

Who am I

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning.
- Those who are watching online, those who are listening in on the telephone, it's good for us once more to come together. And to worship God on his day. Intimations simply to say that the service this evening should be online just before six o'clock.
- Also to remind the YF that they will meet on Zoom at half past seven tonight. And also to say that the prayer meeting will be on Zoom on Wednesday at half past seven.
- So be encouraged to come to these services. We'll begin our time of worship now and we'll sing to God's praise from Psalm or sing Psalms 139.
- That's the first version, version A. And we'll sing from verses 13 to verse 18. Down to the end of verse 18 of this psalm.
- [1 : 29] And after we've sang this psalm, Stuart King will lead us in a word of prayer. For you, O Lord, created me.
- You wove me on your loom. My inmost being you have formed within my mother's womb.
- Because I'm wonderfully made. With all your praise I tell.
- Your workmanship is marvelous. And this I know full well.
- When in the secret place my frame was made before my birth.
- [2 : 55] You saw my body yet unformed within the depths of earth.
- And all the days that I should live. Which you ordained for me.
- Were written in your book, O Lord. Before they came to be.
- O God, how precious are your thoughts. I scan them from afar.
- And as I seek to grasp them all. How numberless they are.
- [4 : 18] Were I to count them they would be. More than the grains of sand.
- When I awake, I am with you. Feel safe within your hand.
- Let us join together in prayer. Our eternal and most ever blessed Father, Lord. We come before you again in praise and worship of your most holy name.
- Lord, indeed we thank you that we have an opportunity such as this. To be able to gather together. To praise a wonderful, holy and gracious God.
- We thank you, Lord, that when we look to you we see a God that is loving. And a God that is just. We see a God that's near. One that we can commune with.
- [5 : 29] One that we can turn to in every situation. Whether in the depths or whether up on the mountains, Lord. We are able to turn to you. And you will be able to listen to us.
- And that you will indeed answer those prayers. We know, Lord, that your love endures forever. And it indeed never fails. Though there are many ways in which we have failed.

We know that you will never fail. And you will never fail us, Lord. The supply of your mercy and grace will continue on and will endure forever. However, we thank you that you indeed reveal yourself through your word, Lord.

And as we begin to come to your word, Lord. We ask that you would open our hearts and our ears to what you have to tell us. That you would reveal yourself to us in that word. That you would make yourself known to us.

That we would indeed be able to turn every page. And that we would hear your voice. We ask that your Holy Spirit would be at work. That we would be able to see your salvation plan.

[6 : 27] And as we look to Genesis 1, right through to the end of Revelation. We see your golden thread. The salvation plan that you had for us is evident on every page, Lord.

And we ask that you would indeed reveal it to us. That you would reveal your peace and your light to us this very morning, Lord. And we thank you for David. And ask that you'll be with him, Lord.

We thank you for your work and his preparations and his studies, Lord. And that you would continue to equip him in his ministry, Lord. And that you would use this word this morning to bless us.

And to keep each and every one of us. Allow our ears and hearts to hear that word. May it transform our lives. May it work in our lives. And see your will done on earth as it is in heaven, Lord.

And we would seek to see each and every person listening to this service this morning. That they would seek to glorify you. As we read of in the first catechism.

[7 : 24] Our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. So go before us just now. Bless this word to us, Lord. Bless David as he opens it up to us. And we ask that you would continue with his ministry here, Lord.

And that we would see souls saved here in Harris and indeed beyond. So go before us now, Lord. Forgive us for all of our sins. In Christ's precious name we pray. Amen.

Morning, boys and girls. I hope you're doing well today. I've got something to show you. But to show you it, I have to go outside. So I'll see you in a second. So here we are outside.

What have I got to show you? Well, you've seen it, I'm sure, yourselves. And it's down there. Can you see all that stuff? A little bit crane.

And all these things on the side of the sea there. All the rock that's been shifted along there. And you can see all the men working along on the shore and further along.

[8 : 27] I know on Sunday school last week you were looking at all the work that was being done for a couple of hours. So that's it. You can see all the work that's happening down at the shore.

So that's what I wanted to show you. So what are all the guys doing down at the site, do you think? Well, I'll tell you what they're doing. They're following design. They're not just running around the site trying to look busy.

They have purpose and they're following design. So I'm going to show you some of the things that they're following for the design. So here we can see all kinds of drawings.

