

Genesis 1:26-28 – Man & Woman in God’s Image – Sermon Outline

Intro: What is a family? We don’t know male or female, much less marriage and family.

Need: Family is husband and wife bound in marriage, being fruitful by bearing children to further rule and subdue the Earth for the glory of God. Family is the building block of society, the most basic unit. It is not the individual, but the family, that God ordained to build society and nurture His people and all creation.

Theme: God created man and woman in His image to rule His creation for His glory.

1. Image bearing is expressed by taking dominion over creation. (Gen. 1:26)
2. Image bearing requires masculinity and femininity. (Gen. 1:27)
3. Image bearing requires subduing all creation through fruitful, faithful families. (Gen. 1:28)
4. Image bearing writ large requires families rooted in Christ and communities.

I. Image bearing is expressed by taking dominion over creation. (26)

- A. The Triune God who crafted creation from nothing crafts man to reflect His creative work.
 1. Man made in God’s image/likeness means we are to reflect His majesty/glory:
 2. God purposed man, even before the Fall, to have dominion/rule over evil, defeating sin, death, and the devil himself, seen plainly in the serpent/Satan’s temptation of Eve with the forbidden fruit.
 3. Satan being a serpent/dragon shows Adam’s failure to rule over Creation.
 4. What is the difference between “subdue” and “take dominion” in our text? Conquering vs. Ruling.
 5. Down in v. 28 do we see the word “subdue”. Why? B/C subduing is needed beyond Eden.
- B. Alas, man rebelled, and in many ways is now being subdued, suffering under the curse.
 1. **The ground from which we were to rule and subdue will ultimately subdue us**, as we lie down in death, as our bodies are buried in the ground, as we turn to ash.
 2. Man is removed from the lush Garden of Eden with God’s holy presence. The head start is forfeited.
 3. But Chris comes as the Last Adam, fulfills all righteousness, and rises from sin/death, defeating the devil and earning new life for all who are redeemed through Him. He restores us to take dominion.

II. Image bearing requires masculinity and femininity. (27)

- A. All creation was good, and yet, Gen. 2:18, it is not good that man should be alone.” Why? Dominion
 1. Note the “sandwich” in our text: Let us make man in Our image....have dominion.....so God created man in His own image, male and female.” Image bearing and the dominion mandate coalesce.
 2. To properly take dominion over creation, it was not good for man to be alone, **the purpose of dominion can only be fulfilled by two distinct glories of God, male and female.**
 3. Especially husband and wife together. Masculine and feminine virtues are necessary for dominion.
- B. We saw in Genesis 1 that females/women are made in the image of God, but here we see the order, or the hierarchy of that image bearing. Man bears the image of God directly, not through any mediation.
- C. The home, church, and government/society has messed up this ordering/God’s good design and differing purposes/glories of male/female, so we have societal collapse, we have church collapse and confusion, and we have transgenderism, homosexuality, effeminacy, butch women, and broken homes.
- D. There are two practical lessons here for men & women, revealing our differences/needs for each other.
 1. Men, you were created to rule and take dominion, to protect and lead and provide. But you cannot take dominion alone, you need a family to provide for, to protect and lead, & you need their love.

2. Women, you were meant to literally stay by the side of your man, for woman was taken from the side/rib of Adam/man. If Eve was near Adam when Satan came, Adam could have protected her.

[PART 2/NEXT SERMON BEGINS HERE.]

III. Image bearing requires subduing all creation through fruitful, faithful families. (28)

- A. Gen. 5:3, Adam begets Seth, “a son in his own likeness, after his image.”
 1. There’s a lot to say that, even in contemporary discussions on Christian Nationalism, being more favorable to our own kin over others, etc.
 2. But this means more than that Seth looked like Adam, for Cain and Abel did too, but that Seth was upright as Adam was upright before the fall.
 3. Not that Seth was born sinless, he was fallen now and bore the image of his fallen father Adam, but that he was of the redeemed line of grace, the Church, the elect.
 4. And this also teaches us, that Grace restores nature, it restores the image of God in man, to be in God’s likeness, to be holy, untainted, pure, glorious, taking dominion, ruling and subduing for God.
- B. 1:28, God blesses Adam and Eve, and then bids them be fruitful, to fill the earth and subdue it. Make more families. Thus salvation and dominion depend upon marrying and bearing children for the Lord.
 1. Adam and Eve had to have a family line for Christ to come in the flesh, atone for sin, and redeem.
 2. Marriage and children within marriage are essential to Christianity, and to bearing God’s image.
 3. It is sin that has disrupted this. Yes, you can be a Christian who never marries and/or never bears children, but these should be your pursuit and pray God provides, unless/until it is clear you have a rare gift of celibacy; then use extra time & freedom from family to serve God in other, unusual ways.
 4. Raising children for the Lord who love Him, others, and develop creation for His glory as His image bearers has always been the purpose of God for man and woman on earth.
 5. And man and woman redeemed in Christ continue that mission. Grace restores nature, it restores pre-fall purposes, it doesn’t destroy it or move to something different. It heightens it, it brings it to glory through Christ, the glory that Adam would have received if he had obeyed in the Garden.
- C. Some say the dominion mandate has been forfeited because man fell into sin, and is now fulfilled/completed in Christ alone. They may appeal to Genesis 9 to say this.
 1. Noah comes off the ark with his covenant household, with the waters receding/parting again as God parted the waters at the first creation in Genesis 1.
 2. God commands Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply, to fill this fallen, yet “new creation”.
 3. Note God says this only to Noah and his sons, not their wives, for again, men are to lead, to rule, the wives are to be helpers, helpmeets to their men in this task. “Be fruitful & multiply, and fill the earth.”
- D. But Gen. 9 does not explicitly say “subdue”. So some conclude dominion and subduing is no more.
 1. But that’s a really backward conclusion. What the text does say, actually, is how man will still be able to subdue the earth, given it is cursed and Adam failed in the garden to subdue Satan the serpent.
 2. “*And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.*”
 3. In other words, God is going to restrain the brute beasts so man can still take dominion over them.

