

Genesis 97-09-07b

I'm going to talk about the story of the Philistines and what they try to do with the Ark in 1 Samuel Chapter 6. And you have them being afflicted with all kinds of diseases. Their fish god falls and gets his hands and neck broken and so forth, and so they keep sending the Ark to somewhere else in the Philistine Empire. Well, let's send it over to here, and let's send it over to there.

And every place it goes, bad things happen. And pretty soon the whole region is afflicted with tumors, these horrendous growths that appear on their bodies, and this terrible blight of physical disease hits them. And they're overrun with rats and mice and their grain and crops and all the attendant disease that comes along with that.

And so they're trying to figure out what to do, and they say, well, what we'll do is we'll – let's send this thing back to the Israelites and let's offer an offering. And so they say in their pagan ideas of worship, it was common to make an image of the thing that you're trying to purge out of the land. So they make images of the rats and the tumors out of gold and send these back to Israel accompanying the Ark.

They put it on a new cart and they let the ox go that's driving it with its calf and so on, and it wanders back to Israel under God's direction. But the idea we're focusing on in 1 Samuel 6 is these images of the rats and the tumors, the word used there is selen. It's a representation.

It's a model. It's an outline, a casting, if you will, of the tumor. You can't imagine what that would look like.

And the rats, the little creature with the tail and ears and the nose and so forth, they made these out of gold and sent them back with the Ark. And these are referred to as selen. 1 Samuel 6, 5, and so on.

And this is a word commonly translated nine or ten times in the Old Testament. It is translated idol. The theological word book of the Old Testament, which is sort of a magnum interpretive dictionary put together by some of the foremost Hebrew scholars in the world, like Bruce Waltke, says that selen is image, specifically image as a representation of deity.

This is its basic function, its basic meaning in the Old Testament. It's an image that represents deity. And this is important because as such, an image that is a representation of a deity, this is what's forbidden in the Ten Commandments.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. It's not no sculpture, no physical representation of a thing, which is what it came to mean quickly in Israel. But this means no idol.

We know, for example, in the tabernacle and on the Ark of the Covenant itself and in the

curtains of the tabernacle, there were woven images and there were golden cherubim, physical representations of heavenly creatures. And if God had said don't make any graven image, they could have never finished the Ark of the Covenant because it's got these two big cherubs on the top. They are woven into the fabric of the curtains, their image.

And he says thou shalt not make any graven image. Well, what about the pomegranates and the other representations in the seven-branched menorah and so forth? That wasn't what God had in mind in the Second Commandment. It is an image.

It's a telem. It's an image that represents a deity that is viewed as being the shadow or the representation of some imagined god or even god himself. We're not to set up a golden cap and say this is the god that brought us out of the land of Egypt, as the Israelites did right there at the foot of the mountain.

Turn with me to Psalm 8. This is a very well-known, familiar psalm. You can scan down through the first few verses there. But look at verse 5. He starts in verse 4. What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels.

You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet.

This is the idea of image of God. It is the idea of dominion. It's the idea of representation.

The things that God created through his own voice, the works of his own hand, he has put under man's authority. Man is to stand in, if you will, for God, in terms of rulership and dominion over these things. He has been crowned with glory and honor.

This is the glory and honor that attach to God. You have this same idea in Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 15 through 19. Deuteronomy 4, 15 through 19.

Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire. Lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the hosts of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

Reference back to our fourth day. This is the idea implicit in the passage, is don't make an image that you are going to worship, that you're going to view as being the selen of a deity. Well, we'll pause here and take our break, and when we come back we'll contemplate briefly what that means when it says that we are the selen of God himself.

Let's pause here and take our break. Okay, we're back now from our break. And as always we've had some very good questions and hopefully some halfway decent responses during the break.

One of the ideas that we have come up against here is the meaning of *selam*, which we've investigated in its biblical usages in the first session, here in Genesis 1:26. Let us make man in our image after our likeness. Well, again, one of our best clues, especially at the beginning of the Bible, if you will, assuming that someone might start at Genesis 1 and begin studying the Pentateuch, even in the early days after Moses, our context is fairly well limited to what we have here in Genesis 1. So when God says let us make man in our image, we understand that there's the Spirit of God mentioned in 1 too.

