

Theology: What the Bible says about the things that matter most

Message #5 (7/14/13): The Human Condition (What is a human being? What is sin? How does God save sinners?)

Key Scriptures: Genesis 1:26-28; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:3-8

Questions:

1. What from Sunday's sermon was most helpful or insightful?
2. What does it mean to be created in God's image? How does that affect your view of yourself? (see quote from Erik Thoennes below)
3. How does thinking about humans as being made in God's image modify the way you treat yourself and others? What influence should this doctrine have on issues like racism, pornography, war, eating disorders, government, and education?
4. How would you define "sin" to someone at a coffee shop? Does your explanation/definition square with the biblical teaching that sin is essentially to act contrary to the will and law of God?
5. Because sin is a violation of God's moral law, which is a reflection of his character, how should that influence your hatred of sin? Do you grieve over your sin?
6. What should be your main motive for overcoming temptation? What are poor motives for refraining from sin?
7. Do you feel a sense of unfairness that you are counted guilty because of Adam's sin (Romans 5:12–21)? Do you wish you could have had your turn in the garden of Eden to overcome temptation rather than being implicated in Adam's sin? How might your struggle change if you were to grow in your trust of God's all-knowing wisdom?
8. Have you thought before that regeneration is prior to repentance & saving faith? Are you convinced of it now, or is there still some question in your mind?
9. What do you think about the fact that your regeneration was totally a work of God, and that you contributed nothing to it? How does it make you feel toward yourself? How does it make you feel toward God? By way of analogy, how do you feel about the fact that when you were born physically you had no choice in the matter?
10. Have you been born again (regenerated)? Is there evidence of the new birth in your life? Do you remember a specific time when regeneration occurred in your life? Can you describe how you knew that something had happened?
11. Why does Pastor Paul say that "we must focus on our justification to fuel our sanctification instead of focusing on our sanctification to fuel our sanctification?"
12. Use Ephesians 2:8-9 as a prayer of praise to God for His gift of saving sinners...including you!

Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Sermon Details/Specifics:

The Human Condition (article #3 from our S.O.F.):

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.

Made in God’s Image:

“Human beings are intended to live as God’s created analogy for his own glory. God did not create humans because of any need within himself (Job 41:11; Ps. 50:9-12; Acts 17:24-25) but primarily so that he would be glorified in them as they delight in him and reflect his character. We were created primarily to be in relationship with our Creator and find our greatest joy in him. When people are supremely satisfied in him, God is rightly honored and delights in his creation” (Erik Thoennes, *Life’s Biggest Questions*, pp. 130-131).

How God Saves Sinners:

“It is not your hold on Christ that saves you; it is Christ. It is not your joy in Christ that saves you; it is Christ. It is not even your faith in Christ, though that be the instrument; it is Christ’s blood and merit” (Charles Spurgeon).

The Blessings of Salvation:

Justification	Has been saved	From the guilt of sin	Ephesians 2:8
Sanctification	Is being saved	From the power of sin	1 Corinthians 1:18
Glorification	Will be saved	From the presence of sin	Acts 15:11

“God’s calling produces *regeneration* (born again; death to life); this miraculous work of the Holy Spirit makes a spiritually dead person alive in Christ (Ezek. 11:19-20; Matt. 19:28; John 3:3, 5, 7; Titus 3:5). The revived heart *repents* and trusts Christ in *saving faith* as the only source of *justification*” (Erik Thoennes, *Life’s Biggest Questions*, p. 152).