

Good News

Of Kings and Glory

2023-04-23

Leader Notes

OVERVIEW: Welcome to our series, “The Good News!” Over the course of four weeks, we will explore the transformative power of the gospel and how it radically changes us when we embrace it. Our topic for the second week is “Good Image.” According to scripture, humans were created in God’s image to rule, but sin distorts this image and robs us of God’s glory. However, through Jesus Christ, a king who flawlessly bears God’s image, we can regain the fullness of God’s glory, triumphing over the personal, social, and cosmic effects of sin. What if God’s purpose in saving sinners is not only to rescue them from the consequences of their sin, but also to rescue them for something greater? In today’s study, we will explore the good image that God created us for and how we can live in that image through our faith in Jesus Christ.

ICEBREAKER: My Role Model

Growing up I was blessed to have a number of positive role models in my life. There were teachers I really enjoyed at school and pastors and Sunday school teachers at church who impacted my life. Probably my greatest role model is my dad. His work ethic, his love for his family and most of all his faith in Jesus have impacted me deeply. How about you? Who is a role model in your life you are thankful for? Share your story with the group!

STUDY:

What is this good image God has created me to show? How can I reflect that image well? Let's explore these questions as we dive into today's study!

Note: Throughout this study we will reference Matthew W. Bates' book, *The Gospel Precisely*. It's a short, readable book that gives many insights into the topics we're looking at in this series. You can order a copy of it here https://www.amazon.ca/Gospel-Precisely-Surprisingly-Christ-Theology-ebook/dp/B09C2TD9QF/ref=sr_1_1?crid=34XB2KS5ZXDGI&keywords=The+Gospel+Precisely&qid=1680806934&s=digital-text&sprefix=the+gospel+precisely%2Cdigital-text%2C147&sr=1-1

CREATED TO RULE

Many of us who have been raised in the Christian church have been taught an important truth that sets us up to receive that the good news - we are born separated from God by our sin. While this message about sin is important for us to understand, it is not the main message of the good news. In his book, *The Gospel Precisely*, Matthew Bates asks, "What if God's aim in seeking to save sinners is to rescue them for as much as to rescue from?" p. 41

What has God rescued us for? God's reveals his original plan for us in the creation account in Genesis 1. As you read through this passage, underline or circle the words, "rule" and "image".

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:26-28 NIV

- What do you notice here about how God created us in his image? What was his purpose for us?

LEADER NOTE: In Genesis 1 we read that God created us in his image - in his likeness. The image of God (Latin - *imago dei*) means God created us as rational creatures, having the ability to reason and choose. Morally, God created us in perfect innocence and holiness. Socially, God created us to be relational, to bless and be a blessing in our interactions with one another. Before sin entered the scene, we were a beautiful image of God in the way he created us mentally, morally and socially. God's original purpose was that we would reflect his royal image to one another and to the world.

READ: Genesis 2:15, 18-22

- What do you notice here about the ruling role God created us for?

LEADER NOTE: The rule God created us for is not coercive or enslaving. God places Adam in the garden in order to serve ('abad) and to safeguard (shamar) the garden. Eve is given to Adam to be his helper ('ezer) in these tasks. God's role for us in ruling creation is to serve and safeguard what he has given us.

READ: Mark 10:45

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." NIV

- How far did Jesus go to serve and safeguard us?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus' ultimate act of serving and safeguarding us is seen in what he did for us on the cross. Jesus' death on the cross solves our sin problem, but there is more to the message! "The cross reveals who God is, and who we need to become." p. 43

BEARING GOD'S IMAGE

"Humans are created in God's image to rule creation by making his glory present." p. 43

READ: Psalm 8:1-5

LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.
2 Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.
3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?[c]
5 You have made them[d] a little lower than the angels[e]
and crowned them[f] with glory and honor. NIV

- What do you notice from vs. 5 about the way God designed us to bear his image?

LEADER NOTE: Psalm 8 is an incredible worship poem about the glory and majesty of God. In verse 5 we are told that we, human beings, have been crowned by him with “glory” and “honour”. “When anyone or anything is in the presence of a human, God’s glory – his tangible weightiness and splendor – is radiating outward toward that human. Or at least it should be.” p. 46

READ: 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, 18

2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. NIV

- What do you see here about how we are to reflect Jesus’ image?

LEADER NOTE: We are created by God to be living letters, the message the Spirit is writing on our hearts. God is at work in us, transforming us into his image, to reflect his glory to the world.

SIN DISTORTS GOD’S IMAGE

We are created by God to be image bearers, but sin distorts God’s image in us. When Adam and Eve listened to the tempter and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they chose the way of sin, rather than God’s way. As Adam and Eve’s descendants, we are born with a sin nature that distorts God’s image in us. “Sin disrupts image-bearing, so humans and all creation have a deficit of God’s glory.” p. 50

READ: Romans 1:18-32

- What do you notice from vs. 21-23 about the impact sin has on us as image bearers?

LEADER NOTE: In vs. 23 we read how we exchanged the glory of God for images. Sin’s impact mars our original God-given image. God’s glory in us becomes distorted by our idols. Although most of us don’t have physical statues of other gods in our living rooms, there are idols in our hearts – idols like money, sex and power.

- How does this distorted image impact how the world experiences us?

LEADER NOTE: Rather than experiencing God's glory in one another, the world experiences images distorted by sin. Our distorted image leaves the world bereft of God's glory. The result is a free-fall into sin - as we read in vs. 29-32.

THE KING RESTORES IMAGE-BEARING

"We need a flawless human king who can restore God's glory amid humanity's brokenness." p. 52

We will talk about this more in the next two weeks of our series.

- How should image-bearing shape our mission as Christ's church?

LEADER NOTE: Our mission as a church is to help God's people be transformed into the image of Jesus. Creekside's mission statement reflects our desire to help people Follow Jesus, Love God and Love People.

- What does it practically mean for us to rule as God intended - serving and safeguarding?

LEADER NOTE: Serving and safeguarding are practical ways we reflect God's glory. Part of our disciple making strategy at Creekside is that people would be On a Team, serving others with their time, talents and treasure, in order to bring glory to God. Ultimately, our life goal should be to serve others as Jesus did - to give our lives away and to be faithful stewards of what God has given us.

PRAY:

Father, thank you for creating me in your image. You have made me to reflect your glory to others around me and to the world. That is amazing! But I know that the idols in my life have distorted the image people see in me. I am sorry that I don't bear your image as I should. I confess to you that I've let the image of Jesus in me get distorted. Please forgive me and make that image beautiful once again. Thank you for Jesus, my glorious king. My heart's desire is to become more like him. By the power of your Spirit, please help me to be transformed each day to be more and more like your son. Thank you for your incredible love. AMEN.