

What We Believe: The Human Condition

Text: Genesis 1.26–27 (page 1); Romans 5.12–21 (page 1120)

Theme: We need union with Jesus in order to be saved from our union with Adam and sin

Introduction — EFCA Statement of Faith helps us understand who we are

Let's read Article #3 together...

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

A truth largely forgotten or misunderstood today is that we are created...

I. IN HIS IMAGE

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

- this tells us two very important truths

1. Man was created with inherent dignity

- sanctity of human life rooted in creation, right from the start
- God created many creatures and He created them good
- but only man was created in God's image
- there is great majesty and wonder to this
- **Psalm 8:3-4** When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
- this dignity is not self-generated, but given to us by God Himself
- when we define what a man or woman is, must do so in relation to this

2. The image of God

- what does this mean?
- something special, for referred to thru/out Scripture
- **Genesis 5:1** This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.
- **Genesis 9:6** "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
- **Ephesians 4:24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
- **Colossians 3:10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

i. reflection

- if nature declares God's glory, how much more man, at the apex of creation?
- able to reason, to think, to seek after truth
- we are moral creatures, able to make decisions based upon right & wrong
- also spiritual creatures, created to worship and pray

ii. relationships

- we were made to be in relationship with God Himself, our Creator
- our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever
- all this comes in our relationship with and to Him
- saw last week how God spoke to man, engaging with him alone in interaction

iii. representatives

• **1 Corinthians 11:7 ...he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.**

- in this context, this image shows that the man represents God's authority
- he is like God's ambassador in a foreign country
- in this position, he has been given dominion, to rule over creation, to keep it

3. Real People

- when Paul spoke to Athenians, addressed this matter
- **Acts 17:26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place**
- God created Adam, saw that he, too, needed a helpmate suitable to him
- thus God created Eve from Adam, thus completing this "man in the image of God"
- this human relationship reflects God's relationship in the Trinity: we are social beings
- this also tells us man and woman are equal in this image, yet different in roles
- but God also created them different: gender was assigned at creation & later, conception
- more to this, but what we see clearly: Adam & Eve were real people
- not metaphor for all humanity, but our progenitors
- and as real person, Adam represents all the rest of us
- human, real, historical, man in God's image, and, as we'll see, also in sin

*Adam was created righteous, but he **could** lose it...and did, which now shows that we are...*

II. SINNERS BY NATURE AND BY CHOICE

- Mark Twain: man is only creature that can blush, and only one that needs to
- we know we are not what we could be or should be: something is off, wrong
- God has created in us a memory of what He did with Adam
- and something in us longs to regain what was lost
- Statement of Faith follows the path of Adam all way to us

1. Tempted

- the tempter appears in garden
- this lets us know it was not in man initially to rebel against God
- outside influence was needed; so along comes devil to seek to destroy God's glory
- pattern also established with this temptation
- still holds today
- doubt God's word: **Did God really say...?**
- attacks God's truthfulness: **"You will not surely die"** (Gen. 3.4)
- then cast doubt upon God's goodness & tempts them to take it for themselves
- **Genesis 3:5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

- **Genesis 3:6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

2. Sin

- God gave a simple command: Do this and live; fail to do this and die
- Scripture is proved correct right from beginning: All sin is lawlessness
- Adam's disobedience to become like God broke not only law of God
- it broke covenant God had made with him in the Garden
- so, Adam sinned: missed the mark, failed to recall God's command, & deliberately rebelled
- as our representative head of humanity, Adam brought sin to each of us
- **Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- even creation succumbed to man's sin
- may this help us never underestimate seriousness of any and all sin

