Please open your Bibles to Genesis chapter one, and let’s read, verses 24, 25.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”

Introduction

ILLUSTRATION: Young Man In The Gorilla Suit

The story is told about a COLLEGE STUDENT who was desperately seeking a summer job. He searched the WANT-ADS and discovered the LOCAL ZOO was looking for help.

Being an ANIMAL LOVER, the young man thought this would be the perfect job. But when arrived for his interview, he wasn’t prepared for his job description.

The ZOO KEEPER told the young man they had recently lost their GORILLA. and that they wouldn’t be getting their new gorilla until the end of summer. He said, “You can’t have a ZOO without a gorilla.” We need someone to DRESS UP IN A GORILLA SUIT so we can keep the exhibit open during our busy summer season. We will PAY YOU WELL if you’ll take the job.

Well, the YOUNG COLLEGE STUDENT was somewhat hesitant, but he desperately needed the money, so he took the job.

His first day on the job, everything went really well for the first couple of hours, but he was having a terrible time seeing where he was going, and accidentally stumbled into the LION’S EXHIBIT next door.

The LION roared violently. . . . throwing the college student into a STATE OF TOTAL PANIC. “HELP”. . . . "HELP" I’m not a REAL GORILLA, I’m just a man in a GORILLA SUIT. Then he heard the LION whisper, “SHUT UP KID OR YOU’LL GET BOTH OF US FIRED!”

A Biblical View of Animals
Genesis 1:24,25 (NKJV)
How many animal lovers do we have here this evening? Linda and I love animals, in fact we have a little beagle named “Mattie;” two cats named “Mooch” and “Sweet Pea,” and a goat named “Snowflake.”

Beside our house there’s pond full of catfish and carp and eel and bullfrogs, snapping turtles and box turtles. And for much of the year there’s beautiful American bald eagle perched in the tree near that pond just waiting to swoop down and grab something with his massive talons.

As Christians, you and I should have a deep appreciation for the vast array of living creatures God has created. There's not a day goes by but what you and I are reminded that we aren't the only ones on this planet.

When you look at all the animals in the animal kingdom it teaches you and me a wonderful lesson on God's incredible creative power.

From the massive blue whale to the little minnow........ from the giant African elephant to the tiny field mouse ........from the lightning fast cheetah to the lumbering turtle from the majestic bald eagle to the creepy vulture........ God's fingerprints can be seen throughout the animal kingdom.

I have never preached a sermon devoted entirely to the subject of animals, and chances are you have never heard one. So this evening, I would like for us to spend our time together studying “The Biblical View of Animals.”

I would like to share four principles regarding the animal kingdom that we are taught in the scriptures.
The first principle the Bible teaches us about animals is..........

I. ANIMALS BELONG TO GOD

Turn with me to Psalm 50:10, 11

10 For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.

11 I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

1. Think about that! God loves and cares for the animals He created so much, He claims them as His own.

2. Every time you see a deer cross the road or a wild turkey strutting along the edge of the woods or a squirrel scurrying up a tree or dozens of black birds gathering earthworms and insects out of your yard, you are seeing creatures that belong to Almighty God.

3. Where did all the animals get their names? God gave that job to Adam, the first human being He created.

   Genesis 2:19-20 (NKJV) Out of the ground the LORD GOD formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

4. You and I might have called it “hoppy,” Adam called it a kangaroo. You and I might have called it “a banana eating doo-hickie,” Adam called it a monkey. You and I might have called a “slithery thing-a-ma-jig,” Adam called it a snake.

5. And if you don't think for a minute that God isn't an animal lover, did it ever occur to you Noah spent 120 years building enough space on the ark to preserve a male and female of each animal species?
6. God expects us to be faithful stewards of the animal kingdom He has entrusted to our care. A person who neglects to feed or provide proper care for his pets reveals a lack of appreciation for the animal's Creator.

And someone who abuses animals or senselessly kills animals without any purpose reveals a very wicked spirit and a total lack of reverence for the God who created and owns all animals.

