

Introduction: How do you know when you've listened to a good sermon? This is an important question: (For starters) because you're about to hear one and 2) because there is a lot of bad preaching and false teaching that masquerades as the real deal. Though we could make a long list of criteria to define a good sermon, there is one ingredient that stands above all the rest.

Charles Spurgeon, who some call the greatest preacher since the Apostle Paul, told the story of a young man who had the opportunity to preach in front of a very respected minister. Eager to gain his approval, the young man approached the wise and experienced pastor after the service and asked:

"What do you think of my sermon?" He answered: "A very poor sermon indeed," (Please don't be so honest if you feel the same this sermon 😊) Dejected the young replied:

"A poor sermon? It took me a long time to study it." "I'm sure it did."

"Was it my explanation of the text?" "No it was very good."

"Then it must have been my metaphors or arguments." "No, they were good, but it was still a very poor sermon."

"Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it."

"Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text."

So the old man said, "Don't you know young man that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man.

"Ah!" said the old divine "and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. . . I have never yet found a text that had not a road to Christ in it, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it."

Our purpose over the next 12 weeks is to dive into the first five books of the Bible and see how all of the promises, people, events, themes, and stories point us to Christ. They are like roads or threads that run to the person and work of Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples this in the gospels:

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:25-27)

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me . . . For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me." (John 5:39, 46)

The OT properly understood is Christian Scripture. Our goal will be to develop a deeper love for all of Scripture and most importantly the one we should see and savor throughout, Jesus Christ.

FCF: If we miss Jesus as the centerpiece of all Scripture, we will miss the treasure...

To get us started in this series, we will begin where the Bible begins. Open your Bibles to page 1.

“The True & Greater Adam” **Genesis 1-3**

Story of Creation... You should know the first words of the Bible: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” I believe that. God is Creator. He spoke the world into being out of nothing. Everything else is creation. Vv. 3-25 tell us of God’s good work...

Day 1: Light.

Day 2: Heavens

Day 3: Dry land, Oceans, Plants

Day 4: Sun, Moon, Stars

Day 5: Birds & Fish

Day 6 & 7: And before God rested from his work on the seventh day, he created animals & the crown of his creation, people! God declared that everything he made, especially people, was “very good.” (1:31)

Look at verses 26-31

I. God created man in his image to reflect and represent his glory (Genesis 1:1-2:14).

- It is impossible to overstate the importance of the first three chapters of the Bible.
- Here we find the most important and foundational truth about humanity: We are made man in the image of God. We will not understand who we are as individuals, nor will we know how to relate to one another, if we fail to understand the doctrine of the *imago dei*.
- The language found in Genesis 1 for “image” and “likeness” refer to something similar but not identical. We know from the last four weeks, that God is distinct, holy, other than. He is not like us, but we are like him. ☺
- Man was created to glorify God by reflecting and representing him. Let’s break this down.

Man was made to reflect God.

- Just as a mirror reflects the object in front of it, so man reflects what God is like.
- Our highest responsibility and highest privilege is to reflect the God who made us.

In what ways do we reflect the image of God? Here are a few. . .

- Rational: We have the ability to reason, know and synthesize loads of information because we are made in God’s image.
- Relational: God is a relational being. The very nature of God is a triunity. One God eternally existing in three persons. The Father, Son, and Spirit have shared an eternal and perfectly harmonious relationship. We even see a hint of the Trinity in the words: “Let us make man in our image.” We, like God, are gregarious creatures, made for relationship. This is why community groups are such a great idea, because God made us for community.
- Moral: Humanity carries an innate sense of right and wrong because God created us with this thing we call a conscience. That makes us all accountable before God.

Man was made to represent God.

- God delegated great responsibility & authority to Adam and Eve in the Garden. They were given the privilege of carrying out God’s desires and purposes in the world he made.
- We see this in our work lives. We work and desire work because we are made in the image of the God who works. The Bible sets forth a theology of your 9-5 on the very first page.
- Wherever we go, like ambassadors to a foreign nation, we are to represent our Maker in all things.

