

## 1Tim 24-03-06a

Good evening. Welcome to Grace and Truth Bible Church on this Wednesday evening. We're continuing our special study on the gospel of Paul, the mysteries that he revealed and their implications.

What does it mean in terms of our understanding and application? This is the 6th of March, 2024, and we're going to pick up where we left off, talking about this related and closely connected issue to the first of those mysteries, which is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. We have a wonderful passage to look at tonight that interestingly is not from Paul, but emphasizes the very same thing that Paul does. And it is connected to if we understand the incarnation of Jesus Christ in his first advent and his incarnation in and through us as the body of Christ, which connects to a couple of our other mystery aspects of the gospel, what are the implications in how we treat other people? Do we need to have some kind of discernment or some sort of standard in deciding, well, how far does God want me to go in undertaking relationship, fellowship, support, contact, charity, investment of time and resources what is proper stewardship? Should I just give to anyone who asks me and so on? And in that regard, we have come to the image of God.

What is the image of God? Because this is being used to support the idea of charity for all. If everyone contains the image of God, and this is an argument that is being made widely and emphatically in the post-modern church, the post-evangelical church, what you might call the deconstruct, reconstruct, the progressive, which is sweeping formal Christianity in great numbers, great, having great influence and great effect. And it is an idea.

The imago Dei goes back many centuries as do other misunderstandings in the quote unquote church or church capital C. So that's what we're looking at. We're gonna ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study, and then we'll begin. Father, it is such a privilege to explore the wonderful sanctuary that we find in your word to see the beauty and the content and the importance of the revelation that you have entrusted to us.

We know that it is your word by which we live, every word that proceeds from your mouth. The living word, the Lord Jesus Christ is our example and our intercessor, our representative in your presence, even as we speak. We pray that as we look at these scriptures together, that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, help us to understand them properly, to be balanced and effective in our interpretation and application so that we can effectively represent the Lord Jesus as his body on this earth in the time that remains until he comes to receive us to himself.

We pray it in Jesus' name, amen. So you might at first think it's an unrelated idea. Why are we suddenly talking about the image of God? But it relates to the incarnation of Jesus

Christ, which is point one of the mystery heretofore not entrusted to the prophets.

The Lord Jesus introduces it. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. I and my Father are one.

But, and in the gospel of John, you have the Lord Jesus who was in the beginning with God, who becomes incarnate and we beheld his glory full of grace and truth and so on. But the implications of it, the outworking of it, and the means by which the incarnation of Jesus Christ is implemented for us is part of the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Paul is the one who reveals this.

Paul is the one who explains it and details it and makes it clear. So that's our study. That's what we are looking at.

And so we began by looking at the image of God last time, this past Sunday is first mentioned in Genesis chapter one, verses 26 through 28. And in that context, what we see is that the invocation of the image of God, when God in the creation story, Genesis chapter one, it doesn't get any more connected to, you know, the first six days than this. But in Genesis chapter one, having exercised dominion over the heavens and the earth, having separated the firmament, having organized the light into day and night, having separated the seas and brought forth the land, having created plant life and animal life and all of the other creative activities on the first five and a half days of creation, God at this point says, let us make man in our image and after our likeness, let him have dominion over this creation on earth.

We don't have dominion over the stars, don't have access to them, even now in our vast technological, we can look at them better, but can't get there from here. So in verse 26 of chapter one, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish, the birds, the cattle, the earth, every creeping thing. So God created man in his image, in the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them.

And God blessed them and said, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion, subdue and have dominion. So just by way of laying a little bit of foundation here, until the creation of Adam, who had dominion over the animals and the earth? Who exercised that dominion? The creator did, God exercises dominion. When he says, let the earth bring forth the herb yielding seed, let the cattle bring forth after their kind and so on, he is exercising dominion.

He is subduing the earth, he is organizing it. He is looking at his work and saying, it's good, right? God, at this point on the sixth day says, I am going to create a subordinate and I am going to delegate the dominion that God has previously been exercising in a limited fashion. God still causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust and so on, right? That it's a partial delegation of responsibility and God says, you subdue, you fill,

you dominate, exercise dominion and authority over this creation.

God puts Adam in a garden and puts him there to tend the garden. God plants the garden, why doesn't God tend the garden? Because he has delegated that authority and responsibility to Adam. And this is by the way, delegated to Adam before Eve.

The first gardener was not a woman, it was the man, it was Adam. And so you find this in chapter two, verse eight, the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden. There he put the man whom he had formed.

