



Pastor's Update

Sunday, April 21, 2024

The Dignity of Human Beings

We do not get beyond the first chapter of the Bible before we hear God expressing his desire to make human beings in His image, that they be His vicegerent on earth: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

Earlier, the Sovereign Lord decreed the entire creation into existence (Gen. 1:1-25). He filled the earth with grass, herbs, fruit trees and all kinds of animals. He stationed the sun, moon and stars each in its specific position in the sky. He caused the sea to be teeming with all kinds of creatures. All created good. Then we hear the strange words in Genesis 1:26, as God, as a benevolent father, was preparing the earth for the entrance of humans who He is about to bring into existence. This, from the very beginning God purposed to exalt humans above all His creation giving them dominion over every creature.

But this privilege was to be exercised within the parameters of the divine mandate. After He placed the first human (Adam) in the Garden, which was filled with everything necessary for his sustenance, God gave him one stipulation: "From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:16b-17). God created Adam a free moral agent, endowed with freedom to obey or disobey God's will. If Adam, however, violates God's injunction, death will seize him. He was put to the test.

We do not know the amount of time that elapsed between the giving of the command to Adam and the creating of Eve. Nevertheless, after Adam named all the animals (a sign of Adam's his dominion over the creation), God announced the need for Adam to have a "helper." God fulfilled this need by fashioning a woman from a rib He took from Adam's side.

After God built the woman, He brought her to Adam whose excitement is hardly captured in our English versions of the Bible: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one will be called Woman (*Ishshah*), because she was taken out of Man (*Ish*)" (Gen. 2:23). This seems to be the high watermark of the Creation story. God, the man and the woman are united in harmonious friendship. There is worship, unity, love, joy, honor and freedom in the Garden. The narrator is setting us up that we might perceive the high status from which humans have fallen in such depth of sin.

By God's Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis