RUINED BUT REDEEMABLE: HUMANITY
Genesis 2.7

While Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents new possibilities, it also creates uncertainty which causes fear. Will AI eliminate my job? Will I have to put a lot of time into learning new technologies? Will AI reach superintelligence and become a threat to the human race?

Humans uniquely develop technologies to build cultures

Humans alone are made in God's image. This includes ontological (will, desire, conscience, reason, language), relational (complex feelings, love, obligation), and functional (exercise rule) dimensions.

Humans uniquely have a soul, an immaterial aspect that makes human life sacred and accountable to God (Genesis 2.7).

Part of being human means enacting the "cultural mandate" (Genesis 1.28). To "subdue" the creation and exercise "dominion" over it is a charge to build cultures and civilizations.

God is a Creator, Maker, and Fashioner. As we are in God's image we are endowed with gifts to create. The Greek word, techne, which gives us the word technology, means "art, skill, craft, trade...work of art" (Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary).

God gave us things in the ground (i.e. oil, rare earth metals) so that we can use them responsibly to build a civilization. Technology can be used to amplify the good.

As the crown of creation, humans can do amazing things to build culture (Psalm 8).

We've abused our gifts to diminish God and dehumanize ourselves

We tend to ask what we can do with technology. It might be more important to ask what this technology is doing to us.

    i)   Creativity, Making, and Working

If I am made to be a maker, are there consequences for outsourcing these abilities? What do we lose if humans stop making music? What do we lose if humans stop playing chess? What do we lose if humans are unable to make an argument in print or with speech? What do we lose if we stop procreating?

    ii)   Relationships

The most common use of AI is for companionship. If I am made to have relationships with other humans, are their consequences for machine substitutes that cannot feel?

    iii)   Morality

Our ethics do not evolve with our technology. What prevents a machine from behaving immorally? If a machine cannot feel guilt or shame, does this excuse certain behaviors? If a machine cannot be tried in a court of law, is there accountability? Do they have rights?

iv)   Redemption

The great quest in AI is for a "God-like" transhumanism that rids the world of disease and death. Is it possible to create something more powerful than us while also maintaining control of it?

The redeemed in Christ insist on the importance of human life

"The adding machine produces effect closer to thought than anything done by the animals, but it does nothing to justify the assertion that it has a will like the animals" - B. Pascal (d. 1662).

AI will replace human tasks, but it will not replace human beings.

We can shun new technologies and hide from them.
We can embrace them wholeheartedly without question or caution.
We can adopt a balanced approach where we learn the best uses of AI, express concern where necessary, and show the world healthy limits.

Don't be afraid. Our God is in complete control (Cf. Genesis 11.1-9).

Our proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus declares to the world that He died for humans, not machines.

We can practice the one-anothers, connect love & responsibility, sing & make art, and memorize Scripture (Psalm 119.2).

Key Idea: Let's use technology to amplify good as God defines it, always affirming the sacredness of humanity.

Application Questions:

What does it mean for humans to be made "in the image of God"?

Why do you think some materialists have hesitations about advanced forms of AI? How might Christians speak to this?

What opportunities does the church have when so many are nervous about new technologies?

Bibliography:
Andy Crouch, *The Life We're Looking For*
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*
John Matthews, "Redeeming ChatGPT" at providencechurch.us/worship