Out of the ground, the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. Tree of life was also there and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. River goes out, you got the names of the rivers, the three rivers.

Then in verse 15, the Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. He didn't put it there to protect the man, he didn't put it there for any other purpose. He put the man there with the intention and purpose and assignment of dominion.

You will tend it, you will keep it. So evidently left to itself, this garden could have kind of gone wild. I don't know if some kind of, if God plants a garden, why does it need tending? Why isn't it a self-tending garden? Why isn't it perfect from the hand of God that it doesn't need any organization or any keeping? But it does, it needs tending.

And God gives Adam the assignment, you will tend and keep this garden. Tend and keep, organize and protect, guard, ensure that nothing happens to it. So Adam has maintenance responsibilities and he has security responsibilities.

Could God have tended and maintained and kept the garden? Yes, he could. But he says, you're gonna do it now. I'm not gonna do it anymore.

I planted it, I organized it, I put the tree of the knowledge and the tree of life in the middle. Now it's up to you. You keep this thing going.

If deciduous trees shed their leaves and it's causing harm to the plants, you're gonna have to rake those leaves and get them out of the way. Whatever, I can't even imagine what would be involved in tending a perfect garden. But it's Adam's job to figure that out and do it and to guard it, to keep it.

So he does that. After that, and God, by the way, says, now that you're in this garden, let me explain that of these two trees that are in the midst, you eat of the tree of life and you can eat of any other tree. Don't eat of this tree of knowledge of good and evil.

He says that to Adam. Why didn't he wait until after he made Eve and then give the command? This command is given to Adam, there is no Eve. This is chapter two.

Now we're getting the detail that was summarized in chapter one, male and female created he them. And by the way, in chapter one, it also summarizes what's gonna happen after they leave the garden, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, right? Fill the earth is in chapter one, verse 28. Well, how are you gonna fill the earth if you're living in the garden and your assignment is to keep and tend that? Chapter one is a summary, not only of chapter two and a foreshadowing and a condensation, but also of chapter three and chapter four, because multiplying and filling the earth doesn't begin until chapter four with Cain and Abel and chapter five with Seth.

And chapter one, verse 28 anticipates going out into the earth and filling it, multiplying and dominating the entire earth. Pretty hard to dominate the earth if you're living in the garden. How can you organize and be responsible unless there's a lot of us out there to take individual portions? Adam cannot administrate the earth from Eden.

So we have to be careful. This is my point. We have to be careful about the application of what is said in chapter one when it is looking ahead past the garden, past the fall and into the future that really starts in chapter five with the multiplying and filling and so on.

But Eve is formed in the last part of chapter two. 21, the Lord caused a deep sleep, took one of Adam's components out of his side, closed up the flesh. He made a woman.

And when Adam sees her in verse 23, God brought Eve to the man. He didn't just leave her there for Adam to wander around and bump into. God brings Eve to Adam.

I find this really fascinating that God did this while Adam is asleep. And when God is finished, God brings Eve to Adam. And the idea is once he brings her, God doesn't speak and say, "Adam, I have made you a help meet for you."

"And her desire will be unto you" and you shall have dominion. "And she's gonna be the one that has babies" and you're gonna be the one to be accountable to me." God doesn't speak. God brings her there and evidently God is silent.

The only speaking is done by Adam. And what does Adam say? Adam is in his perfection at this point. There is no sin.

There is no fall. There is no tempter in evidence or in view. And what does the perfect man say when he sees the bride, if you will, the help meet? What does Adam say? This is now another example of the image of God.

I recognize in her the same image that God has created in me. What does Adam say? This is bone of my bone, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Isha because she was taken out of Ish.

She shall be called Isha. Same root, but slightly different. Isha, she's the feminine of the man, the feminine expression of humanity.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh. They were naked, man and his wife, and were not ashamed. Then you have the infamous episodes in chapter three.

You go to chapter four and you have the, Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain and said, I've acquired a man from the Lord. Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Abel was a keeper of the sheep.

Cain was a tiller of the ground. In the process of time, it came to pass. And you have that story.

Notice in the birth of Cain and in the birth of Abel, there is nothing mentioned about image. Chapter four focuses on the first capital crime outside the garden. You can say eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a capital crime because God said, in the day you eat thereof, you will die, right? But God defers the execution of that sentence until man is able to accomplish other purposes for which he was created, which is to multiply, fill the earth, exercise dominion.

