

CREATED AND RECREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

- A. Introduction: For a number of weeks we've been talking about how peace of mind comes to us through God's Word. The Word of God (the Bible) gives us peace of mind by providing information that helps us deal with the anxious thoughts and disquieting emotions all of us experience.
1. Recently we've focused on the peace of mind that comes from knowing our created purpose, along with what God has made us to be and is making us to be through and because of Jesus' death and resurrection.
    - a. God created men and women to become His holy, righteous sons and daughters and live in loving relationship with Him in the home He made for us—this beautiful world. But sin disqualified humanity from our created purpose and damaged the family home. Eph 1:4-5; Isa 45:18; Rom 5:12
    - b. Through the Cross of Christ, God opened the way for human beings to be restored to our created purpose. At the Cross, Jesus paid the price we owed for our sin.
      1. The punishment due to us for our sin went to Jesus (Isa 53:6). When we believe on Him (acknowledge Jesus as Savior and Lord), the effects of His sacrifice are applied to us.
      2. The blood of Christ so thoroughly cleanses us from the guilt of sin that God can indwell us by His Spirit and life and make us literal sons and daughters. John 1:12-13; I John 5:1
        - A. When a person believes on Jesus, eternal life fills his inner being (his spirit). Eternal life is the uncreated life in God Himself. The entrance of God's life into our inner being is referred to as new birth or regeneration. John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5
        - B. This new birth produces a fundamental change in our nature. And, it is the beginning of a process of transformation that will ultimately restore every part of our being to what God always intended us to be—holy, righteous sons and daughters who are fully pleasing to Him in every thought, word, attitude, and action.
  2. Christianity is more than a moral code or a set of beliefs, although it has both. Christianity is a living, organic union with the life and spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ.
    - a. The New Testament uses three word pictures to illustrate our relationship to Jesus once we believe on Him. All convey union and shared life—vine and branch (John 15:5), head and body (Eph 1:22-23), husband and wife (Eph 5:31-32).
    - b. Paul the apostle was commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to preach a previously unrevealed aspect of God's plan for man—union with Christ through shared life: For this revelation means nothing less than—Christ in union with you, your hope of glory (Col 1:27, 20<sup>th</sup> Cent).
      1. Last week we looked at an epistle (letter) written by Paul to a group of believers who lived in the city of Ephesus (modern-day Turkey). In this letter Paul systematically laid out what we are because of our union with Christ and how we should live in light of this union.
      2. As part of his instructions on how to live, Paul directed Christians to put off the old man and put on the new man (Eph 4:22-24). In this lesson we're going to talk more about what Paul meant by the terms old man and the new man and what it means to put one off and the other on.
- B. Gen 1:26—To appreciate what the old man is we must go back to the beginning when God created man. God made man in His image and likeness.
1. Before we examine this passage, I need to make a brief comment. The text says: Let us make man in our image. Who was God talking to? A full discussion of this passage would take an entire lesson and isn't necessary to make the point for tonight's lesson.
    - a. Here's the point for this lesson. God made man as much like Himself as a creature can be like His Creator so that sonship and mutual relationship is possible. But there is more to it.
      1. The words image and likeness have basically the same meaning in the original language (Hebrew): resemblance, pattern, form. In Hebrew, the word in (make man *in* our image) has

the idea of *as*. It's the same in English where the word has several meanings depending on how we use it (in the room denotes location; broke it in pieces denotes result of an action).

