

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

Psalm 139:13 ESV (Pp. 300-301) For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. **14** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. **15** My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. **16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. **17** How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! **18** If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

(Mention Missions Offering)

- I. Genesis 1 tells how God created everything with just his Word. He said, "Let there be light!", and there was light, and it was good! God speaks again and again, creating an atmosphere for the earth, seas and dry land, trees and plants, the sun, moon, and stars, aquatic animals, birds, and every kind of insect, reptile, and mammal on the face of the earth- just by speaking! Done with just his word!
 - A. But in verse 26 of chapter 1, God moves in a decidedly different direction.

Genesis 1:26 ESV 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." **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

 1. Genesis 2 relates how God created men and women. After creating by the power of his Word, he literally got his hands dirty when it came to the man.

Genesis 2:7a ESV the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground...

 - a) The Almighty, Infinite God knelt down in the mud, and lovingly and intricately formed Adam, the first man, in his own image.
 - b) He did not think it beneath his majesty to give such personal attention to the various details and attributes that would define human life.
 2. He took a similar "hands-on" approach with the woman, The Bible says that he extracted a rib from the side of Adam and fashioned his bride from it, forming from one substance a perfectly complementary couple.
 - B. The man and his wife were one-of-a-kind; specially made by the hands of a Divine Craftsman. Though he had created many awe-inspiring things, humanity would be the crowning achievement, for they alone bore God's own image.
 1. But it was more than the mode of their creation that separated them from every other living thing. **Genesis 2:7b ESV** (God) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Literally, a soul.)
 2. The other creatures had a biological life, but when God created humankind, he imparted something more than the ability to process air and food, or to have instincts. He gave his own eternal element - a "soul". They would be more like him, and less like all the other living things that inhabit the earth.
 - a) They would eternally exist, never ceasing to be. They would live beyond their instincts; reasoning and deciding. They would be able to innovate and discover, reflecting the creativity of the one who had created them.

- b) As his image-bearers, they would represent him to the rest of creation, for God himself had given them dominion over everything else he created.
- II. So human life is superior to anything else God has created. I love my dog, Luther. But whether he likes it or not, I have dominion over him. As cute as he is, he was not created in the image of his God. God never breathed into his nostrils, and called him a living soul. And as silly, or even obvious, as all this might sound, it's important because we live in a society that has diminished the glory and value of what it means to be a human being because of the contamination of our sin.
 - A. Today is set aside to reorient our thinking. Today is "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday". Today, we join others in worshipping God for the gift of Human Life.
 - 1. The word "sanctity" describes a state or quality of holiness. When we speak of the sanctity of human life, we are simply saying human life is holy.
 - 2. Today I want to discuss 3 aspects of human life that designate it as holy. I want to prove that humanity is distinct among all of God's creation. We will also discover the implications of this distinctiveness for our lives.
 - B. We have already discussed the the first way in which human life is distinct: **God Created Human Life**. I told you how God took personal care to create our first parents; how he gave them more than mere biological functions.
 - 1. Do you realize that he gave you the same attention when he put you together in your mom's womb? **"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb...I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."**
 - a) People often speak of fetuses developing in the womb as though they were troublesome parts that we can elect to remove, like swollen tonsils or an enflamed appendix. I've even heard people compare babies in the womb to parasites, like ticks and tapeworms!
 - b) But the Bible says that they are children, and the personal handiwork of God. He "forms" and "knits together". The Psalmist pondering this process says, **"I praise you...wonderful are your works!"**
 - 2. He said this, never having seen a sonogram, or the wonders of modern obstetrics. What we know (and are still discovering!) about fetal development is astounding. What is occurring during in 9 months should inspire worship.
 - a) At just 5 weeks, a little circulatory system is forming, and a tiny heart will begin to beat. All this while your baby is the size of a sesame seed! The very next week the child begins to develop a face, brain and digestive system, and they've grown to the whopping size of a lentil!¹ By 11 weeks, they are almost completely formed, having all necessary systems.
 - b) Developing babies have fingerprints, yawn, hiccup and even suck their thumbs! They can respond to the sound of their mother's voices². They are individual persons, in David's words "fearfully and wonderfully made".
 - C. All of this is by the design of a creative and loving God. Everything that makes us human originates with him. He alone is the architect of all our biological, emotional, and spiritual complexity. This fact of creation makes human life holy.
 - 1. If you were a painter or a sculptor and I went to your studio and smashed all your works, it would not only be an insult, it would be a crime. Human life is a display of God's masterpiece! It is to be protected, and not destroyed.