So we know that there are at least two individuals because there is a difference between God and the Spirit of God that's implied in that statement. And secondly, when God says let us make man in our image according to our likeness, he's going to have to say something about that to help us understand what it means. Obviously, we are not little gods as much as people might want to see that.

There are religions and cults that think that we are all going to turn into little *elohims* as we progress and get better and better and we'll someday have our own little universe that we can create things in and subject to our will and so forth. So what exactly does this mean? Well, first of all, we want to see these two nouns, image and likeness. This is the only place in Scripture where they occur together, the only place in the Hebrew Bible where these two nouns occur in conjunction.

But we have them separately. We saw several passages where *selam* is used and we've seen that in the theological word book of the Old Testament, Waltke and Archer and some of the very great Hebrew scholars have helped us arrive at a definition for this. It is image as representation of deity.

And as such, in the Hebrew, in the law of Moses especially, that is forbidden. Now why do you think it would be forbidden? We talked about the idols and the difference between having a statue of a cherub versus an image that serves to represent God in some special way. And in fact, this was one of the discussions that came up during the break.

What about, you know, can we hang a picture of Jesus on the wall? I mentioned the painting used to be in my aunt's house of the cityscape and the skyscraper and a very large, not exactly 77 foot tall, but quite large Jesus semi-transparently there with his hand out toward the city as it were. We used to have what I like as a representation of Jesus that used to hang in our house when I was a little boy. Just a picture of Jesus sitting with his hands folded, not especially attractive, not dynamic.

You see lots of these today where they try to make Jesus out to be one thing or another. There are things that are tried to be communicated in paintings and representations of Christ. But what are we to make of this? Should we not have these pictures? Should we be restricted like

the Israelites were? And this is where the definition of Selem helps us out because the specific idea is a representation of deity, something that in a special way is viewed as representing or embodying the presence of God.

You know, ancient people were not silly. They weren't just stupid. They didn't hew out a rock and say, now this rock is what created me, this rock is what is going to make my crops grow well.

This idea was inherent in idolatry. They knew that a statue of a god, Baal, they knew that down the road there was another town with another statue and that it wasn't a separate Baal. These were contact points with an imagined deity such as Baal or Dagon.

People understood the difference between the representation and the deity that they were worshiping. At the same time, they attached special significance and meaning to that representation. If you wanted to offer a sacrifice, you'd bring it to the image.

You'd bring it to the idol because this was a contact point. This was a place and this image, because it represented Baal or Dagon, had special, it was different than other rocks or other carvings or other statues. It was somehow imbued with the presence and the personality and even the perception of the deity.

You could come before the idol and that god could hear you better or see you better or acknowledge you and bless you or curse your enemies or whatever, so that this becomes a sort of a conduit. That's the idea today. It's one thing to want to be reminded of Jesus Christ and his call on the world is represented by this painting of Jesus addressing a city, so to speak.

It's something else to come before that picture and think that this is a special place of prayer or have a little altar there. Many people do this today. Some religions are more prone to this than others, but people will have a statue or a painting or an image and that's where they will bring remembrances and that's where they will come to say their prayers and to do whatever it is they do as a part of their worship.

That's what is forbidden. That's what God specifically prohibited the Israelites from doing. He didn't say never make a statue.

The Israelites didn't even put a man's face on a coin under this prohibition and that wasn't what God was getting at. God said, I don't want you investing objects and representations with special significance in terms of communication. God set up the means of communication and it was through the priests, through the worship, I shouldn't say through the priests, through the worship of the priest superintendent.

They maintained and did the operations and functions of the place of worship, the tabernacle and later the temple. People came there and realized that God was in that place but he wasn't imbuing a statue or a painting or an object. This is one of the arguments against things like a crucifix or even a rosary or any other object that we want to associate with worship and in

Christian circles we do this with our church building, with our quote unquote sanctuary, with our quote unquote pulpit and our baptistry and our steeple and so forth and the stained glass windows and the whole idea.

We think, well in this place I am somehow closer to God. That's the idea. We've come in danger of the same prohibition of the second commandment when we think that a church building, well I'm going to go to the chapel to pray.

Why? I'm going to go to the sanctuary to pray or to worship. Why? We need to have a perspective. Now these are useful things.