There's different drawings there. I was down seeing one of the boys from RJ McLeod's and they were telling me about the job. And they were showing me some of the pictures, some of the design drawings.

And you can see these different designs, all the different detail. There are some of them showing the levels and where the bits and pieces are to go and where the seabed is. And there's the numbers, the calculations and the distances they've got to build to.

[9 : 35] And there's the notes and the specifications. This one over here is even more detailed. It shows where all the bars and the reinforcements to go. And it's very, very detailed, all these designs.

And over here we've got calculations. And they have to get all the calculations checked. And they've got to work to make sure that all the maths and all the calculations are just right.

So you can see that they're following a very clear design. So boys and girls, we've seen the work down at the harbour.

We've seen some of the drawings and the calculations, the design. And it's really important to have that design because the new harbour is not just going to build itself. It won't just appear.

It's got to be really carefully thought through, designed, planned and then built. Now, boys and girls, if you go and look in the mirror, what do you see?

[10 : 39] Well, you see you, don't you? You see yourself. But where did you come from? And who made you?

Who designed you? Well, the Bible tells us that it's God who made us. He's the one who designed us. We were singing about that in the psalm that we sang at the beginning of the service.

It says in Psalm 139 and verse 13, For you, that's God, created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb.

And this week we're really excited and we're really happy about little Benjamin Alexander, who was born on Monday night. So congratulations to Dave and Jane and big brother Finley now.

And Brownie and Flora and Andrew and Hugh. It's great that he's arrived, but he didn't just arrive, did he? God made him. God designed him. And God designed you.

[11 : 42] He designed me. He designed all of us. He planned what we would look like. He made some of us tall. He made some of us a bit smaller. He made some of us with brown hair.

He made some of us with blonde hair. He made some of us with blue eyes. Others with brown eyes. Some with green eyes. He made us all different.

And we all have our own individual fingerprints. And boys and girls, the thing I want you to remember today is that God designed you.

God made you. He planned you. And not only did he design you and make you and plan you, but he's designed, he has a plan for your life and my life.

And God's plans are always the best plans, aren't they? It says in Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 11, For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

[12 : 52] And you know it's Jesus that gives us that never-ending hope. It's Jesus that promises that our future is safe if we're trusting in him.

So boys and girls, let's be trusting the best planner, the best designer that this world has and will ever know.

Let's be trusting God. Let's be trusting Jesus. Trusting him so that he'll take our sin away, so that he'll give us his salvation, and trusting his plan for our lives.

So let's be trusting God. And we'll pray. Lord God, we thank you that you love us. We thank you that you made us. We thank you that you care for us.

We thank you, Lord, that your love for us is so great that we see that Jesus went to a cross to make it possible for us to be safe forever.

[13 : 51] We thank you that when we're trusting in Jesus, our future is not only safe in this world, but it's safe for all of eternity. We know that when we don't trust Jesus, we don't go to be with Jesus in heaven.

But we thank you that when we trust in Jesus, we're promised that Jesus has that special place prepared for us in heaven. So we ask that all the boys and girls and all of us would know that you love us and that we are safe because we are trusting in you.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's open God's Word now, and we read from Genesis chapter 1 and verse 24 of that chapter.

Genesis chapter 1 and verse 24. This is God's Word. And God said, Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds, livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.

And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.

[15 : 08] And God saw that it was good. Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number.

Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it.

They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds of the air, and all the creatures that move on the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food.

And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

[16 : 32] And then we'll move on from the end of chapter 1 to verse 4 of chapter 2. This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth, and watered the whole surface of the ground.

And the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Well, just before we turn back to that chapter, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day.

We thank you for your word, which we have read and sung, and we now turn to meditate upon. And we ask, Lord, that you would meet with us as we seek to worship you.

[17 : 48] We pray that you would draw near to us as we seek to draw near to you. And we thank you, Lord, that we have the faith to believe that you will draw near to us, because we pray in the name of Jesus, and our faith and hope is in the finished work of Jesus.

We thank you that he is the one who has opened up the way into your presence. We thank you that he is the one who has taken our sin away through all the work that he's done on the cross.

We thank you that he is the one who brings life, that eternal life, into our souls. And we pray, Lord, that you would come near to us on this day, and that you would speak to us through your word.

We pray for all who are listening in, all who are watching, every home that's represented. And we ask, Lord, that you would be working in each home and in each life.

