

Image: God Loves

Lecture

- All right, so in this talk, we're gonna get into Image: God Loves. And what I'm trying to do is walk through the storyline of the Bible from creation to new creation looking at some of the big doctrines and issues. And here we find ourselves asking the question, what is human life? Or for you, it would be the question of identity. So think of it for a second, how do you introduce yourself? You're meeting someone, you could tell them anything. You could say, "I have bad breath and I don't spell well." You probably don't start with that, you start with your name, your age, where you live, whatever it is, we think of ways to present ourselves because that way in which we present ourselves is how people perceive us and interact with us. So we want that to be positive, not negative. We do the same thing, we fill out a resume or a job application or a social media profile, how am I going to explain myself? How many of you have struggled to do these things? How many of you have struggled to put together a dating profile on a Christian dating website? You're like, "I don't know what to say. How do I present myself? I don't wanna lie, but I also wanna be picked, so where is that line, Lord?" And so in the non-Christian world they'll talk about your self-image, your self-esteem and self-love, which is the way I understand myself is only in relation to myself, not in relation to God. As Christians, we perceive things a bit differently. And when it comes to the issue of identity it really is the one thing that changes everything because when you know who you are, you know what to do. And we struggle to form an identity. How many of you, when you were a kid, your identity was shaped by your place in the birth order? Oh, that's the daughter, that's the son, that's the middle one, that's the first born, that's the funny youngest one. How many of you, it was a nickname, positive or negative that somebody gave you? It was a role that you had, or a sport that you played, or an achievement that you are, and that became your identity. And then you hit junior high and high school, and we all have some sort of identity crisis. This is where kids change their appearance, changed their dress, they're trying to figure out what will cause me to be accepted and approved? And they will recreate their identity until they find something that others will respond to positively. Then you'd go to college and you get to reinvent yourself. You're away from your parents, nobody knows you. You get to dress however you like, believe whatever you wanna believe, go wherever you wanna go, drink whatever you wanna drink, and you sort of recreate your identity. And then you graduate and you're single, and it's like, who am I now? I gotta get a job, I gotta pay off my school loans, I gotta figure out who my friend group is. And then you get married, and you think you know who you are till you get married. Let me just tell you this, your spouse doesn't change you, they expose you, that's what they do. There's now witness to your life. And it's like, okay, I'm me and you're you, but now we're supposed to be one, what does that identity look like for us to be one, as God is one? And then you become a parent, and so much of your identity can be around, we're parents, and the kids are the gravitational center of the universe, and then the kids leave home, and the parents who are we, what are we doing? We lost sense of purpose. We want the kids to come home, or we just tell them, "Get pregnant and give us babies as soon as possible, so we can go back to our identity of caregiver and nurture." See, we struggle with this throughout the course of our life. And when it comes to looking at the human person and how we identify ourselves, various groups will

give us various answers. So we didn't even conceive of ourselves as individuals until a philosopher named Augustine wrote a book called "The Confessions". And in it, he started talking about his personal psychological journey with God. Before that time, your identity was primarily shaped by your culture, your family, and your family history. And so we tended not to think of ourselves as rugged individuals, this is a very modern and Western, not necessarily Eastern and biblical view of humanity. You are an individual, but you are obligated to care about the rest of humanity. And what I see even most interesting is people open the Bible and say, "What's the personal application?" Well, most of it's written to communities and groups of people about life together, not just one person, and so much of, we think about our identity as well is that primarily we are defined by our mind and the thoughts that we have. And then we put a lot into our education because our GPA determines our worth and our value. Well, that starts with a guy named Rene Descartes, who's a philosopher, he has a cogito, ergo sum, I think therefore I am, and what he decided was the center of what it means to be human is to be a rational mind or brain. Ergo sum says the essence of what it means to be a person is to be an individual, Descartes says it's to be a thinking individual. And then there's a man named John Jacques Rousseau, he is a philosopher, not a Christian. And what he says is we're made for love and acceptance, but we don't need that from God, we need to love ourselves and accept ourselves. So the sense of what it means to be a healthy person now is I'm an individual who approves of myself, accepts myself and loves myself, no relationship to God, just me in relationship to me. William James was an American psychologist comes along and says, "You as an individual with the mind separated from God, needs to not only love and accept yourself that through counseling and guiding and psychologizing yourself, you can improve yourself. You don't need God to forgive you, and God's spirit to indwell you, and God's grace to sustain you, you don't need to live in relationship