

An Introduction to a Theology of Worship - Week 5

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Humanity: Dignity and Depravity

Review:

where we've been and where we're going

Creation and Glory: creation is not a veil to God's glory
display of God's transcendence and immanence
Ps. 19:1

Creativity

McDonald's: getting a McThanks.

There is a monotony that voids its meaning: clearly you've said this a million times and it becomes meaningless.

God is constantly saying I love you to us, but it's like the first time, every time.

A monotonous "thanks" voids its meaning: creativity is a necessary virtue and goes hand in hand with authenticity.

Creativity allows the church to communicate such a thing without getting old, etc...

creativity, for us being imperfect, requires trial and error. But we are deathly afraid of making mistakes.

Children are okay with being wrong.

story of a girl drawing a picture of God.

Wrong doesn't equal creativity but if you're not prepared to be wrong, you will never do anything creative

ask a room full of 4 or 5 year olds who's an artist- they'll probably all raise their hands. But by the time we get older, we're so afraid of being wrong, of making mistakes, we've "educated" ourselves out of that aspect of our being.

growing out of creativity

talking about creativity leads us to the image of God, or humanity's dignity:

Humanity: Dignity and Depravity

Rouault - The Old King

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Rouault)
(http://www.artchive.com/artchive/R/roualt/old_king.jpg.html)

Gen 1:26

from Pratt's *Designed for Dignity*:

image of God

Images of kings/rulers common in ANE: original audience would have understood this easily

God made man into His image: we are a royal image: not just *in* the image of God, but we *are* the image of God. Like a potter puts the clay into a vase.

image **of God**

not in the shape of other animals or anything else in all of creation: in His likeness.

For the original audience: only kings could claim to be divine. Moses here is writing that *all* people have this divine image.

the contradiction of humanity in views of Darwinian macroevolution, or also the new atheists (like Hitchens or Sam Harris or Dawkins): We are only products of chemicals and random mutations, yet we need to shed religion because we're in control of our own fate: the improper embrace of divinity and humanity

Rouault's response:
Are we not convicts?
and
we believe ourselves kings.

Miserere series online:
<http://www.thirdmill.org/worship/rouault-l/default.asp>
more info:
<http://www.marquette.edu/haggerty/exhibitions/past/rouault.html>

Humility and Dignity in the phrase *image of God*

image of a thing vs. the the thing itself. We are not God, but we are a representation of who He is. This makes love for everyone all the more

heavy and necessary. Doesn't murder or torture seem all the more heinous if there is a recognition of the image of God?

What about road rage?

One of the negatives to using technology is the playing down of the richness of humanity: people become a car, a voice, a video, or a blip on the computer screen.

Social networking as an example.

Gen 2:7

dust from the ground: the great equalizer.

Sidebar: not just man's mind or man's spirit, but man *himself* is in God's image (including his physical existence)

There is an intimate connection: dust from the ground (not out of nothing), and the breathing into man's nostrils- all living things have the breath of life (Gen 1:30), but man apparently received it in a different way: we are connected to the earth and to God, with no contradiction. Yet we have a tendency to deny one or the other.

Gen 1:27

male **and** female make up the image. (see the structure)

not their roles, but their very essence:

there is something in masculinity that incompletely describes God

there is something in femininity that incompletely describes God

Why are relationships between men and women not always easy? There is a tension, a struggle between the very thing that makes up who they are.

The struggle of strong and nurturing is found unified in God

is it better to know God's goodness or God's strength? what a foolish false dichotomy!

Remember the unnecessary aspect of creation:

using the example of dance:

the body is more than a transport for your head

dance as a reflection of creation and humanity:

physical bodies, time based, reflects the unnecessary aspect of our being here- the grace, beauty and fragility in humanity

excerpts from “manifesto” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-poEavzp5wY>)
(www.methoddance.com)

Gen 1:30-31

Unnecessary, yet “very good”

After God made everything (including us!), he not only said it was good, it was “very good.” Trees are very good to God. The sun is very good to God. Humans are very good to God. Sometimes that’s a struggle for us to believe.

But this is the starting point of the story of redemption: we often forget that everything was originally made *very good*. Started with a couple in a garden, eventually to a family in the desert, then to a people group and a nation, now to the ends of the earth and ultimately to a city that will cover the whole earth. And we are a part of this epic story...let’s get caught up in it!

The Fall

Affects the relationship within ourselves, between others, creation and God:

doesn’t take long to get to murder, also note the emphasis on the ground or the earth:

And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” (Gen 4:10-12 ESV)

Roger Varland - *Cain and Abel*
(<http://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/1022/>)

Why is *doing life* such a struggle?

Existential, situational and normative struggle.

The importance of the *noetic* effect of sin: to all parts of our being, nothing pure remains.

Frustration of work (what men did and what women did): paperclips for everyone: try and make into a perfect circle.

Sculpture and frustration
Michelangelo's *Pieta*
(<http://www.millsaps.edu/philo/hooksclloydgarth.shtml>)

Image is distorted, but not lost.
Piece of paper example

John Lee Hooker - Boogie Chillen - man's dignity, or innate desire...it comes through.
lyrics:http://www.lyricsmania.com/lyrics/john_lee_hooker_lyrics_11917/hooker_%5Bbox_set%5D_lyrics_37211/boogie_chillen_lyrics_404316.html

more on this song: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boogie_Chillen%27

It is a dangerous thing to tap into our deep desires and discover what it means to be made in God's image.

Humanity has a direction: we are all teleological beings

Wendell Berry's Sabbath Poems (p. 13)
VI from 1979

What stood will stand, though all be fallen,
The good return that time has stolen.
Though creatures groan in misery,
Their flesh prefigures liberty
To end travail and bring to birth
Their new perfection in new earth.
At word of that enlivening
Let the trees of the woods all sing
And every field rejoice, let praise
Rise up out of the ground like grass.
What stood, whole in every piecemeal
Thing that stood, will stand though all
Fall—field and woods and all in them
Rejoin the primal Sabbath's hymn.

Rouault - "Arise, you dead!" from the Miserere series

Gen 3:15 and 3:20- the seed of hope and its recognition of grace will grow into the tree of redemption.

Next week: Incarnation