

**Sunday 27 June 2021**  
**Glynde Lutheran Church**  
**Sermon on Genesis 1:24 – 31**  
**Theme: “Created in God’s image”**  
**“You are special!”**

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**Question: “Are all human beings special?”**

***Introduction:***

What is a human life worth? I wonder....

If you added up the value of the chemicals that make up the human body, then probably “not much”. But intuitively, we know that every human life is priceless....

If someone is in trouble, do we worry about the cost of rescuing them? I don’t think so....

The news at night on the TV often features someone being rescued from the drowning in the sea, or from lying injured at the bottom of a cliff face, or from a variety of other troubles sometimes at great expense: *for example, a helicopter may need to be flown in to rescue the person, or heaps of people may give up even days of their time to rescue someone....*

It may not be logical or economical, but most of us know intuitively that every life is priceless, *and that every person is special!*

But, you know, humans haven’t always felt this way.... (“*For The Love of God*”, session 2)

***Part 1: Society’s answer***

Back a while, some of us watched the DVD, *For the Love of God*.... It has some excellent thoughts about all this. The writers of this DVD point out that, *in the world of the Greeks and the Romans around the time when Jesus was born, it was not*

uncommon to find babies discarded like rubbish on the dumps outside town....

Babies were exposed and left to the elements for a variety of reasons: because the child was deformed or had a serious illness, or because the parents wanted a boy rather than a girl, or because the child was the product of rape or incest or adultery....

The writers of this series quote a letter dated around 1 B.C. which shows how “unshocking” the practice of exposure was at that time. This letter is from a Roman soldier in Alexandria, a prominent city in Egypt where he was stationed, to his pregnant wife back home. He writes to her:

**I ask you to take good care of our baby son, and as soon as I receive payment I will send it to you. If you are delivered of *your child* before I come home: if it is a boy, keep it; if it is a girl, discard it.**

Plato, a prominent Greek Philosopher, states that “we must get rid of surplus children”, and that “only the best people should be born...and others should be got rid of”.

John Dickson, one of the presenters of *For the Love of God*, and a prominent Australian historian and Christian, has this to say:  
**It comes down to how we measure an individual’s value. If a person’s worth depends on what they add to society, discarding the useless makes some sense.**

***But* if our worth depends on something higher, something absolute, it’s a different story. And arguably the most absolute claim about human value is that every man, woman, and child is created in...the image of God.**

## ***Part 2: The Biblical answer***

This is the answer of the writers of the Creation accounts at the beginning of the Bible. There are two separate creation accounts at the start of the Bible, and both emphasize the value of human beings and human life.

The first account, from which our Bible reading for today is taken, uses the framework of seven days. In this framework, God creates different things on different days, leading up to climax of His creation, us human beings.

Listen again to what the writer of the first creation account says about God's creation of human beings on Day Six of His creation:

**Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over all animals domestic and wild, large and small.**

**So God created human beings, in his own image, in the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them.**

**God bless them, and said to them, "Have many children so that your descendants will live all over the earth, and bring it under control" (*Gen. 1:26-28, NIV & TEV*).**

God created us human beings at the climax of His creation recorded in Genesis, chapter one, and it is emphasised that we are created "in God's image". What does this mean?

It means that we only, *out of all our God's creation*, are created to live our life in a relationship with God. Dr. Renner, my Old Testament lecturer, puts it this way:

**All this leads to the conclusion that there is no other creature made by God which has such affinity with God, and stands in such a close and intimate relationship with the Creator (*Renner, Genesis, p. 32*).**

In short, God created us “special”, and we are each “special” to God!

The second creation account, which is largely found in Genesis, chapter two, makes this same point in a slightly different way. In this creation account, man is formed first by God, and he is at the centre of God’s garden, and all other created things are placed around him (*Gen. 2:7, 18-20*).

So whatever creation account you look at, it is clear that the writers, *writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*, are saying that human beings are special to God, and each human being is of infinite worth to God.

I love, too, the creation account, *of sorts*, in Psalm 139. There the writer of the prayer or song shouts out that we each have been made by God and that we are each special to God.

Listen to what he says:

**You created every part of me;  
you put me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you because you are to be feared;  
all you do is strange and wonderful.  
I know it with all my heart.  
When my bones were being formed,  
carefully put together in my mother's womb,  
when I was growing there in secret,  
you knew that I was there—  
you saw me before I was born.  
The days allotted to me  
had all been recorded in your book,  
before any of them ever began (*v. 13-16*).**

The Psalmist can say this, *just like the writers of the Creation accounts in Genesis*, because he and they have experienced the loving kindness of God in the events of the Exodus, and in God’s care of them in the wilderness and in “the rich and fertile land” of

Canaan, and their confession is that our good God has made this world and made us each special to Him....

And listen, too, to how Jesus, God's Son, speaks about how special each one of us are to God.

Jesus says to his disciple, *and to us*:

**“So do not be afraid of people.... For only a few cents you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many tiny sparrows (Matt. 10:26-31).**

Remember, also, how Jesus answered the question, “Which commandment is the most important of all?”

**Jesus replied, “The most important one is this, ‘Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.**

**The second most important commandment is this, ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself’. There is no commandment more important than these two” (Mark 12:29-31).**

Jesus is saying: “Love God, and love your neighbour!!” Each person is precious and special to God, and that's why Jesus emphasises that God created us to love one another, *just as He loves us*.

Remember, too, how Jesus in his parables, emphasised the value of each of each person in God's sight. When the religious leaders were grumbling that Jesus ate with tax-collectors and sinners, what did Jesus say to them:

**“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them – what does he do? He leaves the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and goes looking for it...” (Luke 15:4).**

Each person is special and precious to God.

We are each special and precious to God, and God wants us to love and care for other people as He loves and cares for them. Every human being is precious to God: babies *in the womb and in their mother’s arms*, infants, people with special needs, the aged, the dying, whoever....

Each one of us has been created “in the image of God”, each of us have been created to live in a relationship with God, *now and in eternity*. That’s what God wants (Luke 15:11-20; 1 Tim. 2:4).

*Exhortation:*

What is God saying to you and me this morning as we think about the fact that each of us has been made “in the image of God” and is special to God....

- 1) I think that God is reminding each of us of how special we each are to him.... There are times when we think that we are worthless, *a lot like Punchinello thought about himself in Max Lucado’s book....* But God wants to remind each of us this morning of how special we are to Him: so special that He made each of us to live in a relationship with him now, and so special that He sent His Son to the cross so that we each may live with His forgiven children, *not only now, but also in eternity....*
  
- 2) I think that God is reminding us too this morning that He wants us to love every person that he has placed around us: regardless of their age, or their abilities, or their intelligence, or their usefulness.... Some people aren’t valued in our society *because they can’t contribute to our society, or because they are a “drain” on our resources, or because they are old and dying....* God wants us to care for each and every person....

3) And finally, I think that God is calling us to fight for the rights of every person.... Every person has a God given right to life. In our current situation, I believe that God calls us to fight against:

- \* **Abortion**
- \* **Infanticide**
- \* **Euthanasia**

...And to fight for the rights and the needs of:

- \* **Unborn babies**
- \* **Those who have special needs**
- \* **The unemployed**
- \* **The homeless**
- \* **The mentally ill**
- \* **The sick, the dying**

What do you think? How are you working to care for those around you, who are special to God, *even though they may not be so special to our society?*

### ***Conclusion:***

Thank God that we live under the cross of Jesus, with God's ongoing forgiveness....

And may God's Spirit in us lead and guide us as we struggle to care for *all* those around us.