2. As a nation, our hands are bloody, stained by millions of innocent children slaughtered in the name of rights or convenience. But the blood of the unborn cries out to God day and night for vindication.
 - a) Christians, can't sit idly by, while millions of unborn children are slaughtered every year through the atrocity of abortion. It is a crime against children, mothers and the holiness of God. As creator, God is the sole decision maker when it comes to how life is disposed of.
 - b) **Proverbs 24:11 ESV** Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. **12** If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?
- D. We must defend the sanctity of lives created by God. We do this by speaking out in the public arena. We do it by fostering and adopting children who would otherwise have no home. We do it by advocating for women who are pregnant with few options. We do it by teaching our children the value of human life.
 1. We are not dismissive or judgmental towards women who find themselves pregnant, or in the fog of post-abortive guilt. If you, or anyone you know, is in any of those situations, come and talk to Ginger. She has some wisdom and some resources to be able to help you. We will get you help.
 2. God is the author of life. We can't afford to be negligent and fail to place great value on that which is designed and treasured by God.
- III. The second thing that makes life inherently sacred is that **God chooses to relate to us through human life**. God doesn't wait until this life is over and we are absorbed into some cosmic plane before he reveals himself to us. He comes to us as we stumble through failure, fear, doubt, anxiety, and distress and says to us, **Jeremiah 30:22 ESV** "And you shall be my people, and I will be your God."
 - A. The gospel is not so much about forgiveness, as it is about reconciliation. Sin has separated humanity from the creator, and God wants to restore us to himself. Therefore, the forgiveness of sin was not the end-goal of the cross, but the necessary pre-requisite in order for us to be reconciled to our Creator.
 1. Since he formed Adam from the dirt, God has always desired fellowship with us. Deists teach that God wound up the creation like a mechanical toy at the beginning, and stepped back to see how it would all turn out. But no student of scripture could come to that conclusion. God wants us to know him!
 2. The Old Testament is a constant reminder of God's longing to be united with his people. The New is a celebration of how that union was accomplished. God's desire to be in eternal relationship with us tells us that life is sacred.
 - B. "My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." What a beautiful picture!
 1. It seems that, as glorious as their creation was, that plants and animals were sort of "mass produced" by the powerful Word of God, but humanity's creation, both at the beginning and in the womb, indicates a far greater degree of care and intimacy, accomplished by the "personal touch" of God.

- a) The Psalmist says while he was formed, he was never out of God's sight. If I ask my wife to make me a grilled cheese sandwich, I'm not too worried about the process. I won't be standing over her shoulder making sure that she gets everything just right (temperature, color, the cut of the cheese).
 - b) But if someone's building a house for me, I am going to oversee every detail! Did they follow the blueprints? Are the fixtures exactly what Ginger wanted? What about the paint colors? Are the rooms all the right size?
2. God never stopped watching as we were formed. His level of concern displayed indicates the value of our lives. **Matthew 10:29 ESV** *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.*
- a) Knowing that God has intended humans to be in relationship with him, we honor all life; from the lives of the poor and marginalized, to the lives of our enemies across the street and around the world; red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight!
 - b) As people who have been reconciled to God, we place people above possessions and power in our list of priorities in the joyful hope that they too will walk in restored fellowship with their creator. We demonstrate this with loving service, hospitality, and benevolence for the widow, the orphan, the elderly, the mentally challenged and physically disabled. When society casts someone aside, we rush in to pick up the pieces.
- C. This is why we preach the gospel! Our desire is that everyone appointed to eternal life would come to know the saving power of a God who loves them, not as a species, or a race, but as individual creations. But our desire is not that they would simply know his saving power, but would know **him** intimately.
- IV. There is only one way this happens; it's the last thing about human life that makes it holy. It reveals **why** God created us, and **how** he intends to be in relationship with us (us knowing him, and him knowing us). It is that **God has redeemed human life.**
- A. God created humans in his own image, and placed them in a perfect world to live in relationship with him. But they chose sin, exchanging his image for the image of lesser created things over which they were intended to have dominion. When this happened, the close relationship we knew with God was shattered because God is too holy to look upon our sin, and we all desire other loves.
- 1. But God was undeterred in his insistence of having a people for himself, so even before he created, he decreed a remedy for humanity's lethal addiction to sin. **2 Timothy 1:8 ESV** *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, **which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...***
 - 2. Adam and Eve's sin did not catch God by surprise. They did not throw a monkey wrench in to his plans. God always intended to rescue fallen humanity by his Son, and to glorify him through his bloody sacrifice.

- a) **John 17:24 ESV** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, **to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.**
 - b) God loves Jesus. He redeemed a people through Jesus' sacrifice. He has now glorified Christ because of that; and this was always his intention.
- B. Knowing that God has redeemed humanity by Jesus screams that life is sacred. It doesn't mean everyone is saved, or that they will be in some universalist sense, but that from our perspective, everyone is potentially one of God's elect.
 - 1. Knowing this, we diligently share the gospel with whomever will listen. We do not take it upon ourself to judge who is worthy to be saved, because the truth is, none of us are! We make room for the grace of God to do in others what he has done in us, praying that he will sovereignly redeem many.
 - 2. We must not neglect to pray for people to be saved or to share the gospel with them because of what we see in their character. Instead, we should remember who we were before Christ Jesus found us and saved us.
- C. David describes the redeeming love of God when he writes **"How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you."** God's redeeming love never takes its gaze away from us. He never stops thinking about us! Hebrews says Jesus "always lives to make intercession" for us³.
 - 1. So no matter where we're at right now, it's not an indication of God's ability to save us! The sanctity of human life makes it unthinkable to take the easy way out through a drastic measure like suicide when life seems overwhelming. God is mighty to saved the most troubled, distressed people!
 - 2. When we are discouraged or depressed, especially by our own depravity and wickedness, the best thing we can do is cry out to God for mercy. In the Bible, Jesus says "whoever comes to me I will never cast out"⁴.
- V. Human Life has sanctity because God created it, he wants to relate and be reconciled to it, and he proved that when Jesus died to redeem it. **Romans 8:32 ESV** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
- VI. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- VII. **Benediction: Numbers 6:24 ESV** "The Lord bless you and keep you; **25** the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; **26** the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

¹ <https://www.babycenter.com/fetal-development-week-by-week>

² <https://www.babygaga.com/15-mind-blowing-things-babies-can-do-in-the-womb/>

³ Hebrews 7:25

⁴ John 6:37