with God, you live in relationship with yourself and you could fix yourself and overcome your own problems." And this is the whole of American self-help industry. This is the whole of American self-health industry. And then lastly, there's a gentlemen named Abraham Maslow, and he comes up with something called The Hierarchy of Needs and the highest need he says that humans have is self-actualization, which is glory. So he says, "The chief is that you would achieve all your potential, that you would reveal all your glory that the universe is waiting to see you." And we put this pressure on our kids and it crushes them, and we wonder why, because it's ungodly. We're not supposed to be the center of the universe, we're not made for glory, we don't live independently and we're more than just a mind. So when it comes to the Bible, I told you in the first lecture, two of the most important things that we learned from the Bible, it's who God is and who we are. In this time together, I wanna look at who we are. So if you've got a Bible, go to Genesis chapter one, we'll just read what it says, and I'm not gonna hit everything but I'll give you some highlights. So Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." So the center of history is not us, it's God, it's God. You're not gonna learn this, apart from the Bible. God made us, and He made the world which we live in. The rest of Genesis 1 talks about God creating plant life, animal life, and then we get to human life, verse 26, "Then God said." So God speaks, says 10 times in Genesis 1, God said, "Let us." Back to the church, Father Augustine, he would say that, that plural language of us could refer to the Trinity, the father, son, and spirit. Others would say that the angelic heavenly hosts, God's divine counsel, those created beings that include angels as well as others, and we'll get into those in a future lecture that they may have been present, and

God was inviting them to observe His creation account as well. God said, "Let us make man that is humanity, mankind in our image, in our likeness." So what does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God? That's your identity, that's human life. In Genesis 3, when we get into it, Satan shows up and he goes after their identity. And what he says is if you will disobey you can become like God, that's fashioning an identity apart from God, not in obedience to God, they didn't need to disobey God to become like God, they were made by God in God's likeness, like God. So the key is you either live from the identity that God gives you, or you adopt an identity that Satan fashions and forms for you. And he's always going for your identity. The story continues, "And let them have dominion." So there is a hierarchy, "Over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, over all the earth, over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man, that's the race, that's humanity, that's mankind, in His own image, in the image of God, He created him, and then what? Male and female, He created them. Men and women are equal by virtue of creation that they are both made in the image and likeness of God. Furthermore, God is binary in His gender categories, male, female, He doesn't have a third target restroom and you get to pick, He has male and female. Again, because the God of the Bible, He is binary, He is categorical, there is night and day, there is man and woman, there is creator and created, there are categories and differentiations, and this includes male and female. And some of you say, "Boy the culture doesn't believe this." Because Satan continually goes after our identity and seeks us to live to death out of an identity that he forms and fashions contrary to the one God created us for to experience fullness of life. So it goes on to say, verse 28, "And God blessed them." Did they ask for a blessing? No, did they do anything to deserve a blessing? No, God blesses because God is good. Let me tell you, God made you and God likes to bless you. How many of you look back at your life, and you say, "Yeah, God's blessed me." Satan's attack me as well, we'll get to that next week, it's the next part of the story, but God has blessed me. God blessed them, and God said to them, not only does God speak, He speaks to us, this is a relational God, the Trinitarian, God of the Bible. Let us make man in our image, in our likeness and let us speak to them so that they can relate to us. "God blessed them, said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, increase in number, fill the earth.'" Basically have a lot of kids, it's a big planet, fill her up, that's sorta God's decree, it's fill her up. And then verse 31, if you jump down, "And God saw everything He had made and behold, it was very good." Everything that God made, He says is good. And then the crowning achievement, the apex of His creation is the man and woman made the image and likeness of God. And He says, "That is all very good." This is the world as God intended it, this is the world as God created it, this is before the world as we know was corrupted by sin. What happens in Genesis 1 and 2, it is a beginning, middle, beginning story. And so it tells the beginning and then it revisits the story again. And so Genesis 1 and 2, are both snapshots giving different aspects of the creation of the man and the woman. So I'm gonna jump down to Genesis 2:18. "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone.'" Question, has sin yet entered the world? No, everything God made was good but there was one thing that was not good, that it's not good for a man to be alone, why? Because he can't reflect the image and likeness of a relational God unless he's in a relationship. God is a personal God, He made us personally, God is a relational God who made us for relationship. And some people will say, "I don't need a relationship with other people, I just have a relationship with God." Adam had a relationship with God and God had said it wasn't good for him to be alone. That he needed somebody who

was also made in the image and likeness of God to be in relationship with him. God says, "I will make a helper fit for him." Now some women get offended but all married women know your husband needs help, that's what it means, he needs help. So we appreciate you, thank you for helping, but she is going to help him to image God and together, they will reflect the Trinity to the earth. "Now to the ground, the Lord, God formed every beast of the field, every bird of the heavens, brought them to the man to see what he would name them." This is Adam demonstrating dominion by naming the animals. So God says, "I'm gonna make you a partner for life." Adam's like, "Amazing." And then he's naming all the animals, can you imagine that? That's not her, right Lord, okay, good aardvark. No, that's not her, right Lord? No, hippopotamus, okay good, thanks Lord. And what happens is he sort of waits for the grand finale. It says, "But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep." I tend to think of it as a recliner with the lever, but I'm not sure that's in the Hebrew. He's taken a nap, he's out cold. "God had him to sleep, He took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh, and the rib the Lord got to take it from the man, He made it into a woman and brought her to the man." So here's, what's beautiful. God creates the man out of the dust of the earth, He creates the woman out of the side of the man. This is very personal, and they go together. When Grace and I first got married, she still likes to, so I'm gonna say we used to snuggle, we still do, but when we first got married and she'd be like, "I just wanna snuggle, I wanna hang out." And what I always say is "Welcome home." You come from here, this is where you belong and it feels like home. And by coming from the side of the woman, this is different than chauvinism that says that the man should be out front and it's different than feminism which says, no, the woman should be out front, it says, no, we should be side by side as peers and co-laborers made the image and likeness of God. It's this beautiful poetry of the creation of our first parents. And let me just say this, I do believe that Adam and Eve are the first human beings in the history of the world. And you're gonna see that in Romans 5, and 1 Corinthians 15 because of one man sin, the race fell. And then Jesus is the last Adam, and so all of this has theological significance but I do believe these are the first two human beings and they didn't evolve, they were created by God in His image and likeness, and they're our first parents and we are their descendants. Then the man said, so not only does God speak, now the man speaks, this is the first recorded words of any human being in the history of the world. And he sings, this is a Hebrew love song, he sings to his wife, that's why you musicians have always had a strategic advantage over the rest of us. But for Adam, he needs to nail this because there's how many women? One, you better work this out. So he sings to her, he sings to her. "The man said, 'This is at last bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man.'" He sings her a song, sings her a song. And then it says something that Jesus and the apostle Paul quote, "Therefore threefold process." You single guys, write this down, a man, shall number one, what? Leave his mother and father, what does that mean? Move, get off the payroll, move. And then cleave to his wife, and then the two shall become one flesh. A man needs to self-govern, create a responsible environment to enter into a romantic relationship and not live or sleep with the woman until they are consummating their covenant, that's God's intent and plan. So much of the problems we have in our world are this pattern is not followed. People are still dependent on their parents, and having children that maybe they don't even want, so we take their life, we'll get into that in this lecture. Everything that God made functions according to God's purpose and breaks, when it rebels against God's

intention, and this is God's intention for us. And then it goes on to say, "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother, hold fast to his wife, they'll be become one flesh." I would make you this observation that word there for one in the original Hebrew, it's a Cod. I told you in the lecture on Trinity there was something called the Shema, in Deuteronomy 6:4, three times a day, the devout Jewish people including the Lord, Jesus would have said it, it was here Israel, the Lord our God, He is one, the Lord, our God, He is a Cod. And the question is well, what is the Trinitarian God of the Bible like? Well, He's kind of like a husband and a wife who are one. Let me just say this, when the kids were growing up, they would ask me, "Dad, what's the Trinity like?" And I say, "Well, your mom and I do you think we're one?" They're like, "Yeah, you guys are one. You guys live together, same last name, do everything together, yeah, you guys are one." 