

# LIFE



*Revealed. Protected. Cherished.*

## **SAMPLE SERMON OUTLINES**

Sanctity of Human Life Week 2018



CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTER  
OF TIDEWATER

**Sanctity of Human Life Week**  
**January 21-28, 2018**  
**Sample Sermon Outlines**

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## Sanctity of Human Life Children's Sermon

### Big Feet, Little Feet

Choose someone (young man/teen) with really big feet to come sit in the front with you and the children. Point out that *Tom*'s has really big feet, and that lots of people know

*Tom*': people at the church, his family, his grandparents, people he goes to school or works with. If he has lived in different locations, point out that people in another state/city where he lived or went to school know him. **Lots** of people know *Tom*.'

Choose a child with very small feet to come and show his/her feet. *Jane*'s' feet are a lot smaller than *Tom*'s' feet, but still a lot of people know *Jane*.' You all do, her family, her grandparents, her neighbors, etc. *Jane*' has pretty small feet, but still, **a lot** of people know her.

**Show the 'Little Feet' pin.** At one time, we all had feet this small, and when our feet were this small, do you think that many people knew us? Maybe our mom and dad knew that we were beginning to grow, but hardly anyone even knew we existed. Nobody knew what we looked like yet. But one person knew all about us, even when our feet were this small. Who do you think that is?

**God** knew all about us even before our feet were this big (show pin), even before our moms and dads knew we existed. The Bible tells us this is true. (Have older children or teens read the Bible verses.)

**Jeremiah 1:5** – The womb is the place inside of the mother where a baby grows until he/she is big enough to be born.

**Psalms 139:16** – This verse tells us that God has always known all about us and loved us, even before our feet were **this** big (show little feet pin again).

**Suggestion:** Give out "Little Feet" pins as a reminder that God knows us and loves us even before anyone else knew us.

## **Life**

*Matt Chandler – The Village Church*

How are we? Excellent. If you have your Bibles, let's go to 1 Timothy, chapter 1. Before we really dig in here, I need to put some lenses on us. I need to put some filters in our ears so that really the difficult subject we need to address today will be heard rightly. The God of the universe goes to great lengths in regard to revelation to get you to understand and grasp the truth that fundamentally is difficult for us as humans to grasp. I want to try to put some lenses on you before we get going, and I think 1 Timothy, chapter 1, starting in verse 12, is going to help us out with that. So let's look at it.

**"I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."**

Now that's a spectacular statement that, "I am the foremost. Mercy was given to me. Forgiveness was granted to me. God counted me worthy to his service, to serve him, to make much of him, to decry his glory and might, that he counted me worthy, even though I was an insolent, violent opponent of his." He is going to say why in the next line. **"But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."**

Now Paul just said in his letter to Timothy, one of his disciples, that the reason God saved him, the reason God rescued him, the reason God called him to himself was so you and I would be without the excuse of self-pity, would be without the excuse of, *I've gone too far. God certainly can't forgive me. The mercy afforded to so many others cannot be granted to me because I have sinned in ways that surely the Lord won't forgive.* Yet so much of the Bible is built out to make that thought in you a lie.

Moses killed a man with his bare hands. He didn't shoot him from a few hundred yards away. He murdered him with his bare hands, and yet who does God select, empower, and choose to lead his people out of slavery? The murderer. David, a man after God's own heart, takes advantage of a woman who is in the process of ceremonially cleansing herself, gets her pregnant, and then has her husband murdered. The Bible calls David a man after God's own heart.

You see, the Bible wants to consistently and constantly assault this idea and assault that little thing in our head that says, *Not me! Not me! I've gone too far. I've done too much.* It's imperative for where we're going today for us to let that kind of fill in all the crevices and all the little cracks of our souls and for us to marinate a bit in that before we proceed. So let me pray for us to that end, and then we'll get started.

Holy Spirit, I just ask today that you would do what I cannot, that you would work in ways I cannot. I pray you would make me bold and, God, that you would, by your Holy Spirit's power, persuade our hearts and our minds, and we might find ourselves in the middle of your heart around this issue. Help us, Jesus. It's for your beautiful name. Amen.

If you have your Bibles, let's go to Genesis, chapter 1. Several years ago, I went off script, I went off of my notes, and I just pointed out I believed a lot of how we treat our pets is silly. I mean, I just talked about the fact that they're members of our family, and some of you have even bought clothes and shoes for your pets! So I just commented I thought that was ridiculous. It was a rabbit trail. It was not a bulk of the sermon, but there are few things in my decade here that elicited the type of response I got from that little rabbit trail.

So one belief and one action arose out of that very quick, two-minute statement. One, apparently because I made that statement, I hate animals. Okay, that's not true. I love animals that aren't at my house. Love them! Your little puppy, Bootsie, love that dog. I just don't want him defiling my backyard. Love animals. I just have three kids. There's enough mess to clean up. I'm not looking to add to bills or to messes that need to be addressed. I'm not looking to train anything else right now. All right? I love that you love your dog.

Then the second thing that occurred was what I perceived to be your love for me led many of you to email me and send me pictures of your dog dressed up for Christmas, in your family photo, with their Halloween costume on. This is straight. I even got a calendar of dogs dressed up as biblical characters. Really, my point in even bringing that up that day was there appears to be, although it cannot be clearly articulated, a homogenization of all mammals as kind of being on the same kind of equal turf.

If you look at the shows we like, everything from *The Dog Whisperer*, which is legit... I've tried that *tsst* on my kids. From *The Dog Whisperer* to *Whale Wars* to *animal psychics*, I mean, we are into these other mammals. We want to protect them, take care of them, fight for their rights. I mean, we're in right now on the puppy/kitty love. I want to set out to answer a really simple question we know the answer to, but I believe we need to address it. The question is simple. I'll ask it in two ways: *Are all mammals equal, or is there something special about us?*

That takes us to Genesis, chapter 1. This is verse 26: **"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**

All right? Now what's happening in this text is the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, the image of God, is being built out. What this text is communicating to us is that humankind, mankind alone, in all of creation has been created in the image of God. That is that mankind, unlike all other mammals, has an emotional or a spiritual, intellectual, and moral component the rest of creation lacks. Now the rest of creation might have *one* of those components, but it's only mankind that has all three of those components. It's only mankind who can live in, explain, and enjoy the fullness of what God is doing in reconciling all things unto himself. We are spectacularly different than the rest of creation.

No matter how smart the dog and how dumb the human, a dog will never own a human as a pet. No matter how ignorant the human and how brilliant the gorilla, the gorillas never get together and go, "Look at how he likes bananas! That's crazy! Look! We've taught him to beat his chest." All right? That's never happened. The reason is we are *other than*. We have been made in the image of God, in the *imago Dei*. It sets us apart from the rest of creation.

Now hear me. The Bible clearly teaches creation care. So any type of brutality towards animals because of our position would be wicked. I'm not talking about hunting. I'm not talking about those kind of things. Everybody breathe out. Keep your camo and your .30-06 loaded. I'm saying simply that brutality for the sake of brutality is sinful, even if exacted upon an animal that is, according to the Scriptures, underneath our position in the creative order. You and I, made in the image of God, are wholly different than anything else in all of creation.

So we know that Adam is made in the image of God. It's clear. It can't be argued. So the question then becomes is that some kind of special deal for Adam, or are we also sons of Adam, daughters of Adam? Well, flip over to Genesis, chapter 5. We'll look at verse 3. **"When Adam had lived 130 years..."** Can I just tell you for free, I'm not interested in that? **"When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son..."**

Listen to this language. "...in his own likeness..." So he looks like his daddy. "...after his..." What's the word? "...image, and named him Seth."

So what we see happening in Genesis, chapter 5, is the idea that not only does Adam pass down his likeness to his sons and daughters, but he also... That image of God that was created in Adam (Adam was created in the image of God) is passed down to the sons and daughters of Adam through his line so if we trace from Adam to us, we see you and I are also made in the image of God as mankind as it's been passed down from generation to generation to generation, which means we also reflect to creation and back to God the God-ness of God in his power, that moral, spiritual, and intellectual capacity the rest of creation lacks.

Now not only does the image of God get imparted to us through our fathers, but the brokenness and sinfulness of our fathers also is imparted to us. Let me show you this. So it's not just the image, not just the *imago Dei* that we get, but it's also the brokenness and sinfulness of the world. Psalms 58:3: **"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies."** Job 14:4: **"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one."**

All right, that doesn't work. You can't bring something clean out of something that is unclean. Since Adam sinned and passed down to his sons sin and they passed down to their sons sin, and since we have discussed at length here that sin isn't just an external action but an internal state of the heart that leads to action, that comes via our father's line into our souls. We come out of the womb with iniquity. In fact, according to this text it was actually in the womb also.

Let's keep going. Job's friend agrees with him in Job 15:14: **"What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous?"** So if the Bible is saying that in the womb not only is the *imago Dei* present but also the iniquity and sinfulness of mankind is present, then you have a moral, spiritual, and intellectual crisis in the womb, that the components of personhood are present in the womb.

Now the next question we have to answer (this gets progressively more difficult in lieu of our culture) is...*If the image of God and the brokenness of mankind and all our personhood is present in the womb, at what point in the womb are those things present?* So the Bible is not silent. In Psalms 51, verse 5, the Bible says this. David says, **"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."** When I read that, I don't know where your mind went. Can I tell you where my mind went? Scandalous. Jesse's wife, playing around. Then *Jessie's Girl* popped into my head, and I had to shake that out.

In the middle of all of this, I'm going, *Okay, I need to go back and look because David just said, "At my conception, I was conceived in sin."* My thought was, *Jesse's girl was playing around.* Here's the thing you gotta love and respect about the Bible. The Scriptures do not protect the sins of the heroes of the Bible. They lay it all out for you to see their failures, their shortcomings, their rebellion. When they really blow it, it's right there on the page. The Bible does not try to make men and women in the Bible look lovelier than they are.

It's a very refreshing part of the Scriptures. It's one of those things that draws us to, *Okay, this will work for me. God can save me. God can do this work in me.* If we go back and look at the story of Jesse and his sons, there is not a hint of immorality. There is nothing shady going on here, but what David is getting across to you and me is that moral and that spiritual and that intellectual component is there at conception. All that he would be and all that God had for him was there at conception. So when the sperm hits the egg and two cells become four cells become eight cells become 16 cells (I'm not going any higher than that for math's sake), we are persons, we are people, at conception.

Now the implications of this biblical truth are massive. Let me give you just two. The first implication is God is intimately aware of you and of me. Psalms 139 says he knit us together in our mother's womb. Now I think the weight of that text is missed on us a bit. I'll tell you why. There are not a lot of knitters anymore. There are not. I mean, I think some of the hipsters (Thank you, Denton) are probably trying to bring it back since it was old. *We knit our own stuff*. Right? But ultimately in our culture, there are not a ton of people knitting anymore.

So when we read a text like that, really the forethought involved and the planning involved and the end in mind involved in such a project as knitting something is completely lost on us. So a woman at the church knitted my wife a really beautiful scarf. That didn't accidentally happen. She didn't pick up it up and was like, *Oh, it's a scarf*. She thought, *I'm going to make a scarf. This is the color I want the scarf to be. This is the pattern and the design of the yarn and how I put it all together*. With great forethought, with the end in mind, she began to knit and put together.

So in Psalms 139, when it says you were knitted together in your mother's womb, it's this God is aware of you. God is into the details of how you've been wired, how you've been put together. We could also look at Acts 17 where the Scripture says the times and boundaries of your habitation were set by God before you were, which means there are no accidents in this room! You might have freaked out mom and dad, but you never freaked out God!

So Mom and Dad might have gone, "Oh man! You really weren't planned," but there's never been an argument in the Trinity about you. The triune God of the universe has never gone, "Spirit? What in the world? I had that kid pegged to go out in '86, and you sent them down in '74? It ruined my whole plan. You and I need to sync up." That's not how it works! That's not what happened.

So we like to think of God at 40,000 feet. That's one of the reasons we've been robbed of deep intimacy and worship for God because we love God at 40,000 feet. We love kind of big banner truths, but we don't like to let those truths really kind of sink into our hearts that God is aware intimately of you. Those kind of intrinsic gifts you have, that's a delight to your father who wove those into you. So thinking back on life and looking at things you were naturally drawn to and gifts you have that begin to work themselves out in a way that you see the kingdom of God pushing out and moving forward, those are spectacular moments.

I'm loud. I have always been loud. There has never been a time in my life where I'm not. My wife in restaurants has gone, "Hey, it's just us. It's just us!" I have a voice that carries, all right? That's what it's called. Now I'm not *this* loud always. Like if we were to talk in the foyer, I wouldn't be like, "Hey! How are you?" It's not like that, but I am loud. I do project. My understanding from Scripture is God, with the end in mind, knowing he was going to call me, save me, and flame me for his name and his renown, said, "We need to give him some more folds. We need to build it out so he can do it a lot without those things fading on him."

God, with the end in mind, your life, my life, is intimately involved in the details. If we could just sit in that and marvel at God's delight in how you are wired, how you're gifted, how you function. I wonder how much more we could get the rest of that text and really grasp we're fearfully and wonderfully made? That implication alone is massive, but here's the second implication. The second implication of us believing that the Word of God teaches that men and women were created by God in the image of God and that our moral, intellectual, and spiritual components are present at conception, the implication of that belief because we are in glad submission to the Word of God... Are you tracking with me?

Now in a day of blogs and op-ed pieces, it's harder to kind of get that across. We are people of the Word, and the church is a creature of the Word, which means we let the Scriptures define for us how life should



be. We don't let the temperature of our culture tell us what's right and wrong. We let the Word of God tell us what's right and wrong. We don't let our own opinions be absolute for us. We let the Word of God be absolute for us, because there's a way that seems right to us, and in the end, it leads to death.

There isn't anyone in any of these rooms who would for a second try to point back at their pasts and say there has never been a time they were sure they were right that they didn't later go, *Oh, what an idiot!* We've all been guilty of that. What saves us from that is the Word of God that leads us into paths of righteousness. Since that is true, the believer in Jesus Christ is not indifferent or neutral when it comes to the cultural sociological arguments around life and abortion. We are not neutral.

Now in trying to understand this, I just tried to look at the arguments. I just wanted to look at the arguments for this, and I found a kind of schizophrenia that blew my mind. I'll tell you why. Because I spend a lot of time with unbelievers, I enjoy that, love that. It sharpens me. I love the questions. What I have found when I'm around truly secular people who are thinkers, what they tend to bring up are really scientific issues. They will say, "Well, Matt, the Bible would say the world is only this many years old, but science has shown us the world is this many. How do you reconcile science and faith?"

I mean, those are the kind of questions I end up responding to and answering of how science really kind of assaults the Word of God. So I have to kind of deconstruct that and go, "Well, not really. Let's look at this, and let's look at what science has claimed historically. Let's not try to call faith this and science this. I just don't know that's true historically or even in present reality." The only issue I have ever come across where the secular humanists of our day do not want the evidence of science to bear weight on the issue is the issue of abortion.

