

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
June 10, 2020

"IMAGE BEARERS"

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Genesis 1:26a

We heard Genesis 1 read a couple of Sundays ago, a very long reading as you may recall. It is the account of the creation of all things, the entire universe and everything in it. Once all was ready, on the 6th day, God placed the crown jewel of all His creation into it, and that would be mankind. People are the only creature that God created in His own image so I believe it would be a good thing for us to understand just what that means. John's Gospel states, *"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* (4.24) Since spirits have no physical manifestation being created in God's image does not mean that we look like Him. Jesus only took on human form long after the creation of mankind took place. Being made in the image of God implies that God is present in the physical world in and through us. Our being reflects God's essence and character and we are His representatives within His creation. From the beginning God gives to us alone the gift of a conscience, where He writes His law on our hearts, the desire and ability to know and do the right thing. He gives us the greater gift of being aware of His existence and able to relate to Him. In the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1 & 2) all of this was perfect. Adam and Eve lived in "shalom" with God, that is in the harmony, righteousness, fullness and blessedness as God had intended things to be. Unfortunately, we all know how about how long that lasted. Sin entered the world (Genesis 3) through the willful disobedience of Adam and Eve, and that perfect shalom was broken. The link between heaven and earth was broken as the earth and everything in it became corrupted by evil. The eternal relationship between God and man was also broken and death entered into God's creation for the first time. The spirit of all people from that point forward had died to God making us His enemies. The Good News (Gospel) in all of this is that God was not about to let this be our ultimate destiny. In order to set right all that had gone wrong, to re-establish shalom between God and man, He sent His Son into humanity, taking on a human nature, in the person of Jesus Christ. His perfectly obedient life qualified Him to be able to take on all the sins of the world and die under them to pay the penalty for all people. His death satisfies the wrath of God against sin and sinners, and His resurrection proves that the sacrifice is sufficient to reconcile and restore us to a right relationship with God. In spite of our sins we still carry the image of God in us, but it blurred and corrupted. That's the state of all people whether believers or not. As we are redeemed in Christ by faith in His completed work, we once again become God's ambassadors, His presence in the world through the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. As the Holy Spirit sanctifies us...enables and empowers us to grow in the grace of God and reflect Jesus more and more in our lives...we model His beauty and virtues before those around us. In Christ we also bear the "family name" of God as we live in the world as His children. Gathering in worship we are our character is gradually transformed and we seek to please God more and more. As Christians the image of God will necessarily shine in us and outward from us. Those around us who see that image will be drawn by through the Holy Spirit to *"ask us for the reason for the hope that we have."* (1 Peter 3:15) To which we can then respond, gently and respectfully, *"It's Jesus that is our hope...the eternal life we have in Him!"*