'Cause we love each other, and we live in relationship, and we care for one another and we speak to one another and we cherish one another, that's a little reflection of the Trinitarian God of the Bible. We're one, though we're two. He's one, though He's three. And He enters into our covenant so that together, the three of us can live together as one, it's a little reflection of the Trinitarian character of God. The man and his wife were both naked or if you're in Texas naked, naked, and they felt what, no shame. See guilt is external, shame is internal. God could take away your guilt but you could still carry your shame. They had no shame because there was no sin. God's intent is one man, one woman, consummate their covenant, live together in union and communion with no shame and total intimacy, that's God's intent. Let me say four things about relationships from this, number one, well, I'll say these in succession, God actually made you for four different categories of relationship. He made you for a relationship with Him, that's your spiritual relationship. He made you for a relationship with yourself, but you would know who you are. Adam is Adam, Eve is Eve, He speaks to each of them, this is your psychological relationship with yourself. He also created you and I to live in relationship with other people, that's our social relationships. And with the world that He made, that's our environmental relationship. And so God is a relational God, and He wants you to have a healthy relationship with Him, with yourself, with others, and understanding your place in the world that God made. Let me say this as well regarding marriage. Number one, God made us male and female with equality and dignity by virtue of creation. So a woman doesn't have anything to prove to a man, a man doesn't have anything to prove to a woman 'cause the man and the woman were both made by God. Number two, romantic relationships and true love is more like a song than a math equation. When Eve shows up and he sings to her, what it means is that love is best in the context of creativity and poetry, and I dare say even sentimentality, it's an emotional passion, and that's how God feels toward us. And He has a lot of poetry in the Bible articulating His affection for us like a husband loves the wife, it's all very emotional, personal. Number three, I'll just lean over the plate and take one for our team, marriage is for one man and one woman only, God created marriage, the state did not create marriage. God created marriage and God defined marriage. As some of you will say, "Well, their culture disagrees." Well, the culture disagrees with most everything in the Bible, so this shouldn't shock us because the world in its wisdom does not know God. Nonetheless, when it comes to the issue of marriage, it doesn't matter what the courts say, it matters the verdict that God's court renders. Marriage is for a man and a woman and that's God's intent and decree. And some of you will say, "I disagree." And my rebuttal to you would be, we all agree there should be a line, we just disagree over where that line should be drawn because what's gonna happen in our lifetime is

polygamy, I promise you that it's coming. Because the Bible is far less clear about polygamy than it is homosexuality. There are people who love God that were polygamous, it was wrong, there is not anyone in the Bible who loved God, was a faithful servant of God and involved in homosexual relations. Our culture will shortly be debating polygamy for marriage. And some will say, no, no, no, no, no, it should be two people, why two? Do you wanna draw a line somewhere? Okay, well four, but five is too many. Why is five too many? What should only be with consenting adults was that 16 or 18 or 21? Why not a 12 year old? 'Cause we need to draw the line somewhere. We all agree there should be a line, the difference is where do we draw it? And the question is who has the authority to draw the line? And the Christian has always held God created marriage, God created the line, God drew the line, our job is to hold the line, is to hold the line. In addition, God created our bodies and sexual pleasure and He said it was all very good. All sex outside of heterosexual marriage is a sin. That marriage is a hearth and that passion is a flame. How many of you love having a fire in your house if it's in the fireplace? A fire outside of the fireplace is a real situation. You're like, I love fires in fireplaces, I don't like fires in bedrooms. And what happens is we bring fire into our bedroom that's supposed to live in the hearth, that it's supposed to be contained and constrained, the passions of intimacy in the hearth of marriage. Then it can warm the home without earning it down, that's God's intent. Sex is to be without shame, so God wants to take your shame and Jesus scorned our shame, and we'll get into that in the future, and then number seven when it comes to your romantic relationships, your standard of beauty is your spouse. Who did Adam have to compare Eve to? No one, who did Eve have to compare Adam to? She couldn't be like, "He seems tall or short." She's like, "I've only seen one, he is whatever that is." Your standard, God doesn't give you a standard of beauty, God gives you a spouse as your standard of beauty. This is where we see everything differently. And we don't just look at the body, we look at the soul of the person that we're in relationship with, so this is what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God. So let me walk through some questions then that come as a result of this, what is the place of humans in relation to God and creation? So there's animals, there's plants, there's God, there's us, there's angels. It's sort of what's the chain of command? Psalm 8:5-8, "You've made him, that is mankind, a little lower than the heavenly beings." So right now, you and I, there's God and the obedient angels, and then us, because we have sinned and disobeyed. Once we're in our resurrected body, Paul tells the Corinthians that we will judge the angels. That means that we're going to be promoted once we're resurrected, but for now we're below the angels but we're crowned with glory and honor. God looks at human life and He bestows glory and honor on humanity. When we take this from people we're dishonoring the God who made them. "You've given him dominion over the works of your hands, you've put all things under His feet." Again, this is chain of command. Under feet means under authority of, jurisdiction of. "All sheep and oxen, the beasts of the fields, the birds of the heaven, the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea." So here it is, God, the angels that are still obedient, us, and then animals and plants, we would call this a Christian anthropology. And when you don't understand this one of two things happens, we pulled humanity up to be like gods and goddesses, and sparks of the divine and Holy sacred beings, and we make ourselves into god like status, or we pull ourselves down to the realm of the animals, that we're just highly evolved animals, that we're all just a bunch of beasts. So we just drink our alcohol and rape our neighbor and pillage our company, and that's what animals do, it's might makes right,