At eight weeks in the womb, it is scientific fact that the baby has brain waves, a heartbeat, a functioning liver, functioning kidneys, a fingerprint, and recoils from a prick. Yet the argument is, "That's not a human life. That's a woman's body, and a woman should be able to do with her body anything she wants to do with her body." Now here's what I mean by schizophrenia. That's completely untrue in the rest of our laws. If you don't believe me, take off your clothes; run through the street. Do you know where you're going? Jail.

Try to sell your body for sex. Try to do that. You get busted. Do you know where you're going? Jail...along with the guy who tried to buy it. So this idea that self-autonomy rules and reigns is not true in any other domain except around this one. On top of that, the laws are so backwards. Hear me. If a man were to assault a pregnant woman and the baby were to die in her womb, he'd be tried for manslaughter. Yet the same woman can go to a clinic, and for a small price (maybe even subsidized by the government), can have the baby inside of her killed, the baby who does not have her genetic code who cannot have her blood type who does not have her fingerprints.

Of the one million plus abortions that occurred in the United States of America last year, the majority of them occurred after eight weeks, which means there's a heartbeat, brain waves, and functioning organs. But our position is, "That's not human. That's not a soul. That's not a person." In fact, we know you can sustain a baby's life after 23-24 weeks if they're born early, if they're born prematurely. But it's still legally viable to kill that baby in the womb post-24 weeks.

If we step away from the life issue and just look at it on the surface, how can you logically buy into this unless you're willing to suppress truth, which is Romans 1 in action? I read a lot of history. I don't know. I just love it. There are times specifically around the slave trade and genocide that when I'm reading history, I'm just going, *What were they thinking?* Not *persons*, because I completely understand how persons can stumble into dark things. I completely get that. I am a person.

My question when I read history isn't about persons; it's about people. Like when I read about the slave trade and when I read specifically about coming out of England that the slave trade was about sugar... They were stealing Africans and taking them to the Caribbean to harvest sugar because they tried to use the Irish, and the sun crisped them up. Literally hundreds of thousands of Africans were brutally killed for sugar, for sweet tea and biscuits. I mean, so I'm thinking, *What were they thinking? What were they doing? Where were the people who were going, "Hey, this is crazy"?*

What you find in history is that really underneath and subversively witting away at the foundation of that nonsense were faithful men and women, but the culture by and large was passive and ignored it. I earnestly believe that over the next few years, science itself will help overturn some of the ridiculousness we see in our culture. I think our children's children will look at us and go, *What in the world? Where were you? What were you doing? Why didn't you see this? Why didn't you sense this? I mean, if you're going to say that biblically you believe this is a life, how could you not do anything as millions were killed every year, the most helpless of helpless, the weakest of the weak, yet you did nothing?*

My hope in talking about this subject today, knowing it will be costly... What I mean is it's not going to be *costly* costly. Here's what I mean. Some of you aren't coming back. I mean, you wanted to hear fairy Jesus sprinkling you with blessings. That's not where we went today. Let me be straight. I don't have any political affiliations here. I'm the kingdom of God party. We already have our Guy, so I'm not stumping here. Okay? In light of the darkness our culture is walking in around this issue, let me tell you some things I think we need to do.

Let's look over at Ephesians, chapter 5. We're just going to look at verse 11. I'll wait 'til you get there. I want you to see this. Ephesians, chapter 5. We're going to look at verse 11. **"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness..."** So let me just stop. If we're saying here, which we are, that life begins at conception, then the taking of a life post-conception is murder and must be filed under the unfruitful works of darkness. Is that fair?

If life begins at conception... The Word of God weighs in it does; science would say it does. You have to be careful playing this little game of, *Well, I define life as this amount of brainwaves.* If that's true, we have to pull the plug on a lot of people in a lot of hospitals. Our definition of personhood is another piece of that kind of schizophrenic, "it's what I want to do" type of ethic that's driving this industry, because if we were to say, "Well, it's only a human when it's breathing on its own," then we have a lot of people in ICU who need to go out, don't we? We need to start pulling some plugs. We need to get rid of our dialysis machines. We need to get rid of our respirators.

See, it's so logically insane that I've found myself provoked, if you're not picking up on that. So in this text, he says, **"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness..."** Now what I've found is most believers in Christ don't have a problem with this. *I don't have a problem with this. That isn't a problem. I'm not going to have an abortion!* Now some of you have, and I started with 1 Timothy on purpose.

You have not gone beyond the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. In fact, we have a very good-sized ministry here called Grace Abounds that's there for men and women who are dealing with the post-abortion stress, guilt, loss, and sorrow. So I point you in that way if it's hitting you. There is no condemnation for you, no judgment on you. This is the Word of God defining what life is for us. The Scriptures say, "Have no part of these things."

I believe that most evangelicals will go, *Yeah, no problem. No problem!* But the text doesn't stop there. Look at the next line. **"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead..."** What? So not only are we as believers in Christ to not participate, but we are also as believers in Christ to work to expose. So what

does it look like to work to expose? Well, let me just float some of many options. I think there is a political component to this. I mean, there just is. So if you're politically involved, I think this has to be an issue for the Christian conscience.

There are advocacy and pregnancy centers all over the Metroplex, one in Denton, one in Lewisville, several down in Dallas, a brand new one up in Keller. Their sole purpose is to walk young women, support young women, care for young women who are pregnant and don't know what to do. We can volunteer our time. We can give up our resources. It's my hope that hundreds of you would be on the phone come Monday going, "What can we do? How can I help? How can we serve?"

I think everything from being willing to look at adoption to... I'll tell you a great source of information. The boys at Way of the Master produced a 33-minute documentary that's online for free. You can look at it YouTube. You can also watch it at [www.180movie.com](http://www.180movie.com). It's just a 33-minute documentary on this issue. I want to give you a word of warning and then expose yet another piece of hypocrisy. The documentary is graphic, but here's what I've found to be somewhat interesting in reading the comments. Usually I have a general rule that I don't read the comments on YouTube stuff, but I read it.

Here's what I found. The graphic scenes in *180 the Movie* are touted as manipulative. "That's emotive, manipulation, not based on fact." Now here's the irony of that. I don't remember the last time I've watched television... I'm not a huge television watcher, but I can't remember the last time I watched television where I didn't hear Sarah McLachlan singing a song with a puppy that was all jacked up. So here's what I keep trying to point out. Nobody is going to say this is the same, that this puppy has more rights and requires more care than this human. Nobody is going to say it, but you fight for the rights of the unborn, and you're manipulative, but if you want to give Bootsie a new home, that's worthwhile.

I mean, I feel like I'm taking crazy pills. I mean, do you see this weird stretch of things? I think watching *180 the Movie* would be extremely helpful as you watch those boys at Way of the Master kind of dissect this issue. Oh, that God might put a fire in our bones around this! Might we never get so loud on the issue that we forget the souls like our boy Paul who in ignorance and unbelief walked in things that they did not understand and into decisions they didn't fully grasp. May we not be so passionate around this issue that we forget about the souls that are actually caught up in it. Might we be known as a place that loves and extends grace to the culture that we were called to be as the church of Jesus Christ, the conscious in.

We will find ourselves in this issue and on many other issues being against the world for the world. You don't have to be an expert in Scripture to wonder God's opinion on the murder of over a million little boys and little girls every year in the U.S. So it's my hope that if God gives me great-grandchildren, this issue has been settled, that I be able to say, *No, no, we've fought. It was crazy, but we fought. We prayed. We pled. We engaged at every level we knew to engage to intervene against this injustice on the weakest of weak and the most helpless in our society.*

Join us this Wednesday night. We're just going to pray. We're going to pray for our president. We're going to pray for Congress. We're going to pray for the advocacy and pregnancy centers. We're going to pray the Spirit of God would move in such a way in the hearts and minds of Americans that we might see God do something spectacular in our day and age around this horrific reality. God be merciful to us. Let's pray.

Holy Spirit, I know there is a thickness to this subject. I pray for my brothers and sisters in this room who, without knowledge or understanding, or maybe even *with* knowledge and understanding, have sinned against you and against the life of a child. I pray that in this moment you would, in just the way you and you alone can, might massage into our spirits your love and forgiveness, the grace afforded to us in Christ.

For those of us who have erred on the side of passivity, where we have let this be somebody else's issue, some other thing where we have not, as you have clearly articulated in the Scriptures, fought against injustice and worked to expose the darkness, I pray we would work at pushing back the darkness in this place at this time and that you would grant us wisdom on how to proceed. I pray that in our passion we would not sin against others and we would not judge harshly others, that we would have great care and compassion for persons and a desire to see you work among peoples. Help us, Holy Spirit. We need you. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

Love you guys.

**Life is Sacred**

*Focus on the Family*

Have you ever seen an apparently healthy driver pull into a parking space marked "Handicapped" at the grocery store? A feeling of indignation rises in your chest, doesn't it? "They shouldn't take advantage that way!" you comment to your companion.

Yet when you, yourself, or someone you know is pregnant with a child that the "experts" say may be less than perfect, you encourage eliminating it. Or when an elderly person has been partially incapacitated by illness, you advocate facilitating his demise.

Why is it that, in the first instance at the grocery store, being disabled engenders a desire to protect, to defend, to stand up for; and in the other two, there's only a desire to get rid of "the problem?"

The unborn, the elderly, the disabled, the terminally ill — if these are only "problems" to us and have no intrinsic value of their own, then we naturally become very lax about conveniently disposing of them at both ends of life's spectrum.

First it was the unborn, via abortion. Francis Schaeffer, that 20th century prophet and intellectual, warned us in the 70s that abortion was the beginning of a slippery slope of denigration of human life that would eventually lead to euthanasia and such things as physician-assisted suicides. People were incredulous then; now people in Oregon have voted to maintain the availability of that very "option." Why?

People think *their* answers, *their* solutions, *their* viewpoints are at least equal to, if not superior to, God's. *We* decide which unborn children should be given an opportunity at life. *We* decide when someone's life is no longer "useful" enough or of sufficient "quality" to be allowed to continue.

Meanwhile, God's heart aches as He sighs, "My thoughts are higher than your thoughts, and My ways than your ways" (Isaiah 55:9). **All human life is sacred.**

### *I. Life is sacred . . . because God made it.*

#### *A. It was created by God.*

1. And God created man in His own image. — Genesis 1:27
2. For in Him all things were created. — Colossians 1:16

#### *B. It is protected by God.*

1. And Thy care has preserved my spirit. — Job 10:12
2. For He will give His angels charge concerning you. — Psalms 91:11

#### *C. It is valued by God.*

1. Behold I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands. — Isaiah 49:16
2. I have loved you with an everlasting love. — Jeremiah 31:3
3. Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. — Jeremiah 1:5

4. I am come that they might have life and have it to the full. — John 10:10

#### ***D. Illustration.***

Have you ever done a piece of needlework, or woodworking, or ceramics for someone special to you? Or for yourself? Or what about an organization, a ministry, a campaign that you founded? You always have a very special place in your heart for that which you had a primary role in creating, don't you? Imagine how God feels when He creates each one of us, and then we are simply "thrown away?"

## ***II. Life is sacred . . . no matter what its condition might be.***

### ***A. Life is a challenge in a sin-tainted world.***

It would be wonderful if God's original plan had materialized, but unfortunately sin came into our world and with it came pain, imperfection, injustice, etc. God warned us of these challenges and enables those who trust in Him to be victorious through Him.

1. Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. — I Peter 5:7
2. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials. — James 1:2
3. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world. — John 16:33

### ***B. We must not overlook those who have challenges in this life***

Jesus showed special concern for the lame, the blind, the woman with the issue of blood, the lepers. In our day we mustn't forget.

1. The woman in crisis confronted with an unplanned pregnancy or abnormal embryo development such as Down Syndrome.

Some studies report that as many as 90% of couples faced with an amniocentesis report of probable Down Syndrome will choose to abort. Yet, do you know anyone with a Down's child that doesn't tell you that child is the light of their life, an absolute joy, the most loving person they've ever known?

2. The post-abortive woman who struggles with the reality that she consented to her baby's death.
3. The post-abortive father who walked away from the reality of his sin.
4. The terminally ill or aged who have been forgotten or who have outlived many of their family and friends.
5. The disabled, the disadvantaged.

- a. Illustration.

Pastor and author Max Lucado tells in his book, *The Applause of Heaven*, about a sweater that hangs in his closet. He says he seldom wears it — it's too small, the sleeves are too short, the shoulders too tight, some of the buttons are missing, the thread is frizzled. Logically, he says, he should throw out that sweater since he has no use for it and will never wear it again. It simply takes up space in his closet. That's what *logic* says.

But *love*, he reports, won't let him.

Why not? What's unusual about that sweater? To start with, it has no label, no tag telling you "Wash in cold water." That's because it wasn't made in a factory, produced on an assembly line as the product of a nameless employee earning a living. Rather, it was the creation of a devoted mother expressing her love — *his* mother. That sweater is unique, one of a kind, irreplaceable. Each strand was chosen with care, each thread selected with affection.

And so, even though that sweater has lost all of its use, it has lost none of its value. It is valuable not because of its function, but because of its MAKER. So is each life.

6. The lonely and emotionally distraught.  
Jesus said, "...to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." Matthew 25:40

### ***C. Our Lord placed great value on those whom society has shuffled aside.***

1. While on his knees, the leper begged Jesus to make him clean. The Bible says, "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man." Mark 1:41
2. We are His hands and His heart to a desperate, searching humanity.  
*Please use one or two illustrations of people you have pastored who will fit in here.*

### ***III. Life is sacred . . . because of its eternal nature.***

#### ***A. Life exists before we enter the material world.***

"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place." — Psalm 139:15-16

#### ***B. There is life at new birth.***

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." — John 3:3

#### ***C. Our earthly life is simply a prelude to eternity.***

1. "Man is destined to die once and after that the judgment." — Hebrews 9:27
2. "In my father's house are many rooms; I am going there to prepare a place for you." — John 14:2
3. "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." — 1 John 5:13  
In other words, we can know and be assured of abundant life while on the earth, and everlasting life in eternity with Christ.

#### ***D. The steps to life eternal.***

1. Acknowledge that you are a helpless sinner separated from God. — Romans 3:23
2. Agree that Jesus Christ is the only provision for your salvation. — John 1:12
3. Receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and ask Him to come into your heart. — Romans 10:9  
*Share an illustration of someone you know who accepted Christ after a life of struggle and challenge.*



#### *IV. Conclusion*

**A. ALL human life is valuable**, then, because God creates and sustains it, in His own image and for His purpose — His sacred image, and His sacred purpose. Those are His "ways," which Isaiah tells us are so much higher than our "ways." Deliberately violating God's "ways" is the Bible's definition of sin.

**B. And there's only one effective way to deal with sin:** confess and repent. God is calling us to do confess that we have not followed His "ways" and repent from only following our "ways" — individually, as a church, as a nation. How will you respond to God's call?

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**Abortion: The Innocent Blood of Our Sons and Daughters**

*John Piper – January 27, 2008*

## Abortion: The Innocent Blood of Our Sons and Daughters

By John Piper – January 27, 2008

### Psalm 106:32-48

They angered him at the waters of Meribah, and it went ill with Moses on their account, 33 for they made his spirit bitter, and he spoke rashly with his lips. 34 They did not destroy the peoples, as the Lord commanded them, 35 but they mixed with the nations and learned to do as they did. 36 They served their idols, which became a snare to them. 37 They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; 38 they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. 39 Thus they became unclean by their acts, and played the whore in their deeds. 40 Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people, and he abhorred his heritage; 41 he gave them into the hand of the nations, so that those who hated them ruled over them. 42 Their enemies oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their power. 43 Many times he delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes and were brought low through their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress, when he heard their cry. 45 For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love. 46 He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive. 47 Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. 48 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the Lord.

Psalm 106 is a summary of the history of Israel with a focus on her repeated sins and God's repeated judgment and mercy. Psalm 106 is a picture of the Old Testament in miniature. It cries out for something more final, more lasting. The final verses (vv. 47-48) say, "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the Lord!"

Yes. And all that had been said before. Over and over, they called on the Lord to save them during the time of the judges, for example. And God did save them. He was merciful and gracious and slow to anger. But then over and over, they reverted to unbelief and disobedience. So the end of the psalm, just like the end of the Old Testament, cries out for something more. This psalm and the Old Testament itself are incomplete. They groan for something more. They point to the future. They are not ends in themselves. They are stories and books of promise.

Jesus: God's Decisive Yes and Amen

And that is why the New Testament exists. Because the final, complete, decisive, lasting act of divine salvation happened when Jesus, the Messiah, came into the world. He was the final Adam (Romans 5:12-21), and the final prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22; 7:37), and the final Israel (Matthew 4:1-11), and the final high priest (Hebrews 7:23-24), and the final Passover sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7), and the final manna from heaven (John 6:31-32), and the final suffering servant of Isaiah 53 (Mark 10:45), and the final Son of Man of Daniel 7 (Matthew 24:30). His blood was the blood of the promised final new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 (Luke 22:20). He therefore was the final, decisive Yes and Amen to all God's promises (2 Corinthians 1:20).

So when we read the stories of the Old Testament like the one in Psalm 106 and we feel the oppressive weight of sin that never seems to have its final solution, we should think: It's all pointing to Christ. This is not Christians reinterpreting the Jewish Scriptures. This is God revealing the completion of the Jewish Scriptures. And the point of the Jewish Scriptures and the long history of Israel was not in itself but in Christ.

### God Has Come, His Name Is Jesus

Therefore, when this text ends today in verse 47 with the cry, "Save us, O Lord our God," we should take it to mean: O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, rescue us from captivity wherever our enemies have the upper hand, and hasten the coming of the King, who will deliver us once for all from the worst of enemies, and make atonement for our sins once for all, and write his law on our hearts, so that we may fear him always and never rebel against him again.

And when we hear that cry, and understand that implication, we today should rejoice because he has come already. His name was Jesus. And he has revealed the mystery, long obscure in the Scriptures, that by his death and resurrection not only Jews but also all the nations of the world will be forgiven and justified and cleansed and reconciled by faith in him alone.

### The Banner of the Cross

In other words, flying over this psalm and all its horrors and failures that are so relevant for our modern age, is the banner of Jesus Christ as the final Savior of the world who has died for sins and conquered guilt and condemnation and death and hell—for everyone who cries out from the heart, "Save me, O Lord my God."

Flying over this message about abortion is the banner of the cross of Christ. Its color is crimson. Because the blood of Christ takes away the sin of abortion and the sin of not caring about it. So I don't just end today with the call for repentance and the offer of forgiveness. I begin with it. I want it to hover over your head while I walk you through this text.

### The Sins of Israel

Let's get the bigger picture of the text and then focus on the sacrifice of innocent blood. First there are the sins of Israel, then the anger and judgment of God, and then the cry for salvation. First the sins:

Verse 32: At Meribah, Israel murmured against Moses because there was no water, and they provoked Moses to strike the rock instead of speaking to it, and God was angry that Moses did not sanctify his name by believing him (Numbers 20:11-12).

Verse 34: The Israelites did not destroy the peoples of Canaan as God had commanded them. This shows that the opposition to sacrificing the children we will see in a moment is not owing to a general opposition to killing. There was a place for killing. And the explanation for this horrific moment in Israel's history is given in Deuteronomy 9:4, where God says,

Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, “It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,” whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you.

In that period of Israel’s history, God wielded them for his judgments. We may not follow them in this kind of judgment because things have fundamentally changed with the coming of Jesus. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting” (John 18:36). But the point I am making is that God’s anger at the killing of infants is not owing to a sentimental rejection of violence or physical force. There is another reason why God opposes it. We’ll come back to that.

Verse 35: “They mixed with the nations and learned to do as they did.” The root issue here is not intermarriage. That’s what we focused on last year in the racial harmony message. The issue is that mixing meant learning to do what the pagan nations did.

Verse 36 gives the general statement of what happened. And verse 37 gives the specific sin that expresses the corruption best.

Verse 36: “They served their idols, which became a snare to them.” This was the overarching reason for God’s prohibition of mingling with the pagan nations. It led to idolatry—the abandonment of the true God and the worship of idols. And these idols, the psalm says, became a “snare.” They were a trap that led to their destruction.

Then verse 37-39 give the specific sinful behavior that this idolatry led to. “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they became unclean by their acts, and played the whore in their deeds.”

### The Anger and Judgment of God

This is very strong language. This is God’s language. He is very angry. Verse 40-41: “Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people, and he abhorred his heritage; he gave them into the hand of the nations, so that those who hated them ruled over them.” Idolatry led to a snare and the snare was the sacrificing of their own children in religious rituals and these rituals were spiritually whore-like in God’s sight and the anger of the Lord was kindled and judgment fell.

We need to feel the horror of this language: “sacrifice,” “demons,” “innocent blood,” “polluted,” “whore,” “anger of the Lord,” “the Lord abhorred his heritage.” We need to feel the force of this so that when we use such language today we do not communicate, any more than the psalmist did, that there is no hope for the guilty. That is the most amazing thing in the psalm.

### The Cry for Salvation

Verse 44: “Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress, when he heard their cry. For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love.” *Amazing grace, how*

*sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.* So we need to hear the horrible language so that the grace that comes will sound as amazing as it is.

And just like the psalmist looked child sacrifice full in the face, so today we need to study abortion. We need the raw facts—just as raw as the language of this psalm. We need to watch the videos over at [Abort73](#), and we need to look at beautiful pictures of the unborn. We need the statistics of over 40 million babies killed by abortion since 1973 just in our own country, with 90% of the abortion clinics in urban centers, and therefore wiping out massive numbers of minorities (over half of all abortions) with a kind of ethnic cleansing that pro-choice people cannot dare to think about. We need to know the procedures (suction-aspiration, dilation and curettage, saline abortion, intact dilation and extraction, RU-486, intrauterine cranial decompression, or partial birth abortion).

### Some Sins Need Raw Language

The psalm is as raw as it could get before photography and DVD. The point is: There are some sins that cannot be comprehended without raw language or raw pictures. I once read in the *Star-Tribune* that if all Americans could be made to watch a live execution (electric chair or lethal injection), capital punishment would be abandoned. I don't know if that is true. But if it is, the same thing applies all the more to abortion. If we were made to watch a doctor pull off the little baby's legs and arms one by one and place them on the table like a dentist removing cotton from your mouth—if all Americans were made to see what it really is, the pro-life goal of abortion being unthinkable (not just illegal) would be much nearer.

### Four Parallels with Abortion

So the psalm is raw when it comes to child sacrifice. There are at least four parallels with abortion.

#### **1) It Is Called *Sacrifice***

One is that it is called “sacrifice.” Verse 37: “They *sacrificed* their sons and their daughters.” Sacrifice means that you give up something ordinarily considered valuable (a sheep or a bull) to gain something better—usually from a deity. Abortion in America is not done consciously with any desire to get blessing from a deity. But it is done to gain something “better” than the baby—that is what the whole debate is about. Is the gain greater than the loss? We need to be sure to see it in those terms: The life of a child is being sacrificed for something. What that “something” is defines the barbarity of our culture. I say that knowing full well how unimaginably difficult many unplanned pregnancies are. I do not make light of that. The issue is: How precious is the child? And will we trust God to make a way? This is what crisis pregnancy centers are devoted to.

#### **2) They Are Sons and Daughters**

Second, the child sacrifice in the psalm is described as the sacrifice of our sons and daughters. Verse 37: “They sacrificed *their sons and their daughters*.” He could have said “children.” But he says “sons and daughters.” This draws attention to two things. 1) They were sexually different. They were little boys and girls. And 2) they were family. This baby that is being sacrificed is family. And so it is with abortion. It is always a little girl or a little boy. And it is always family.

### 3) There Was Innocent Blood

Third, the psalm calls the sacrifice “innocent blood.” Verse 38: “They poured out *innocent blood*, the blood of their sons and daughters.” This is the difference between the Canaanites who are to be punished and the babies who are to be protected. This is not a statement about original sin or the lack of it. This is the ordinary legal statement that we all depend on in court: Did I do anything to deserve the punishment other people are about to execute on me? Among other people babies are innocent. They do not deserve to be mistreated by other human beings.

God himself has an absolute right to give life and take it. And we may be sure that if he takes the little ones, he deals with them according to what they could know (Romans 1:18-20). I believe they are saved. But we today have no right to take their lives. In relation to us, they are innocent. And we are guilty if we take their life.

(I insert here a qualification so you will know where I stand. There is no time to develop it fully. If God is already taking a baby’s life inside his mother—through some catastrophic anomaly or mishap, and if it is clear that the baby cannot live outside the womb and that leaving the child will imperil the mother’s life—under those circumstances I do not think we sin against the baby or God by taking the baby and saving the mother. But that is not the case in 99+% of the abortions.)

### 4) It Is to Demons

Fourth, the psalm says that this innocent blood is sacrificed to demons and to idols. Verses 37-38: “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters *to the demons*; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.” In 1 Corinthians 10:19-20, Paul deals with this connection between idols and demons. He says, “What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to *demons* and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.”

In other words, Paul sees behind all idols not any true God, but only a world of demons that promote idolatry and therefore, without the worshippers even knowing about it, these demons receive tribute from their sacrifice. Two years ago, a group of Catholics and Protestants produced a document called “That They Might Have Life.” In it, they said this about abortion:

The blindness of so many to this moral atrocity has many sources but is finally to be traced to the seductive ways of evil advanced by Satan. Jesus says, “He was as murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).<sup>1</sup>

I think that is right. Which means that the sacrifice of our sons and daughters today is in a very true and profound sense a sacrifice to demons. The religious part of paganism may have fallen away in our modern Western world. The devil does it that way in today’s secular world. Otherwise, he would be laughed off the stage. And of course he wants me to be laughed at, not himself. So it all appears very secular, very rational, very non-religious, very high-sounding, when in truth it is very demonic.

## Abortion: Sacrificing Our Sons and Daughters to Demons

It is the sacrificing of our sons and daughters to demons. And someday we will see this. And we will be as amazed that it could have endured so long as we are that the enslavement of Africans lasted as long as it did. The issue is just as clear as that one was. And we are just as blind today as they were then. The big difference is that the babies can't run away. The underground railroad is entirely dependent on you, not them.

The strength to stand up and make a difference in this cause comes not mainly from the raw horrors of abortion, but from the amazing grace of verses 44-45: "Nevertheless [that is, in spite of sacrificing their children to demons], he looked upon their distress, when he heard their cry. For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love." This is what Jesus Christ came to achieve for all who will receive it.

### Take Up the Challenge

I pray that the horrors of abortion and the glory of God's grace will move you to take up the challenge of prayer on the back of the worship folder and to extend yourself in other practical ways for life, both temporal and eternal. Amen.

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;  
maintain the rights of the afflicted and the destitute.  
Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.  
(Psalm 82:3-4)

<sup>1</sup> *First Things*, October 2006, p. 22.

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**Our Modern Moral Trifecta**

*Bill Hybels – March 13-14, 1993*

## Our Modern Moral Trifecta - Bill Hybels (March 13-14, 1993)

### Abortion

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Well, my friends said that I would never forget it. I was about ten years old. I had gotten a BB gun for my birthday, and they said, "You ought to go out and shoot a bird. You'll never forget it."

I'd never hunted anything in my life. So I took that brand new BB gun and I stalked birds around our property. Finally I saw a robin -- state bird in Michigan. They throw you in jail if you mess with them, but I thought, "There's no way I'm going to hit this robin."

So I drew a bead on it, I pulled the trigger and I hit it. But it wasn't like they said it was going to be. It didn't just keel over and die. It flew a little ways in a very contorted way. Then it flopped around on the ground. It was chirping and screaming. It was bleeding and it looked very unnatural.

As I stood over it looking at what I had done, I couldn't believe what I had done. When that struggling bleeding bird finally died, I ran to my room and closed the door, fell on the bed and cried. I didn't like that.

Some years ago, a guy in my small group died. There were four of us men in this group who walked together in relationship for about ten years. One of the guys in the group got a brain tumor and died.

When we knew he was close to the end, we got the phone call and we raced to the hospital. He died in his hospital room when we were in the lobby. But we all went up anyway. For a while we were granted the privilege of standing at the foot of his bed while he lay there dead. The three of us silently cursed the one who steals life away. Then we went across the street, the three remaining members of that group. We sat in a Burger King until one guy finally said, "I hate death."

A couple years ago I was on a speaking assignment out in Southern California. I went on a late afternoon jog, jogging on the sidewalk of a busy street. I saw a guy on a bicycle, about 55 years old, riding my way. A city bus came by real close and they got tangled up with each other. The guy went head over heels. The bus kept going, didn't even know what had happened.

Right in front of me, between me and about the tenth row right there I saw a guy have a horrible collision with the pavement with no helmet on. Long story short, he died in my arms. But it wasn't just that he died in my arms. It was how he struggled to live while he was in my arms. He was gasping for breath. He was clutching me as though I could somehow keep death from pulling him into its grasp. Finally he lost his fight to live and he died.

The older I get, the more I find myself pondering the treasure, the wonder of life, of being alive. Because we're all alive, we forget and take for granted the wonder of life. But we're dead without it. Think about it. Even though you might not be too excited about where you're going after this service, you might not be very excited about what you're going to walk out to -- you know, the car that drove you here -- but you're alive. You're alive.

The older I get, I'm awestruck by simple little verses in the Bible like Genesis 2: 7, where it says, "God breathed into mankind the breath of life and man became a living being." The essence of who we are, what really makes us fully human is that we're alive. God is the author of life. Men can't make it, scientists can't engineer it, and once it's gone, nobody can recreate it. God is the author of life.

On the other hand, if the truth were known, the older I get, the more melancholy I become about the whole notion of death. I resent its perniciousness. I resent its selection process and its terrible timing. The older I get, the more outraged I am when a man or a woman usurps the domain of God, when someone takes someone else's life. 'Take their stereo, don't take their life. They're dead without it. Don't take their life.

Now, I don't only hate death, I hate death's father. John 10: 10 says, "The evil one comes to kill, to steal and destroy. Death is his deal." God is the author and the engineer and the giver of life. The evil one is the author and engineer of death, which is why Christ's followers whisper to friends who are grieving the sudden death of a loved one.

