

Home Group Notes Human 1

Psalm 8 Am I just another animal?

Introduction

There are different ways to approach the issue of what it is to be human. For instance, Christopher Morley: 'A human being: an ingenious assembly of portable plumbing'! But understanding our humanity is crucial to a healthy approach to life and for making sense of many big issues today.

1. Someone said, 'Ultimately, aren't we all just talking monkeys with an attitude problem?' When you think about being human, is your first reference point other animals?
2. 'Man is rated the highest animal, at least among all animals who returned the questionnaire.' 'If man were relieved of all superstition, and all prejudice, and had replaced these with a keen sensitivity to his real environment, and moreover had achieved a level of communication so simplified that one syllable could express his every thought, then he would have achieved the level of intelligence already achieved by his dog.' Some people speak as though animals are no lower than humans, and perhaps superior. What would be your response if you were chatting about these issues?
3. **Read Psalm 8:1-2**
As David approaches the issue of the relation of humans to the whole creation, which of these contexts does he introduce?
 the Lord God is the one in authority over all the earth?
 all beings are created equal?
 the clever sophisticated person will help us understand it all?
 the humble simple person will be the one who helps most?
 God is mindful of needed protection from enemies' talk?
What are the important starting points for you?

4. **Read Psalm 8:3-9**
Where is the place of humans/mortals in God's created order?
5. Where is the place of humans in relation to animals? And God?
6. When it comes to authority and responsibility for all creatures, who is in charge? And who is given responsibility?
7. Do you feel responsible to God for your care of all creatures? How do you show this care? And how do you show in your life the call of God to take responsibility for other creatures?
8. Where is this teaching found earlier in the Bible? Do you agree that this is our God-given approach to enabling the healthy fruitfulness of the world?
9. **Read Hebrews 2:5-9**
The New Testament teaches that Psalm 8 teaches that all created things were given by God to the responsibility of humans. At the same time it recognises the present reality that not everything has been successfully delegated.
Why might this be?
10. Who is needed to make things as they should have been? And how does he achieve this?
11. What are the issues in our present society where you find the most significant clashes between the zeitgeist and the Bible's message to all people in all ages?
12. Being truly human is at least about fulfilling our calling to be responsible to God for the care and fruitfulness of other creatures AND receiving necessary leadership and salvation from Jesus. Are these things which define your humanity?

Prayer Points

Pray for us to understand our humanity more profoundly and faithfully
Pray that we may have a Christian approach to big issues in our society
Pray for the PCC as we seek to appoint an Operations Manager
Pray for Garry Ion (Uganda) as we send an extra gift towards his work
Pray for many facing mental health issues at this difficult time of year

Home Group Notes Human 1

Psalm 8 Am I just another animal?

Introduction

There are different ways to approach the issue of what it is to be human. For instance, Christopher Morley: 'A human being: an ingenious assembly of portable plumbing'! But understanding our humanity is crucial to a healthy approach to life and for making sense of many big issues today.

1. Someone said, 'Ultimately, aren't we all just talking monkeys with an attitude problem?' When you think about being human, is your first reference point other animals?
2. 'Man is rated the highest animal, at least among all animals who returned the questionnaire.' 'If man were relieved of all superstition, and all prejudice, and had replaced these with a keen sensitivity to his real environment, and moreover had achieved a level of communication so simplified that one syllable could express his every thought, then he would have achieved the level of intelligence already achieved by his dog.' Some people speak as though animals are no lower than humans, and perhaps superior. What would be your response if you were chatting about these issues?

3. Read Psalm 8:1-2

As David approaches the issue of the relation of humans to the whole creation, which of these contexts does he introduce?

the Lord God is the one in authority over all the earth?

all beings are created equal?

the clever sophisticated person will help us understand it all?

the humble simple person will be the one who helps most?

God is mindful of needed protection from enemies' talk?

What are the important starting points for you?

4. Read Psalm 8:3-9

Where is the place of humans/mortals in God's created order?

5. Where is the place of humans in relation to animals? And God?
6. When it comes to authority and responsibility for all creatures, who is in charge? And who is given responsibility?
7. Do you feel responsible to God for your care of all creatures? How do you show this care? And how do you show in your life the call of God to take responsibility for other creatures?
8. Where is this teaching found earlier in the Bible? Do you agree that this is our God-given approach to enabling the healthy fruitfulness of the world?

9. Read Hebrews 2:5-9

The New Testament teaches that Psalm 8 teaches that all created things were given by God to the responsibility of humans. At the same time it recognises the present reality that not everything has been successfully delegated.

Why might this be?

10. Who is needed to make things as they should have been? And how does he achieve this?
11. What are the issues in our present society where you find the most significant clashes between the zeitgeist and the Bible's message to all people in all ages?
12. Being truly human is at least about fulfilling our calling to be responsible to God for the care and fruitfulness of other creatures AND receiving necessary leadership and salvation from Jesus. Are these things which define your humanity?

Prayer Points

Pray for us to understand our humanity more profoundly and faithfully

Pray that we may have a Christian approach to big issues in our society

Pray for the PCC as we seek to appoint an Operations Manager

Pray for Garry Ion (Uganda) as we send an extra gift towards his work

Pray for many facing mental health issues at this difficult time of year