Having an auditorium to come together and worship is a good thing but it's because it's a meeting place with other believers. It's a good place for corporate worship where everyone can hear and everyone can sit comfortably and so forth. But as soon as we start attaching a special significance to something material, that's what God prohibits in the second commandment.

And how does that relate to this passage? Well, what is it that is the selen for God on this earth? It's man himself. We are the image of God. We are the representation.

We are the likeness of God. And it is in our very existence that we see an implied need for relationship with God. If you cast a shadow, there is a distinct and inseparable relationship between the shadow and the object that casts it.

And the implication of being made in the image of God is that there is a required connection. There is a required relationship. If we are made in the image of God, we are related to him.

We are supposed to be connected to him. We are supposed to be reflecting him, representing him actively. Nothing else in creation does that.

Not the trees, not nature, not animals, not the movement of the celestial bodies. The expression and the representation of God is in mankind. Now, we will come back to this issue at the fall.

Because this is a different state of things when man, male and female are created versus man, male and female today. We are in a different status. We are not as we came from the hand of God.

We are not substantially the same as Adam and Eve were when they were created. We are different because we are corrupt and we are fallen. Well, what exactly happened to the image of God at the fall? We will take that up when we get to the fall.

But suffice it to say that there is a man, there is a human being who is the last Adam, who is the incarnation of the Godhead in bodily form. And who is that? Jesus Christ. And if you will turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. I almost despair to finding that there in my note, but there it is.

2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4. We have this idea expressed. Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, Christ is the image of God, should shine on them. You can turn a few pages over to Colossians chapter 1 and verse 15.

Colossians 1, 15. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. The juxtaposition of those two ideas is a reminder of what we've seen in 1, 26 and 27, isn't it? Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

In that image you have the idea of dominion. You have the idea of authority and responsibility over creation. That's what God originally assigned to man and that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Another couple of pages over in Philippians chapter 2. Actually a few pages back, Philippians chapter 2 and verse 6. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, a thing to be gripped, being in the likeness of God, in the image of God, the form of God. Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3. God in these last days has spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. And we're back in Genesis 1 with the presence of Jesus Christ as the agency by which God the Father made the worlds.

Who, Jesus Christ, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power and so forth. In Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3. We're focusing here on Jesus as the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. So Jesus Christ as undiminished deity and true humanity, perfected or perfect humanity, perfected in the sense of coming to perfection or obedience through suffering, is and bears the image of God.

Now we ourselves are also referred to as bearing or having the image of God. Look in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 7. In the whole discussion there of the man and the woman, the woman ought to have authority on her head because of the angels as she prays with her head uncovered and so forth. If it is shameful, in verse 6, for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God. But woman is the glory of man. And this is the image and glory of God in terms of representation, of reflection.

Now Paul here is speaking after the fall, isn't he? Man is, man is now the image and glory of God. And you might initially say, well there appears to be some distinction between the man and the woman here. Are we saying that the woman is not the image and glory of God? Not at all.

This is image in the sense of function. What is man's function? Man is to represent God, to

reflect the glory of God. And the relationship between husbands and wives, between men and women, is one of voluntary subordination.

Jesus Christ voluntarily subordinated himself to the Father. It doesn't diminish his quality, does it? This is one of the often overlooked truths in Christian feminism that the Bible is patriarchal and denigrates women and so forth. And it completely misses the idea of voluntary subordination, which has nothing to say about quality.

Jesus Christ voluntarily subordinates himself to the will of the Father. But it doesn't denigrate Jesus Christ in terms of quality, does it? If anything, it is a comment on his quality and on his character. And in the same way, we are all called upon in different areas of life to voluntarily submit, whether it's to governmental authorities, to God himself, or to one another in some capacity.

Slaves to masters, children to parents, wives to husbands. But it is not a comment on quality. It is function.

It is fulfillment of a plan. And in the fulfillment of a military plan, we don't say that the officers are qualitatively superior to the enlisted or that the NCOs are qualitatively superior to the non-coms, to the lower enlisted corporals and lance corporals and so forth. It's an assignment of function.

And all of us have noted that many times you find your higher quality people in some of your lower billets, some of your lower ranks. Many times a wife will outshine her husband in terms of her personal quality. And yet she may, and probably does, continue to voluntarily submit to her husband in those appropriate areas.

