

Seminar

Being Human



Andrew Collins

Being Human – a Theology of God-given Limitations

- Some life examples...
- Some cultural attitudes...

The Limitless God - time

- He is without beginning, Psalm 90:1-2
- He is uncreated, Colossians 1:16-17
- He is imperishable, Isaiah 40:28-29
- He is immortal, 1 Timothy 1:16-17
- He is eternal, 2 Peter 3:8

The Limitless God - space

- He transcends space, Psalm 139:7
- He is incomprehensible, Isaiah 55:8-9
- He is omnipresent, Acts 17:28
- He is omnipotent, Job 42:2
- He is omniscient, Psalm 139:1-4

The Limitless God – in Himself

- God's absolute perfection – Psalm 145:3
- God is love, God is...
- Our response

The Creator-creature distinction

- Imaging the limitless God, Gen 1-2
- Limited in time
- Limited in space
- Limited in a body
- Dependent with strengths and weaknesses
- *And it was very good*

You're Only Human

when I say "finite," I [am] focusing on good, created human limits: all creatures are limited by space, time, and power, and our knowledge, energy, and perspective also have always been limited.

Kelly Kopic

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Big words describing our smallness

- Particularity – we're small
- Finitude – we're limited
- Limitation as creatures in relation to:
 - Our situation: particularity in space and time
 - Our bodies: needs, strengths and weaknesses
 - Knowing God completely
- *All of the implications of being contained in a body!*

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Discuss

Discuss your limitations in relation to

- Space
- Time
- Your body's needs, strengths and weaknesses

How many can you list? [Hint: think about what you can't do!]

Created with limitations – it is good

- God is infinite in time, space and in Himself
- Man is finite in time, space and in himself
 - In what ways am I needy and dependent
 - How much time do I have?
 - What space do I inhabit?
 - What is my calling?
 - What are my strengths, weaknesses, gifts?
 - To be limited, dependent and needy are not sins, just creatureliness
 - And this is how God wanted Himself to be represented and reflected on earth

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Game! Images of limitation

How many bible images of limitation / finitude / creatureliness can you think of in 1 minute?

e.g. dust....

Game - Images of limitation

- Dust – Gen 2
- Child, offspring – Acts 17:28-29
- Sabbath [not really an image!]
- Babel – Gen 11
- Grass or flowers – Psalm 103
- Clay and Potter – Isa 64:8
- Clay jars – 2 Cor 4
- Thorn in flesh – 2 Cor 11

Fallen finitude

- Time and space become hard
- The body decays and dies
- The heart wants creature to become Creator
 - Limits aren't good
 - We don't want to submit to our limits
 - We create expectations beyond our limits
 - Limited knowledge of God becomes blindness to Him
 - Limitations reveal our hearts

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Discuss - where do you notice the fall affecting your limitations?

- Where do you see your created limits as not good?
- Where do you experience frustration with your limits?
- When is your attitude characterised by feeling 'not enough' or that you 'should be able' to.....?

The Limitless takes on Limitation

- The Word becomes flesh – John 1:14; Phil 2:7
- He lives in weakness, limitation and dependence
 - He grew , Luke 2:52
 - He ate, Mark 2:15
 - He slept, Mark 4:38
- But does not stop being God

The union of divine and human

the incarnation means that Christ took a true human body, the same in all essential respects as our own. It grew from zygote to foetus to infant to child to adolescent to man. It had the same nutritional and environmental needs. It had the same chemistry, the same anatomy, and the same physiology. It was not an illusion, but was real and tangible. The incarnation was not a theophany – the temporary assumption by God of a human appearance. It was a genuine entering upon the possibility of all those experiences to which our bodies expose ourselves – hunger and thirst, weariness and pain, seeing and hearing, flogging, crucifixion, death and burial.

Donald Macleod – From Glory to Golgotha

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That which is not assumed is not healed

- Gregory of Nazianzus

- Romans 8:3-4

what the law was powerless to do ..., God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us

- Hebrews 2:14-17

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity

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The union of Limitless and Limited

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were [inseparably] joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man

Westminster Confession of Faith 8.2

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The Limitless takes on Limitation

- He died – 2 Cor 4:13
- He rose – John 20:19

God loves his world. In Jesus, God incarnate (enfleshed), we encounter God's resounding Yes! to his creation. ...The fact that the Son became incarnate in Mary's womb and grew to a man reminds us that our bodies and this world were made for good.

Kapic – You're Only Human

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The Christian – Limited and in union with Christ

- Our limited bodies in union with Christ's body
- Christ sympathises with our limitations
- We are strengthened by faith in the Limitless One
- Limitations honoured in the Church Body

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Our limitations & everyday life

- Limits, Need and Dependence *are good*
- Rest and rhythms
- Discerning calling and gifting
- Community and compassion fatigue

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Our limitations & everyday life

- Expectations
- Stress and anxiety
- Neurodiversity
- Ageing

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Questions

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