We thank you that you are the God who is with us, and you rejoice when we, you rejoice with those who rejoice, and you weep with those who weep. And we thank you, Lord, for the reasons we have to rejoice, especially this week.

[18 : 59] We thank you for the safe delivery of baby Benjamin Alexander, and we thank you for Jane being so well, and we pray your blessing on Benjamin Alexander, and on Jane, and on Dave, and on Finlay as well, and for the whole family, Lord.

We commit them to you. We thank you for your faithfulness. We thank you for the gift of this new life, and we pray that he would grow up to know you, and to trust you, and to glorify you.

We pray, Lord, for those, not only those who rejoice, but those who struggle, those who are wrestling with difficult things. We pray for those who grieve.

We think of a year having passed since Joan McCaskill's passing away, and we pray for the family, Lord. We think of our Lord with great fondness.

We thank you for the faith that she had in Jesus, and for the hope that there is in the gospel. But for those whose hearts are sore as they think back, we pray that you would be near to them.

[20 : 10] We commit the whole family to you. And all families, all who grieve, for loved ones past and in past months and in past years, we ask that you would be to them the God of all comfort.

Lord, we pray for those who are anxious. We see how close this virus now is to us with the outbreak in Uist, and we ask, Lord, that you would be with those who are struggling with the virus in Uist at this time, that you would minister to them, that you would lay your hand of healing upon them.

We pray for your hand of protection, that this virus would not spread further on that island, and we pray for your servants over there, and for Callum Murdo and for Tom Penman, especially, that you would be close to them, Lord, and that you would minister your compassion through them and speak your word through them on this, your day.

And Lord, we ask that you would protect us here from an outbreak like that, and especially for the older people, we pray on for Harris House and for the home in Liverpool, and we ask for your protection to be over those who are most vulnerable to an outbreak like that.

We thank you for your protection over us thus far, and we pray on, Lord, that you would guard us and that you would keep us. And we pray for our young people.

[21 : 44] We ask, Lord, for those who are away from us, especially the students and those young people who have gone to work on the mainland where there are much greater risks of contracting the virus, we commit them to you, Lord, and we ask that they would know your presence and your peace.

And family members at home, Lord, that you would steady them, that you would steady us and enable us to be looking to and trusting in you. So hear our prayers.

Continue with us in this day and enable us to hear your voice, to listen to your word and to do what you say. And we ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. If you could turn back now with me, please, to Genesis chapter 1 and chapter 2. Every now and again when you visit various houses as I used to before these strange times, when you go into a house, you see photographs and pictures on the wall and there can be pictures of various members in the family, there can be pictures of beaches and beautiful landscapes and it's not uncommon to see pictures in a house of a house taken from above and when you take a look at the picture you realise quickly that the house that you're looking at, the house that's been photographed from above is actually the house that you're sitting in.

I don't know how it works, somebody flies over and then takes a picture and then offers you this photograph of your own house and many people buy them, put them on the wall. people buy them and they're the younger generation don't tend to go so much in for that but the younger generation will be very much familiar with the programme Google Earth.

[23 : 41] That's a computer programme that allows you to look at pictures of planet Earth and you can see from outer space the whole globe, the whole planet Earth and then you can start to zoom in and you can see whole continents and you can zoom in further and you begin to see countries and that's what we do, we zoom in further and further until we say, well, I'd like to see Scotland.

You see Scotland and then once you see Scotland, you want to zoom in, can we see Harris? And once you see Harris, you zoom in further all the way until you're looking from overhead at a picture of your own house, of yourself.

we tend to do that, we zoom in all the way until we see our own houses, our own postcodes, our own selves sometimes.

And that's what I'd like us to do today in the time that we have. I want us to take a look at ourselves. Last week the question that we asked with Genesis 1 and 2 open was who is God?

and we considered the attributes of God, that God is eternal, that God is triune, he's trinity, that he is our creator, our maker, that he is the God who reveals himself to us, he's the God that we can know.

[25 : 04] We saw these attributes of God as we stepped through the days of creation, but this morning I want us to zoom in on one particular day of creation, that's day 6. And I want us to be encouraged to ask the question, who am I?

It's a big question. If you google this question, who am I? There's almost 11 million hits in response to that question.

And if you look on page one, there are personality tests you can take, there are psychologists who are offering their opinions, there are mediums who are offering their services, don't ever take them, but they're offering them.

There are scientists who are writing academic papers, and all of them are trying to answer this question of who am I? Now in Genesis 1 into Genesis 2, we come this morning to ask God, our maker, the one who's best placed to answer this question.