So there's a big distinction between quality and worth versus submission. Submission, submitting to something, doesn't mean that you are inferior to it or that you are somehow denigrated. In many cases, it takes the highest quality people to voluntarily submit.

And the greatest illustration of that is Jesus Christ himself, who is the image of God, who had equality with God in eternity past but did not think that that was something to be grasped and retained at the expense of fulfilling the Father's plan. He voluntarily emptied himself and took on the form of a slave on our behalf. So it's an important principle, and it's one that we see here in the image of God, likeness of God idea.

You might also note in this connection, James chapter 3 and verse 9. Remember that very famous section there. When I say famous, probably well-known would be a better description. But talking about the tongue and the power of the tongue.

Look at the ships, even though they are large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles.

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire by Gehenna. We just had our little mini-study on Gehenna this past Friday.

Every kind of beast and bird, reptile and creature of the sea is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. Reference to our responsibility for dominion assigned by God. But no man can tame the tongue.

It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison. With it, in verse 9, we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the image of God, the similitude of God. And what is the application there? We are to remember when we view one another, when we are quick to criticize, quick to curse, quick to assign blame, quick to find fault, quick to elevate ourselves by denigrating others, that we are all in the same status.

We all bear the same relationship to God. God's purpose in creating us was to bear His image and His likeness. We have a representative function.

We have an assigned dominion. Even as God has dominion, He has delegated that dominion to us on this earth. And it's interesting in that regard, this idea of dominion, that God assigns man dominion over what? Let's go back to Genesis chapter 1 because this is inherent.

This is the context for image and likeness. We saw that these ideas were also brought together in the description of Jesus Christ. Let them have dominion over what? The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, all the earth, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

It does not say dominion over each other, does it? There is no idea of submission of one man to another or even woman to man in this passage, is there? That is one of the distinctives between the pre-fall and post-fall situation of mankind. Adam and Eve in the garden did not submit one to the other. Eve was not submissive to Adam.

Adam was not submissive to Eve. There was no need for dominion one over the other. There was need for dominion over the unthinking creation, the animals, the birds, and the fish to not only be ruled over but also to be subdued as we will see in verse 28.

Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. This is an authority. This is a responsibility that God has assigned us and it's one that's often overlooked.

Today you hear a lot about what right do we have to mess up the snail darters environment or what right do we have to depopulate the dolphins or the porpoises or whatever with tuna fishing and so forth. We have no right to relocate animals or to mess with the environment that sustains different species and so forth. We have no right.

Yes, we do. We do have a right. We have a right to fill up the earth and subdue it.

That means go everywhere, go into the belt, go into the Arctic, go into all the different areas of

the earth and subdue it and bend it to our will. So in the area of do we have a right, the answer is yes. But with that right and with that authority comes responsibility.

And the argument that needs to be made is not we have no right to interfere with this species or this creature but what is our responsibility toward this species? What is our responsibility toward this creature? And we have a legitimate responsibility for stewardship. We should not trash our environment not because we have no right to because we're just another one of the creatures and we don't have any right for dominion or to dictate their fate over against ours. That's wrong thinking.

Right thinking says we have a responsibility. We have been assigned stewardship and dominion and we're accountable for that. Do you really want to stand before God as a factory owner and say I polluted the rivers and I killed all the fish and all the wildlife? I poisoned the water and chemicals went into the water table and messed up the area for many square miles? That is a failure to fulfill responsibility for stewardship and dominion.

But you can't make the argument on the basis we have no right. We have no right to kill the deer. We have no right to manage the elk population in Montana.

We have no right to manage the coyotes in the plain states or whatever. What right do we have to end their lives? What right do we have? It's right here in Genesis chapter 1. We have been assigned the divine right of dominion. It has been delegated to us but with that comes responsibility.

So nothing wrong with being aware and sensitive and judicious in how we operate in the environment but we've got to make our arguments on the right basis and with the right viewpoint. It isn't that we're just another cog in the great machine and we don't have any right. We are the brain of the machine and we have a responsibility to make sure that it functions in a way that pleases the Lord.

So that's another byproduct of our investigation here in the area of dominion. But at this point there is no dominion in the human realm. This is dominion over creation, not dominion over one another.

