

- 1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
- 3** And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.
- 6** And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” **7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. **8** God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.
- 9** And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. **10** God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.
- 11** Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. **12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.
- 14** And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. **16** God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. **17** God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, **18** to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.
- 20** And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” **21** So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in

number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” **23** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

**24** And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. **25** 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. And God saw that it was good.

**26** Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>[a]</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

**27** So God created mankind in his own image,

in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

**28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

**29** 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. **30** And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

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

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

**2** By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. **3** Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

## Keeping Up Appearances

In the 90's there was a British sitcom centered on the social climbing snob of a middle class named Hyacinth Bucket - pronounced Bouquet. Keeping Up Appearances was a comedy based on Hyacinth trying to climb the social ladder proving her superiority and worth. One felt sorry for her husband because she regularly failed horribly and often embarrassed herself in the worst possible ways. Her lower class family constantly reminded her of her roots and her own failure would lead anyone to give up but she held her head high no matter how embarrassing a situation.

Maybe you know someone like Hyacinth. Maybe you are the one like her. Almost everyone is interested in proving their worth and or superiority. Meanwhile there is always the low class family who reminds you of your roots as well as our own failures keep pulling us down. These things may lead you to question your worth. But does our value as a person depend on who we are and what we can do? Is our value, importance, or dignity dependant on our ability to provide for ourselves or others?

God reminds us where our worth comes from: him. No, God doesn't make mistakes. There are no accidental children, there may be accidental parents. But no child is a mistake. God is in control over all things. God gives us value, dignity, and worth. If your past or your roots leave you questioning your value. If you must **Keep Up Appearances** remember your roots and your dignity are based on whose image we bear.

At least that's what Moses tells us about creation. There is something special about humankind. The first six days of creation find separation - light from dark, water from water, land land from sea. This is followed by three days of population. All of creation comes together by God's declaration spoken with specific formula, "*Let there be... and it was so.*" That refrain is repeated for six days until something special interrupts the pattern, "*Let there be... Let there be... Let there be...*" It's the creation of humankind, "*Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.*"

It's as if God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit hold a conversation when it comes to creating humans. No longer is a declaration that man is like the rest of creation but he is set apart, dignified, special, and superior. "*Let us make mankind in our image.*" In other words God makes humans just like God. Not like God according to substance or appearances but like God in that mankind was perfect and holy. Like God in that humankind has been given the same work, responsibilities, and authority as God.

They are made in the image of God and assigned a god-like task and act like God, "*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and*

*the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*" Their special assignment was to populate the earth. God allows them to partake in creation - procreation. God gives them authority to rule and have dominion over the world. God's declaration over all things he had created, *"It was very good."* All appearances are excellent. No need to keep them up when they are perfect. The only thing left to do after a good weeks worth of work was to rest from all his labor.

We too may need to take a break having finished the first chapter of Genesis. We've just heard how the world came into being in six days. God spoke and it happened. To think of how powerful God must be in order to make everything. We haven't even begun to comprehend all that God has done in just 6 days but before we have opportunity Moses is already taking us from the 20,000 foot view and dropping us to ground level.

Chapter 2 takes us down to the six foot mark as we see what's happening in the life of Adam. Adam and Eve are given, as image bearers of God, the authority to act on God's behalf and participate in creation and hold dominion over it but we know how that worked out. Dominion comes from the Latin which literally means, "Lord." Be stewards and dispensers of the gifts that God has given. Take care of the world in which you live. The only indication the Fall came quickly after creation no mention of children. Instead they try to keep up appearances - sewing fig leaves together and hiding among the trees. They try to cover up their sin the same way Hyacinth tries to hide her past. But their sin, their actions keep surfacing for all to see.

Sound familiar? At times we try to hide our past, cover up our sin and pretend we are something that we are not. It's easy for us to ignore our problems at the 20,000 foot view after all we all look alike at that level but then we take a closer look at our lives according to God's Word and how we've *"filled the earth and exercised dominion over it,"* what do we see?

How are we taking care of the world in which we live? How have we been stewards and dispensers of the gifts God has given us? Instead of caring, this world is exploited for selfish gain. Instead of serving like God who had nothing to gain in creating and caring for this world, we'll often look at, "What's in it for me?" If not one extreme then another as mankind is made subservient and even slave to creation: a gift we can't touch or make use of. We are to be stewards of this world. Every Christian should be an environmentalist or a tree hugger with a chainsaw - caring for tending and making use of the world to support those made in the image of God.

Those created in the image of God are those often overlooked. We'll place value with Baby on Board signs but you'll never see, Senior Citizen on board because we tend to think, "Their life isn't worth as much." Why? Is it because they aren't as useful? Can't care for themselves? They're a drain on society? Sadly the poor, the destitute, the mentally incapacitated, even children are deemed as extra, unnecessary, and inconvenient. These ones are the least of these Jesus directs us to care for.

That image of God was lost at the fall, completely corrupt and ruined beyond repair. Rather than keeping up appearances and reflecting God's glory we may try to make him more like us. A God who isn't so powerful is easier to control. A God not so perfect gives me an excuse. A God I can comprehend is not God at all. But that sort of God brings me value, dignity, and worth.

However, our value doesn't come from God being like us but in what he has given us. Although that God's image was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin God has begun to rebuild his image and only in heaven will it be fully restored.

God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all active and involved in creation. They are all still active and involved. The Father in sending the Holy Spirit, creating, and preserving this world. The Son in living, suffering, and redeeming this world. The Holy Spirit in creating faith and keeping us in that faith. God is still actively involved in creation. He's not an incompetent clock maker who set things in motion and walks away. He hasn't walked away unconcerned for how the pigeon's have fouled their nest.

Instead of being concerned about his appearance he gave up everything. The Father gave the one thing most precious to him. His only son. The one he loves. If we want to see what God is like then look to Jesus. Jesus is the exact representation of the Father. What the Father is so is the son. The Son gave up his rule, authority and took on the form of a servant. He made himself nothing and yet throughout his life even though he was, is, and still remains God, he went to work. Took up his cross. Suffered for all. And on the 7th day Jesus rested from all his work. After Jesus' resurrection and ascension the Holy Spirit got to work creating and sustaining faith.

That is the God whose image we bear and yet even though we are a far cry from an exact representation of the Father - we have one who has come to restore that image and forgive all our failures. It doesn't matter if you are young or old, rich or poor, successful or not, all are created in the image of God. You are one for whom Christ died. *Purchased not with gold or silver but with the holy precious blood, the innocent suffering and death.*

That's like creation where God creates something out of nothing except at this point he brings the dead to life. We come down from the 20,000 foot view and apply that

personally and you just might need a day of rest as well. God comes to us in Word and Sacrament. He comes to us in a very personal way. In baptism we wake up on the 8th day - part of a new creation. With the Holy Spirit working through God's Word we are reminded of whose image we bear and restoration of that image begins.

God who hasn't stopped working in this world. When God rested on the 7th day it wasn't because he was tired but the work of creating was done. He stopped. We know that he is still at work ruling this world for the good of his church, pouring his Spirit on all people. At creation God created out of nothing but now he creates with something or rather someone. Through you. Through his church. God allows us to work with his word. He still allows us to participate in creation - you are a new creation created in Christ Jesus to do good works and give glory to God in all you do.

You don't have to keep up appearances. You have nothing to prove. When you fail and fall down you can still hold your head high because you are and remain, "one for whom Christ died... one whose image is being restored." But if you must keep up appearances, keep before you the image of Christ and his work for you. Amen.