We're bringing this question to him, we're asking him with the scriptures open, who am I? There's various answers to this question. And the first answer to this question, the first point that we have this morning is we are those who are unlike the animals.

[26 : 31] Look at verses 24 and verse 25. God said, let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds, livestock, creatures that move along the ground and wild animals, each according to its kind.

And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds and livestock according to their kinds and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds and God saw that it was good.

Now as we track through the days of creation, as we see God's work of creation, as we looked at it last Lord's day, we see that God made many kinds of plants, we see that in verse 11 of chapter 1, he made many kinds of sea creatures, we see that in verse 21 of chapter 1, we see that he made many kinds of land creatures and wild animals, we see that in verses 24 and 25 that we've just read.

But then when we come to verse 26, there's a very definite break, there's a pause in God's work of creation and we realise in that pause that something new is about to happen.

There's a new kind of creation about to be introduced, something unlike anything that has been created before is about to be made.

[28 : 12] And so in verse 26, God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness. And with that statement, God is making clear that man, woman, boy, girl, is unlike the animals.

Man is different to the animals, man is given greater dignity and worth than the animals. Jesus said that also in Matthew chapter 10, verse 29, Jesus said, are not two sparrows sold for a penny?

Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid, says Jesus, you are worth more than many sparrows.

Now it's not that God doesn't care for the sparrows. They're under our father's care, says Jesus. But God has given greater worth to man.

That's what Jesus is saying. And yet when a culture begins to rebel against God, we object to that.

[29 : 34] We contest that. When a culture begins to rebel against God, we begin to elevate animals and birds to a place that God never gave them.

And we devalue human life. And that's very much happening today. Today people are spending billions on pets.

It's estimated that in the UK this year we'll spend seven billion on our pets. And yet there are huge areas in this world where people are starving because they have no food.

They have no food because they have no money. You take a walk down the street in a city in Edinburgh for example, it used to be that you'd only see babies being taken out for walks in a pram.

Now if you glance into a pram as someone's passing, it's not unusual to see highly groomed dogs being taken out for a walk in a pram, being treated as if they were babies.

[30 : 47] I think it was Alistair MacLeod that made this point when he was speaking about Genesis. He made the note that today it's illegal as it should be to take an eagle's egg from a nest and to destroy the prospect of a baby eagle being born.

If you do that, you'll be put in prison for that kind of an offense. And yet by contrast it's legal in fact it's acceptable to take an unborn child from a mother's womb and kill it.

The Guardian newspaper wrote in June of this year a record number of women in England and Wales had an abortion last year. A total of 207,384 procedures were carried out.

Official figures show that this was the highest number in a year since the historic vote in 1967 to legalize abortion in Britain through the Abortion Act.

What about Scotland? Well, the Glasgow Herald printed in August of this year that the number of abortions carried out in Scotland reached the second highest on record last year.

[32 : 16] Official figures showed that there were 13,583 terminations carried out in 2019, the highest total since 2008.

these are staggering statistics, awful statistics, and yet our culture doesn't bat an eyelid.

This is normal, we're told. This is acceptable, we are told, and anyone who goes against this as a valid choice is absolutely blasted by the media.

so how can we get to a place where we think it's okay to murder almost a quarter of a million children each year in our nation?

How can we get there? Well, I think the answer to that question is we get there very quickly when we don't listen to what God says on the question of who am I?

[33 : 29] When we underestimate the value, the worth of human life. We are unlike the animals we are taught.

The second thing that we learn here in response to this question of who am I? Is that we are made in the image of God? Verse 26, Then God said, Let us make man in our image.

Now, if you pick up a pound coin like I have in my hand here, what is it that gives a pound coin its worth? Well, it's not actually dimensions of the coin.

It's not the shape of the coin. It's not the type of metal that it's made of. We could actually make a coin the same shape as a pound coin, using the same materials that a pound coin is made of, but Brownie wouldn't accept it.

It wouldn't be worth anything. What actually gives this coin its worth is the image of the sovereign on it.

[34 : 41] It has the image of the queen stamped on the coin. that's what gives the coin its worth, legally. And the reason that you and I are worth more than many sparrows is because sparrows are not made in the image of God, but we are.

Every human being is made in the image of God. So every human being has that God-given dignity and value and worth.