That will come later with the introduction of sin. And that's going to be instructed to us in terms of the function of that dominion and the responsibility that goes with that right of authority. We'll get to that after the fall.

So this is a sign that in verse 27 God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And this tells us that in the initial creation the implication is that there is equality in this regard.

Unlike the implication in the New Testament that man bears the image of God and the woman reflects the glory of the man, initially the man and the woman are alike in this regard. There is no idea of subordination, of differentiation of function. The man and the woman cooperate in

executing this dominion.

Let me return just for a moment to the idea of likeness. Because this is a different word in Hebrew. Let us create man in our image and after our likeness.

And you'll notice that that is not repeated in verse 27. It doesn't say God created man in his image and after his likeness. It just says in his image.

Is that significant? Let's find out what it means to be in the likeness. The verb is used some 30 times in the Old Testament, twice in the Aramaic of Daniel. And it basically means to be like, to be like something, to compare one thing to another.

It's usually with reference to man. You can see this just as an example in Psalm 144 verse 4. Man is like a breath. His days are like a passing shadow.

Just a simple comparison. A simile idea that you have in literature. Similarly in Psalm 102 verse 6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness.

I am like an owl of the desert. This is the verb form demuth. And this is d-e-m-u-t-h.

You also have this in Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 9. A little bit different idea in Isaiah. Unless the Lord of hosts had left us to a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom. We would have been made like Gomorrah.

Gomorrah. Demuth. This also in the intensive stem, the p-a-l in Hebrew, is the intensive form.

It's got a different vocalization. It means to compare. And we find this, for example, in the passage we read this morning out of Isaiah chapter 40 verses 18 and verse 25.

Who is like me, says the Lord. This is the same idea. It's the verb form of this noun that we find in Genesis 126.

The likeness of God. Who is like God? That's the question we opened with this morning. You see this also, and you might turn to this, Psalm 50, 21.

Psalm 50, 21. To the wicked, we'll start up in verse 16 of Psalm 50. To the wicked, God says, what right have you to declare my statutes or take my covenant in your mouth, seeing that you hate instruction and cast my words behind you? There are people who disregard God and his plan and his purpose, the call that he places on our lives, and yet still want to claim his blessing, still want to be under his grace.

So to the wicked, God says, what right have you to declare my statutes or take my covenant in your mouth, seeing that you hate instruction and you cast my words behind you? When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and you have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother.

You slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I kept silent. You thought that I was altogether like you, but I will rebuke you and set them in order before your eyes.

Now this is man in his sinfulness and in his sinful activity thinking of God as being like man, inventing God in the image of man rather than man being created in the image of God. And this is a very common thing. You see it throughout scholarship.

You see it in Christian thinking, in Christian circles. We reinvent God in our own image. It's rampant in Christian music.

It's rampant in a lot of modern Christian books that you see in the Christian bookstores where people invent a god of their own imagination, picking and choosing passages of Scripture when they do quote any Scripture at all, but thinking of God and treating God as though he is a certain way rather than finding out what God is like from Scripture. And that's a very dangerous thing. God says you wicked think that I am altogether like you, but I will rebuke you and set in order before your eyes.

And if you read the rest of that there in verse 22 and 23, now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. Whoever offers praise glorifies me. And to him who orders his conduct aright, I will show the deliverance of God.

We need to remember that we are the shadow. We are the image and the likeness, not the other way around. And we don't go to God and get him to do our bidding.

We are here to fulfill his purpose. This idea of the prosperity gospel and so forth is a classic illustration of this mistake. So that's the verb form.

The noun occurs. I'll just give you the chapter, Ezekiel chapter 1. When Ezekiel sees the vision of God and he says, I saw one like, this occurs throughout the chapter. It's in there.

It's verse 5, verse 10, verse 13. Pretty much every place you see him say, I saw one like, Ezekiel is very careful to say he did not see God. He saw a likeness of God.

And you find this again four times in Ezekiel chapter 10. And this is the idea of theophany. I saw one like.

And of course it's interesting in a study for another time to compare that to Isaiah who in chapter 6 says he saw God or to the elders who go up into Sinai and see God enthroned in the sea of glass and so forth. You also find this idea or this noun likeness in Daniel chapter 10, verse 16. And you have the idea of it in Revelation 1, 13.