4. Indeed, animal flesh is now given to man for food, and someone has to take dominion over the animals to kill and eat them. Animals must be subdued even more given the earth is hard to cultivate.
- E. If serpents were still crafty, they'd form an alliance with the lions, tigers, and bears and rule this earth, for we know these animals are stronger than us. It'd be some Planet of the Apes sort of conflict.
1. Further, we see in Lev. 26:22, and elsewhere, that when God's people refuse to obey Him, He curses them with plagues, but also He will "send wild animals against you to rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and reduce your numbers, until your roads lie desolate."
 2. Earlier, in Lev. 26:6, blessings for serving God and turning from idols include "rid[ding] the land of evil beasts/dangerous animals". Remember how plagues were often swarms of gnats, flies, frogs, etc.
 3. We will take dominion over the elements, over the creatures, but now only with God's help, His restraining the brutality of the lion, His withholding the plagues of flies, etc.
 4. Man will master chemicals that destroy cockroaches, and the Bug Guys will take dominion by spraying them for us. We still exercise dominion, but under much hardship and misery now.
 5. The crawl spaces are nasty, moldy, dirty, and the sun scorches us. Yet by God's grace and blessing, it is a wonderful thing not to have to contend with roaches and ants and wasps, etc.
 6. And why is it, usually, when a mouse or snake or roach is in the house, the wife urges the man to take dominion over it and destroy it? Friends, it is built into our natures.
 7. It is a greater sin for a man to be too afraid to kill a mouse or remove a snake than it is for a woman.
 8. And usually as men, if we are honest, we don't love doing that either, but we know it is our duty.
 9. But David was prepared to defeat Goliath because he had killed a bear and lion already as shepherd. Men need threats, conflicts, dangers, to build masculine courage. There will always be threats.
- F. We might think it odd that the focus of dominion is over the animals in Genesis 1-2, Noah in 9, etc.
1. But remember, plowing and planting and traveling, etc., was only possible by the strength of the ox, the backs of the camels and donkeys, etc. for thousands and thousands of years.
 2. We are so separated from the Earth, from the grass and dirt and animals, because others, believer and unbeliever alike, have taken dominion so powerfully over creation, that we now have machines and technology that do a lot of this grunt work.
 3. So, starting a garden may be more than a hobby, it is dominion taking, it is touching the earth and connecting with our forefathers who worked the ground hard and long so we don't have to so much.
 4. That's not some tree hugger, mother-earth weird thing, it's just God's design. There's joy in the natural elements because we were made to rule over it, and to enjoy it directly, not detach from it.
 5. The curse causes pain and suffering, hardship and death, thorns and thistles, but moments of joy and pleasure still break through, fresh air, dirt, sunshine still heals, and that's a foretaste of heaven.
- G. Something good is lost when we are distanced from the literal ground from which men were taken.
1. In fact, the word for man in Hebrew is **Adam**, and the word for ground is **Adamah**. Man's purpose, his very name, is connected to the ground.
 2. Further, "ish/eesh" is the name for man, and man/Adam calls woman/Eve "ish/eesha" since she is taken from man. Man and woman belong together, man ruling and wife helping.
 3. The earth is big, so man and woman must come together in marital union and produce more image bearers of God, more hard workers, more dominion takers, more subduers for God's glory.