2. If I say I work in finances, I mean that I work as a banker or a loan officer or a teller. That's the idea in Gen 1:26. Humans were created in or as God's image to image Him be His imagers.
  - b. The next part of Gen 1:26 this clear. God gave man dominion over His creation. We were meant to be God's under rulers on earth—His representatives (His imagers)—in this material realm.
    1. Mankind (men and women) were created by God for a lofty position. Note what King David of Israel wrote about mankind's created purpose in Ps 8:3-5.
    2. God made man a litter lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor. The Hebrew word translated angels is *elohim*, a frequent name for God in the Old Testament.
2. If this seems shocking, remember what we covered a few weeks ago. Not only did Jesus open the way for men and women to become sons and daughters of God through the Cross, in the years leading up to His death and resurrection, Jesus demonstrated what sons and daughters of God look like.
  - a. Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God (John 1:1; John 1:14). He became man so that He could die (Heb 2:9; 14-15). While on earth, Jesus didn't live as God. He lived as a man in dependence on God as His Father. He did what He did by the life and power of His Father in Him.
    1. Jesus was able to say: If you've seen me, you've seen the Father because I do His works and speak His words by His power in me. In other words, Jesus imaged the Father. John 14:9-10
    2. Jesus, in His humanity, is the pattern for God's family: Rom 8:29—For those whom He (God) foreknew—of whom He was aware and loved beforehand—He also destined from the beginning (foreordaining them) to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness] (Amp).
  - b. Let me be clear. Man is not God. Man was created in the likeness of God to be an imager. An image is a reproduction or pattern that resembles a person of thing. Only Jesus is the exact likeness of God because He is God become man (Heb 1:3). We are created copies of God's likeness.
3. The problem is that God's imagers have been corrupted by sin and no longer accurately image God. When Adam, the first man, sinned his act of disobedience affected the entire race resident in him.
  - a. Beings made in the image of God became sinners by nature. This change showed up in the first generation born by natural processes, when the first born son (Cain) murdered the second born son (Abel) and lied to God about it. Rom 5:19; Gen 4:1-9
  - b. Every generation since Adam has manifested this corrupted inward condition through sinful actions. Paul wrote that men apart from Christ are by nature the children of wrath. Eph 2:3
    1. Nature means lineal descent. Children stress the fact of birth. Man's problem is more than what he does—it's what he is by nature, by virtue of birth into a fallen race. Men do what they do because of what they are.
    2. Eph 2:3—The corruption that was in us from birth was expressed through the deeds and desires of our self-life. We lived by whatever natural cravings and thoughts our minds dictated, living as rebellious children subject to God's wrath like everyone else (TPT).
4. Therefore we are lost to our created purpose, our destiny as sons and daughters of God. Because of sin, not only are we guilty of sin before a holy God, our nature is corrupted.
  - a. Salvation is about restoring men and women to what God created and intended us to be so that His plan for a family is realized. God cannot overlook men's sins and still remain true to His own holy, righteous nature. Sin must be punished.
    1. At the Cross Jesus took our place and was punished for us as us. He satisfied justice on our behalf and when we acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord, God can justify us or declare us not guilty. Through the Cross we are made righteous or right with God. Rom 5:1
    2. Because we are no longer guilty of sin, God can indwell us by His life and Spirit and begin the

process of restoring us to our created purpose as sons and daughters who accurately image Him—men and women who are righteous and right in every part of our being.

5. We are saved from sin and its effects and restored to our created purpose, not by anything we've done, but by God's grace demonstrated through Jesus. Because of the Cross, which opened the way for new birth, we are God's workmanship created anew through union with Christ Jesus. Eph 2:8-10.
  - a. Just as God created Adam, He now recreates men and women through the new birth. Eph 2:10—For he has made us, creating us through our union with Christ Jesus for the life of goodness which God has predestined us to live (Goodspeed).
  - b. I Cor 15:45-47—Jesus is called the Last Adam and the Second Man. Jesus went to the Cross as the Last Adam (the representative of the entire fallen race). He arose as the Second Man, the head of a new race of men like Himself in His humanity, a race of new creatures (creations, II Cor 5:17).
  