Abel as a keeper of the sheep is exercising that dominion. What does it say again in chapter one? What is the command? Dominion over fish, birds, cattle. Cattle is any beast of the field.

This includes sheep, goats, oxen, asses, any domesticated farm animal you can think of, maybe not ducks or chickens, but the cattle and over the earth, over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And so it doesn't say anything about farming here, does it? There's no farming. Dominion over the animals specifically.

And God says in verse 28, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion once again. What is he to have dominion over? Animals, fish, the seabirds of the air, every living thing that moves on the earth. Every living thing that moves on the earth.

That's your job. I have given you every herb that yields seed, which is on the face of all the earth in verse 29, and every tree whose fruit yields seed, to you it shall be for what? Food, vegetation, crops, herb yielding seed, fruit trees, that's your food. And also to the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, to everything that creeps on the earth in which there is life, I have given the green herbs for food.

And it was so. So what happens in chapter four? After the birth and growth and maturing of Cain and Abel, in the process of time, verse three, Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. It's an offering of the fruit of the ground.

We've been over this many times, but one thing we've not really emphasized is what it says in chapter one about over what do you have dominion? And the dominion is over the animals. There's nothing said about dominion over plants. So when this sacrifice is

brought, there is an element of authority.

I am bringing an animal over which you gave me authority. Cain says, I'm gonna bring vegetation, which God says in two specific emphatic verses, this is food. So instead of bringing the life of an animal and the life of the flesh being in the blood and the dominion aspect of delegated authority in the image of God and reflecting the image of God and saying, I have so much dominion that I can take the life of this animal and present that life as an offering to God.

There is no assignment of dominion over the crops. What are the crops? Where are they mentioned? Are they mentioned in connection with the image of God or are they mentioned in chapter three, verse 17? Cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil, you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Thorns and thistles, verse 18, it will bring forth for you and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread until you return to the ground. Out of it where you're taken, dust you are, to dust you shall return.

So rather than a reflection of the image of God in dominion over the animals and recognizing that the life of the flesh is in the blood, you have an offering from Cain that partakes of the curse of the ground and bringing food. The purpose of the vegetation is to feed man and feed the animals, not to honor God at this stage of history. So there are multiple lines of argument that this was a terrible way to offer a sacrifice.

It seems clear that these early generations understood what was involved in sacrifice and in offering to God. And Cain wants to bring an image of the dust, the dust, God made man out of the dust, crops grow out of the dust. I'm going to bring this crop.

It's an interesting aside there. And when Cain is judged for his murder, God has not delegated judgment for crime to anybody. He still retains that at this point.

So in verse 11 of chapter four, now you are cursed, you Cain are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. Cain should have slain an animal and brought that as a sacrifice to the Lord. Instead, he invents and innovates a sacrifice of his own and ends up shedding his brother's blood, which is another coloring outside the lines.

If you're going to shed blood, find a lamb, find a goat, find an ox, depending on the kind of sacrifice it's going to be. Abel brings a lamb from the flock. Cain says, I want to put a salad on the altar.

God does not accept that offering. And so Cain says, well, you want blood? I'll give you some blood. And he goes and kills his brother.

Now, the argument is that, made by Psalm, and it's a fair point to consider. Why doesn't

God execute Cain for the murder of Abel? From chapter nine forward, if man sheds another man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. It is a universal dispensation, transcending command.

And he's going to mention the image of God and we'll get there. We covered it last time, but here's the thing. If the reason murder is so heinous is that you have desecrated the image of God in another human being, why isn't that brought up here? And why isn't Cain executed by God for the murder of his brother, Abel, with or without considering that he has desecrated the image of God? The image of God is not brought up here at all.

And if that is the nature of the crime, that there is something sacred and holy and unique about mankind, you didn't slaughter an animal, you didn't perpetrate cruelty to an animal, you slew a human being. And if in every human being is the image of God and the heinous component of murder is that you have desecrated that image, it isn't brought up here. Not only that, but God does not take Cain's life.

So if you bring this up in discussion with intelligent people, they may respond, well, the reason God could not take Cain's life or did not take it is that he had not given a command prohibiting murder. That doesn't come until chapter nine. So, you know, sort of by implication, Cain didn't know that he was committing a capital crime by slaying his brother.

And, you know, ignorance in this case would be an excuse. And God couldn't execute him because he had not been told, you know, thou shalt not take the life of thy brother lest thou surely die, like they had been told about eating of the tree. Here's my response to that.