the survival of the fittest, the weak are eaten by the strong. And what allows us to have dignity and humility is to be under God and over lower creation. Radical environmentalist wanna push us down to animals, Eastern religions want to pull us up to gods and goddesses, God wants us to know our place. Now this next question, dichotomy or trichotomy, I'm debating whether or not I should have put this in, but I'm gonna run through it quickly. And here's the reason I wanna hit this, how many of you are counselors, you're ministry leaders you're teachers, you're parents, you're caregivers, you're doctors, you're nurses, you're helping, you're trying to help hurting people? How many of you that describes you? So the question is how do we help someone unless we know what constitutes a person? If we don't know what a person is, we don't know how to help the whole person. And this is the essence of the debate between what I'll call dichotomy or trichotomy. Now in the old Testament, there are a lot of different words to describe different aspects of your being. So you have a soul, that means you're created by God. You have a spirit, which speaks of you being filled with the Holy Spirit. It also can refer to your mind, resolve, your will, your inner life, your flesh refers to your physical body. Blood denotes humanity, and the shedding of blood is the ending of human life. And then the heart is your inner life, the seat of your emotions, your will, your decision making. And so the Bible says that you and I we're complicated, How many of you have realized that people are complicated? Have you noticed that? We're complicated, there's a lot going on in concert and in harmony in the human life and body. The New Testament has some additional words as well and it denotes different aspects of our being. So you have your body, which is your physical life. You have your soul, which is your inner life of thoughts and feelings, you have your spirit, which is your internal life and sometimes refers to the soul that God saves. Your heart again, refers to feelings, thoughts, will, decision-making, worship. Jesus says, "Out of the heart comes the words we say and the life we live, and the decisions we make." Your mind is knowing and thinking and determining and judging and being responsible. We're supposed to love the Lord, our God with all our mind, that we're to think God's thoughts after Him as an act of worship, and then the conscience is the capacity of universal, moral judgment. We just know things are right and wrong because we're made in the image and likeness of God and we're not inanimate immaterial objects and we're not just passion driven animals, we're people who know right and wrong, because God made us and we have an innate sense of that which is good and evil. This leads to this question, dichotomy or trichotomy? And this is a debate, are you primarily three categories or aspects or are you two? And there are those who are Christians, this is an open-handed issue, who would debate and argue for each case from the Scriptures. I believe trichotomy primarily comes from ancient, non-Christian, non-biblical Greek philosophy and I believe that dichotomy is more of a biblical category, I'll explain why, trichotomy says you're three parts, your body, your spirit, your soul. Your body is your physical being, your spirit is the inward part of you that relates to the Holy Spirit and then the soul is an invisible immaterial part of you that causes affections, desires, reason, emotions, will and expresses self-consciousness. I would hold more to what I would call a dichotomy and that is that you and I are primarily two parts and people are very complicated. There is the material, the physical, the visible, there is the immaterial, the spiritual, that which is only visible to God, that you have an outer life and you have an inner life. And I think categorically, this is the easiest way to understand humanity, now, here's why this matters. When it comes to caring for a whole person we need to understand what constitutes a whole person, so we can minister to, and we

can love, and we can serve and we can help the whole person. Those who hold a trichotomous position say, you need a doctor to deal with your body, you need a pastor to deal with your soul, to deal with your spirit, and you need a psychologist to deal with your soul or your inner life. And what this has caused is many people have nothing to do with God, and they're trying to get fixed by people who don't understand that God made them and the complexity that He made them in and the purposes that He made them for. I would argue, you need a doctor to serve your body and then you need someone who is particularly gifted in soul care. This can be a pastor, this can be someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit and has wisdom. This can be someone who is trained in psychology and using the social sciences and what I'll call general revelation and coming to an understanding of the human need, but the human solution has to come from God, that psychology and the social sciences, they can watch our patterns and some of the cause effect correlations but only God can heal the soul, only God can change the heart, only God can transform somebody at the center of their being and that's what it means to be born again. And so for us, we believe to care for the whole person, yes, you need to go to a doctor, maybe it's hormonal, maybe it's chemical, maybe it's medical, maybe