- C. Eph 4:22-24—Back to Paul's instruction to put off the old man and put on the new man. Paul spent the first half of this epistle telling believers what God has made them (us) to be through their (our) union with Christ. Now he instructs them on how to live like sons and daughters of God.
  1. Eph 4:1—In light of what God has done for us through Jesus, live lives that accurately reflect the inward changes because you are born of God. That's the context for Paul's words about the old and new man.
    - a. Eph 4:22—The term old man has a twofold meaning: what humans are by nature through our first birth into a fallen race; it also refers to the behavior which reflects (demonstrates) that nature.
      1. Paul has already made it clear that the old man (nature) comes to an end (or is put off) when our inner being is flooded with eternal life and we are born of God.
      2. Paul told the Ephesians: You were by nature children of wrath, but now you are created anew through union with Christ. Eph 2:1-10. (You were, but now you are is a theme in his epistles.)
    - b. Then Paul makes some very direct statement about behavior. Eph 4:17-21—"Live no longer as the ungodly do...since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus", put off the old man and put on the new. His point: stop acting like what you aren't and start acting like what you are.
  2. Eph 4:24—The new man is what we are because of our second birth. We are new because we have something in us that was not in us before—the life and Spirit of Almighty God. And the entrance of that life has transformed my nature.
    - a. Note, the new man is created after God (as opposed to by God). The new man has been created (recreated) in God's image.
    - b. Remember, the purpose of salvation is to restore men and women to our created purpose as sons and daughter who live in loving relationship with Him—sons and daughters who are imagers and accurately express their Father's glory, excellence, and beauty, just as Jesus (in His humanity did).
      1. Eph 4:24—You must display a new nature because you are a new person created in God's likeness—righteous, holy, and true (NLT); And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image (Godlike) in true righteousness and holiness (Amp).
      2. Through new birth (regeneration) God has put something of Himself in us, something of His likeness in us. Righteousness and holiness are characteristics of the new life in us. Righteousness is rightness and holiness is purity of nature and separation from evil.
    - c. The phrase true holiness (v24) in literally holiness of truth. Righteousness and holiness are produced by truth. Truth is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is revealed in and through the Truth, God's written Word, the Bible. John 14:6; John 17:17
      1. When we believed the truth that Jesus is God and that He died for our sins, we were born again and united to the life in Jesus.
      2. Truth (Jesus, the Living Word and the written Word) are now to govern our lives as we live as

sons and daughters of God as we learn to take on outwardly the effects of the inward changes.

3. We've made the point in previous lessons that the new birth does not directly affect our mind and emotions (our soul) or our physical body.
  - a. That is why Paul made another statement in between urging Christians to put off the old man and put on the new man, or take on outwardly the effects of the inward changes: Be made new in your mind. Eph 4:23—And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind—having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude (Amp). The word translated renewed means to renovate.
  - b. The way we think needs to be renovated. We were born with a nature contrary to God, grew up in a world contrary to God and were influenced by the spiritual darkness in this world. Consequently, we don't automatically know right from wrong. We don't know what righteous living looks like.
  - c. Regular, systematic Bible reading (especially the New Testament) will help change your thinking and your view of reality.
    1. II Tim 3:16—Every Scripture is God-breathed—given by His inspiration—and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, and for training in righteousness [that is, in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose and action] (Amp).
    2. God's Word will help you see things (yourself, life, others) the way God sees them and will help you know what is right and wrong, righteous and unrighteous. (For further instruction of how to read the Bible see the lessons from the first part of this year, 2021.)
4. Paul's point in all that he writes is: Stop living like what you were. Get your mind in line with God through His Word. Expect His inward help and strengthening as you grow in the knowledge of what He has made you and is making you to be.

D. Conclusion: We could say more about each point we've made in the lesson. But the purpose of this part of our series is to discuss how knowing your created purpose and what God has made you and is making you to be because of what Jesus has done for us brings peace of mind. Consider these thoughts as we close.

1. I John 3:2—We are finished works in progress, fully God's holy, righteous sons and daughters through new birth. But we aren't fully restored to the pattern for the family (Jesus) in every part of our being.
  - a. God deals with us as sons and daughters (on the basis of the part that is finished) because He knows the process of transformation will be completed (Phil 1:6). God knows a perfect you—the you He had in mind before you or this world existed.
  - b. Rom 5:1—So now since we have been made right in God's sight by faith in God's promises, we can have real peace with him because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. For because of our faith, he has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently look forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be (TLB).
2. Gal 5:16—Paul wrote to Christians that if we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Sincere Christians get frustrated because they seek to experience a walk in the Spirit—whatever that means. Consider this simple definition of what it means to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.
  - a. When you boil it all down, the world flesh refers to our unchanged parts—the parts of our makeup that were not directly affected by the new birth (our mind, emotions, and body).
  - b. God is in you by His life and Spirit because you are born of Him. To walk in the Spirit means to live with the awareness that God is in you—not because you feel or experience something, but because you believe what the Bible says.
3. God is in you by His life and Spirit to restore you to His image in every part of your being. God works in our lives by His grace when we believe what He says. You face life as a son or daughter of God in union with Jesus Christ. Peace of mind comes from knowing and believing this wonderful fact. Lots more next week!