7. Studies have shown that most murderers, especially serial killers, started down that dark path by gratuitously abusing and killing animals just for the fun of.

That sort of behavior doesn't just reveal a total disregard for the sanctity of life, it reveals a total disregard for “the giver of all life.”

**ILLUSTRATION**

William Wilberforce, took a public stand against cruelty to animals in the 1800's. His stance was not in the name of animal rights so much as it was in the name of Christian stewardship.

Bro. Wilberforce cited PROVERBS 12:10 as the scriptural basis of his strong stand: That verse says, “A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”

8. So the first principle the Bible teaches us regarding animals is that **ANIMALS BELONG TO GOD.**
The second principle is this:

II. **ANIMALS ARE INFERIOR TO HUMAN**

Let's go back to Genesis chapter one, and read verses 26-28.

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

1. The Bible teaches us that **animals have value**, but the scriptures warn us that **animals are not to be worshiped**. Nor does the Bible teach us that **the life of an animal is equally as valuable as the life of a human being**.

2. Both man and beasts were created by the same hands of God. But there is a difference! God created man in His own image; animals are not created in the image of God.

   God created man and beasts with physical bodies, but God created man with an eternal soul. Animals do not have an eternal soul.

3. If someone wants to insult another person, he might compare that person to a certain animal.

   * **He’s a “lazy dog.”**
   * **He’s a dirty “rat.”**
   * **He’s a “wiesel.”**
   * Law-breakers often refer to police officers as “pigs.”
   * Truck drivers often call a State Trooper “a bear.”
   * Lawyers and politicians are often compared to “snakes” or “sharks.”
4. In the same way, to make an image of an animal and call it “God” is not only a gross insult to the heavenly Father, it is blasphemous.

5. We're quite familiar with the events that took place in EXODUS 32 when the people saw that Moses didn't return from the top of Mt. Sinai for many days. The people said to Aaron, “Come make us gods that shall go before us.”

Aaron instructed the people to turn over all their golden earrings and Aaron fashioned the gold into the image of a calf. And the people worshiped that golden calf as a god.

6. When I was in India several years ago I saw multitudes of people who were starving to death. And the ironic thing is there were cows and oxen and goats and sheep everywhere that would provide sustenance for these starving people. But the Hindu religion does not permit the killing of any animal because animals are worshiped as gods.

7. We're all familiar with the animal rights activist group known as PETA, which is an acronym for “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.” Several years ago PETA ran a public service ad on TV comparing the slaughter of cows and chickens for human consumption to the mass murders committed by serial killer, Jeffry Dahlmer-------as if killing animals and killing human beings were moral equivalents.

8. Many of you can probably remember the story in the news years ago about hundreds of loggers in Oregon who lost their jobs because animal rights activists fought to keep them from cutting down the trees that provided the natural habitat for “the spotted owl.”

9. The late Charles Colson once wrote: “The animal-rights movement is not just about being kind to animals. It's about a radically naturalistic worldview that denies any special status to human beings. Animal rights promises a naturalistic utopia where we all live in harmony with nature. This is the secular substitute for heaven, where instead of Christ coming down to earth, humanity comes down to the level of animals.”
10. Think of all the publicity endangered animals get in the news, and yet our society hardly raises an eyebrow over the murders of over 55 million innocent babies by abortion.

11. One of the final stages of a dying society is when it values the lives of animals over the lives of human beings created in the image of God.

Paul writes in Romans 1:21-23 (NKJV)..........

"Because all though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man-----and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

12. While God created all the animals, He did NOT create animals to be equal to or superior to man. GOD never intended for man to worship animals as a god.

**BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE #1: ANIMALS BELONG TO GOD**

**BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE #2: ANIMALS ARE INFERIOR TO HUMANS**

Now here's biblical principle #3...........