there's something biological going on and something spiritual, and these tend to work together. So it's somebody filled with the Holy Spirit bringing the presence of God into the relationship and having the Holy Spirit do part, if not all of the work, in the transformation of the inner person to make them healthy so that they can live as the child of God. Here's what I'm telling you. If you need help, feel free to go to a doctor, feel free to invite Godly wise counsel in, but make sure these are people that know and love the Lord and bring the power in the presence of the person of the Holy Spirit into the healing opportunity that God intends for you. And the reason I tell you this is because even in our modern education, doctors only study the body and seminary students only study the spirit and then the psychologists only study the soul, and God wants us to care for the whole person, minister to the whole person, love the whole person, and God redeems what part of you? All of you, so are you supposed to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? That's Jesus' way of saying everything, Jesus' way of saying everything. That being said, let's talk about unborn life. We've talked about those made in the image and likeness of God, what about those that are still in the womb? This is where issues of life and abortion are not necessarily political issues, they're biblical issues with political implications. So my question is what do Dr. Luke and the Holy Spirit say about the unborn? Each verse I'm gonna share with you is written by a man named Luke, he is called in the New Testament, I think it's in the book of Colossians, the beloved physician, he's a medical doctor. So some of you say, "I don't believe we should go to doctors." The majority of the New Testament was written by a doctor, so God's okay with doctors. And Luke is one who heals physically and spiritually. He'll bring medical insight and also pray for divine healing, and that is helping the whole person. And here's what I want you to know. There is a word for baby that Dr. Luke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and who knows what's going in the mother's womb, who knows what's going on in the mother's womb? The Holy Spirit, the Bible says in Psalms that God knit us together in our mother's womb that we're fearfully and wonderfully made. There's a lot of mystery there, but the Holy Spirit, he sees and knows what's going on in the womb of the woman even before those who have medical training can fully understand or articulate all that is happening. And I want you to see that the word used for baby is the same word for a baby in a tummy and a baby in an arm and a baby in a swing. It's the same word because it's all human life. So in Luke,

here's John the Baptizer, Jesus' cousin he's in the belly of his mother Elizabeth, and she goes to see Mary, their relatives. When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby, his name is John the Baptizer. He was already named by an angel, so you can be known by God, named by God with a destiny and calling on your life before you're born. That's a person, and the baby, Luke 1:44, "In my," Elizabeth says, "womb leaped for joy." She's like, "I showed up with Mary, and John the Baptizer was so excited, he started worshiping God in here, in here." How about Jesus Christ in the room? Luke 2:12, Mary is told or rather the angels are told, "You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." So angels are told, and the wise men are told Jesus is born. And you know what? He's a baby, same word in the womb, same word outside of the womb, because it's a person from conception through birth, through life. What's amazing is in our day, we would say well, single poor uneducated women shouldn't have babies. Her name is Mary, His name is Jesus. Luke 2:16, "They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby." What baby is that? That's the baby Jesus, same word for the unborn, John the Baptizer. What about children outside of the womb? Luke 18:15, Jesus is a grown man. And it says, "Now they were bringing even infants to Him that He might touch them." That's one of the most touching stories in the whole Bible, all the kids run to Jesus, and you know what it says? The same word as the unborn, John the Baptizer, the newly born, Lord Jesus, and the kids who run to hang out with Jesus, same word, all human life all created in the image and likeness of God. This is where an attack on human life is an attack on God, who is the giver of life. There's a haunting line in the Psalms and God, or excuse me in Proverbs, and God says, and I quote, "All who hate me, love death." If you hate God, you love death, if you love God, you hate death and those who hate God love death. Acts 7:19 speaks of this. "He," talking of Pharaoh in the old Testament, "dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they should not be kept alive." He says there was this mass infanticide of the killing of all of these sons back in Egypt, and it was demonic and it was evil and it was a satanically inspired false God named Pharaoh who didn't want the children of the real God to live, and so we brought death and it was death to the infants, the same word that is used of John the Baptizer in his mother's womb is the same word used at the baby Jesus in the manger, is the same word used for the children who run to Jesus, is the same word used for all of the sons that were murdered back in the days of Egypt, it's all the same. So this insanity in our day, well, when does it become a life? When God says it's a life and that's from conception. I mean, we now have states that are saying, we can have post-birth abortion. I'll just tell you, you are now post-birth. If I kill you, it's murder, the world is lost it's mind. And the world doesn't understand that they are made by God, and we're here for God, and human life is significant and sacred, and intrinsically designed by God, and that we will give an account for how we treat human life when we stand before God. Now all of this comes out of a non-Christian evolutionary thought process. That is why abortion is racism, I'll just say it plainly because it is the erroneous notion, not that everybody comes from the same mom and dad, Adam and Eve, all the races and nations are all part of the same family, all made in the image of likeness of God. Now, evolutionary thinking says some of us were animals, some of us are people, and some of us are somewhere in between and they are not fully human or worthy of all human rights. Charles Darwin says, and I quote, "At some future period not very distant and measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world." Charles Darwin said, you know what? We need to get rid of