This pound coin that I have in my hand is quite a shiny, it's quite a new-looking pound coin. But you can have another pound coin in your other pocket which is battered and it's dull and it's been through the wars, maybe slightly damaged, but it's worth exactly the same amount as the shiny new one that's straight out of the factory.

They look different but they're worth the same. And even though in this world seems to like to raise some people up and push other people down, what we're taught in Scripture is that every human being has the same value because every human being is made in the image of God.

So black lives matter and white lives matter and all lives matter. You know what the answer to racism is?

[36 : 35] Well it's not defunding the police, it's not in taking the knee at the beginning of a football match, but it's found in the acceptance of the fact that we are all made in the image of God.

The man living homeless on the street matters. The drunk, the drug addict, matters. the unborn child in the mother's womb matters.

The elderly person in a care home matters. That's what we're taught here by means of application. And if we grasp this, I think the whole of our society would look different.

The school playground even would look different. We think back to the days of being in the school playground. That can be a cruel place where the cruel kids are accepted and others can be cast aside as if they don't matter.

And then we have teenagers, especially today, more so than ever today, who are depressed, who are even suicidal, some of them, because they feel that they don't matter.

[37 : 56] And atheism just fuels that because the atheist will say, you're just a string of DNA. You're some cosmic accident.

You don't matter. You have no meaning. You have no purpose. But God says to us through his word, you do matter.

You're no accident. You were created. You were planned. You were made by God. You were made in the image of God. You do matter.

You are loved. And I think even the conversation that we're allowed to listen into in verse 26, it indicates God's love for us.

We have this conversation in verse 26 when God says, let us make man in our image. God is speaking to God in that conversation.

[38 : 57] And we overhear this commitment within the Trinity. We hear this commitment where God the Son would not only be involved in the creation of man in his perfect state together with the Holy Spirit and God the Father as they do the work of creation together, but we overhear in this conversation a commitment whereby God the Son knew that he would not only be involved in the creation of man, but he would be involved in the salvation of man from his fallen state.

Because we know that from before the foundations of the world it was known that we would be those who would need to be redeemed. So even in this first conversation of verse 26, I think the cross begins to come into focus.

So if we ever need reassurance that we matter to God, if we ever need reassurance that we have value, that we are loved, that we have purpose, think about these things.

Don't listen to what the world tells you about how unvaluable you are. Listen to what God says. He's the God who chose to make us.

And even though we fell with Adam, such was the commitment of God to man that he chose to come into this world to go to a cross to save us, to redeem us.

[40 : 56] So who are we? We are unlike the animals. We are made in the image of God. The third point we come to is we are like God. Verse 26 though, then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. So we need to ask the question now, well, in what sense were we created in the image of God?

In what sense are we like God? And one of the commentators, Hale, gives an explanation of that. He says, we humans, in contrast to other living creatures, bear the image, the likeness of God.

This can be understood on different levels, the most important of which is spiritual. Our human spirits are like God's spirit in that we can respond to God in faith and worship.

Also our minds, though finite, bear a likeness to the mind of God. And if we flick over from Genesis 1 to Genesis 2, we see how God made us.

[42 : 15] Verse 7 of Genesis 2, the Lord formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

And so we see in Genesis 2, as God gives us a bit more detail of how he made us, we see God, who is the potter, taking the dust of the earth and using it to form our bodies.

That should humble us. And that's why, in one sense, we share some of the physical similarities that we have with the animals.

Again, Hale, the commentator, says, as far as man's physical body is concerned, he is a creature of the earth like the animals. But as far as man's soul is concerned, his spirit, mind, and character, he is stamped with the image of God.

And we see that in the beginning. Adam didn't become a living human being until God breathed his spiritual life into him.

[43 : 28] And it was at that moment moment that Adam became like God. So what makes us at that deep level, unlike the animals, and like God, is the spiritual dimension.

You know, I don't think the sheep in the fields are saying to each other, who made us? Where did we come from? Where are we going?

What is our purpose? I don't think they're asking these questions, they're just munching the grass. And Shawus, our dog, as intelligent as he can sometimes be, as long as he has his dinner and a walk, he's quite happy, he's quite content.

He's not wrestling with the big issues of life. life. But man is different. Humans have that depth, that sense of eternity, that soul thirst that God puts on us.

And it's in that sense that we are like him. Wearsby, the commentator, says, unlike the angels and the animals, humans can have a very special relationship with God.