Because we're now going to chapter five and then to chapter nine. But the iniquity of men's hearts that was only evil all the day. And so God told Noah, build an ark.

And the entire generation was wiped out of all ages from the gray heads to the infants. And everybody was drowned. What command, why does God execute capital punishment on the entirety, hundreds, thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of people, who knows how large the population was when the flood was sent.

They had no more commands than Cain had. There is no indication that the law of God in any form or fashion had been perpetrated. You also have Lamech.

You know, if Cain is avenged, you know, I'll be avenged sevenfold. He's got Zillah and Puah, whoever his two wives are. And he says, well, you know, if Cain, you know, nobody can kill Cain.

Well, I've killed several people. So I should be even more bulletproof. It's a weird

distortion.

But I don't think you can make the idea that Cain is spared because God had not given a specific command of no murder. There is an equal lack of command for all of the people who are on the earth. And yet God wipes them all out with the flood.

God institutes capital punishment on everybody except the eight souls that are in the ark, right? So you'd have to try to come up with a solution to that problem. But here's the more central point. In the association of the image of God with the institution of capital punishment in chapter nine, you say, well, God invokes the image of God when he says, you shed man's blood by man shall your blood be shed, basically.

I'm paraphrasing. Because man is made in the image of God. But the archetypal original first murder in history in chapter four, in all of the conversation, and there is plenty of conversation here, God converses with Cain on two occasions.

And that image never comes up. God doesn't say, where is your brother Abel? Am I my brother's keeper? And God says, you've desecrated my image in your brother. And therefore you must be held to account.

He says, your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. The ground from which you grew your crops and brought your unacceptable sacrifice. Your brother's blood spilled into the dust cries out to me.

There is no mention at all of the image of God. Whatever else you wanna say about the image of God and you try to associate the two in chapter nine, murder and the image. God himself, given every opportunity in chapter four does not do so.

How great would it have been for God to mention this in his dialogue with Cain and then to rehearse that and refer back to it in chapter nine. As I told Cain, murder is a desecration of my sacred image in mankind. And that person must be himself executed.

It just isn't there. The association with the image of God is the purpose and the authority to accomplish that purpose that is given. So the question ultimately becomes, and I think this is important.

What is the definition of the image of God? People wanna say, well, I think it's moral responsibility and the ability to make decisions. And that's why it's in chapter nine because you decide whether or not to murder another person and then you are held to account because that is immoral. It's included in the law, thou shalt not murder.

There are plenty of other things in the law also, but that's one of them. So being made in God's image is to have sentience, to be able to evaluate priorities, goals, to have moral accountability for right and wrong, the knowledge of good and evil, and counterintuitively, this is exactly what God prohibited man from partaking of in the

garden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, don't eat of it.

In the day you eat of it, you will die. So, and in that instance, it isn't the tree of the knowledge of the image of God, or the image of God is not implicated in this. Moral accountability, moral conscience in knowing what is right and knowing what is wrong is not linked to the image of God in the discussion of the tree or in the judgment on Cain where the original murder takes place.

So why then does it come up in chapter nine? Well, to get to chapter nine, you got to go through chapter five, which we saw last time. Book of the gene, the book of the genealogy of Adam, in the day that God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. In the day that God created man, what day is that? Creation day six.

In the day that he created man, the origination of the human race, he created him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them and called them mankind in the day they were created. Created in the image, perfect.

God saw everything that it was good, right? In that day, Adam lived 130 years and begot a son in his own likeness after his own image and named him Seth. If there was ever an opportunity for God to impress upon us the importance of recognizing his image in every man, this would be it. Adam lived 130 years and begot a son in the image and likeness of God.

Why doesn't it say that? Why does it go out of its way to express and emphasize that Seth is not in the image of God, he's in the image of Adam. He partakes of Adam. Adam was made in the image of God, but the question is, how much of that image does Adam retain in the fall? Having been driven from the personal presence of God out of the garden, no longer qualified, so the image of God doesn't seem to give or confer any special privileges to Adam in terms of fellowship with God, presence of God, that the man is no longer qualified to reach out and eat of the tree of life, so he drives man out.

There is something different about Adam than when he was created in God's image and after his likeness. He is different. They knew they were naked and were not ashamed, but once they sin, they know they are naked and they are ashamed and they are judged by God and driven from the garden and prevented from returning to the garden.

He is not the same Adam that was created in the image and likeness of God. He is not qualified to come into God's presence. Now we see God in subsequent chapters in heaven, receiving reports from angels.