certain people because of their skin culture, their skin color, excuse me, their skin color or their culture. And God says, those are all my kids made in my image and likeness, and we don't murder the ones that don't look like you, we love them because I love you all. God is a father and He has a father's heart. God is not a murderer, He doesn't have a murderer's heart. This evolutionary thinking led to something called Nazi Germany and sterilization, and the Überman and the survival of the fittest, and conquering and overtaking other races and nations and putting people into furnaces. And it was concentration camps, but it became too barbarous and then we had World Wars to bring it to an end. And so we moved it from the concentration camps to the clinics in poor neighborhoods. There is a woman named Margaret Sanger, she is the founder of Planned Parenthood. She has something called a Malthusian eugenicist and she holds to Darwinian evolution and she wants to see less fit races destroyed, so she opens clinics. In 1933, her planned parenthood magazine called *The Birth Control Review*, published an article called *Eugenic Sterilization and Urgent Need*. It was penned by Ernst Ruden, Hitler's director of genetic sterilization and founder of the Nazi society for racial hygiene. I'm telling you that apart from the Bible, there is nothing to stop the horror of racism and human evil. The same year, it also published an article by EA Whitney called *Selective Sterilization* that praised and defended Nazi racial programs. When she opened clinic, she put those in poor neighborhoods, why? To get rid of certain races, and it continues to this day. We've had nearly roughly 1 million abortions a year since it was legalized, 29% of the population is Black and or Hispanic, but 55% of the abortions were to those who are Black or Hispanic. And one of our Supreme Court justices recently spoke out against the terrifying and horrifying success of racial profiling and sterilization and murder and eugenics through legalized abortion. Margaret Sanger said and I quote, "Birth control appears to the..." Excuse me, "Birth control appeals to the advanced radical because it is calculated to undermine the authority of the Christian churches, I look forward to seeing humanity free someday of the tyranny of Christianity no less than capitalism." I just wanna laugh every time I hear people who don't love God or believe the Bible say, "We believe in equality, we believe in love, we believe in justice, we believe in human rights." Why, if you come from nowhere, if you're here for no reason, if you give an account to no one and you are more evolved and fit and superior than why does not might make right? Why should mercy prevail? Only the Christian view of humanity gives us dignity and the opportunity for human flourishing. I didn't believe this, I started off as one who was devoted and committed to not only pro-abortion but forced population controls and Malthusian eugenics. I argued it persuasively in high school, I won debates on it in college, and then God saved me and I started reading the Bible and God re-hardwired my understanding. So if you're like I was, I would encourage you to think like God does. So now I've got five kids and the thought of killing them, I literally cannot stomach, even an infantestable moment of considering me ending the life of my blessings. And some of you have participated in this and Jesus died and He forgives and He loves and He heals but you and I need to be about life because God is the living God. That being said, what happens when we don't mirror God? Some of you would ask, "Well, what if we don't mirror God? What if we don't image God?" And here's what I'm saying, to be made in the image and likeness of God means you were made to mirror. Do not, please do not, I know I'm being strong but when we tell our testimony, don't say "I was just empty, and then God filled me." God's goal is not to fill you, God's goal is to remake you to reflect Him. You are made to mirror, when you get up in the morning and you look in the

mirror, the job of the mirror is to reflect your image. You're made in the image and likeness of God, you're created to reflect something of the creator to the creation, this is our whole life. So in every situation it's like how can I reflect the love of God, the mercy of God, the justice of God, the generosity of God, the patience of God, the forbearance of God, the endurance of God, the greatness of God, the glory of God, the beauty of God, the symmetry of God, how can I reflect this in the situation? And that's human life. And what happens is when we don't image or reflect God, we're broken mirrors that image and reflect other people in things. I'll read it to you, Romans 1, "They exchange the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." All the mirrors that were broken said we're not gonna reflect Him, we'll reflect that which the creator made, namely created things. "Who is blessed forever, Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions." Our world doesn't even believe that some passions are dishonorable. And what I'm gonna say is really