**Who Are We?**

**The Word**

Read together Genesis 1:26-28 and 3:1-7

**The Big Idea**

According to the Bible, human beings are both beautiful and broken. We are made in God’s image and called to partner with Him in his creation project, but our quest for autonomy has marred the image of God in us and violated his creation project.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How have you historically understood what it means to be made in the image of God and the implications of that reality, and how did Sunday's message change or add to your understanding?

2. We talked about our human vocation of partnering with God to move the creation project forward. How does that idea reflect the way you currently think about your job, and are there any practical ways you could rethink or reframe your current job in light of the biblical vision?

3. Throughout history, many in the church have argued that pride is the root of all evil. As you consider the account of the fall in Genesis 3, do you agree with that statement?

4. Sunday’s message ended with the idea that the biblical story is actually an invitation to become fully human. How does that square with your own experience of your Christian faith? Where specifically might there be a fresh invitation for you to become more fully human through the Christian story?

5. Bonus Question: How would you respond to a non-Christian friend who seriously doubts or even mocks the Bible’s creation story full of talking snakes, magical trees, floods, and towers reaching to heavens?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. The Bible offers both a higher and lower view of humanity than other worldviews

B. The Bible’s story declares that we are both beautiful and broken.

C. “You come from Lord Adam and Lady Eve. That is both honor enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth.” – Prince Caspian

II. Beautiful (Genesis 1-2)

A. A beautiful identity

1. Made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27)

a. The Bible never clearly defines what this means (may be a combination of abilities, roles, relationship, etc.) exactly what this means.

b. Rembrandt’s self portrait: the painting has such inherent worth because of who painted it and because it’s a reflection of the artist

c. This doctrine is the basis of human rights in western civilization and is what gives every human being inherent worth, dignity, and value regardless of age, ability, capacity, race, etc.

d. This identity as image bearers isn’t something we earn or lose; it is given to us as sheer gift, and this is a much needed truth in a culture that defines its worth by achievement or identity creation.

B. A beautiful vocation

1. Fill the earth, rule and subdue (Genesis 1:28)

2. We are invited to be partners with God in his creation project, developing it and moving it forward

3. Genesis 2 helps explain what this might actually mean

a. 2:15: Eden is a garden that actually needs a gardener to work it & tend to it

b. 2:12: Eden has resources (gold, etc.) that can be used to build and develop human society and civilization

c. 2: 19: Adam’s role in naming the animals is a good example of how God delegates authority to his human creatures and gives them a role to play

4. This is the basis of the dignity of our work and vocation

a. Work is not a result of the fall, a necessary evil, or merely a paycheck

b. Work is a sacred task of partnering with God for the common good in various industries.

III. Broken (Genesis 3-11)

A. The terrible lie: Choose autonomy.

1. You can’t trust God (3:1). He’s a withholder who wants to keep you in your place and doesn’t have your best in mind

2. So you need to decide for yourself what is good and evil (v. 5)

a. Choose autonomy. Define your own existence, chart your own path

b. You can be “like God” in being the master of your own life (even though they were already made in God’s likeness)

3. Autonomy is an irrational illusion since God gives to everyone life, breath, and everything else (Acts 17:25). Like a kid being held by its father slapping dad in the face. But if he doesn’t keep holding the kid up, it can’t slap him.

B. The terrible consequences of autonomy: Broken image bearers

1. Self-conscious insecurity and shame (v. 7)

2. Embarking on a cover, hide, and blame strategy (v. 7-13)

3. Romans 1:21: our thinking becomes futile, and our hearts are darkened.

4. Total Depravity = Every aspect of our lives is infected with sin

5. Imagine a ripped Rembrandt covered in graffiti

C. This brokenness infects our vocation

1. Rather than partnering with God in his creation project, we pursue self-centered endeavors that violate his creation project

2. Genesis 4-11trace the downward spiral of human sin (Cain and Abel, the flood, the tower of Babel)

3. The Bible is a dark and violent and often depressing book. It seems that God wants us to hear this message loud and clear: Human beings are broken and lost without him!

IV. Conclusion

The Bible story is actually an invitation to become fully human.We become fully human not by asserting our own autonomy and charting our own course but by trusting in God, surrendering to him, receiving our identity as a gift from him, and finding freedom within his good ordinances.