IV. Image bearing writ large requires families rooted in Christ and communities.

- A. Genesis 2:15, Man is placed by God in the garden of Eden “to tend and keep it”.
1. 2:15, “**put**” Adam in the garden could almost be rendered “**planted**” Adam in the garden.
 2. He was deposited there, to develop that Garden. Would he have left it? Doubtful.
 3. He would have had children who would have sprung forth from there, and been planted/laid down roots nearby, and their children would spread a bit further, planted nearby, and on and on it goes.
 4. God made people to be rooted to a place, to take dominion over it, to subdue it, to beautify and cultivate it, make it fruitful, and to do all in worship and service to God.
- B. Today, we are rootless as a nation by and large, and therefore aimless, hopeless, full of bitterness.
1. Big, corporate jobs require you to move a lot, the military requires the same.
 2. Frankly, the church prioritizes missionaries overseas, or bold pastors who “*forsake family*” and take jobs far away from their home community, as if that is more noble or righteous or healthy.
 3. Bonds of families are weakened, so children will gladly get out of dodge and replant somewhere else, or just drift aimlessly from place to place. There’s no clear dominion to take, no purpose.
 4. So we have drifters, wanderers, discontents who turn angry, violent, bitter. We have lost culture and familiarity and stack as many people, as many homes in the suburbs per square mile as we can.
 5. And nobody really knows or trusts each other, so kids don’t play together in the streets, and everything is made for the car, so it isn’t even safe to play in the streets.
 6. We are a fluid society, rootless, not planted in our gardens to tend and keep.
- C. 2:15, “**tend**” is to cultivate, to order, etc., and keep means to “**guard**” it, such as from crafty Satan.
1. Remember, God placed the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden, and that was the lone prohibition God give Adam.
 2. He could eat of all the other trees, but not that one. It should have been guarded carefully by Adam, he should have protected Eve, and Eve should have stayed far from it and stuck with her husband.
 3. For Israel to worship God properly, they had to be delivered from Egyptian bondage and taken to the Promised Land, rooted in a particular place. Land, a place, dominion there, was tied to worship.
 4. We must be rooted in Christ and our homeland to be maximally fruitful and faithful, to tend and keep!
- D. God covenanted with Noah/all humanity and creatures, that the Earth would not be consumed in flood.
1. He’s promising dominion will occur, times/seasons of harvest will endure until Christ’s return (Gn. 8:21-22; 9:16-17). God’s promise is in reply to Noah’s blood atonement/sacrifices, pointing to Christ.
 2. So God has covenanted with His Son Christ, to fulfill all righteousness, so that in Christ, redeemed from sin, we can rightly take dominion over creation again, with new hearts, renewed in God’s image.
 3. Salvation is about getting back to the dominion mandate, to fill the earth and subdue it, to rule over all creation as His redeemed people/image bearers, to the praise of His glory, in all holiness and purity.
 4. This we are to do now, and will do eternally in the new heavens/earth when Christ returns.
 5. Christ would not be our true redeemer if we did not end up ruling and reigning over creation with Him on His throne, Rev. 3:21. Adam’s destiny is now realized for all rooted in Christ the last Adam.
- E. Our purpose and goal as redeemed sinners in Christ who are renewed in God’s Image:
1. We rule and subdue this cursed earth, in holiness and righteousness, loving one another. We do this knowing we will return to dust, that all our efforts will in one sense lie in the grave.
 2. But thanks be to God in Christ, this is not the end. It is not the final word. We shall rise again in Him, in the same bodies in which we died, to die no more & ascend to glory as Christ ascended to glory.

3. The throne upon which He sits at the right hand of the Father, we too will sit upon, by grace.
 4. The creation too, the soil which suffers from the thorns, that sighs and groans like a woman in labor, will also be delivered from its cursed body of death.
 5. The Earth too will have its resurrection, its redemption, Rom. 8:19-25.
- F. So your dominion labors are a matter of righteousness. It is part of your sanctification.
1. Growing in holiness isn't just going in your closet, praying, & reading your Bible. It better include that.
 2. You must be rooted in Christ, in His Word and Truth and righteousness, to truly take dominion. The thorns and thistles of sin in our heart must constantly be slayed as Christians by God's Word/Spirit.
 3. You'll do nothing if you don't do that. But service to God doesn't end and begin there, or at Church on Sundays. How well you labor in your job, in your home, in your town, is a matter of dominion taking.
 4. The Fall itself, after all, occurred because the man of the house didn't tame his animals properly, and allowed his wife to take fruit from the forbidden tree that would lead to death.
 5. But Christ has reversed and overcome this all, sure enough, on a tree, for the cross has become a tree of life for all who repent and trust in the Man who bled and died upon it to wash away their sins.
 6. And as the first man was planted in the Garden, now God has planted His redeemed people in Christ, the living Garden, the source of all blessings and delights are found in Him.
 7. And if we are in Him, we will be with Him forever, and when He returns, His bountiful Garden will cover all creation.
 8. So spread that Garden now, in righteousness, marry and have children, teach and train, protect and serve, beautify your homes, build the kingdom, serve the Lord and receive His blessings. Let us pray.