

Sermon Notes - Mission Implications of Gen. 1-3

29/8/2020

Introduction.

We need to remind ourselves that there is strictly only one mission, which is God's mission. We are called to become involved in God's mission to the world. Therefore, the first and primary task is always to seek to discern what God has done, is doing and plans to do.

Gen. 1:1-2:3 (following Wenham WBC Gen. vol. 1)

1. What is the relationship between the Creator and His creation?

All of creation, including living creatures and humankind, comes from the creative acts of God. It has the imprint of His creative power and thus expresses something of His character. However, the Creator is clearly to be distinguished from His creation.

2. What are the implications of God's pronouncement that His creation is 'good'?

Creation in its original state is **ordered** and **purposeful**, each part has its role to play as part of a meaningful whole. It is designed to be enjoyed by humankind and is the basis for all scientific research.

3. How does God create and what is the purpose of His creation?

God creates by His word, He speaks. Because of the incarnation of the Word of God we now understand that 'through him all things were made' (Jn. 1:3) and that 'all things were created by him and for him' (Col. 1:16). Christ is the centre and the purpose of creation.

4. Why is being created in God's image central to the creation of humankind?

Only humankind is described as being created in God's image. This is what distinguishes humankind from the rest of God's creation. Humankind has a role of being God's representatives, to express the character of God in their relationship with each other and with His creation. Under God, humankind has a unique oversight role over His creation. The only person who has truly represented God's character is the One who is described as the 'image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15), Jesus Christ.

5. What is the significance of God's rest on the 7th day?

It signifies the completion of God's creative work and affirms both the dignity of creative work and the proper place for rest and renewal.

Gen. 2:4-25

1. What is the significance of God's provision for humankind and God's prohibition?

Human life comes from and is sustained by God. God's provision shows His continual concern to nurture and care for humankind. God's prohibition gives authenticity to human actions, they involve real choices, and the exercise of their wills, their minds and their moral conscience. Humankind's purpose is to live for God.

2. Why is the resolution of this problem of the solitary (alone) 'man' (= male) crucial for God?

For the first time in any accounts of God's creative work there are two references to something not being right; 'it is not good for man.' and 'no suitable helper was found'.

Here is a dramatic illustration of the foundational statement in Gen. 1:27-28 – God

created man [humankind] in His image ... male and female He created them.' At this point in the account God's creation is incomplete.

3. How does God solve this problem?

God makes a special new creation – woman. The animals are an important part of God's creation, but they are not 'suitable helpers', companions, for the man (= male). Affirming Gen. 1, humankind is unique and distinct from animals.

4. What is the focus of the man's response to God's solution of his problem?

The man (= male) recognises that the woman is of the same stuff as him – 'bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh'. His focus is on their unity and oneness. This is further emphasised in the marriage relationship, which expresses this unity – 'one flesh', affirming 1:28-30.

Gen 3:1-24

1. What was the cause of the fracturing of the relationship between God and humankind?

Humankind chose to disobey God. They questioned God's good intentions for them.

2. What was the effect of human disobedience? On their relationship with God, each other and on creation?

They are in tension rather than in fellowship with God; they have begun and will experience conflict with each other and their interaction with God's creation will be hard and painful.

Some further missiological implications.

3. Human solidarity between female and male and across racial and cultural divides, is predicated on the solidarity of male and female as 'one flesh' and 'one humanity' created in God's image. The proper concern to affirm the differences between male and female based on their biological differences created by God, should not undermine the primary reality of a common humanity.

Reflection/Response.

How do we live in fellowship with God, care for each other and exercise our stewardship of God's creation?

How do we affirm that all are created in God's image yet are rebellious sinners?