They say, "This is not God's say. This scenario that you're in was not Plan A. This was not the picture God had in mind when he breathed into man his very eternal life breath." This is why the apostle Paul refers to death as the enemy, because death stands in opposition to the very nature of who God is -- the life giver. I suppose I hope at some level we all value life.

Doctors take pledges to sustain it. Soldiers train to protect it. Artists perform to enhance it. Ministers preach Christ to redeem it. And God promises in his Word that when he closes the curtain on history as we know it, when he gathers his children to be with him forever, he says, there will be no more death.

In that time and that place God says that no one's going to walk around with that low-grade awareness that the clock is ticking, that time is growing short, that our bodies are wearing out and that loved ones are going to start disappearing, leaving gaping holes in our hearts. None of that, God promises. No more death, just life with the life giver. Life in its fullness, eternal life. It's OK to long for that. It's OK to worship God for giving us that promise. It's quite appropriate for you to hate death and its author.

Having said all that about the gift and the treasure and the wonder of life, it should not come as a surprise that we have developed nomenclatures for societies that appropriately value life. We have developed nomenclatures for those societies that devalue life or profane it.

Societies that tolerate violence and cruelty and bloodshed and wholesale slaughter of human beings are societies appropriately called barbaric or uncivilized. Those that treat their citizens with dignity and honor and strongly protect and value life, we call those societies civilized.

Question: Against the backdrop of all we're reading in the papers these days of what's going on in our land, are we in the United States heading in the direction of becoming more civilized or are we heading in the direction of becoming less civilized?

With regard to how we're treating each other these days from conception to the grave, are we showing signs of attaching more value to life or less? Are we doing a better job of protecting the weak and vulnerable among us or a worse job? Are we shielding more of our citizens from violence, abuse and mistreatment or fewer?

I don't have to bore you with all the stats, but if you read the reports of which way the charts are headed for this stuff, it's not good. You read how the charts are headed for crimes against children, women, minorities, handicapped, the aged. One can only conclude that our progress toward civility has long since stalled out and these days we're going the other way. How do you feel about that?

Nowhere is this more evident than in the category that scorekeepers what we are doing with unwanted pregnancies. In case you haven't heard, we're not doing a very good job of celebrating when a little baby comes alive.

We had our gift of life. Whenever that gift of life is bestowed on a developing baby, there ought to be some high-five's. There ought to be some parties. There ought to be some people running around saying, "Man, I value my gift of life. I celebrate yours." That's not how it's happening very much these days anymore. We're not even doing a very good job of shielding these developing babies from mistreatment or violence.

An alarming percentage of all pregnancies these days are victims of a rather severe form of in-womb child abuse. It's got names: termination or abortion. It's in-womb child abuse of the worse kind.

Can I take you on a quick rabbit trail? I am so glad of one particular kind of moral advancement in our country. We are finally addressing the horrors associated with post-birth child abuse. Nowadays we have served notice and gone public about it. Any adult mishandles, mistreats or abuses a child or an infant, they're going to be held accountable for their actions. They're going to be arrested. They're going to be convicted. They're going to be put in jail for a long time, as it should be in a civilized, life-honoring society.

In the strangest twist of human logic, if you take an infant and you push the reverse button on the film of his or her life and you roll that infant's life story back a few frames so that it's just a little bit inside the birth canal, that infant can legally be hacked up, poisoned to death, sucked to pieces and thrown in a dumpster.

Do you know what many of us do even though we're aware that that's going on every day? We just look away. We go to work and we go home. We go to church and we go home. When we're bored we rent videos, and we get on with our life. How many of us are really all that worked up about abortion?

Speaking of videos, guess what I did for two hours this past Thursday? I sat all alone in my office and I watched videos of actual abortions taking place. Unedited, uncensored -- real life slice-and-dice films of babies. Beyond the point of viability now; babies that had they been born prematurely would have been fine, could have gone home that day and laid in the crib in the nursery at your house or mine.

But because of this strange twist in logic that I referred to a moment ago, because they are a few inches inside the birth canal instead of a few inches outside the birth canal, you can't imagine what happens to those infants.

Because I don't think you can imagine it, I wonder if maybe I should show the video that I watched. I wonder. If I do, I can already hear the screams of protests. I can imagine the stacks of letters that are going to come accusing me of using shock values, accusing me of being sensationalistic. I got that from the short clip from last week, a middle-aged doctor just spouting some facts.

I wonder what would happen if I just rolled the film of that non-narrated clip of a baby being sucked apart limb by limb; then its head being crushed so that it can be removed from the womb without undue pain to the mother. I wonder if I just let it run and show you how the abortion attendant inventories the body parts on a nearby countertop to make sure all the pieces that have been hacked and sucked apart are there. Then maybe I could show the part where the attendant casually flips the switch by the sink for that extra horsepowerd garbage disposal that will take care of everything. That's what happens.

If I show it, what would you think of my pastoral discretion? Would you say, "That's really not in good taste, Bill." Would it be a responsible way to inform you of what's going on every day in abortion clinics

fifteen minutes from this campus? Or would you bail and say, "Bill, this is a church. Let's just talk and sing about the love of Christ."

Well, I'm not going to show the clip, so you can relax. But I am going to state, as clearly as I can, four reasons why I think abortion is an unacceptable solution to the problem of unwanted pregnancies.

The first reason is what I call the bio-ethical reason. Since 1973 -- you know, the Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision -- since 1973 women have been filing in and out of abortion clinics in order to remove what has been referred to as "those little spots, those little lumps of worthless tissue, the unwanted products of conception." Everything was proceeding nicely for about 15 years until the advent of ultrasound and the advances in fetology.

A few years back, suddenly when women went to their doctor's office to check out their pregnancies, a little probe was put on their stomach and they looked at a video monitor, and that was not a lifeless lump of tissue in there. At nine weeks or eleven weeks or thirteen weeks, you see little babies with arms and legs, with a head, with a heart beating, with a resolve to do back flips in there whether you like it or not. When ultrasound came of age, this was a serious blow to the pro-abortion crowd. No longer could they say, "Just take the spot away." There was more than a spot in there.

Complicating the matter further, whereas 20 years ago researchers and lab workers were quite comfortable about talking to pregnant women about these lifeless little subhuman tissue masses that didn't amount to a hill of beans in anybody's book, these days those conversations don't happen much anymore.

Why? Because doctors like the world renowned French geneticist Jerome LeJeune goes on record as saying, "To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place a new human life has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion."

What's he saying? He's saying that we don't even debate anymore in a scientific crowd. We don't debate when a life begins or when someone becomes human. It happens at the point of conception. He said you can see it with high powered microscopes these days. There's not much disagreement about it anymore in the scientific community.

Doctor Heime Gordon says, "The question of when life begins is no longer a question for theological or philosophical dispute. It is an established fact it begins at the moment of conception."

I've done all new research this time around as I've spoken on this subject. The biochemist, the geneticist and the fetologist are all in agreement on this -- human life begins at the moment of conception. It's verifiable. It's scientific fact, which presents the ethical problem of whether to call the termination of human life inside the womb different than we call the termination of life outside the womb.

Outside the womb we call termination of human life killing or murder or homicide. What then should we call the termination of life if it happens inside the womb? See the ethical problem? If a fully human, fully alive baby is a few inches inside the birth canal, legally these days we can collect a handsome fee for snuffing out its life, call it abortion and the abortionist can go to the movies that night and eat popcorn.

However, if the fully human and fully alive baby is a few inches outside the birth canal and someone snuffs out its life, it's a moral outrage and we all say, "Lock that guy up and throw away the key." Seems to me that geographic position with respect to the birth canal is a pretty critical factor, don't you think?

If you were a baby in the womb, I'd tell you, you ought to do a little less thumb-sucking and a little more strategic thinking and figure out a way to get yourself on the other side of the birth canal. If I were in there I'd be saying, "I want out. I'm fair game when I'm in here. I want out."

You know, I heard a doctor describe a dilemma that's happening in a large downtown hospital in one of our major cities. He said, "It's a problem. One floor of the hospital we specialize in keeping premature delivered babies alive, little tykes," he says, "that we can hold in the palm of our hands. Four months along, sixteen weeks, twenty-two weeks. We do wonders with these little babies and we can nurse them to full health. They live full lives."

He says, "But one floor below that, we do abortions on babies much further developed, much further along than the ones we're helping to save upstairs." He says rather sheepishly, "It gets a little confusing to the hospital staff." Wouldn't want to press the wrong button on the elevator, would you?

Back to my first main reason why abortion is an unacceptable solution to the problem of unwanted pregnancies. Bioethically, friends, the practice of abortion is indefensible. It's the killing of a fully alive, fully human person who just happens to be on the wrong side of the birth canal.

And before I move on to my second major concern along these lines, I just want to add that all the rhetoric that you hear about mother's rights over her own body, all of that rhetoric sounds a little hollow when you read deeply in the field of bioethics.

You see, there's a fully human, fully alive baby developing in the womb of that woman. It becomes readily apparent that there are two individuals rights that must be taken into consideration when a major decision is going to be made -- the baby's rights as well as the mother's rights.

Once again, the way our current laws read, the baby's rights don't exist on the one side of the birth canal, but they exist in full just inches on the other side. Again, I say to any womb-bound babies who can hear my voice, get out of there as soon as you can. It's a lot safer for babies outside the birth canal.

The second reason why abortion is an unacceptable way of handling unwanted pregnancies is what I call the psychological reason. Simply put, most mothers that abort their babies wind up with deep regrets and gaping emotional wounds, some of which never seem to heal. Admittedly, not all.

I keep hearing from Planned Parenthood people and from pro-choice people that there are women who can go out and get an abortion, come out; couple of years later go out and get number two, come out. Go in couple years later and get number three and come out. It doesn't even faze them. I hear that there are women around like that.

I've been a Christian leader for 20 years now. Talked to hundreds of women who have had abortions, and I have never run into a single one who did not deeply regret it. Luck of the draw -- what do you think? Maybe the next fifteen women I bump into are going to be ones that say, "I had one and it was just like going to the dry cleaners to get a spot removed." But I doubt it.

Every time I announce that I'm going to speak on this subject, I'm inundated with unsolicited pleas from women who themselves had abortions and they say, "Bill please tell pregnant women who are trying to make up their mind what to do, tell them to call me. Here's my home phone, work phone, car phone and fax number. Tell them to call me. I won't preach to them, I won't judge them, I won't shame them. I'll just tell them my story and show them the wounds I carry in my heart. After that it's their choice.'

Last night a woman gave me this:

"Dear Bill, Twenty years ago I had an abortion." She's a regular worshiper here. "I had to put my heart in the deep freeze in order not to be bothered by that act. But my heart has been thawing out for the last few years. As it gets warmer and more tender and more alive, my heart burns in pain for the child I killed. I wonder about her. I try to imagine her in heaven looking at me and I hope she can forgive me on that day. I haven't forgiven myself yet, even though I'm told that God will forgive me."

Another woman wrote to me this week and said, "My quick fix has tormented me for 20 years."

A New Zealand woman wrote a column recently. In it she stated that abortion does more soul damage to a woman than a woman being raped. Her reasoning is that at least somewhere in the trauma and a tragedy of a rape episode, a woman finds a thimble of solace in knowing that this was not her choice.

Not so with the abortion trauma. In fact, the piece that usually won't go away is the knowledge that there was indeed another choice. Not an easy choice, not a low-cost alternative -- carrying a baby to full term, risking losing the job, the financial implications, the social embarrassment, the separation, pain once you give it up for adoption -- if that's your choice. But there is an option. This woman writer from New Zealand says that second option is going to lead to far less soul damage than abortion will.

I have a psychological concern about abortion. I have a bioethical concern. Thirdly, I have a medical concern. I could spout off a long list of stats on this concern, stats that show dramatic increases in the risk of miscarriages and premature deliveries for women who have had abortions. I could site studies that show the connection between abortion and increased risk of infertility.

But I came to a whole new level of understanding about the medical risks associated with having abortions when I read Carol Everett's new book this week titled "Blood Money." Carol Everett used to direct and own and work in abortion clinics. She became very wealthy in the process. Money drives this whole thing. You do know that, don't you?

It's money and greed that fuels the entire abortion industry. Carol Everett became very wealthy due to her involvement in the abortion industry, but she became disillusioned as well, primarily disillusioned because of all the medical damage that was being done, the physical damage being done to women who were getting abortions.

Her disillusion led her to some soul searching which led her to a cross where she gave her life to Christ. With her new value system doing dissonance with her old, she decided to get out. She writes a book which lifts the secret veil of what goes on in abortion clinics around the country and of how many medical complications actually occur in the business.

All I can say is buy the book and fasten your seat belt. It's information you'll never hear from Planned Parenthood or pro-choice folk. There are serious medical risks associated with having abortions.

Last but not least, my fourth concern is a biblical concern. And it's true, if you push a Christian up against a wall and hold him by the throat and say, "Show me the chapter and verse that says thou shalt not have an abortion," there's not one verse in the Bible that says it exactly that way. But there are scores of passages in the Bible to tell us to celebrate, affirm, validate and protect the gift of life.

Jesus said in John 10: 10, the first part of it, "I have come to give life. I am a life giver and I came to give it in all its fullness." Later he says, "Not just the fullness of life here, but in eternity. I am all about life," he says. "I am all about life, quality life and eternal life. I'm a life-affirming savior."

You know, there are lots of passages in the Bible that tell us that life is so precious and we ought to treat it so carefully that the Bible actually prohibits us not just from striking each other, which would tarnish life just a tad, but the Bible actually tells us not to speak harshly or unkindly to one another.

It's saying that life is such a miracle, such a gift, we ought to be living it in Christ in the fullness of life. Don't even speak unkindly to each other and take any of the shine off the gift and the wonder of life.

Then the sixth commandment says it about as clearly as it's going to get said -- "Thou shalt not kill." Thou shalt not trespass into the domain where God alone decides when he's going to spawn life and when he's going to number someone's days and say that's enough. That's God's exclusive territory. Thou shalt not trespass and become the arbiter of life and death.

Then there's that major theme in the Bible of God coming alongside and offering protective grace to the afflicted, to the helpless, to the vulnerable, to those who have no power and no voice.

Make no mistake about it. When Jesus said, "I notice when a single sparrow falls or when a robin falls," that same Jesus also notices and cares when a freshly conceived baby miraculously developing in the safety of its mother's womb is suddenly subjected to a nightmarish attack that ends its life before it sees a single smile or sunrise. "Thou shalt not kill."

We don't have time to go into it today, but there's a whole new controversy brewing to a boil on the other side of the chronological time line. Mercy killings they're called. The subject of euthanasia is quickly becoming the next moral mine field we're going to have to navigate.

An expert in this field said to me this week, "Bill, with medical technology and machinery, we could keep cadavers going indefinitely. We can keep the brain waves bouncing. We can keep the blood flowing through the body. This is our next moral mine field. When do you pull the plug, when do you go to heroic means to save someone and when don't you do all that?" I started probing into that field and decided that I'm going to have to handle that at a separate time and place.

