

29TH NOVEMBER 2020

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

“Christ bequeaths to us His manger from which to learn how God came down to man; and His cross to teach us how we may go up to God. May we all discover Christ in the Scriptures today and know His transforming power..” (C. H. Spurgeon)

PSALM 72: 17 - 19

His name for ever shall endure;
last like the sun it shall:
Men shall be blessed in him, and blessed
all nations shall him call.

Now blessèd be the Lord our God,
the God of Israel,
For he alone doth wondrous works,
in glory that excel.

And blessèd be his glorious name
to all eternity:
The whole earth let his glory fill.
Amen, so let it be.

PRAYER

Father, we pray this morning that You would use the wonder of Your word to open our eyes again to this principle that we are saved by faith in Christ alone and not by our works, a principle that lasts throughout the whole of the Christian life, that we live by the same kind of faith that looks away from ourselves and looks to Christ. Help us to worship in spirit and in truth we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*



SCRIPTURE READINGS

GENESIS 1: 20 - 26 (NKJV)

20 Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens."

21 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

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

23 So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

HEBREWS 2: 6 - 9 (NKJV)

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?"

7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honour and set him over the works of Your hands.

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

SERMON



It is mankind's special relationship to God that shapes our identity. We will consider the meaning of the image of God more fully next week but viewing man among the "living creatures," we can note man's supremacy as the climax of God's creation. Man's special status is seen in God's deliberation prior to his making: *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image'" (Gen. 1:26).*

Well, we should take a moment to note the question which is raised here about who is the "us" to whom God is speaking. Earlier generations of Christians assumed that this was an occasion where the Trinity is seen in the Old Testament: Therefore, the "us" is the Son and the Spirit together with the Creator Father. So, God the Father is addressing His fellow persons in the Trinity. After all, it is only they together, as "us," who could create in the "image of God" (Gen. 1:27).

In Genesis 1:2, we met the Spirit of God hovering over the waters, and the New Testament identifies the Word of God in Genesis 1:3 as God the Son (Jn. 1:1-2). It seems best, then, to see the Creator Father addressing the Creator Spirit and the Creator Son, deliberating on the climactic moment in all creation, the creation of man in God's image. G. C. Aalders writes: "this passage, standing by itself, would not constitute a clear proof of the Trinity. . . . But what is clearly indicated here is that God, in His unity, has a certain plurality." The Trinity may not be proved by this verse, but it is the Bible's explanation for God saying, *"Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26).*

It is by virtue of his special creation in the image of God that man rises above the other living creatures. It's worth noticing here that while the other creatures are created 'according to their kinds' (Gen. 1:21, 24, 25), humanity is made 'in the image of God.' Being made in God's image establishes humanity's role on earth and facilitates communication with God. This understanding grounds the special dignity of human beings. Men and women do not claim their value on the basis of egotistic arrogance, but rather by God's design in our creation. It is because of this that God will later express horror at the taking of human life (Gen. 9:5-6).

Because this teaching grounds our human identity in God, Francis Schaeffer wrote that for contemporary mankind "this phrase, the image of God, is as important as anything in Scripture." He explains, "In his own naturalistic theories, . . . with an evolutionary concept of a mechanical, chance parade from the atom to man, man has lost his unique identity. As he looks out upon the world, as he faces the machine, he cannot tell himself from what he faces. He cannot distinguish himself from other things." How important it is, then, for the Christian to see his and her identity as grounded in God and tell the despairing world that we were made in God's image, with a dignity and value established by our origin. In Psalm 8, King David wrote a short poetic commentary on Moses' account of man's creation. The psalm begins and ends with praise to God: *"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:1, 9).*

In between, David reflects on the order of the created realm. He notes that God made man *"a little lower than the heavenly beings," but also gave "him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea" (Ps. 8:5-8).* In other words, we stand below God and above the lower creatures. As Genesis 1 teaches, we are made from the earth like the other living creatures, but we are made in the image of God. This observation raises a question that is vitally important in our time. If mankind is made below God and above the animals, in which direction are we to look?

Are we to look down and think of ourselves as a slightly superior kind of animal or are we to look up and think of ourselves as the image-bearers of God on earth? The answer is given in David's statement that man was made *"a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour" (Gen. 8:5).*

In other words, we live in the world according to God's will and standards and exercise His rule on the earth. Psalm 8 agrees by Genesis 1 in identifying us as creatures who therefore must bow in humility before God: *"what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"* David mused with our calling to exercise dominion on the earth on God's behalf.



It tells us that as those who bear the image of God, we are to have our faces and our hearts directed upward to God: in joy, in obedience, and in worshipful awe of the Creator who placed his own image upon us. A later interpreter of Psalm 8, and therefore of Genesis 1:26, is Hebrews 2:6-9 which we read earlier, which not only quotes Psalm 8 but takes notice of how much our dominion has gone awry.

Our sin has made a ruin not only of the world but of our own lives, alienating us from God and placing us under his wrath. The writer of Hebrews, however, adds the solution: *But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, . . . by the grace of God (Heb. 2:9).* Perhaps the reason so many people refuse to look upward today is because they realise how our sin has failed God and earned His displeasure. The answer to this is Jesus Christ. Trusting Him, and through repentance and faith we may look up to God again, having been forgiven of our sins through Christ's death. It is only then that we can humbly embrace our biblical status above the creatures and bear God's image without falling into arrogance or pride. Jesus is God the Son who became man that He might restore God's image in humanity. The God who created all things and created man to bear His image does not intend to fail in His purpose.

For this, Jesus came and exercised a triumphant dominion, overcoming the guilt and power of sin through His conquering atonement on the cross. Now, enthroned in an eternal and universal dominion, incarnate as both God and man, and crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of His death, Jesus can restore us to God and to our original calling. Through faith in Jesus, we will be placed not only in our rightful place of dominion above the creatures, but according to God's Word we will be enthroned with Christ in God's presence, bearing God's glorious image and praising God's wonderful name not only on earth but in heaven forever.

If we will trust in him whom God has sent for us, God will crown us again with "glory and honour" (Ps. 8:5). Jesus promises to those who call on His name: "I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

HYMN

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

The Lord hath promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

PRAYER

Gracious God,
our hearts praise you for the wonder
of your love in Jesus.
He is heaven's darling, but is to us
the incarnate, despised, rejected,
crucified sin-bearer;
O Father, we adore you for your great love
in the gift of Jesus,
O Jesus, we bless you for resigning your life for ours,
O Holy Spirit, we thank you for revealing to us
this mystery.
May we never give you rest until Christ is
The pulse of our heart;
The spokesman of our lips,
The lamp of our feet.
Accept Christ's worthiness for our unworthiness,
His sinlessness for our transgressions,
His meekness for our pride,
His fulness for our emptiness,
His glory for our shame,
His death for our life,
In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

(Prayer from 'A collection of puritan prayers')



WORSHIP UPDATE

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.

Services have re-started in the Church in Conon Bridge on a trial basis. Depending on demand there will be two Sunday services, at 11am and 12.15pm. The services will run initially on a trial basis, and seating is limited to comply with guidelines. To attend you must contact the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, by Friday at 5pm prior to the service to book a place.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking or email the Session Clerk at

SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

Martin McLauchlan, Session Clerk

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

We are planning weekly meetings until 16th December at 9.45am each Wednesday. If anyone wants to join in the Zoom meetings please email: jintys@btinternet.com so that an invitation to join will be sent.