controversial. And I'm not trying to pick a fight but I am trying to make a point, that what the Bible says is revolutionary, counter-cultural, controversial, opposed in every generation, which indicates to me, it came from God because we wouldn't have voted for this. "For their women, exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature." It is what you think, "And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women." We're back to natural law and unnatural acts, "With women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error." Some of your translations will say perversion. "So God gave them up to a debase mind to do what ought not to be done, though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." They have t-shirts, they have hashtags, they have parades and petitions. This is America, America is what happens when image bearers stop reflecting the character of God and start reflecting fallen culture. I'll give you an analogy, so I've been on the show, Loveline with Dr. Drew, it's a perverted show, don't listen to it, but he takes sex calls from people on the radio, or at least to used to, I've co-hosted that show with him, I was the first pastor, "Hi, Pastor Mark." They'd ask me questions, and I quote verses and they'd hang up, so I tried. Grace and I were also on his television show and I actually got to go to his studios in LA and spend some time with him, I actually liked him, he's a nice guy, I have no indication that he is a Christian but he wrote a book called "The Mirror Effect". Isn't that an interesting title? We were made to image God, we were made to mirror. And as a non-Christian, he comes to this conclusion, looking at celebrity culture and addiction and sexual promiscuity, and he says that what happens in our culture is celebrities model and then their followers mirror because we were made to mirror, and if we don't mirror God, we mirror someone that God made. If we don't mirror the Creator, we mirror that which has created. And so he says what happens is somebody gets a lot of attention or notoriety because they do something that is outrageous. And then what happens is all of their followers do what? What they did, so now it's not outrageous or noteworthy. So to maintain your status, you need to do something more outrageous, more noteworthy. And how many of you have seen this in the age of social media? It's like, where are we going? What people are doing, particularly sexually, where does it end? It ends in death, it ends in death. This is why we have certain people that make their whole living going around the world taking photos of themselves in certain places or with certain products because then their followers will mirror them and treat them like and goddesses, and offer their sacrifice of money and consumption

and identity, and I just wanna be like them. This is where we have whole shows about how to become somebody idol. These are our heroes, we wear what they wear, we drink what they drink, we buy what they buy, we believe what they say because we worship them and they're our gods. Let me just tell you this, this book makes sense of everything, it does. Who would have thought a chapter to a church in Rome nearly 2000 years ago would explain the Kardashians? Amen, some of you are like, "How did we get that?" The mirror effect, do something crazy, everybody else does it, do something more crazy, everybody does it, do something even more crazy, everybody does it, that is our celebrity culture, it's an idolatry culture. So who is best imaged God? Let me hit this quickly. What does it look like to image God? It looks like Jesus, creator enters creation, Jesus reflects God, the Father. "The God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:4, "Who is the image of God." Jesus images reflects, mirrors, God, the Father perfectly. Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God." You say, "What's God like?" Look at Jesus, that's exactly what God's like. And I hear some people say, "I really like Jesus, but not God, the Father." Jesus says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father, I am a reflection of Him." Let me say this, if Jesus existed to mirror the father then that is the greatest possible devotion of a human life is to do the same. And so here's what it means for us to image God, I'll close with this, how do we image God? Romans 8:29 says, "Those He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His son" If you're a Christian, God's whole plan is to make you like Jesus, to take the broken mirror that is your life, to repair it so that you can reflect His character to His creation because His creation is broken and needs to be healed, it's rebellious and it needs to be saved. Colossians 3:10, 9-10, "Do not lie to one another, seeing you've put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self, which is being renewed after the image of its creator." What he says is, you know what? You used to just live for yourself or others or culture or pleasure, you've been saved, now you're supposed to live out of your new relationship with Jesus. And so what you need to do, you need to put off the way you used to live and put on the life of Jesus. And we all, 2 Corinthians 3:18, "With unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, this comes from the Lord who is the spirit." The Holy Spirit in you makes you new. He connects you as a created being to your creator. And now the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ opens your blind eyes, it transforms your hardened heart and it softens it, it gives you a new nature and a new identity and now God, the Holy Spirit enables and empowers you to increasingly reflect the character of God, following the pattern of Jesus to your family your friends, your coworkers, and to our world. And some of you say, "But then I get a lot of resistance." That's what happens when people live in darkness that they love and someone brings light.