[44 : 59] He not only gave us personality, minds to think with, emotions to feel with, and wills for making decisions, but he also gave us an inner spiritual nature that enables us to know him and worship him.

See, as long as we don't know God, and don't worship God, when we are in that state of being apart from God, when we have no thought of him, when we have no desire to worship him, we are discontent.

And we may have many, many things in this world, but there is a deep discontent within us, that we are unsettled. We don't know what we're for.

We don't know truly who we are. And what we're taught here in Genesis 1 and 2 is that we were made for relationship with God.

And we find our true identity. We find out who we are truly. as we come to know him. So who are we?

[46 : 23] We are unlike the animals. We are made in the image of God. We are made to be like God. And the fourth thing here is we are made male and female.

Verse 27. So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them.

And I suppose when we think about our identity, this is one of the key flaps. We identify from the very beginning, we identify as either male or female.

female. You know, when a child like Benjamin Alexander is brought into the world, the first thing the mother is told, and the father is told, is whether this child is male or female.

Now who decides that? Well, God does. The midwife doesn't say, the baby has been born, would you like this child to be male or female?

[47 : 35] The midwife will simply say what they see, that this child is either male or female. And the one who decides whether this child will be male or female is God.

He's the one who creates. He is the one who determines the gender of the child. And there seems to only be two options here for us as we look at verse 27 of Genesis 1.

God created us in his own image, male and female. He created them. And that's something that very much flies in the face of our culture today.

I think even going back 20 years, 10 years even, this is a verse which we would readily accept and there would have been no great objection to.

Today, a verse like this causes a riot. healthline.com tells me that there are currently 64 different terms that describe gender, identity and expression.

[48 : 46] Not two terms that tell us what gender we are, but there's 64 terms. There's a whole spectrum of terms that we're to choose our gender from.

And we live in an age where you can transition very, very easily between all these different gender, scales and types. And anyone who tells you that you can't transition from one to another will face the wrath of the culture.

Think about J.K. Rowling who wrote these Harry Potter books. She tweeted recently in criticism of the transgender movement.

She was absolutely blasted for it. as a culture today, we seem to be in a state of gender confusion.

If we have 64 categories to try to help us define what gender we are, we are clearly in a state of gender confusion. confusion. And there are very young children growing up in our culture whose confusion is fed and fueled by those who seem to want them to change their gender.

[50 : 04] children. I was hearing about a young girl in Edinburgh known to some in the congregation here. At age 12 just at the beginning of high school this girl decided she wanted to change from being a girl to being a boy.

She chose a new name, told her teachers, told the school. That's fine they said. She went home, told her parents, the parents objected, as you would expect them to.

And the parents told the school that the child was going through a difficult period and that they did not want their child changing genders, they did not want their child to be known by a different name.

And the parents were told by the school, you have no right to object. If your girl now wants to be a boy, you must support her on that journey, on that trajectory, wherever it takes her.

So we have a girl at age 12 in Edinburgh who's too young to have an email address and too young to go on social media and too young to buy a packet of cigarettes.

[51 : 21] But she's not too young to decide to change her gender. gender. And I don't wish to belittle those who have real struggles on this issue of gender.

There are many who need compassion and help and support to work through these issues, but the help and support they need is not a hurried operation on the NHS, but they need help and guidance on this fundamental deep question of who am I?

See, when we push God out, when we set the Bible aside, there is confusion.

But into that confusion, God in Genesis 1 speaks with this powerful counter-cultural clarity, a clarity that we are badly in need of today.

the whole agenda of transgender is an expression of a rebellion against God.

[52 : 38] It's another way of saying to God, I will not have you rule over me. I will decide. I will decide everything about my life, everything about my sexuality.

I will decide even my gender. And where does that rebellion come from? Well, if we follow it back to its root, it comes from Satan himself.

I'm reading an article this week about a US attorney, a solicitor, whose particular interest, by the way, was an interest in pushing for abortion to be legalized in all these different states.

And she spoke openly and brazenly about how she had recently converted to Satanism. And one of the great appeals of Satanism to her was the motto that they had.

And the motto that they have is this. Thy self is thy master. Thy self is thy master.

[53 : 55] And that motto is dominating our culture today. Thy self is thy matter. Even when it comes to gender.

But the reality, the eternal reality is that God is our master. master. And ultimately, every knee will bow before him.

And every tongue will confess that he is master, ruler over all. But if we want to know peace, if we want to know contentment, if we want to receive salvation, you, if we want to find our true identity, we find it not as we rebel against him, but we find it as we trust him and obey him.