3. Nature & Choice

- important that we see how Scripture tells us of our union with Adam in sin
- important why? So we see how vital is our union with Jesus when we come to trust Him

i. sin nature

- Adam's sin got passed on to his children, sadly
- not simply the individual sin of eating what was forbidden
- but the very nature of sin dwelling in each person passed along
- this sin nature wants what we could not achieve for we were not made for it
- this nature wants us to be like God, to be little gods doing our own thing
- this nature was powerful
- **Genesis 6:5** The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- this nature subjects us to frustration, even as all creation suffers the same
- **Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—
- sin nature abides within from moment conceived; all beginning with Adam
- **Romans 5:19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners...

ii. choice

- since that nature in each of us exists, we also choose to sin
- we are not blank moral slates, but each of us is born with bent toward sin
- it is inescapable and inevitable, showing itself when we each commit act of sin
- this is broad: it comes to every human being, except one: Jesus Christ
- it goes deep, affecting our whole person: thoughts, desires, motives, actions, words

4. Alienated

- grave consequence of this is it leaves us alienated from God
- relationship with God was broken in garden
- **Colossians 1:21** And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,
- now needs repaired, but we cannot and will not do it ourselves

- we are separated from a holy God

5. Wrath

- this separation brings God's wrath upon us
- God's holy righteousness must be satisfied and can only be so thru death
- man's sin was idolatry—to put himself as god
- an infinitely holy God was rejected by a finite and unholy creature
- **Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**
- **Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**
- no amount of positive thinking can save us from this wrath
- no great deed on our part, no huge pile of highest motives or actions
- we are, as Eph 2.3 says, **“by nature children of wrath”**

What we need, God provides, and this provision of deliverance is found in...

III. ONLY JESUS

- we cannot consider our human condition apart from Jesus Christ
- Lord willing, we will see this more in the coming Sundays
- for now, let's focus on what Jesus provides as the second Adam, the perfect Man
 - once Adam & Eve sinned, they were exiled from the Garden
 - when Jesus comes, He fulfills all that they were created to be
 - He revealed God perfectly in His incarnation
 - He lived in perfect relationship with Heavenly Father and fellow man
 - He had perfect dominion over nature & creation
 - He is God's perfect representative
 - **John 14:9 Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.**
 - He came to rescue us, reconcile us and renew our relationship with God

1. Rescued

- man plunged into spiritual death
- helpless to save himself, hopeless to come out from under God's wrath
- we must look to someone other than self to rescue us from this horrible state
- and this is found in Jesus Christ
- **1 Thessalonians 1:10 [it is] Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**
- perfectly equal with God the Father, He came to serve, as Adam failed to do
- where Adam wanted to be like God, Jesus made Himself nothing, humbling self
- Adam disobeyed God's command; Jesus perfectly keeps all, fulfills all righteousness
- Adam was condemned; Jesus was highly exalted
- He alone rescues us by God's grace alone when by faith alone, we trust Him

2. Reconciled

- because the relationship between man and God was broken, we need to be reconciled
- praise God, He gave us His only begotten Son
- **Romans 5:11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**
- look to Him, trust Him believe Him and all His promises

- **2 Corinthians 5:19** :in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

3. Renewed

- thru Jesus Christ, the corrupted image of God in man is renewed
- in fact, we become new creatures
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
- **Ephesians 4:24** [in Christ, we] put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
- Jesus makes hope a solid reality
- **1 John 3:2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Conclusion – hearing much of this probably sounds like bad news

- and you're absolutely right: it is bad news...the worst of news for everyone of us
- left to our own, we are still dead in trespasses and sins, destined for wrath for eternity
- yes, still have some of image of God, but stain, corrupted, faulty, and hopeless
- this is why seriousness of sinful condition demanded nothing less than God's Son
- **Acts 4:12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- **1 Timothy 2:5-6** 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

Carl Sagan once captured problem of man:

- we humans are like a newborn baby left on a doorstep with no note explaining who it is
- but God has given us a note: the Bible
- and in its pages, along with the truth of who we are, He tells us of His Son and His love
- if you look to Him, you are no longer under condemnation
- you are His precious child, Christ's righteousness upon you, for ever and ever