The Value Of Human Life

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Preacher: Pastor Ken

[0:00] So either last Sunday or this Sunday, churches nationwide have dealt with the topic of the sanctity of human life.

It's what we refer to as the sanctity of human life Sunday. 49 years ago, on January 22nd, the final decision for Roe v. Wade was handed down, asserting the right of a woman to an abortion until viability.
And they define viable as being potentially able to live outside the mother's womb, albeit with artificial aid. So basically, if a baby can be pulled out and survive, even if they have life support, they're considered viable.
As you know, abortion is a hotly debated issue among many people in our nation and maybe even worldwide. I can't speak to that because I've not really seen that end of things.
And it's an issue which tends to be emotionally charged. And it can lead to division between family and friends and even churches.
[1:14] The momentum is not slowing down. In fact, there are major cases even now that the Supreme Court is hearing and in the process of deciding on as it relates to the topic of abortion.

There have been over 60 million abortions in the United States since January 22nd, 1973. And so on average, that's 3,200 a day or one every 26 seconds.
According to the World Health Organization, around 73 million induced abortions take place worldwide each year. I'm going to repeat that because maybe it kind of flew over your head or maybe you thought I misspoke.
Around 73 million induced abortions take place worldwide each year. Six out of 10 of all unintended pregnancies and three out of 10 of all pregnancies overall end in induced abortion.
So you can see why it is a hotly debated, very emotional issue. But the question of the value of human life does not start and end with abortion.
[2:33] It is the matter that is at the forefront. But consider these other matters as well.

Racial prejudice. People who are marginalized by the color of their skin. Bullying takes place in schools, social media, workplaces, churches.
The issue of euthanasia. And that's a topic that almost 10 years ago, the issue of dying with dignity. And the young lady by the name of Brittany Maynard, her story dominated national news for several weeks in 2014, where she opted to decide when she died.
So through physician-assisted suicide. And because of a brain tumor that she was dealing with and the quality of life that she was going to have or not have, actually, moving forward, and the effect that was going to have on her family.
And so that was an issue that was big at the time. Excuse me. And which, for me, leads to the question, how protected are the aging in our society? Or those who can no longer be contributors?
[3:50] That's kind of what that issue, in my mind, brings up, among others. Stem cell research and cloning have been issues in science, ethics, and such for many years.

Human trafficking. Human trafficking. So I read this article a while back, and I just want to share a part of it with you. It's called Human Trafficking, The West's New Slave Trade, by Janet Krause. She shares this. It was the middle of the night, and I was sitting in the back seat of a dark SUV moving along the taxi lane in downtown Mexico City, Mexico.
A car with guards went in front of us, and another followed us. In addition, a long line of cars drove very slowly ahead and behind our vehicles to give the men time to choose a girl from the dozens of young girls lining the streets.
That was the first time that I saw, up close and personal, the human face of the evil that we call sex trafficking. My heart broke that night as I saw the tragic faces of very young teenagers who were

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offering themselves as sex slaves for a few minutes or a few hours.
[5:00] One of our guards was so stunned that he cried out over the walkie-talkies in a choked voice, Those girls are as young as my daughter. Things got very quiet after that.

Nobody had anything to say. What we witnessed that night is part of the industry that former President Bush called modern-day slavery. It is rampant and growing.
All of these topics deal directly with the question of how valuable is life?
Or what is the value of life? This is a topic that we can debate and discuss and go back and forth on in each of those separate areas, and I don't want to do that.
It's not my intention. My intention this morning, I'd like to look in Scripture about the value of life in the eyes of the one who would have that best estimation of it.
[6:00] Our Creator. So if you'd like to follow along, as I mentioned in the front of your bulletin there, there's a list of Scriptures we're going to be going to. The first area that I want to look at is creation.

Shock. Value is shown through creation. Value is shown through creation.
Genesis chapter 1. I'd like to read verses 26 and 27. It says, 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.
We see right from the start of all things that man was created in the image of God.
[7:18] Mentally, man was created as a rational, volitional agent. That is, he can reason and he can choose. And it's a reflection of God's intellect and freedom.

Morally, man was created in righteousness and perfect innocence in a reflection of God's holiness.
And socially, man was created for fellowship, which reflects God's triune nature and his love.
And we see even in Genesis 2, when you look at the purposes of mankind and being created for work, yes, but verse 18 and following, God brings all creation to Adam to name, which is his role as having dominion over all creation.
But it also shows the relationship of the one who is over it all to be aware and know of the created beings. And then ultimately, Eve is created.
And because God says it's not good that man should be alone. And so he made a helper suitable for him. So man and woman created the image of God, created as relational beings with one another, a relationship with the rest of creation.
[8:41] And given stewardship over what God had created. So there's a lot of value, excuse me, in life. There's a lot of value in a human being just because we were created in the image of God and given a tremendous responsibility by our creator.

I want to turn a few pages to the right, to Genesis 9. another one of those debated issues in society is that is the death penalty a just punishment?
And the answer to that question is a resounding yes, it is. Because our creator instituted it. Being created in the image of God, Genesis 9, verse 6.
We see, actually, I'll go with... Yeah, verse 6. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.
For God made man in his own image. So, because man is created in the image of God, anybody who chooses to take the life of another individual, their life should be taken for it.
[10:15] There's value in the life of an individual because that individual is created in the image of God. turn me to Psalm 139.

