and each other. There's a sense of ethics, of morality. It's still there. It may be hidden, it may be shredded, but it's still there. There is still kindness. There is still compassion. That is still there. Praise the Lord for that.

That should give us hope. Friends, the people that you're frustrated with, need the gospel of Jesus Christ and they need the change that can only come through the Holy Spirit, but do not become so jaded in you're thinking that you have dismissed people. I mean the homeless man who walks up and down the street. I mean the man, I mean the drug addicted person. I mean the person on the other side of the boulevard. Do not dismiss people. Please don't dismiss people who are made in the image of God.

But spiritually, the likeness has been lost. Lost, gone, because God is lost from our mind. That's what Romans 3 says, right? God is lost from the mind. I don't mean there's not an awareness of God, but as far as being a fear of God, a respect of God, the dignity of God is lost from their mind. Man demands dignity, he demands respect, he demands honor, but the honor for God is lost. And that won't work, friend, because man was not made with his own honor, his honor comes from being made in the image of God.

So all this it's no wonder that our society is degrading because man is seeking to honor himself divorced from honoring God. It can't happen. It can't happen. You cannot

recreate self. You cannot reimagine self in your own image according to your own imagination and come up with something that is lasting or that is satisfying. I'm not just talking about the transgender movement, but it's part of it, right? You cannot take God out of the picture, but man has attempted to take God out of the picture and so there is this degradation and then there is this coming judgment.

But the gospel, here's the gospel. Hebrews 1, "God, who at sundry times spoke unto the fathers in different ways by the prophets, hath now spoken by his Son." Let me just turn there, "by his Son, whom he hath made the heir of all things." Listen to this, "Who," this is Jesus, "Who being the brightness of his glory," and here's the passage, here's the phrase, "and the express image of his person." That word "image" is a little bit different than the word "image" in Genesis 1. That word "image" just this one, it's sort of like it is a form, a shape, a mold. This is different. This is the express image. The idea here is that God, that Christ is both distinct from God and he is exactly God. He is the imprint, the exact, the express imprint of God, so not just an image bearer who could have the image marred by falling into sin, but Christ, he is the stamp, he is the engraving, that's where the word comes from, he is engraving, he is the engraving of God, the express. Image of God, the exact imprint of a substance.

And what's the proof for that? Talked about three things, didn't we? Ethics. Relationships. And purpose, what you do. Think about Christ for a minute and Hebrews 1 talks through this. In terms of ethics, look at Jesus. He, it says, loved righteousness and he hated iniquity. In terms of relationships, look at Jesus in this passage, who, when he had by himself purged our sins. The question is why? Why? Why did Jesus by himself purge our sins, especially when you know what it took to by himself purge our sins? To by himself purge our sense meant that he would bear what deserves an eternal weight of God's wrath poured out, he would bear in one moment on the cross on himself. So he would bear the breaking of his relationship with God the Father, the fellowship of that. He would bear the pouring out of this cauldron of wrath from God on his own body for sins he had never ever, ever done. Not guilty for. Why would he do this? Because number 1, his relationship with the Father was perfect, "I come to do thy will, O God." It would make his Father happy for him to bear this wrath. And secondly, for his great love for you, image bearer. Oh friend, look at Jesus. He is the express image of God. Perfect in ethics, perfect in relationship and then perfect in his pursuits. Listen to description. Okay, so he's by himself purging our sins. He is creating all things, making all worlds. He is upholding or sustaining all things by the word of his power. Do you think Christ is a very good example of someone who works with purpose? He creates all things. He holds all things up. He purges all things. And he sits and reigns over all things.

Now friends, look at Jesus, the express image of God. Jesus does this so that your sins would be purged, and that you might be brought to God. This is the gospel. Friends, the image of God is a glorious thing, but the marring of the image of God is a devastating thing and the only hope to be brought back into the image of God is through the express image of God Jesus Christ himself. And here's the promise. Here's the promise, the promise is that this is exactly the work that Jesus is doing in everyone who's been brought to faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Spirit. He is, we say these passages so often I'm

afraid that we lose their power, he is conforming us into the image of his dear Son. And that may seem almost foreign because you know your sinfulness. I want to promise you that's true that is happening.