Let me give you one huge implication of the *imago dei*? *Every human being has dignity and deserves the utmost love and respect.*

- To injure or demean another human being as an affront to God. This why the Proverbs say whoever oppresses or mocks the poor, insult their Maker (14:31; 17:5).
- We must apply this comprehensively. The Poor. The elderly. The Unborn. Every ethnicity. We are a church for all people because all people are masterpieces designed by God.
- Look around. Every person you see was made in the image of God, full of dignity and worth!
- What if you stop viewing your boss, your neighbor, your roommate as a nuisance and start viewing them as someone made in the image of God.
- What if, in our relationships with the opposite sex, we stopped viewing them as an object for our carnal desires, and starting viewing them as a person made in the image of God.
- What if, in your view of your self, you discovered all the sense of self-worth and self-confidence you'll ever need is bound up in one great truth: you are made in the image of God.
- As **Wayne Grudem** says: **"If we are truly important to God for all eternity, then what greater measure of importance or significance could we want?"**

These first three chapters of Genesis provide us a framework for understanding all of Scripture: Adam and Eve were God's people, dwelling in God's place, the garden, and living under God's gracious rule, experiencing his good blessing! *God's People in God's place living under God's rule and blessing.*

This begins the **Metanarrative of Scripture** (Story over all the stories) **Creation: God made man in his image to reflect and represent his glory.**

T: This should have greatly encouraged Adam and moved him to honor God at all costs. But here's the deal: Adam, though placed in the position of great honor chose to dishonor God, and so have we.

Read 2:15-3:7

II. Though made in God's image, man has radically failed to reflect his glory (Genesis 2:15-3:13).

Story: Look at how Satan, the Father of lies, works in Genesis 3, and pay very careful attention because this is how he continues to work today. He entices them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, strictly forbidden by God.

- He first deceives them by undermining God's command and twisting God's word. (3:1-4) "Did God really say?" This is why we preach through books of the Bible at Redemption Hill. True preachers don't tamper with God's Word, but simply open the Bible and say what God says.
- Second, he deceives them by encouraging them to doubt God's goodness. (3:5) God's withholding something from you. "Because God is good and his word is good, we don't have to look elsewhere." (Chester)
- Finally, he deceives them by making evil look so appealing to our senses and desires. (3:6) What did they desire? To sit in the seat of God. To possess what he possessed and find goodness apart from him.

He works because we have the capacity to sin. If we did not have sinful desires, Satan and the temptation we battle daily would have no appeal. That's why we must take responsibility for our sin.

- But here's what makes matters worse: When we sin, we typically do not take responsibility. Instead we shift the blame to others. Look at Adam . . . in vv. 8-13
- Did you see how God, like a good parent who already knows what's going on, asked him a direct question? "Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" He's caught red-handed! The only appropriate answer is "Yes, I did."
- But look at his answer in verse 11: "*The woman.*" Let's stop right there.

- Number 1. He blames his wife! Men, take ownership. Your house is in disrepair. Own it. Your marriage is not what it out to be. Own it.
- It would be incredible if we could be a church that simply owns our sin. I blew it. I rebelled against God, and *I hate it*. Help me to live my life for God.
- If that wasn't enough, it gets worse. Adam doesn't stop with Eve, he says,
- 2) "The woman *whom you* gave me, she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate."

Ecclesiastes 7:29 has it right: **"See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes." (Ecclesiastes 7:29)**

And these devious schemes lead to severe and tragic consequences!! Sin brings personal shame and cosmic consequences. Worst of all, the brokenness of their sinful hearts led to broken fellowship with God, as the end of the chapter tells us. They were banished from the garden having trampling the glory of God under their feet rather than displaying his glorious image to the world. We call this story "The Fall."

What does it mean for us? We all have inherited his sinful and guilty nature. Look at our statement of faith.

V. The Fall of Man.

God originally created Man in His own image and free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, Adam transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness whereby his descendants inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law. As a result they are under condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors (Gen. 1:26-27; 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3).

We have inherited a corrupt nature, depraved in every possible way.

- Rationally we don't measure up. We don't see the world with clarity, often led astray by misunderstand and deceit. In the language of Romans 1, we "suppress the truth."
- Morally we are a mess. Our sinfulness fails to reflect the pristine character of God's holiness.
- Relationally. Anybody have a life filled with perfect relationships? Selfishness often dominates how we relate to one another. (State of the Union address; Deport Bieber...)