And you can see that Daniel and John both follow Ezekiel's careful distinction between seeing something like, you know, that represents God and seeing God himself. But what's the bottom line here? You have image and likeness. And these words occur only here together.

And God says something is unique about man. We're going to create him to uniquely reflect

and represent God. When we look at the things that distinguish us from the rest of animal creation, we find out what that image and likeness are.

God doesn't expand on that idea. He doesn't explain it and develop it in Genesis. And he doesn't really do that anywhere else in Scripture.

And you find people who do. You have people who say we should go out and do altruistic things for all the people in the world because they all bear the image of God. The Bible doesn't make that application.

Our application is this. Likeness, being the image, being the outline or the shadow of something that has more substance than us, more reality and fullness than us, implies relationship. It implies an inescapable connection that we're responsible for.

Your shadow never leaves you. You have these fanciful things on TV or in cartoons where the shadow does something different than the real thing. Well, in reality, that does not happen.

And we are inextricably linked to our God. We bear His image and likeness, even after the fall. And we'll develop the difference between before and after the fall when we get to that point.

But for now, it is enough for us to remember that we have responsibility. When God created us in His image and after His likeness, in the same breath, He assigned us responsibility. We have responsibility.

We have delegated authority. And we have a call on us. There's a purpose in our existence.

And that purpose is to represent and reflect God. Well, we have fallen from the likeness of God. We are not like Adam in perfection in the garden.

We're not like Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of deity in bodily form. The call on our life is to capture that, to become that in our lives. That's the fundamental root reason for our existence.

We are to pick up that fallen flag, that fallen banner, and carry it forward. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We are to become Christ-like.

And what is Christ? He is the image of the invisible God. He is the fullness of deity in bodily form. And that leads us logically to the next question.

Well, what is that image that I am to recapture? God is love. God is light. God is compassion.

God is grace. God is not evil. God is not sin.

God reserves mercy for thousands. And it is the positive side of God's expressions of character toward us that we are to seek, because that's what we lost at the fall. We lost the ability to love on the basis of our own inherent character and quality.

We lost the ability to forgive because of who and what we are. We lost the ability to have

genuine compassion that has a purpose and that reflects the glory of God, not compassion for its own sake. And you find in recent events, the death of famous people who have done good works and are revered and renowned and mourn Princess Diana and all of the press that has received this last week.

And people have constantly referred to her compassion and her heart and so forth. And yet she did these things without a sense of purpose in the light of the divine, in the light of God. She apparently consulted astrologers.

There was never any connection, public or private, that I have heard with being a believer or serving God or fulfilling his purposes or doing these things as an expression of a love of Christ. These were altruistic good works which anyone can do. The worst, Al Capone gave to charities and benefited a lot of orphans.

What eternal impact does that have? Oh, he did good for people. Well, in connection with this death this past week, some celebrity was saying about Princess Diana, well, she made an impact on people. In fact, it was a rap guy that said this.

He said, well, and isn't that after all the ultimate meaning in life is to benefit others, to have a positive effect on people? Wrong. That's not the ultimate meaning of life. That's not bearing the image and the likeness of God.

It's totally apart. And that's what's missing. And that's the difference.

And we have to be sure that we observe that distinction in our own lives. Why do we do what we do? Do we understand our responsibility as image bearers, as living in the likeness of God? That comes through growth. It comes through the power of God's Word and the power of God's Spirit.

We don't want to forget that because every day that we do is a day wasted. And we might as well be going into the ground over there on the island in the middle of the lake on the Spencer Estate because that's all the fruit of our life. Positive things done for people, that's not the standard of measure in God's eyes.

To what extent do we reflect His glory? To what extent do we recapture and bear His image? Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank You for Your grace toward us. We thank You that You have found a way after our fall, in our corruption and our sinfulness, You have found a way to rehabilitate us.

You have infused us with Your Spirit. You have given us the opportunity to be transformed by the renewing of our minds through Your Word so that we can fulfill our original purpose of likeness and image that You purposed for us. And we know that this is Your eternal purpose and one that we will fulfill not only in this life, but also in the ages to come.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us of these things, make them real to us, and show

us the means to fulfill these things, not just to think about it and meditate on it, but to develop it into priorities, thoughts, and actions in our lives so that we will be representatives of Your truth.