Let me give you once again the four reasons why I think abortion is an unacceptable solution to the problem of unwanted pregnancies -- the bioethical reason, the psychological reason, the medical reason and the biblical reason. I realize that I didn't cover everything that could be said. I didn't get into RU-486, fetal tissue research and the likes. But I just couldn't, for time's sake, go into everything.

I also decided I couldn't close this message without issuing a couple of challenges to every person in this place. Would you allow me that? First challenge: I want to challenge everybody in this place to come to your own well-informed conviction on this issue of life and death. It's so easy to hear the sound bites on the evening news and to read bumper stickers and billboards and then climb on the band wagon with one group or another without every having done authentic reflection or deep personal research.

Friends, that's a low-integrity approach to establishing a conviction on a matter. Some of you came here with a pro-choice, pro-abortion position this morning. That's OK, glad you came. Why do you hold that position? Do you really know?



Could you defend that position? Could you? Could you defend it against the bioethical reason not to have an abortion or the psychological reason or the medical reason or the biblical? Could you defend it against that? Have you done your homework, really? Have you done deep reflection and prayerful, soulful kind of analysis of this? Have you? I wish you would. The stakes are high, not just for mothers but for babies.

Others of you came here as pro-lifers. You know the slogans and the rhetoric, but have you really done your homework? Would you be able to give a compelling and systematic and comprehensive defense of your position if asked to? Or did you just climb on the band wagon with the group you thought was on the right side of the issue?

We've got to all do our homework, friends. We put a resource sheet together. There's tons of books on this in the book store. Make your conviction your own on this.

My second challenge is a challenge to action -- action with integrity. Just this week we saw a horrendous violation of the biblical way to change public policy. It happened in Pensacola, Florida. A man who calls himself a Christian -- he carries a Bible regularly and he had just been in a meeting. A pro-lifer ended the life of a doctor who does abortions. I saw it on the television and said, "How does this moral map work? I am a pro-lifer; therefore I will end your life. How does that map work?"

It doesn't, friends. It's an outrage. In recent years, Bible-carrying pro-life activists have begun to cross a line of integrity that has discredited the one we worship. Demonstrations have turned into ugly shouting matches complete with wild exaggerations and obscenities flying from both sides.

Planned Parenthood clinics have been bombed and burned and vandalized. Threats of violence against abortionists and their families are a rather common occurrence. Again, I remind all of us that this is not God's way. This is not the way of Christ.

Jesus said never return evil for evil. Never. Colossians 3: 23 says, "Whatever you do, do heartily, but do it as unto the Lord." Do it in a manner consistent with the character of Christ. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry." There ought to be some outrage in your spirit about some of what you've heard this morning. The Scriptures say, "Be angry, but don't sin in your anger."

To those of you who want to honor the gift and the wonder and the miracle of life, and you want to stand up for it and stand up for the rights of the unborn, do so heartily. Write letters, picket, vote, march, align yourself to serve in an organization that exists for this express purpose. But remember, because you do it, reflect the kindness of Christ. And remember that the people standing on the other side of the street and the people standing on the other side of the issue still matter to God. They do.

My final challenge is to those among us who have terminated pregnancies or who have paid for someone to do so or counseled someone to do so. You knew what I was going to talk about today. I can't imagine how you've endured sitting through this service. I can only commend your courage for having come. You've just about made it. We're almost done.

I've read many of your soul-wrenching letters and I've wept with many of you down in the bullpen. I feel just like I have to remind you of the words of God through the Prophet Isaiah who said in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they can be as white as snow. Though they be red as crimson, they can be made as wool." Can you take those words in this morning?

Remember what I said last week about who we really are. Who are we? At Willow Creek we are just a colossal collection of moral foul-ups. We ought to sit around a moral poker table some day and just hold our cards and someone will lay a card down and say, "I see you that one, and up you one." You think that's something? Watch this. Here, I'll up that one. I'll ante you way up. Watch this.

If we play moral poker and started laying our cards down on the table, everyone in this place would stand exposed. That's all we are. And some of our moral foul-ups are just as serious as your foul-up when you terminated your pregnancy. We're in this thing together, friends. We're in it together.

Together, God says, 'Lay all your cards on the table. Expose your moral failures to the light of my holiness and then turn to a bloodstained cross and say that on the basis of what Jesus Christ did, I'm going to look to Christ to make my scarlet sins as white as snow.'

The image in the book of Colossians is the one we do every baptism service, where we ask people to write their worst sins down, put them on a piece of paper and before they get baptized, to pin them to the cross. That's what you've got to do with the mistakes you've made in this area.

You've got to take it some day. You've got to pin it to the cross and say, 'I bear it no more.' Christ bore the penalty and paid the price for that sin. Then you've got to walk out of here in the fullness of life, liberated to live life, motivated to share life, new life in Christ, anticipating eternal life.

God, the author and engineer of life, wants us to live that way. If you're pregnant now and standing at a moral crossroads, call the church and we'll help you. We've got a ministry here called 'Alone and Pregnant,' staffed by some people who'd love to wrap their arms around you and talk it through with you. But what God wants for you, for your baby for all of us and for all eternity is life.

Let's stand for closing prayer.

**Our Modern Moral Trifecta - Bill Hybels**

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**Willow Creek Association 2006**

**The Biblical View of Abortion (2 Part Series)**

*Rev. John MacArthur*

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(For a complete version on cassette, contact Grace to You Ministries, P.O. Box 4000, Panorama City, California, 91412)

### **I. Introduction**

Statistics and quotes describing abortion in America today

### **II. Abortion comes from Satan**

John 8:44: In His conversation with the Pharisees, Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil And the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning."

Supernatural satanic conspiracy: Satan has always been a murderer. It started out with Cain killing Abel

Satan has even been a mass murderer. You can go back into Canaanite civilization and read horrific accounts of the Canaanites' massacring of their babies, burying live babies in walls of new buildings. The people in the land of Canaan offered their born children as sacrifices over the fire to the god Molech.

Satan tried through the time of Moses to massacre the Messianic line in the massacre of all of the babies that Pharaoh ordered.

He tried again in the massacre that was carried out by Herod at the birth of Christ.

### **III. Abortion is Not New**

In the Jewish Talmud you will read statements made by Jewish rabbis throughout ancient history in which they say that abortion is murder and has no place in the society of the people of God.

Aristotle and Plato both advocated abortion as a way to control large families and stop population development.

During the early church period, the Greco-Roman pagan world was very busily engaged in abortions. These were the reasons the pagans gave for abortion. One, to conceal illicit sex. Number two, rich women who were illegitimately impregnated in their love affairs by low-class common men did not want to give birth to low-class common children and then have to waste their fortune on them. They also said that abortion was convenient because, "It allowed a woman to preserve her sex appeal so that she would not," and I'm quoting from an ancient source, "be troubling her womb with bouncing babies." Abortion then was a contraception to conceal illicit sex, to prevent unwanted children, to preserve your figure...just as it is today.

### **IV. The Early Church Stood Against Abortion**

The Jews were against abortion. Because of their view of God and His sovereignty and His creative power and because of the sanctity of human life and because they knew that the second great commandment from the Deuteronomic law was to love your neighbor as yourself and they saw that infant as a neighbor, the Jews knew this was a sin, a horrendous crime of violent murder.

The church, along with the Jews, stood against abortion. And basically for the same reason, for the reason that life is a creation of God, for the reason that that life is not the woman but a neighbor that is being cared for and preserved by that woman in the most protected place on the earth, a woman's womb.

They advocated the fact that Jesus reached out to the poor and the weak and the helpless and the needy and defenseless. And there is no more defenseless human than one still in the womb of his mother.

The Didache says, "Thou shalt not murder a child by abortion." The Epistle of Barnabas, which gives us insight into the years after the New Testament, says that abortion was rejected by the church because it was the opposite of loving your neighbor. "To follow Jesus," said the

early church, "was to shed any thought of murder or violence to anyone, including the unborn."

## V. How Abortion Came to our Country

Rev. MacArthur mentions several reasons, including free sex without consequence; "eugenic abortion" to eliminate thalidomide babies; the feminist and ERA agendas; population control and Planned Parenthood; and finally, the U.S. Supreme Court decision. *Roe v. Wade*.

## VI. What the Bible Has to Say

A. The first biblical principle relating to abortion is this: Conception is an act of God. God creates personally and individually every human life. The deist is mistaken who sees God as a great power starting a process and then backing out of it.

B. From the negative viewpoint: In Genesis 20: "For the Lord had completely closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech." The women were not having babies because the Lord had closed the womb.

In Genesis 16, Sarah says to her husband, "The Lord has restrained me from bearing..." In 1 Samuel 1:5-6, Hannah is described in this way: "The Lord had shut up her womb."

C. From the positive side, the Lord also opens the womb. (Rev. MacArthur explains Gen. 17:16; 21:2; 25:21; 1 Samuel 1:19-20; Ruth 4:13; Manoah in Judges 13; and Isaiah 43:7, on a broader scale looking at the whole of the nation of Israel)

D. God is the power behind conception; every life that begins begins because God has foreordained that life to begin.

Job 10:8-9; 31:15; 33:4

Psalms 22:9-10; 100, esp. v. 3; 104:30; 127:3 ("Children come from the Lord. Children are not an accident. They are not an inconvenience... Children are a gift from God.")

Ecc. 11:5

Isaiah 44:1-2, 24; 45:9-11; 49:5

Jeremiah 1

Gal. 1:15

John the Baptist

It was not some nameless nonpersonal blob in the womb of Elizabeth, it was the prophet of God. It was not a nameless blob in the womb of the mother of Jeremiah, it was a prophet of God. It was not a nameless appendage to the body of the mother of Isaiah; it was the prophet of God. In fact, when the testimony of Mary and Elizabeth came together in Luke chapter 1, the babe leaped for joy. And when Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit, she had in her not some appendage that was discretionary as to whether it should be retained, but she had in her the incarnate Son of God.

The incarnation did not begin in Bethlehem It began in conception and Jesus so totally identified with humanity that Jesus was fully human, even identifying as an unborn infant from conception to death.

Luke 1:41: the word "babe," *brepbos* is the word for babe. But it's speaking here of an unborn babe. (In Luke 2:12, 16 and Luke 18:15 and 16, four other places, the same word is used of a born baby.)

Deformed babies: Exodus 4:11; Blind man in John 9

## 2nd Sermon

### **I. Conception is an act of God.** (building on last week)

A. God is Creator of Everything (Acts 17:24ff; see also Psalm 146:5-6 and Zechariah 12:1.) B. God is Ruler (Acts 17:24) C. God is giver of life (Acts 17:26-28)

D. We are the offspring of God (Acts 17:29; see also Psalm 139)

We are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:25; 9:6; James 3:9)

### **II. God is particularly compassionate toward the helpless.** (Psalm 82:3; Proverbs 17:5; Exodus 21)

### **III. The compassion of love demands that all of God's creatures be protected.**

Deuteronomic law restated in Matthew 22:39. "Love your neighbor as yourself having loved me Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."

Children: Matthew 18:10

### **IV. The Bible teaches the condemnations of murderers is the plan of God.**

Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not murder."

Genesis 9:6 (see also Matthew 26:52; Acts 25:11; Romans 13:4)

Proverbs 6:17; 24:11

Deut. 27:25 Lev. 18:21

2 Kings 24:4 Amos 1:13

Psalm 106:38 (See also Genesis 4:10; Genesis 42:22; Lev. 20:9)

2 Samuel 4:11

### **V. God will Forgive.**

It is the grace of God that forgives the murderer. It is the grace of God that rescues the victim.

Yes, God is a God of grace and we can reach out for that grace. (Prayer)

**Duplicated with Permission**  
**The Biblical View of Abortion**  
**Dr. John McArthur, Grace Church**

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ABORTION**  
**Knowing Right From Wrong – Part 6 of 9**

*Tom Holladay*

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ABORTION**  
**Knowing Right From Wrong – Part 6 of 9**  
**Tom Holladay**

4 Options for dealing with the powerful emotions of abortion:

- Focus in on only one of the emotions
- Freeze up and do nothing
- Fly apart with confused anger
- Find balance in God's word

4 ways to talk about the abortion debate:

- Science
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Stories
- \_\_\_\_\_

**I. WHAT ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_?**

The first question in the abortion debate is not Are you pro-choice or pro-life?

The first question is \_\_\_\_\_?

Look at Psalm 139:13-16

Three truths about everyone before they are born:

God \_\_\_\_\_ Me

God \_\_\_\_\_ Me

God \_\_\_\_\_ my days

What does the Bible say about life in the womb?

1. The unborn are called “ \_\_\_\_\_ “



*“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the **baby** leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”*  
Luke 1:41 (NIV)

*“This will be a sign to you: You will find a **baby** wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”* Luke 2:12 (NIV)

The same Greek word, *brephos*, is used in both verses.

2. The unborn are \_\_\_\_\_ (Psalm 139)

3. The life of the unborn is protected by the same punishment for death as a child or adult.

*“If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life.”* Ex. 21:22-23 (NIV)

4. Unborn children possess distinctive human traits

\_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 1:41) \_\_\_\_\_ (Ps. 51:5)

5. The unborn are said to be known intimately and personally by God just as He would know any other person. (Ps. 139)

6. The unborn are \_\_\_\_\_.

*“The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, ‘Why is this happening to me?’ So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated, one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.’”* Gen. 25:22-23 (NIV)

*“Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the Lord called me from my birth He has made mention of my name. And now the Lord says – He who formed me in the womb to be His servant to bring Jacob back to Him and gather Israel to Himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength – “Is. 49:1, 5 (NIV)*

*“But God had special plans for me and set me apart for His work even before I was born.”*

Gal. 1:15 (NCV)

## II. WHAT ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_?

*“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”* 1 Cor. 6:19 (NIV)

*“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”* Judges 21:25 (NIV)

*“There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”* Prov. 6:16-19 (NIV)

### III. WHAT ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_?

King David, the man after God’s own heart, had a baby die as a direct result of his sinful actions. Psalm 51 tells us how David dealt with the fact of his sin... how we can deal with the fact of our sin.

1. Begin with a request for \_\_\_\_\_ according to God’s love. (Ps. 51:1-2)
2. Say your \_\_\_\_\_ to God \_\_\_\_\_ (Ps. 51:3-9)
3. Ask for \_\_\_\_\_ as you ask for \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 51:7-12)
4. Tell \_\_\_\_\_ what God has done for you. (Ps. 51:13-15)

*“Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires. Don’t toss me aside, banished forever from Your presence. Don’t take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.”* Ps. 51:10-12 (TLB)

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ABORTION

### Knowing Right From Wrong – Part 6 of 9

Tom Holladay

#MW93-6

Psalm 139. Tonight we're going to talk about what the Bible says about one of the most emotional, personal issues of our day. What does the Bible have to say about abortion? It's emotional and it's personal. Because it touches our lives. *Atlantic Monthly* this last month put out a statistic that said one of two women have had an abortion in America. I don't believe that's correct. Other statistics say it's about one in three. Whichever you accept, if you say for every abortion, there's at least two or three other people involved that means when we talk about what the Bible says about abortion and you're feeling like it's personally touched your life, you're not alone. Chances are very good that at least half of us here tonight in some way, whether it was in our own lives or our children's lives, we've personally been touched by this issue of abortion. I'm not talking about what's happening out in the world. We're talking about something we've all – many of us – have experienced.