Here's the moral of the story. Though made in God's glorious image, we fail to reflect his glory. Part 2 of the

Metanarrative of Scripture (Story over all the stories)

Fall: Man rebelled against God and his glory, and the image has been distorted ever since.

Though not totally lost, the image of God in us has been disfigured and marred. Like a shattered cell phone screen, the image comes through but we only see it in a broken and distorted way.

T: BUT here's the good news.

III. The image of God can be recovered and restored through the True and Greater Adam (3:14-21).

Laced within these words of great fall and consequences is one verse that resounds with hope and redemption. Genesis 3:15 - - - The seed. This offspring will crush the head of Satan...

Two major confrontations with countless others scattered throughout. . . Jesus vs. Satan in the Wilderness (*Luke 3:38-4:13*)

"If you are the Son of God . . ." Sounds familiar... "Did God really say..."

“You hungry?” He appealed to Christ’s desires.

“You want glory?” [He tempted him to doubt God’s goodness...]

“You really trust God?” He twisted Scripture...

Where Adam failed the test in the Garden through disobedience, Jesus passed the test and became our perfect sacrifice through his sinless life. So much so, that he not only defeated Satan in the wilderness but crushed the head of the serpent when he conquered death and the grave through his work on the cross and in his resurrection for us.

Metanarrative of Scripture (Story over all the stories)

Redemption: Through the work of Christ, the image of God can be progressively recovered to reflect God’s glory.

Let me show you how this works . . .

- When a person comes to faith in Christ, God causes them to be reborn into a whole new life. He deposits a new heart in us. We have a new nature with new desires to live for him. Our new hearts lead us to new ways of thinking and living. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)**
- What happens after God makes us new? He makes us more and more like Jesus. This is what happens for the Christian. Jesus is the perfect picture of human flourishing. Why? Because . . .
 - **“He is the image of the invisible God . . .” (Colossians 1:15)**
 - **“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature . . .” (Hebrews 1:3)**
- To be transformed into the image of Christ then is to be transformed into the image of God. We are growing to be more like him.
 - **“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” (Colossians 3:9-10)**
 - **“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)**
- What does a great Christian look like? Like Jesus! What does a great Church look like? Like Jesus!
- You don’t have to go to seminary to know that! 😊

Jesus is the true & greater Adam who transforms our lives into the likeness of his glorious life.

There is no clearer passage that explains this in the NT than Romans 5:12-21. Turn there (pg. 942) *Read!*

The First Adam vs. The True & Greater Adam

- **Disobedience vs. Obedience**
- **Unrighteous** (morally impure) **vs. Righteous**
- **Condemnation vs. Justification**
- **Reign of Sin – Reign of Grace**
- **Death** (subjected to physical and spiritual death) **vs. Life** (now and eternal; never subjected to death again)

Everyone is born in Adam, but not everyone is reborn through Jesus, the true and greater Adam. So I want to plead with everyone here. . .

The Point: Escape the death we receive through the first Adam by finding life in the true and greater Adam.

If you know you have been disobedient before God and are unrighteous in his sight, then you under the reign of sin, condemnation, and death, BUT through faith in Christ, by looking to him, trusting in his work for you, you can enter into the reign of grace, justification, and life! Embrace him today. Don't let your sin separate you from a holy God, when he holds out to you the FREE gift of life. Receive it.

Jesus, the way, the truth and the life, came to give us life. But it does not stop there. . .

Brace yourself to be blown away. Not only do we find life through Christ, but we will one day perfectly reflect his image again.

“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.” (1 Corinthians 15:49) - - cf. 1 John 3:2

Metanarrative of Scripture (Story over all the stories)

New Creation: Through the work of Christ, the image of God will be completely restored to reflect God's glory.

T: Let me conclude with this:

Conclusion:

- During the last week of Jesus' life, the religious leaders tried to trap him in his words so they could arrest him. One ploy was to get him to speak against the Emperor that they might accuse him of treason against Rome. So they asked him if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Verses 23-25
- **“But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar's.” He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” (Luke 20:23-25)**
- It is important to know who you are, but it is more important to know whose you are! You belong to God. Your life bears the likeness and inscription of God! You exist to reflect more and more of God's image and glory until one day you experience complete transformation in his presence!
- So give your life to God!

Let's Pray.