Have you ever, I love to watch videos, have you ever seen these videos of, you know, they have these new amazing hearing contraptions now and these videos of them putting these contraptions on the on the backs of the heads of these little toddlers who have never heard anything before? Just go spend an afternoon on YouTube watching that. It's a great exercise. You'll be tearing up and it's amazing. They've never heard anything before and then they hear sound for the first time. And sometimes they cry. They scream, right? They've never heard sound before. It' is completely foreign to them. But just a little while and they're hearing their mother's voice for the first time and they begin to smile and they laugh and they begin to wonder and they're being brought towards their mother for somehow they just recognize, "This is sound. This is my momma's voice."

That's sort of like what's happening in you right now, friend. You're being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it feels so foreign, doesn't it, and you scream. You're not there yet. This is exactly what God is doing in his people, conforming them, changing them, molding them into the image of Jesus.

And so we just have like four sentences of application. Would you make owning your identity a daily thing. Maybe put it on a piece of note on your refrigerator, "I am made in the image of God. I have dignity and so does my husband. I have dignity and I have a great responsibility today." Okay? Three more things. Would you take a serious assessment of your personal ethics in light of being made in the image of God. Next, would you take a personal assessment of your relationships in light of being made in the image of God. And then lastly, would you make a personal assessment of your pursuits, that's what you do in light of being made in the image of God. Friend, there is no greater honor upon this earth than number 1, being made in his image, but number 2, being remade in the image of his Son. How we should be people who are hopeful. Yes, we're sinners.

Maybe I'll close this way. We like to hide our brokenness, but we can't hide the brokenness. I think of o Joni Earickson Tada. Are you familiar with her? She can't hide her brokenness, can she? It's displayed right there in front of everybody. She's been a paraplegic for 50 years. I saw Joni speak a couple weeks ago at a conference and I told some of you guys this other day, and it wasn't a sermon but she talked about this Japanese art form called. Kitsune, I think is how you say it. Kitsune. It's an art that deals with pottery. So you might think of a bowl. Go Google this later this afternoon. A bowl and a bowl breaks. By the way, the Bible says that we have received this treasure in earthen vessels. We're like that, aren't we? We're like pottery. Just kind of broken breakable pottery. Now when something breaks in our life we don't want anybody to see the brokenness, do we? But this kitsune is different. This kitsune is a philosophy actually that treats the breakage and treats the repair, so both the breakage and the repair, treats them as part of the history of the object, okay? So it's not something to disguise but something to tell a story.

So the way this art works is that there's a lacquer and it's dusted with gold, and that lacquer is used to repair the object, the bowl, but not like glue that is hidden, right? It's gold. So the story of the break is told by the gold pattern, the pattern of the gold that makes its way across the cracks and the repair. And here's the thing, I've looked at a few of these vessels, the vessels are far more beautiful with the gold who tells a story than they ever were just nondescript as just vessels. But with this gold line telling this story, far more beautiful than ever it was.

That's true of Joni's life. Can you not see that? Here's a woman who loses her ability to walk when she's 17-18 years old which God then used to pull her out of her bitterness and to tell this story that's not divorced but it's a part, it's a vital part of her ability to bring glory to God. But friend, you and I are no different than Joni. You're breaking may not be physical but most likely it's spiritual. Broken relationships. Broken personality. Broken this broken that. And so often we treat these things as if they did not exist or as if they are something to disguise and hide, say, "No, yeah, it's all good." Now my toe is falling off, but I'm good. Is that not true? But we who have been made in the image of God lost the functional part of that but in Jesus there's a story being told that is better than gold. It's the work of Jesus himself to put us back together again and he's promised to do that. And when we're put back together again, the story is going to be the glory. May God bless you is my prayer.

Is there a hymn, Brother Logan? Do you have a hymn we can sing?