

Sunday School Class-Creation Ordinances

May 9-Marriage

Why creation ordinances? Because they bring great clarity and are often overlooked or understudied. In a time of such confusion and culture seemingly redefining every previously accepted definition it is helpful to revisit how things started and more specifically were designed. The first two chapters of Genesis are incredibly unique to the bible. Who can guess why? These two chapters are provided prior to sin. We can see God's intentions or framework for a world without sin, we can see his intentions in an even purer sense. The logic follows that if these instructions were given in a sinless state how much more are they needed in a sin stained world? Thus, my desire was for us to "detach" our selves from our thinking and modern-day context and revisit how things were designed.

What are creation ordinances? Creation ordinances are laws God gave Adam and Eve before the fall. John Murray lists among them "the procreation of offspring, the replenishing of the earth, subduing of the earth, dominion over creation, labor, the weekly Sabbath, and marriage". These are taken from Genesis 1:28, 2:2-3, 15, and 24. The command to not eat from the tree of knowledge is not considered a creation ordinance as it was a command for one occasion not for mankind perpetually. Unlike the animals God made Adam and Eve in a differentiated way and gave them dominion so we can rightly deduce that human life was something exceedingly precious to God. It is helpful to think of the Creation Ordinances with a three-fold perspective.

First on God (Sabbath/worship),

Second on the natural world (replenishing, subduing, and dominion over the earth)

Third on Man (marriage, procreation, labor).

This is the WHY. Creation Ordinances are important because they form the basic law of human existence. **They don't really consider any historical perspectives.** They are given to man as man, thus the only presupposition required is our creation in God's image and the world as our created environment. Thus, its rather unlikely that God would repel or modify any of these ordinances in the course of history.

Mans chief end is to love God and enjoy him forever. To do this it would then naturally follow that we need to live within Gods design. It would not be either loving or bring him glory to live outside his design. Nor would it bring the creature peace or happiness as we know these ordinances have been written on mans heart as Romans 1:20 says

1:20, ESV: "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

It is important for us to consider these creation ordinances so we can rightly live within our creator's framework and seek to enjoy him forever.

Man is made in God's image which separates him from the animals. In John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **Thus, we can hardly dissociate the fact that we are made in his image and he is also the "way". Creation ordinances bring us peace, fulfillment, and significance by bringing together the creature made in the image of God with he also lives in the "way" God design. The Christian life seeks to intertwine his image and his way.**

This begins to speak to what we broadly call biblical ethics. "Biblical ethics is that manner of life which is consistent with, and demanded by, biblical revelation. Our attention must be focused upon divine demand, not upon human achievement, upon God's revelation of God's will for man, not upon human behavior." John Frame

OK. I think that gives us a brief introduction to creation ordinances and why they are important. Lets look at our first ordinance, that of marriage.

Marriage

Lets look at something amazing, I mean truly incredible. Lets look at what God's first words to man were before sin. God's first words to man in a world without sin are available for us to consider. That has to be a framework worth considering!

1:28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Gods first words to man, before any sin, was a blessing and a command. First God blessed them, then he commanded them to fill the earth. This blessing may be regarded as the source from which the human race flows as all of mankind is barren unless blessed with a seed. God here appoints Adam and his wife Eve to the production offspring, of which he certainly could've filled the earth with multitudes on his own so this is clearly his desire. God desired the earth to be filled, but not as brute animals, but by joining Adam and Eve as a married couple it may produce a legitimate seed. Notice here that God does not give the power to humans or fleshly passions. No, from the first step of procreation the

legitimacy and beauty of marriage is in place as the means and method. There must be reproduction if there is to be dominion, so marriage is clearly a creation ordinance.

Then God states that it is not good for man to be alone and appoints him a helper in vs 18. See where female is created in vs 23.

We see clearly that God does not want man to be alone, he does not wish for isolation. I find this to be most insightful particularly given it is pre sin. In counseling one of the things that they teach is a certain red flag for someone who is struggling severely isolation. If you can identify someone who is removing themselves from relationships and seeking to not be known, it is a sure sign of unhealthiness. Here we see that this is out of step with Gods framework. God wants man to cultivate a mutual society between ourselves. At the first step of human society God design is to include others, man was formed to be a social and communal. Now, the human race cannot exist without a woman so we begin to see the beauty of how tightly tied together we are.

Next, we see that God assigns woman as his helper. Sorry men woman have been divinely prescribed to instruct us in our duties!! God is pronouncing that marriage and woman as our helper will prove to be our very best support in life. Think about marriage if sin had not been committed. From the beginning it was ordained and is clearly discerned, and would have such a sweet harmony, because the husband would look with reverence to God, the woman would be his faithful assistant, and both with one heart would cultivate a holy, as well as friendly and peaceful intercourse! Is this not the most beautiful road map? Do not those marriages we know that are the most Godly resemble this? This vision is still in place today, but we must strive for it in the midst of sin.

John Calvin says "Women, being instructed in their duty of helping their husbands, should study to keep this divinely appointed order. It is also the part of men to consider what they owe her in return to the

other half of their kind, for the obligation of both sexes is mutual, and on this condition is the woman assigned as a help to the man, that he may fill the place of her head and leader.

This points to the beauty of the union and distinction of roles. And to the fact that Men are accountable! Men do not get of easy. Consider woman's role as a helper. If the man is not functioning in his role how much harder is it for her to flourish in hers?

Then in vs 24 man is told to leave his home of origin and hold fast to his wife. This is Leave and Cleave.

This passage is worth parsing out for a moment. The passage suggests that a husband ought to prefer his wife over his own father. This is not to create some type of strife or conflict between father and son, no that would be God directing contrary to himself which he cannot do. The point here is that it is less lawful to desert a wife than even your parents. **If we make a point of conscious to not separate a child from his father as a society, that point of conscious should be even greater for husband and wife.** The passage also mentions that the two becomes one which does represent the spiritual union that takes places in marriage. It does also specifically reference the physical bond of the marriage bed as consisting of two persons only, and nothing less is in accordance with the divine framework.

So marriage creates a new situation, a new norm, and new deeply personal relationship, including mutual care and sexual fulfillment. It is worth noting that scripture delights in Godly sex, in fact more so than some may prefer in the Song of songs. But the bible is clear that sex within marriage is part of God's good provision for human beings. This is why God calls marriage a covenant in Ezekial 16:8 and Malachi 2:14. The world sometimes asks why the Bible is so harsh towards adultery and I think the most direct answer is because it is covenant treason.

A few takeaways:

- Creation ordinances allow us to see God's design or framework prior to sin
- Creation ordinances have no historical context. This is God's design in its purest and most creative sense
- Man is made in God's image and God is "The Way". The Christian should look to intertwine these two for a life of significance and peace.
- If God's design was beautiful and instructive pre sin, how much more do we need this path today
- We want to live our lives with a Biblical ethic, meaning consistent with biblical revelation
- God's first words to man were a blessing and a command for marriage and procreation
- Procreation is not animalistic or fleshly, it has a divine means and method of marriage
- Woman is man's helper and man is to fill her place as head and leader. Simply put the husband ought to be seeking after God with reverence and the wife helping him do so
- A wife is man's best helper and of which he will be the most happy.