As we look at it together, I have the feeling some of you are sort of like me. You have an incredible conflict of emotions when it comes to this subject of abortion. And all of the emotions are powerful. Every one of them is powerful. I have within me this powerful anger that babies are being aborted by the millions in our nation. But right alongside of that is another powerful emotion – a powerful compassion for those who've been trapped into abortions, those who are dealing with the guilt of abortion in their lives. A compassion for what so many are going through in our country today. And right alongside of that is a strong heartache for what I consider to be a national tragedy. And alongside of that is another strong anger for those who bomb and kill to try to stop the killing.

I have all of that in me. And with all of those powerful emotions there's some options. One is to focus in on only one of the emotions. And some people do that. They focus just on the anger. And that causes them to bomb an abortion clinic.

Or they focus in just on compassion. It's a lot easier that way. A lot less complicated if I can just phase out all the other stuff, pretend it's not there and say, I'm just going to focus in on one of the emotions I have about this issue.

But it's more than a single issue isn't it?

Another option is to freeze up and do nothing. Like when you try to put too many commands into a computer at once, what happens? It crashes! And that happens to me, sometimes, with this kind of an issue. This is a response that is easy for me with this kind of an issue. There's so many inputs. There's so much going on. There's just something about it that you sort of crash and freeze up. You care – but not much is done.

Another option is to fly apart with confused anger. You let it get to you.

But there's a fourth option. That's to find balance in God's word, find the ability to make sense of all the confusion, all the emotion, all that's happening in our world today and find in God's word the hope that we need, the direction that we need and the strength that we need.

I've been reading a lot these last few weeks about the abortion debate. In all that I've read there's basically four different ways of talking about this debate.

Sometimes we talk about it from the viewpoint of science. What does science have to say about when life begins and what abortion is all about?

Sometimes we talk about it from the standpoint of statistics. You start to read books and articles and magazines about abortion, the statistics are incredible.

Sometimes it's from the standpoint of stories. You've heard this. One side can tell a story that will get you crying about an abortion. Another side can tell a story and get you crying about somebody who's faced an abortion, who's life has been ruined by an abortion or by not having an abortion. You can always find a story that can get you crying about an issue.

Another way to look at it is through Scripture – God's word.

We're going to look at each of these but focus on the last. I'm not a scientist. I can read some things about science and understand some things. I'm not a statistician. I do tell stories sometimes – I like to do that. But I do know some things about God's word. I have made a lifetime study of this book. Tonight I'm talking to believers in Christ, who say, "I want to know what the Bible says about this issue. There's so much confusion out there, so many questions being thrown at me. What does the Bible really say? Does it have some answers?"

It does. It's one of those places that when you cut through all the rhetoric to see the reality in this issue. It seems like when you talk about the issue of abortion the big question is pro life or pro choice. Tonight, we're going to talk about those things. It's going to be difficult for some of you. It was difficult for me in a different way looking through these things, reminding myself of the tragedy that we're facing in our nation. Tonight we're going to talk about, What about life? We talk about Pro Life. What about life? If that's one of the issues, we'd better talk about it. What does God have to say about it? And we're going to talk about, What about choice? If one of the issues is choice then we'd better talk about choice and does God have anything to say about that, any direction to give to us? Then something that sometimes gets lost in all the rhetoric, What about forgiveness?

If one of the major issues in the abortion debate is life the **WHAT ABOUT LIFE?** The first question in the debate is not are you Pro Choice or Pro Life? There's a question that has to come before that to make everything make sense: When does life begin? That's the first question. And that's a question that the Bible has some answers on. When does life begin?

Many of you probably read in today's papers that the congress approved the ban on late term abortion. Reading through the *Times* article on that Barbara Boxer said this. She lamented that "A

woman's right to choose is under the fiercest attack since I came to Congress in 1983. It is a sad time for our country." If that which is a woman's womb is not life, she is absolutely right. As difficult as it is for me to say to this audience that Barbara Boxer might be right about something, if it's not life, she is absolutely right.

But, if that which is in a woman's womb, conceived in that womb, grows in that womb, is life, then it's just pure rhetoric. Nothing less.

So the real question is, What does the Bible say about this? Psalm 139:13-16 would sum it up for a lot of you. David said, *"For You, God, have created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful and I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body and all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be."*

In beautiful language, David talks about life. He says three things, three truths about every one of us before we were born:

1. God created me. That's true of David, me, you, everybody.
2. God saw me. *"Your eyes saw my unformed substance."* Your eyes saw what was happening.
3. God planned my days.

Does that sound like life to you? Creation of God, seen and understood by God, planned for my life by God, ordained for me? Let me just walk through scripture with you tonight. If you're wondering tonight, does the Bible really have anything to say about this? Does it clearly tell us when life begins? If you ever have had a conversation with somebody who's said, "We don't really know when life begins." And you've thought the Bible has something to say about this but couldn't find it. Let me show you some places in the Bible where it talks about when life really begins.

How do we know that when a baby is conceived in the womb it's alive, it's a person?

1. Because the unborn are called "babies" in the Bible.

Luke 1:41 *"Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting and the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."* She heard the greeting of Mary and the baby (John the Baptist) leaped for joy in the womb.

Luke 2:12 *"This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in clothes an lying in a manger."* This baby was Jesus.

The baby Jesus and the baby still in the womb. The same Greek word is used. It's not one called "some unformed substance" and the other called a baby. The same Greek word is used. In a

practical way, we barely have to look at the Bible for this one. Every pregnant woman refers to her unformed, unborn baby as a baby. I've never heard a pregnant woman say, "I'm carrying a product of conception in my stomach... I'm carrying a mass of cells in my stomach." It's a baby not a tissue mass. That's somewhat obvious.

But it's more than just obvious. God, in His word, uses the same word "baby" for that which is carried in the womb and that which is born. Same word. The words in God's word are important. He chose these words carefully. The Holy Spirit inspired these words.

2. The unborn are created of God.

Psalm 132. We're talking about a creation of God here, not just a creation of man and woman, but a creation of God.

3. The life of the unborn is protected by the same punishment for death as a child or an adult.

Exodus 21 *"If men are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there's no serious injury the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury you're to take life for life."* This verse is so important in this debate that people try to rewrite it. People try to say, "Here's what I think it means." Or they read it and say, "I don't think it means... a miscarriage. I think it has the meaning if two men are fighting and they bump into a woman and she has a miscarriage and she doesn't die (not the baby) then just a punishment or fine. But if the woman dies because of the miscarriage..." Do you see how it can be read that way? The problem is, that's not what the Scripture says. You can do things with the text sometimes in the English language without looking back to what it really says.

Two problems if you ever talk to somebody about this verse. It comes up sometimes in conversations with people who've studied this issue.

1) If that's true then the verse doesn't even need to be there. There's no need for the verse. There's already a law in the Old Testament about what happens if men are fighting and they bump into somebody and they are killed accidentally. This verse wouldn't even need to be there in that case.

2) There's two words in the Hebrew language – one for miscarriage and one for early birth. Guess which word is used here? The word here in the Hebrew language is the word for an early birth. There is a separate Hebrew word for miscarriage. It's not used here. So to say, "I think this means a miscarriage when the language says "early birth," misses the point.

Now that we've gotten through the rhetoric that some people sometimes do with this verse, let's look back at what it says. If the baby dies, life is to be taken for life. The Bible's saying that the same punishment as would come upon somebody who killed an adult would come upon somebody who killed a child – a life.

4. In the Bible it says that even unborn children possess distinctive human traits.

In the womb, like in Elizabeth's case, there was a sense of joy in the child. This leaping in the womb. In Psalm 51, David talks about the fact that even from his conception he was conceived in sin. Both joy and sin are there from the very beginning. "Conceived in sin" means we all have a sin nature from the beginning.

So in the womb there is both joy and sin. Every mom understands this. They've felt the kicks. Sometimes they are joyful kicks and sometimes they are sinful kicks! Both already there, already present.

5. The Bible says in Psalm 139 that the unborn are said to be known intimately and personally by God, just as He would know any other person.

6. The unborn are called by God, even before birth.

Genesis 25. *"Two babies jostled within her and she said, 'Why is this happening to me?' and she went to inquire of the Lord."* The two babies were Jacob and Esau, fighting it out. When she asked what was going on, God didn't say, "Two tissue masses are having something going on, sort of a medical thing." *"The Lord said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb and two peoples from within you will be separated. One people will be stronger than the other and the older will serve the younger.'"* That's pretty personal, human, what's going on in that womb.

Isaiah 49, what Isaiah says about himself, *"Listen to me you islands and hear this you distant nations, before I was born the Lord called me. From my birth He has made mention of my name. And now the Lord says, He who formed me in the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him and gather Israel to Himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and God has been my strength."* Formed in the womb for God's purpose.

This is simply what the Bible says about when life begins. Paul said it this way in Galatians 1:15. I don't think it's just a verse about Paul. I think it's a verse about you and I too. *"But God had special plans for me and set me apart for His word even before I was born."*

You add up these six things we've looked at. There's no one verse in the Bible that says, "Thou shalt not abort a baby." There is no one verse. But when you begin to add up these things we've just looked at, it's pretty clear from God's word that there is life there. That makes an entirely incredible difference in the debate. When someone says something like, "Would you prevent a woman who was potentially going to have a handicapped child from having an abortion?" If you believed, if you know from God's word that is a life, it's an entirely different question. So instead of not knowing what to say, you can say, "I'm glad you brought that up because it helps me to clarify the real issue in abortion. What kind of living thing is in that mother's womb?" If the unborn child is not a living person, then no excuse for abortion is necessary. If the unborn child is a living person, no excuse for abortion is acceptable. That's life. That's what God's word talks about. If it's a baby and not a tissue mass it's everything because it's life. Because life is life whether it's just conceived or one day old or just born or one year old. Would we take a one year old baby that is

severely handicapped – mentally or physically – and feel like it's morally right to end it's life? Can you imagine that? No. No, because it's alive. When we take a one year old baby and say, "This baby is in a bad home, a home where the parents are abusive, where the parents didn't even want the baby and it's probably going to be kicked from foster home to foster home all its life," would that justify killing that baby? Of course not. If we look at that baby and said, "The parents of this baby can obviously not care for it like rich parents can care for it," would that justify killing it?

It's alive. When we talk about this issue of when does life begin, I believe God's word has some incredible things to say. But one of the reasons why the debate about abortion is intensifying so much is that it's not just Christians – believers – who are saying this, who are looking to God's word because obviously those who don't know Christ yet don't accept the authority of His word. But more and more science is showing us what scripture has told us all along. Increasingly, science is giving us this window on life.

One of the things that really began this was the ultrasound. When you could start to look in and see. Interestingly, Roe-v-Wade and the ultrasound came in about the same time in America. When you could start to look in and see this picture of what was going on in the womb, it was an incredible thing. An ultrasound is black and white and not the clearest thing in the world, but you have the hands moving, the heart beating. It's very difficult when I see it to say, "That's just a product of conception." This window on life has increasingly brought this issue to a head.

By the second month – 8 weeks – brain waves are detected in a baby. At 40-42 days that happens. A nose and eyes, ears, toes appear. The heart beats, its own blood starts to flow. A skeleton develops and it has its own unique fingerprints. By the third month it swallows, it swims. It can suck its thumb. It can feel pain between the 8th and the 13th week.

If it's life it changes the whole question.

But there is another question that's being asked right along side the question of "Is it life?" and I believe scripture and science says "Yes". Right alongside the question is the question of choice. There are two major questions: When does life begin? And, Where do our rights end?

So, what about choice? Let's recognize as we begin to talk about this that it is not always a woman's choice that results in an abortion. Oftentimes it's a boyfriend's pressure and not a woman's choice. Oftentimes it's a parent's pressure who doesn't want to see their child hurt, and now a woman's choice. Statistics tell us that a great number of abortions happen before the age of 22. Many times other pressures are being brought to bear in that choice.

When it comes to the issue of choice about our body, for the believer it's a pretty obvious question. 1 Corinthians 6:19 *"Do you not know that you body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you whom you have received from God? You're not your own. You're bought with a price."*

As believers in Christ we're sort of a counter culture on this one. We go opposite to the world on this one. When the world says you're your own, you can do whatever you want with this body, we



say, "That's not true. I've been bought by Jesus Christ. He's given His life for me. I'm not my own. I've been bought with a price. And I want to give my life to Him."

But what about someone who's not a believer? Do we have the right, as believers, to tell them what to do with their bodies? I think that's a great question. A question that needs to be asked. People, even Christians, say things like, "I'm personally opposed to abortion, but I don't feel like I have the right to tell a woman what she should or shouldn't do with her body." That statement only makes sense if that which is within is not a life. If it's a life then you and I have every life to say, this is what I believe is right. If it's a life, then you and I have a moral obligation to say, this is what I believe is right.

I know that in America today, there is a legal right to an abortion. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about is there a moral right? And we have a moral obligation to stand up and say, it's wrong. As much as we'd say it's wrong for that one-year-old to be killed or that thirteen-year-old to be killed or that 96-year-old man to be killed. There's that moral obligation.

In a 1993 prayer breakfast in Washington D.C., Mother Teresa was speaking. She sort of shocked the audience when she stood up and said that America once a generous nation, has become a selfish nation. Her number one illustration of the selfishness of America was abortion. Here's the most respected woman in the world looking at a country and saying your choice is hurting your nation.

Judges 21:25 tells us what happens when we go our own way, "*In those days Israel had no king and everyone did as he saw fit.*" Sometimes we're so focused on the individual choice that is a part of this issue that we lose sight of something. We lose sight of how those choices are impacting an entire nation. Here's where statistics – numbers – start to come in. And I've read a lot of them in my life as a pastor. A lot of them about abortion. It's incredible how conflicting they can be. There's a war over statistics. So great a war that I've learned to take a lot of the statistics about abortion with a grain of salt from both sides. People will pick up from anywhere they can to try to make the argument because they're so passionate about the argument. I understand that.

This week I went back to the source. I looked up a study by the Center of Disease Control finished in 1995 from 1991. It listed what was happening. These statistics don't need much commentary. You can look at these and see the impact of them. As you look at the chart on abortions from a few years before Roe-v-Wade up until 1991, I want to explain a couple of things. First, the numbers ranging from 100,000 to 300,000 to the millions are the number of abortions per year in America. Then there is the number of abortions per 1000. That's saying that for every 1000 children that are born in America, this is how many children face an abortion in America. This is what's happening across our nation. More than twice as many abortions happening in our nation as in 1991. These are just raw statistics. They don't have all the rhetoric behind them. They swept over me as much as any ever have. You start to see how this is effecting and impacting our nation.

The statistics of when abortions happen, the ages: At age 15 and under, 800 per 1000. Then it goes down during the childbearing ages when we want to have kids. Then it tends to go back up when we don't want to have kids.

Is it any wonder Mother Teresa looked at some of these things and said there's a selfishness behind some of these things.

About 55% of women obtaining abortion are doing so for the first time. Approximately 16% of women who've had an abortion are having one after having at least two previous abortions.

