

St Paul's Church, Beckenham

Study Notes

GENESIS

Study 2 – Genesis 1: 24 – 31 “Dominion or Domination?”

1 Made in the image of God (v27)

Here we perhaps are tackling the most difficult part of this passage: What does it mean to be “made in the image of God?” Obviously, we are not a physical image of God, the divine does not have physicality, even though artists have frequently sought to create a picture of God in the heavens. Also, of course, Jesus took on our flesh and dwelt among us. But in essence, God is not physical. So, in what ways are we “made in the image of God?”

Character, imagination, emotions, creativity, ...

In the sermon it was suggested that one understanding is that we are a representation of God in this world, we are his representatives. Do you agree? How does this idea help (or hinder) your understanding of our role as part of Creation?

2 Fill the earth and subdue it (v28)

In what way should we subdue the earth? How are we to “subdue, conquer and bring into bondage” the world that we live in?

How have we exploited the earth's resources instead of harnessing them?

What are the results of our exploitation?

What does God really want us to do?

As you ponder these things, let it lead you into a time of confession for the ways mankind has abused our responsibility.

3 Rule over ... every living creature (v28)

We are commanded to have dominion over the other living creatures that share this planet with us – to rule on God's behalf and not to dominate. The image is that of a benign ruler who cares for those entrusted to him.

In what ways have we failed in our responsibility?

What is happening to the living creatures that we share this world with?

Consider too how our actions, in the past and in the present, towards our fellow human beings have not been in line with God's commands. When we have sought to dominate and not rule on God's behalf over his dominion.

Again, let this lead you into prayers of lament and confession.

4 The Earth is the Lord's ...

... and everything in it, the world and they that dwell therein. Let us never forget that it is all from God. That we too are part of his creation. But more than that, we are made in God's image, to do his work, to show his love, and to enhance and not to destroy the good things that he has made.