

### **3. PROPOSED SERMON SERIES**

#### **Created in the Image of God: How Should We Then Live?**

This sermon series will deal with the foundation of Christian Human Ethics: being created in the Image of God. The current culture “wars” are often centered in sexuality and gender and the definition of marriage. My experience is that the people sitting in the pews often, both for fear of being labeled as bigots and because they feel inadequately prepared, do not engage in this conversation. With this series, I will seek to give my congregation a biblical underpinning of the Christian side of this debate and introduce them to the findings of cosmology, geology, biology and social science which inform the Christian world-view. All of this will be done in the hope that they will gain confidence to engage their families, friends, and neighbors in this important debate.

This sermon series will be in five parts approaching first the biblical created order with its apex being human creation; then the creation of male and female, our specific roles and purposes in our society; the purpose of uniting (or some would say re-uniting) these two genders in marriage; the gift of singleness and friendship in the community (for much of this I will rely on Tim Keller’s important book , *The Meaning of Marriage*; and Wes Hill’s book *Spiritual Friendship*), and finally the derived human dignity from the special creation of humanity in the Image of God.

#### **1. The Created Order – The Big Bang and Deep Time**

Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 – Biblical Creation (I will rely much on the work of John Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World*) and the probability and plausibility of Evolution and the likelihood of an Old Earth (which is consistent with the biblical text)

#### **2. Created in the Image of God: Human Sexuality & Gender**

Genesis 1:24-31; 2:19-25 – Creation of Humanity, then division into male and female (John Paul II); complementarity of male and female; humanity as the pinnacle of creation (dominion over other created things)

#### **3. Created in the Image of God: Human Community – Marriage & Friendship**

Genesis 2:18-25 / Matthew 19:1-12 / Ephesians 5:20-33  
1 Samuel 18:1-4 / John 15:12-17 / Acts 2:42-47

Marriage as a covenant...different than a contract; Marriage being about service – sacrificing for the other to be more like Christ; friendship requiring commitment...there has been a flattening of our understanding of friendship over the last several decades

#### **4. Created in the Image of God: Human Dignity & Responsibility**

John 4:7-38 / Romans 12:9-18 / Romans 14:1-18 / Philippians 2:1-11

That we are created in God's image gives us great dignity and responsibility. That Christ died for us gives us even further dignity and greater responsibility (see especially the work of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and his understanding of the progressive growth of the patriarchs in their personal responsibility for humanity).

#### **5. Created in the Image of God: How Should We Then Live? (*with apology to Francis Schaeffer*)**

Matthew 5:13-48 (Sermon on the Mount)

This will be the summation of the previous four weeks. I will make an attempt to bring together the previous weeks' themes into one coherent ethic which will respect our humanity, scientific wisdom, the created order, and our eternal hope. I will also lead the congregation in reflecting on various ethical issues – e.g., homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia (as well as end-of-life issues), cloning – with our understanding of being made in the image of God as a starting point.

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