Seventy-six percent of women who obtained abortions were unmarried. There's no politician, political commentator, newscasters in America who's going to stand up and say, "One of the reasons we're having so many abortions is because we're violating God's laws about when sex should happen. If you'd just wait until marriage, look at what would happen with the statistics on abortion." A politician couldn't say that. He'd never be elected again. A newscaster couldn't say that. He'd be off the air the next night.

But you and I can say it. That's why we need God's voice in our world today. We can say the things that say that the sexual revolution has led to the number of abortions we see here in America today.

As I read through some of those statistics and felt the pain – especially about our own state and see how we lead the country in abortions – there's something in that that makes me feel hopeless. The truth is, man has always mistreated, abused, and killed innocent children. This is nothing new that's happening. In the Bible, in Egypt, when they wanted the babies out of the way they killed them all. Moses, remember, was saved by being put on the little boat. In Bethlehem, when Herod wanted all the babies killed he was selfishly afraid that there would be a king there that would take his place. That one fear caused him to kill all the babies two and under in Bethlehem.

It's in the Bible. This is nothing new. Why? Because children are innocent. Why? Because children are defenseless. In Proverbs 6 it says *"There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him -- haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness that pours out lies, and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."* "... hands that shed innocent blood..."

As I look at this and feel the pain of this, I also feel the pain that many of you have because of this. Many of you in this room were involved in an abortion decision. It may have your decision. It may have been a decision you feel like you were pressured into by some other. It may have been a decision that you, as a man, pressured a woman to make. It may have been a decision that you as a parent, encouraged your child to make – or at least didn't discourage them from making. For most of you, that was a decision that you made before you were a believer in Jesus Christ.

Now we hear things like this and look at God's word and there are some of you who say, "What do I do now?"

Now that you're a believer, how do you come to grips with some of the choices that you made before you became a believer. I want you to hear Missy's story, a story of someone who came to Saddleback became a believer here, struggled with this issue. It's a story she could tell much better than I ever could.

Missy:

I grew up believing I couldn't please any one. The legalistic church that my family went to every week caused me to see God as unapproachable. I had a father who was a high functioning alcoholic and a rage-aholic and a co-dependant mother who tended to be critical and negative. I could never seem to please her no matter how hard I tried. Something was always wrong with my hair, my makeup, my clothes, my weight. I grew up feeling like I could never quite do anything right and I was never good enough. On the inside my spirit was broken early, as a child. But on the outside I became a people pleaser and peacemaker. I just hoped to gain the love and acceptance of my family.

In my early 20's everything came crashing in. I found out that I was pregnant. I had no where to turn. I felt that there was no way out. I felt like I had no choice. I felt trapped. So I had an abortion. That one act changed my entire outlook about my life. When I woke up from the abortion I began screaming, "No!" I believed I had committed a mortal sin and I was going to hell. I immediately stuffed it but it came out in different ways over the years. I went in and out of depression. I was brought up in a church where I believe if I was good enough I could make it to heaven. I'd ruined that. I'd lost the hope of heaven. Because of my legalistic background I felt like I'd never have children – that's what I deserved. Eventually, I fell apart emotionally. I cried out for help from God and started praying. It was either kill myself or ask for help. I prayed, "God, if You're really there, could You help me?" I picked up my Bible (dusted it off) and started reading the book of Revelation – a great place to start! That's when a girlfriend invited me to Saddleback. She said I'd love the music and she was right. I felt at home and that God was answering my cry for help.

That was in March of 1993. I started going every Saturday night from then on. I asked Jesus to be my Lord and Savior in April of 1994 after going to Saddleback for a year. I was baptized after 101 class in October of 1994. Although I immediately faced trials as a new believer, my new life and love for Jesus gave me a reason to live and to keep on going. For the first time in my life I had a reason to live, a purpose – to grow more like Him, to become the woman God wanted me to be, so that I could serve Him and learn all that I could from Him. My life verse became Psalm 25:4 *"Show me the path where I should go, O Lord. Point out the road for me to walk. Lead me."* I started every new day with the prayer, "Lead me today, Lord, where and what You want me to do next," and He did. First, He led me to Midweek service and Pastor Tom's wonderful Bible studies. That's where I really started to get to know my Lord. Then He used another friend to get me to go to Friday night Celebrate Recovery. I just went with her that night because she didn't want to go alone and we ended up in ACA – Adult Children of Alcoholics group. After a few months in the program, I noticed the church bulletin information for the Abortion Support Group starting. It struck my heart that God wanted me to go. I asked the Lord, "Are You sure? I'm really ok with my abortion. I know You forgave me." He answered me by sending me another friend who said she thought God wanted her to

go to this group but she didn't want to go alone. So I said, "Ok, Lord. Your will, Your way. I don't understand why, but I'll go."

I was wounded and I need healing as well as forgiveness. I heard someone say "When a woman leaves an abortion clinic it leaves one dead and one wounded." That was me. I needed to process the fear, the anger the guilt, the grief that was still in my heart. I learned to accept forgiveness and to make amends to my unborn child. My friend and I grieved the loss of our babies together with the group.

God still was not done with me yet. I started noticing a guy showing up everywhere I was at church – Midweek, Friday night, Saturday night service – same as me. Patrick and I were married ten months later by Pastor John.

My abortion had consequences that will always be with me and my unborn child. But I discovered that God still loved me and wasn't out to punish me. And God keeps surprising me with His wonderful grace. Just a couple of weeks ago we found out that I was pregnant with our first child.

What about forgiveness? Some of you are thinking you'd like to experience that but you're just not wired like that or you're not sure God even offers that kind of forgiveness. Maybe you've been feeling your sin was too great. Did you know that the man who is killed "the man after God's own heart" in the Bible, the great king David, who wrote about a third of the Psalms, in his life he had the experience of seeing a baby die as the direct result of his sin. The baby that was born to Bathsheba, God said "That baby's going to die." And it was directly as the result of sin in his life.

How do you handle that? He couldn't even lie to himself and say, "That's not really what it is. It was something medical." God told him why it happened. God didn't punish the baby in that because the baby went to be with the Lord for eternity in heaven. How did David handle that? There's a Bible chapter about how David handled his sin. Psalm 51.

How did David deal with the fact of his sin? One study shows that ten years after an abortion 96% of the women surveyed regarded the abortion as a murder. All the politics in the world can't solve the hurt that goes along with that. But God has an answer.

Psalm 51 David teaches us the four things to do to solve the greatest guilt, the greatest hurts of life.

1. Begin with a request for mercy according to God's love. v. 1-2 "*Have mercy on me O God, according to Your unfailing love.*" I need mercy. You need mercy. We all need the mercy of God. You start there. You don't start by saying, "I'm going to make my life right all by myself.

I'm going to pull myself up by my own bootstraps and make this thing great." You start by saying, "God, I'm poor in spirit. *Blessed are those who are poor in spirit.* I need Your mercy. I don't deserve it

but Your love is unfailing. So I ask for Your mercy because of Christ." That's where you start. Don't begin anywhere else.

2. Say your sin to God, out loud. *"For I know my transgressions. My sin is ever before me. Against You and You only, I have sinned. I have done what is evil in Your sight."* He's being clear about it, saying what's happened in his life. Transgression there means "to step over the line." He's saying, "God, I stepped over the line. You said how to live my life and I stepped outside that line and it's hurting my life." The Bible says that every one of us in this room is a transgressor. When we talk about the sin of murder or abortion, sexual sins, or lying or stealing or gossip – any of those. Every one of us in this room is a transgressor. When we talk about forgiveness for the sin of abortion remember that every one of us have sinned. Every one of us have stepped over the line.

Some of us have done it boldly. "I'm going to do what I want to do!" Others of us are more timid – just barely outside the line. Others of us step on the line and think we'll be fine. But it's all transgression. Whatever your personality, however you do it, it's all transgression – it's all over the line. We all need mercy. Every one of us needs mercy.

Say your sin to God out loud.

One of the men in our church, as a part of his recovery for encouraging abortion in his life, wrote this letter. He wrote it to his child who had been aborted. He wrote: "My child, I won't try to make hollow excuses or rationalize... It is only recently that I've been convicted that a child is a person and God's predestined creation from the moment of it's conception. And to end that life intentionally is murder and is a sin. That truth is eternal but I did not acknowledge it then. I do now. I am guilty of this sin and I'm sorry for what I did to harm you. I've asked God, our Father, for forgiveness for this sin. I have repented from the sin and my wrong way of thinking. I will never do this again. I know that I will see you in heaven. I wonder what you'll say. I hope that you'll forgive me and welcome me home. I believe that you will forgive me because in heaven you cannot sin, which means we will forgive, we will love each other and we'll live in peace."

Some of you need to write a letter like that – to say, "God, this is what happened."

3. Ask for renewal as you ask for forgiveness. Ps. 51:7-12. David says, *"Cleanse me with hyssop [that's the branch they use to put the blood on the altar] cleanse me as you do the cleansing of the altar and the sacrifices and I will be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones You have crushed rejoice. Hide Your face from my sin. Blot out all of my iniquity."*

What happens, I think, to many of you – you ask God for forgiveness and you accept His forgiveness, but you don't accept His renewal. You say, "Ok, I know I'm forgiven. I know that means I'm going to get into heaven but I'm going to be miserable on this earth because I sinned.

What I did was wrong and I know it was wrong." You spend the rest of your life taking it out on yourself.

David prays one of the most beautiful prayers. "God, I need Your forgiveness. Would You, as much as You can, renew me. Would You, as much as You can, by Your grace and power make me as white as snow." And Jesus can do that. Too many people feel forgiven but not renewed, cleared of their sin but not cleansed of their sin. This Psalm reminds us that it's your right in Jesus Christ because of what He's done for us on the cross – not because of what you or I have done – but because of what He's done, to say, "Not just clear me, clear the books in heaven, but cleanse me from within. Give me a new life, a new start, a new lease on life." It's not to say that there won't be continuing consequences of sin because there are often but it is to say that God can cleanse you in your heart, give you a new sense of purity. Ask for renewal as you ask for forgiveness. If you never have, do it now. Ask God for His renewing grace.

David goes on to say *"Create in me a pure heart O Lord. Renew a steadfast spirit within me. Don't cast me away from Your presence. Don't take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation. Grant me a willing spirit to sustain me."* Some of you need to pray those words back to God. Ask God to do that in your life.

4. Tell others of what God has done for you. v. 13 *"Then I'm going to teach other transgressors Your way."* We're all transgressors together. We can talk together about sin, about God's healing. *"... and sinners will turn back to You."* There's something healing about encouraging someone else that He's forgiving and He will restore.

So what can we do about this? Three things – something politically, something personally, something prayerfully.

Politically. Make a stand. Clearly and compassionately. If we don't make a stand clearly as Christians, then the world, our nation, is left without God's opinion on one of the most important issues of our day. We have to make a stand clearly and say God says it's life, it's a baby. But we also must make a stand compassionately. If the way that we deal with abortion keeps people out of the kingdom of God we've added one tragedy upon another tragedy and sometimes that happens. We're so clear and passionate that we forget to care about those who are going through an abortion. Sometimes we work to save a life but we lose a soul. I do not believe that it's a choice of one or the other, to either have to be clear and passionate and preach it or you have to be compassionate and loving.

How do I know it can be both? Look at the life of Jesus. Look at how He dealt with sin in people's lives. He was clear but He was also compassionate. And that's what He asks of us.

J.M. Clark says "A politician thinks of the next election. A statesman thinks of the next generation." I want to add to that, "A Christian thinks of heaven." A Christian thinks of eternity, that the way I'm reacting to political issues of the day is not just for the country here and now.

It's also for eternity and the impact and witness I can have to make a difference.

Personally. Decide to make the sacrifices it takes to save children's lives. For some of you that means an adoption. For some of you that means taking care of a grandchild, just when the nest is empty, just when life has other possibilities. You can feel the pain of that but for life; it changes everything. For some of you it means being willing to give up a child for an adoption. For some of you it means waiting for marriage to have sex. What sacrifices am I willing to make to save lives?

Prayerfully. Pray for our nation to come to know Him. Regard Smith says this, "In the great battle for hearts and minds, a wistful Pro Choice generation is watching. Have we given them reason to choose life? Have we given them reason to put the God of creation above their individual choice?"

I think that we should do all we can in the political process to make a difference. I think we should do all we can in the legal process to make a difference. We should do all of those things. But, the problem is not political. The problem is not legal. The problem is not medical. The problem is spiritual. When you and I look at this issue, it overwhelms our lives. It says one thing to us. People need the Lord. They need Jesus Christ in their lives. If I get so caught up in the issue that I forget the heart behind it, I miss the whole point.

Prayer:

Jesus, give us a heart of passion for an issue that's tearing our country apart. Give us a heart of compassion for those lives around us that are being torn apart. Lord, we can't strike the balance between those in just the right way. We need You to help us do that, to help us know exactly when to make the stand, to know exactly the right way, to know exactly when to share the compassionate love in just the right way. We want to be Your hands and Your feet in this world. You see the hurt better than we and the million plus abortions that are happening in our country every year. You know about every one. You understand every one. So Lord, we're not telling You anything. We're asking You for something. We're asking You for strength to make a difference. Lord, I also pray tonight for those who need to sense Your forgiveness so they can be amongst those who make a difference. Tonight as we've looked at these simple truths in the life of David, a man like us who sinned like us, but found Your forgiveness to be real and fresh, I pray that somehow Your spirit will tell us like never before that You can forgive. We don't deserve it but You can forgive. We praise You for this. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Distributed by Crisis Pregnancy Center of Tidewater with the permission of Pastors.com.*

Crisis Pregnancy Center of Tidewater's "SOHL Fact Sheet" has the latest national and local abortion statistics. Download this free fact sheet at [www.cpcfriends.com](http://www.cpcfriends.com).

**Sanctity of Human Life**  
**Sample Sermon Outline A**

*Focus on the Family*



The first to be killed in Nazi Germany were the infirm, the senile and mentally retarded, the aged and defective children. Eventually, as World War II approached, the doomed undesirables included epileptics, children with badly modeled ears and even bed-wetters. Transportation of patients to killing centers was carried out by "The Charitable Transport Company for the Sick." The plan then was to kill all Jews and Poles and to cut down the Russian Population by 30,000,000.

We're all struck by this great Holocaust and wonder how it ever could have happened. Leo Alexander, who was consultant to the Secretary of War and on duty with the office of Chief Counselor for War Crimes in Nuremberg, says that what happened in Nazi Germany "all started with the acceptance of the attitude that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived."

An elderly German man who lived through the Holocaust tells the following story:

I always considered myself a Christian. I attended a church since I was a small boy. We had heard the stories of what was happening to the Jews; but like most people in America today, we tried to distance ourselves from the reality of what was really taking place. What could anyone do to stop it?

A railroad track ran behind our small church, and each Sunday morning we would hear the whistle from a distance and then the clacking of the wheels moving over the track. We became disturbed when one Sunday we heard cries coming from the train as it passed by. We grimly realized that the train was carrying Jews.