**III. ANIMALS ARE FOR PEOPLE'S BENEFIT**

Please turn with me to Genesis 9:1-4 (NKJV)

_So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”_

1. **GOD HIMSELF** ordained the use of animals to provide the physical needs of man like food and clothing.
2. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden they made garments out of “fig leaves” to cover their nakedness. Realizing the fig leaves were not sufficient to protect Adam and Eve from the harsh elements, GOD HIMSELF made garments of animal skins for them to wear. *(Genesis 3:21 NKJV)*

3. As much as the animal rights folks would have us to believe it is immoral to wear garments made from animals skins or furs, the Bible doesn't teach that.

   John the Baptist was described by Jesus Himself as “the greatest man born to woman,” and what did John the Baptist wear for clothing? *Matthew 3:4 (NKJV)* tells us John was clothed in camel’s hair (hide) and wore a leather belt around his waist.

4. And as we read in *Genesis 9* a moment ago, GOD HIMSELF has said it is OK for man to kill animals for food. Many of you are hunters. Each year you stock your freezers with deer and other wild game you have killed while hunting. That practice is seen throughout the scriptures.

   And what did Peter, Andrew, James and John do for a living before they became apostles? *They were professional fishermen.* They didn't catch fish to put them in aquariums did they? NO, they caught fish for people to eat. *Luke 24:42* tells us Jesus Himself ate broiled fish. And in *Luke 22:8* Jesus instructed Peter and John to “Go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat.” Jesus was telling them to go kill and prepare the LAMB for the Passover meal.

5. Some people will argue that a vegetarian diet is healthier, and some even act sanctimonious about it as though they are a more moral being by refusing to eat meat. But the Bible teaches us there is nothing wrong with eating meat, so long as it is properly cooked, and that God created ANIMALS FOR PEOPLE’S BENEFIT.
Now here's the fourth and final biblical principle:

**IV. ANIMALS CAN TEACH MAN SOME VALUABLE LESSONS**

1. We know man can teach animals a few tricks, but the Bible tells us animals can teach you and me a thing or two.

2. Remember those familiar words of Jesus in Matthew 6?

   v.26  Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they."

   Jesus is telling "all us worry warts" we can learn some valuable lessons by observing how God takes care of the birds and how much more He will take care of us.

3. As the final days before the crucifixion were approaching, Jesus looked out over the city of Jerusalem and wept. And do you remember what Jesus said?

   Matthew 23:37 (NKJV)  "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you were not willing."

4. Oh there are so many valuable lessons we can learn by observing animals. In fact I would like to close tonight's message with a valuable life lesson God taught me years ago.

   **CONCLUSION**

When I was in my thirties I walked ten miles a day; five miles in the morning, and five miles late in the evening. Along the route where I walked I encountered a friendly stray black dog who would meet me every day about the same spot. I called him "buddy."

Buddy wasn't the brightest light on the Christmas tree. Quite often 'ol Buddy would get ahead of me, and I would holler for him to come. I would pet his him on the head and tell him to stay with me. On one of those occasions the thought occurred to me how often I get ahead of God, when the word of God teaches me to "stay with God" "abide in Him.
I learned another valuable lesson from 'ol Buddy. Sometimes Buddy would come across the remains of some animal that had been hit on the highway and he would stop and sniff and just stand there in the middle of the road, even if a car was coming. And I would holler for him to come, and reluctantly 'ol Buddy would come right at the last minute before the car got to him.

Well one day it occurred to me how many of us are like 'ol Buddy in that we become distracted by the “dead things” the “worthless things” of this world, totally oblivious to the dangers around us.

“Ol Buddy” may not have been a very smart dog, but he taught this old dog a few valuable lessons.

I pray that the message you have heard this evening will cause all of us to be more observant of all the creatures GOD has surrounded us with. And who knows, maybe we'll learn some valuable lessons about God and about ourselves.

But the most important thing for us to remember tonight is this: “Of all God's creatures great and small, GOD LOVE YOU AND ME BEST OF ALL!”