He doesn't come down and walk in the garden in the cool of the day. The report comes to him that man is evil and he says, I will see what's going on here, but there is now this separation and there is no further mention of the image. It says, it is almost as though, remember the wonderful day when God created Adam in his image and likeness, but

now Adam is outside and when more people come along, they are in the image and likeness of the fallen man, the excluded man, the judged man, the sentenced man, the no longer qualified to be in the garden or the presence of God man.

We bear the image of the earthly. Turn, as we go to the break here, go to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Romans 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

Paul specifically refers to this. Someone will say, how are the dead raised up in verse 35? And he talks about foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain, perhaps wheat or some other.

God gives it a body as he pleases and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh. One kind of men, another of animals, another of fish and another of birds.

Interestingly, the very same animals that are mentioned in the command to subdue and dominate. There are celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies. The glory of the celestial is one, the glory of the terrestrial is another.

One glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars. One star differs from another in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

The body is sown in corruption, raised in incorruption, sown in dishonor, raised in glory, sown in weakness, raised in power, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being.

The last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual is not first, but the natural. Afterward, the spiritual.

The first man was of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those made of dust.

As is the heavenly man, so are those who are heavenly. As we have born, verse 49, the image of the man of dust. What image do you and I bear? Paul, the apostle inspired by God under the influence of the Holy Spirit says, the image that you bear is the image of Adam.

From Seth forward, we have born the image of the man of dust. We shall bear the image of the heavenly man. We've born the image of the earthly.

We shall bear the image, the heavenly image, the image of the heavenly man. Brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Corruption does not inherit incorruption.

Verse 53, this corruptible must put on incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality.

When the corruptible has put on incorruption, when this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

So we bear the image of the earthly. If Paul wants to talk about images and he wants to talk about immortality and future blessing from God, why doesn't he say, because we all have the image of God, ultimately this is going to be redeemed and renewed and God is going to restore us to the garden because we've all got this nascent, incipient image of God. It just needs, it was, what people like to say is, it was defaced in the fall.

The image of God was defaced. It wasn't lost, it was just marred. It got scratched and some of the paint came off.

Paul had every opportunity, just as God had in Genesis chapter four. Paul has every opportunity to talk about the image of God that is in every man. And isn't it curious that he doesn't mention it.

We bear the image of the earthly. We need to bear the image of the heavenly. And as we will see when we come back from the break, well, this is partly review from last time, but the image is renewed in Christ.

This is putting off the former man concerning his desires and lusts and putting on the new man who is being renewed in the image of the creator. You can't even approach the image of God, the image of the creator until you are in Christ, a new creation, old things are passed away. And that image is now in the process of being renewed.

Paul tells the Colossians, I'm in birth pangs until Christ be formed in you. He doesn't say until the image of God gets rehabilitated and, you know, Brasso is brought out to shine it up and fresh paint is put on it to make it look good. Because who is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation? Us, it's Jesus Christ.

Remember the menorah of things that we receive in Christ in Ephesians chapter one, in him we are, in him we have, he is made unto us righteousness and peace and sanctification. In him, we are renewed and brought the image of God begins to be restored. We are not fully saved at this point.

There is a positional sanctification, a positional salvation at the point of faith in Christ, but we enter into, we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We enter into eternal life. We grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

And when we have his words and keep them, he comes and indwells us. If you want to have an express bulletproof statement of the image of God in this age, what is it? Jesus Christ is the fullness of deity in bodily form. He is the expression of God and the express image of his person.

Jesus Christ is the image of God. And without Christ, you don't have the image of God.

It's not there to be dusted off.

The image of God that was lost in the fall is restored. The first Adam lost it. The last Adam brings it back, makes it available.

And we will ultimately bear the image of the heavenly fully and ultimately, but we are progressing and maturing and pursuing the goal of becoming Christ-like because that is the development and the unfolding and the growing of the image of God within us that was lost at the fall. Adam and Eve, the original couple, initiated sin in the world. Who solved the sin problem? The last Adam.

The first Adam loses the image. The last Adam recovers it when we are placed in Christ. And when he dwells in us, as with every other part of our salvation, it is in and through Christ.

The image is uniquely recoverable and uniquely accessible. The image of God to the extent that Jesus Christ is present. He is the image, right? And the implications of that are profound because if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

Well, what about those who are not in Christ? Is there some image of God that is still there that I need to respect and pay attention to? We'll see that when we come back from the break.