Week after week that train whistle would blow. We would dread to hear the sound of those old wheels because we knew that the Jews would begin to cry out to us as they passed our church. It was so terribly disturbing! We could do nothing to help these poor people, yet their screams tormented us. We knew exactly at what time that whistle would blow, and we decided the only way to keep from being so disturbed by the cries was to start singing our hymns. If some of the screams reached our ears, we'd just sing a little louder until we could hear them no more.

Years have passed, and no one talks about it much any more; but I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. I can still hear them crying out for help. God forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians, yet did nothing to intervene.

Does this sound like the United States today? Are we tempted to just "sing a little louder"? Remember, it all began with "the attitude that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived." That sounds a lot like today's statistic. ***Ninety percent of expectant parents who receive a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome will abort their baby.*** A life not worthy to be lived?

While across the nation, we can be thankful that the abortion rate has been steadily declining, the abortion rate in South Hampton Roads has been rising. In 2005, there were 8,949 abortions

performed in Tidewater as compared to 7,671 in 1998. Are we, like the Christians in Germany, willing to continue to sit in our pews and “just sing a little louder”? How long will we be willing to ignore the cries of the innocent?

Our society has embraced the mentality that there is such a thing as “a life not worthy of living.” The post-modern thought of our day denies the existence of a Creator God and seeks instead to view human life as our own creation, which we are free to dispose of at will.

There are also those who do believe in God and yet would still subscribe to this mentality. What they are really saying is that God must have made a mistake. He must have goofed somehow... maybe He was distracted or tired when He created that particular life, maybe He didn't pay real close attention.

God does not create mistakes. Every human being was purposely designed by God. The Psalmist says “All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:16).

The biblical perspective does not allow for the idea that some lives are not worth living. That is not the way God views the people He creates. Let's look into Scripture.

### **We Are Created to Bear His Image**

- Only human beings can fellowship with the Creator (Genesis 1:26-27)
- Only human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27)
- Only man is crowned by God with glory and majesty (Psalm 8:4-5)
- Only God may determine life's beginning and end (Psalm 139:16)

The line between right and wrong is sometimes blurred by those rare and difficult cases. In this context, the question is often asked, "What if the mother's life is in danger? Shouldn't she have an abortion then?" Dr. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States, says that during his more than 35 years of medical practice in obstetrics, "Never once did a case come across my practice where abortion was necessary to save a mother's life."

And at the other end of life, when loved ones have illnesses diagnosed as “terminal” and are perhaps in great pain, Christian physicians who view God as the only giver and taker of life can become very skilled in pain management to alleviate the physical pain and suffering. But many studies have shown that patients under these circumstances experience more emotional suffering and they need, more than anything else, the care and comfort of loved ones. A quick exit through physician assisted suicide or euthanasia is only evil disguised as compassion. While the circumstances often do not make sense from our perspective, we are never "authorized" to "play God," to usurp the position that is rightfully His (Psalm 23:4, 1 Corinthians 12:9).

### **We Are Developed According to His Plan**

We know, both through biblical truth and scientific fact, that we have been fearfully and wonderfully made. God, our Creator, has intricately designed and formed every fiber of our being. That is not to say that we all have perfect bodies, but we were created by a perfect God who had a perfect plan in mind for each of us. Yes, we do suffer from illness and deformities due to sin that has corrupted this world. But regardless of the imperfections that our human eyes can see, God looks upon our souls. Every precious human being—born and preborn, young and old, healthy and unhealthy—is sacred because each one was created in the perfect image of God.

It is not for us to question God and His wisdom, but to simply place our trust in Him knowing that His ways are higher than our ways. Ecclesiastes 11:5 says, “As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.”

#### **It is declared in His Word:**

- Psalm 139:13-15—the organ systems are being "woven together," and the "frame," (the skeleton, bones, and skull, which will determine height, build and size) is “made in the secret place.”
- Luke 1:35—the baby Mary is carrying is called the "holy offspring," not a "blob of tissue" or a "potential" being. Even Jesus Christ began His human life as an embryo.
- Luke 1:41—Elizabeth's baby leaps in her womb upon hearing Mary's news, not an action performed by "fetal tissue" but by a living and growing human being with a soul.

#### **It is validated by medical science:**

- The heart begins beating at 18-21 days and the brain waves can be detected and recorded at 40 days gestation
- The reality of the developing preborn child is clearly shown to us by ultrasound technology.
- Medical advances have allowed us to perform delicate surgery on the child while still in his mother’s womb

- Not even supporters of abortion argue any more as to when life begins, they simply argue that it is their right to end that life.

### **We Are Protected to Fulfill His Purpose**

- God loves little children, a theme throughout Scripture.
- If they're not protected in the womb, they can't live to experience that love. Even the animal kingdom is fiercely protective of its young! If our children are to be protected after birth, shouldn't they also receive even more protection *in utero*, when they're even more vulnerable?
- He leaves us here only until that purpose has been fulfilled: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Job 2:10; Ecclesiastes 3:12.

### **A Call to Action**

Proverbs 24:10-12 says:

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?”  
(Proverbs 24:10-12)

It is incumbent upon us as God’s people to stand up in defense of the innocent, sacred lives that He has created. Imagine what God could do if every Christian church would take a strong stand in this community to protect preborn children. Imagine what God could do if each one of you would do your part to make our community a place where all preborn children are loved and accepted. Ask not *if* God would have you to act, but ask *how* God would have you to act.

We already know the evil of abortion exists right here in our own backyard. We cannot say, as in the Proverb, that ‘we knew nothing about this.’ What excuse will we have when we stand before God?

It is a tragedy that a young pregnant woman would turn to the local abortion clinic for a quick solution because she knew of no other way out. Or perhaps she’d never heard the truth about the new life developing in her womb and ignorantly believed that her baby was just a blob of tissue. Maybe all she needed in order to change her mind was a hug and someone to tell her that God loved her and had a special plan for her life and her baby’s life. If she had only known that there was a place she could go to receive emotional support and practical help to meet her needs, maybe she would have made a different choice.

I want to challenge each of you today to make a decision to get involved. No matter how big or how small your part may be, everyone can do something to make a difference. If you just impact one life, it would all be worth it!

One way that we as a church and you individually can make an impact in our community is through becoming involved with organizations like The Crisis Pregnancy Center of Tidewater, as it is an arm of the church.

The Crisis Pregnancy Center of Tidewater is offering positive alternatives to women considering abortion; sharing the truth about the sanctity of human life and the amazing facts of fetal development; sharing the truth about the painful choice of abortion and God's healing that comes through forgiveness; offering spiritual and emotional support through counseling; providing practical help and educational programs to equip women to make life-affirming choices.

The CPC and others are on the front lines of the life issues every day. The time to act is now. We must respond to the innocent cries of those being led to the slaughter.

Malachi 6:8 says, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

God has called us to action. I challenge you to accept that call. What has the Lord required of you? We must act justly by standing up against the dark injustices of this world. We must love mercy by coming alongside the woman in crisis and offering her help, hope and the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must walk humbly with our God resting in the knowledge that today we have done all that we could do and trusting the rest to Him.

## **Conclusion**

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give the \$20 to one of you, but first, let me do this."

He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were in the air.

“Well,” he replied, “what if I do this?” And he dropped it on the ground and began to grind it in to the floor with his shoe. He picked it back up, now crumpled and dirty. “Now who still wants it?” Still the hands went into the air.

“My friends, you have all learned a valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value at all! It was still worth \$20, regardless of what happened to it.”

“Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened, or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God’s eyes. To Him, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless.”

Psalm 17:8 reminds us that God views us as the “apple of His eye.”

*THOUGHT: The worth of our lives comes not from what we do or who we are, but from whose we are! You are special—don’t ever forget it!*

**ALL human life is valuable, then, because God creates and sustains it, in His own image and for His purpose—His sacred image, and His sacred purpose.**

*Excerpted from the Sanctity of Human Life Quick Reference Guide, a Focus on the Family resource.*

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**Sanctity of Human Life**  
**Sample Sermon Outline B**

*Focus on the Family*

## *We are created for life.*

Two of the persistent questions we repeatedly ask are: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" God addresses both of those early in the scriptures. In Genesis 1:26 we read, *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule. . . .'"* God's view of His creation on the sixth day is very clear (v. 31): *"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."*

Several years ago, a fragile young woman came to my (a doctor's) office, expecting her first baby. One month before she was due, the baby was in a breech position. The death rate of breech babies is high because of the difficulty in delivering the after-coming head and the imperative need of delivering it quickly after the body is born. During the delivery, I waited as patiently as I could for the natural forces of expulsion to thoroughly dilate the firm maternal structures. At last the time had come, and I gently drew down one little foot. I grasped the other, but it would not come beside the first one. To my consternation, I saw the other little foot would never be beside the first one. The entire thigh from the hip to the knee was missing. I knew what a dreadful effect this would have upon the unstable nervous system of the mother. The family would almost certainly impoverish itself in taking the child to every famous orthopedist in the world. I saw this little girl sitting sadly by herself, while the other girls danced and ran and played. I could slow my hand; I could delay those few short moments. No one in this world would ever know. The mother, after the first shock of grief, would be glad she had lost a child so handicapped. The little pink foot on the good side bobbed out from its protecting towel and pressed firmly against my slowly moving hand into whose keeping the safety of the mother and baby had been entrusted. I couldn't do it. I delivered the baby with her pitiful little leg. Every foreboding came true. The mother was in the hospital several months-she looked like a wraith of her former self. As the years went on, I blamed myself bitterly for not having had the strength to yield to my temptation.

Our hospital stages an elaborate Christmas party each year for the staff. This past year, three lovely young musicians on the stage played softly in unison with the organ. I was especially fascinated by the young harpist. She played extraordinarily well, as if she loved it. Her slender fingers flicked across the strings, and her face was upturned as if the world that moment were a wonderful and holy place. When the short program was over, there came running down the aisle a woman I did not know. "Oh, you saw her," she cried. "You must have recognized your baby. That was my daughter who played the harp-the little girl who was born with only one good leg 17 years ago. We tried everything at first, but now she has a whole artificial leg on that side. Best of all, through all those years, she learned to use her hands so wonderfully. She is going to be one of the world's greatest harpists. She is my whole life and now she is so happy . . . And here she is!" The sweet young girl had quietly approached us, her eyes glowing. Impulsively, I took the child in my arms. Across her warm young shoulder I saw the creeping clock of the delivery room 17 years before. I lived again



those awful moments when her life was in my hand. As the last the last strains of "Silent Night" faded, I found comfort I had waited for so long.

(Adapted from "Family News From Dr. James Dobson," December 1993, as condensed from the book, *Christmas in My Heart*, by Joe Wheeler, Review & Herald Publishing Co., 1993.)

### *Created to live.*

We are created to live.

The unique characteristic of each human being is the reflection of being created "in His image." Each of us reflects the very image of God. Our peace ("Shalom") is derived from recognizing that we reflect His image and when we allow God to achieve His purpose through our lives. If we lose sight of the value placed on human life, we are susceptible to the temptation to destroy that life designed by God. Life is sacred. When life is destroyed, we lose the impact of a life that could have enriched our lives and brought glory to God. The movie, *It's A Wonderful Life*, allows a man to see what the world would have missed if he had not been born. A similar experience might help us value our lives and all human life.

A college professor presented this challenging situation for his ethics class to consider. "A man has syphilis and his wife has tuberculosis. They have four children. One has died; the other three have terminal illnesses. The mother is pregnant again. What do you recommend?" The class voted to terminate the pregnancy. The professor noted they had just killed Beethoven. (*HIS* magazine, February 1984)

Ethel Waters, the great gospel singer, was born to a 13-year-old child who had been raped. The world would have been robbed of the wonderful sacred music provided by each of these individuals if life had not been valued even under difficult circumstances.

We are created to live. God saved His breath for the creation of human beings. Genesis 2:7 says, "the Lord God...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." We are created in the image of God and endowed with His very breath to live. That is sacred. Job, even in the midst of his afflictions, notes that God created him to live. (Job 27:3) Paul speaking to the men of Athens, a great Greek city, notes that God is the giver of life. (Acts 17:25) The Psalmist (139:14,15) notes that God weaves life in the formation of humankind. In Isaiah (44:24) the prophet is informed that the Lord formed us in the womb.

When we lose sight of a Creator who has formed us with a purposeful life in mind, we may devalue life and even be willing to destroy it. The Roman Coliseum remains a monument to the degradation a culture or society will experience when it does not recognize that humans are created to live. It has often been noted that abortion and euthanasia are only symptoms of a greater problem: our culture no longer recognizes the sacredness of human life. Mother Teresa said, "Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching the people to love, but to use violence to get what they want. That is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion."

We are created to live.

### *Consecrated for life.*

Life is sacred. Our lives are a trust from God and therefore should be dedicated and lived to achieve His divine purpose. The music of our lives should be offered as an act of worship to our God the Creator. Life is a sacred trust.

Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus (2:10) recognizes that *"we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

Oswald Chambers states, *"If I will come to Jesus, my actual life will be brought into accordance with my real desires; I will actually cease from sin, and actually find the song of the Lord begin."* (My Utmost for His Highest, June 11) When I realize that my life dedicated to the One who created me actually fulfills the intent of my life, I discover life has meaning.

Jeremiah, the prophet, noted (1:6) that God knew him completely before he was born. The Psalmist (138:8) declared, "*The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; . . .*" Peter challenged the church (I Peter 2:16) "*...to live as servants of God.*"

Like a piece of art or music crafted for a specific purpose, we find that life indeed is sacred when we allow our lives to be given to serve the purposes of our Creator God. We are created to live. We are consecrated for life. He gives life; we give Him our life to be His for whatever He designed us to become.

### *Celebrated lifetime.*

Henri J.M. Nouwen, noted author, wrote an entire book to celebrate the life of Adam Arnett. Henri wrote the story of his relationship with Adam because he realized "*...that this very disabled human being was loved by God from all eternity and sent into the world with a unique mission of healing....*" (*Adam:God's Beloved*, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY, 1997)

If we understand that life is sacred and that we are created to live and called to consecrate that life to God's purpose, we will be able to celebrate a lifetime! In Revelation we have a picture of 24 elders celebrating before the throne of God. They recognize that the Creator is worthy of praise for what He has done through His creation. St. Augustine understood that we were made to fellowship with our creator. He said, "You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." The picture Christ paints is of a son returning home to the Father. Luke 15 tells us there is a celebration when the son comes home.

We can celebrate the music of the harpist with one leg, Beethoven and Ethel Waters and others because life was valued as sacred and they consecrated their gift to the Creator. Life is sacred. We are created to live, and because we consecrate our lives to the Creator, we have opportunity to celebrate what He has accomplished through the lives of those He created.

In Matthew 18, Jesus warns against harming children. The Psalmist (127:3) notes that children are a gift from God. Hebrews 4:13 informs us that everything in creation will be uncovered and we will then give an accounting to God. It will be sad to realize the beautiful music that was missed because we did not value life created by God.

On the other hand, we are clearly told that there will be rejoicing in the presence of God as his people are invited to the tree of life. (Revelation 22)

## **Conclusion**

Life is sacred. We are created to live lives that are consecrated to God and can be celebrated in eternity. It all begins when we recognize that life is sacred.

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