Some people say the Bible is not relevant today. it's a dusty old book for another age.

It's got nothing to say, nothing to speak into the issues of our day. And yet here, as we begin in chapter one and creep into chapter two, we have very direct application on racism and abortion and transgender.

[55 : 31] These are the issues of our day. And God is speaking to us. Through his word, whether we want to hear him or not, he is speaking into the issues of our day.

Who am I? Who are we? We are those who are different from the animals. We are unlike the animals. We are those who are made in the image of God.

We are made to be like God. we are made male and female. And finally, and very briefly, we're made to rule.

Verse 26. Then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

land. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every other living creature that moves on the ground.

[56 : 56] And so, these verses go on. But we see in these verses that we are made, we are given us position, we are made to rule within creation.

God himself is the ultimate ruler over heaven and earth. But as God has made us in his image, he has allowed us to share in his rule over his creation.

One commentator said, God has given us as his representatives the rule over all the earth, including all the living creatures of the earth. We exercise this rule on God's behalf.

We are God's stewards, whom he has created to take care of the earth. This means that we humans must not abuse or show cruelty to other living things.

It also means we must protect and preserve our natural environment. government. We are made to rule over creation.

[58 : 04] So how does this rule work? How are we to rule in such a way as to exercise this governance on God's behalf?

Well, I think we could put it this way. God is the one who gives, but he expects us to be those who guard him, his creation.

He is the one who creates, but he asks us to care for his creation. And if we ruled the environment that we live in in that way, our world would look very different.

If we understood that this world and the resources of this world are to be cared for and not exploited for profit, then we wouldn't have the environmental problems that we currently have.

See, when God created the world, we see a garden that is growing. But by Genesis 3, when sin came in, the garden of this creation begins to groan.

[59 : 19] it goes from growing to groaning. Paul writes of that in Romans 8. He says, we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit growing inwardly, as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

God's so today, as we listen, we hear the groans of creation as we live in an environment that has not been ruled God's way, but rather has been plundered through the greed of sin.

And today, we hear and we feel something of the groans of being part of a country, a people who are trying to figure out who we are, apart from God.

But what Genesis 1 teaches us is that we cannot understand who we are apart from God, because we were made by God.

[60 : 39] We were made for God. sin that we see coming in, in Genesis 3, separates us from God.

And when we are separate from God, we are lost. We are confused. We are helpless. We're like sheep without a shepherd.

But the good news of the gospel is that the God who made us did not leave us in our sin. He did not leave us in that lost state to groan.

But he sent his son Jesus to seek and to save the lost. And we find redemption. We find relief from the groaning and we find our true identity.

We discover who we are when we turn in faith to him. We'll pray.

[61 : 47] Our heavenly father, we pray that we, indeed, each one of us would know you as our heavenly father. We pray that we would know the reality of having Jesus as Lord over our lives.

And we pray that we would know the work of the Holy Spirit within us, molding us and shaping us to be more like Christ. We confess, Lord, that we as a nation, especially at this time, have drifted far from you.

we see so much of ourselves as we look in the mirror of your word in these passages. We see the consequences of our turning away from you.

But we thank you that this morning you are calling us to come back to you. And we ask that you would enable each one of us to come. We pray for our nation, for those whom you have allowed to be in leadership over us.

We ask that you would awaken our souls and that we would hear your call, that we would humble ourselves, that we would turn from our wicked ways, and Lord, that you would hear our prayers and heal our land.

[63 : 19] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Lord, I'll worship His holy name.

Sing our glory for all my soul, I'll worship our holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning, it's time to sing us all again.

Whatever may pass, find whatever lies before me. let me be saved when the evening comes, that light of my soul, oh, my soul, worship His holy name.

Sing like never before, oh, my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

[64 : 50] Your rich in love and your soul to land burn, your name is great and your heart is kind, for all your goodness I will keep on singing.

Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. Bless the Lord of my soul, oh, my soul, worship His holy name.

Sing like never before, oh, my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

And on my day when my strength is failing, the angels live and my time has come, still my soul will sing your praise unending.

name. Ten thousand years and then forever more. Bless the Lord of my soul, oh, my soul, worship His holy name.

[66 : 25] Sing like ever before, oh, my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

Till I never before, oh, my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

I will worship your holy name. Worship your holy name.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, both now and forever more. Amen.