Excuse me. Psalm 139, verses 13 through 16. A tremendous passage of scripture.
And I absolutely love this because this was written a very long time ago, long before we had the technology that we have today to be able to look inside the body and inside the womb of a woman where a baby is growing and being developed.
It's one of my favorite parts of each of Bonnie's pregnancies was that being able to go to the ultrasound appointments and be able to see the child, stubborn, rebellious child in the womb.
And I tell you, they didn't like to pose, some of them didn't like to pose for pictures, some of them did good, and you know what, that personality starts there and comes out, but that's just a whole other theory of my own. So, Psalm 139, verse 13 through 16, Psalmist writes of God, for you

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formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
[11:48] We'll pause for a second. I know nothing about knitting other than it sounds extremely difficult, and that's what God does. He knits together in the mother's womb.

Verse 14, I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works, my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depth of the earth.
verse 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.
This passage alone, I can spend two, three weeks on easily. There is so much to take from this. But the fact that God is intimate in the creative process that takes place for each and every child during the nine months in their mother's womb.
God is intricately and intimately involved. He said, my frame is not hidden from you. I love verse 16, your eyes saw my unformed substance. And isn't that what's at the heart of the abortion debate is at what point in the formation process is this clump of cells a human?
[13:20] And the answer is from the very beginning because God sees even the unformed substance and still recognizes it as a human being.

And at that point, every one of the days intended for that individual has already been determined by God. God is all power.
God in the safest place on the planet, the mother's womb, oversees the entire creative process. How awesome is that? He's determined the amount of days we live. He is intimately involved in creation.
He has created man in his own image. There's value in creation. Turn with me to Exodus 21. Get to the second point here.
I didn't really know what to call it or what to say about it, so I said there's value shown through the law. Value shown through the law. Exodus Leviticus numbers, you know, Deuteronomy, the law given to God's people, Israel.
[14:31] There's a lot of things in here that we could go back and forth on and debate. Oh, what does this mean? How does it apply? And all that. It's not the point. The point that I want to look at here is how God views the value of human life as laid out in his law.

So Exodus 21, I'd like to read verses 12 through 25. Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death.
Well, that's Genesis 9, 6, right? We've already established that. God needs to reiterate it because man needs to be told more than once. Verse 13, But if he did not lie and wait for him, but God let him fall into his hands, then I'll appoint for you a place to which he may flee.
But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar that he may die. So it's a big deal to take the life of an individual.
Intentional or not, God addresses it. Verse 15, Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death. Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him shall be put to death.
[15:58] death. Well, that's ironic. Hmm. We had that thing called the slave trade, didn't we? Quite a while. Verse 17, Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.

When men quarrel, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and the man does not die but takes to his bed, then if the man rises again and walks outdoors with his staff, he who struck him shall be clear.
Only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed. When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod, and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged.
But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money. When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.
But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
[17:15] life. The value of life here is seen through the retaliatory measures taken against those who take life.

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And while it may seem barbaric to us, if you notice, verse 17, one who curses father and mother shall be put to death, the sanctity of the home is very well established and very clear, very important in the eyes of God.
I cannot imagine, begin to imagine, what God thinks in our society and the homes that it promotes and has and the normal, what we call normal behaviors of children and the way they speak to or act towards their parents.
God must be appalled. Certainly not condoning of such behaviors. But the sanctity of the home is a big deal.
God has established an authority in the home. God has established an authority in society as well.
But I'm always drawn to verse 22 and following.
[18:43] If a pregnant woman is caused to give birth early, two men are quarreling, they're fighting, they're being stupid, and they hit a woman who's pregnant and she goes into labor and gives birth, then there are to be fines levied against the person who hit her.

If the children come out unharmed and are fine and the woman is fine, then it's just to be a financial restitution. As determined by the husband of the judges.
However, if there is harm, and I do not believe this is talking about just harm to the woman, I think this is talking about harm to the baby as well. Whatever the harm is done is to be repaid by the individual responsible for it.
You got life for life, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, whatever the case may be, whatever the harm is, is to be done to the individual. As a retaliatory measure.
I was interested in the Bible knowledge commentary. I read a while back, I had this in some notes in another sermon, and I said, I'll take that out.
[19:57] While unintentional life-taking was usually not a capital offense, because you see earlier in the passage, if somebody takes man's life, but it happened that God let him into his hands, it happened unintentionally.

He was to flee to a city of refuge, which was covered in another portion of Scripture. But while unintentional life-taking was usually not a capital offense, here it clearly was.
The unborn fetus is viewed in this passage as just as much a human being as its mother. murder.
Which then brings down to the point that the abortion of fetus is considered murder.
What happens to the baby that is not yet born is as if it happens to you or me in the sight of God.
Because that unborn child is still the human created in the image of God.
So value shown through creation, value shown through the law, and how God expected his people, or shared with his people, and how they are to retaliate, or how they are to carry out justice in these different areas.
[21:10] And finally, in Romans chapter 5, if you please turn there with me, we see value is shown through our salvation. Romans chapter 5, verses 6 through 8.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die.
But God shows his love for us, and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Christ died for us.
Christ died for us.
While we were still sinners. Not while we were good people. Not while we cleaned up our lives and eventually came to him. No, no, no. While we were still actively in rebellion against God, and God being God, can see perfectly past, present, and future, and it's all before him as if it's all current.
[22:47] While we are sinners, rebelling against God, shaking our fist at God, Jesus died for us.
He's not dying for good people.

The Apostle Paul made that clear, that if there's a good man, somebody may step up and die for that person. But are you going to die for a dirty, rotten scoundrel? Chances are, if the choice is between you and that person, you might feel it's just for that person to get theirs.
The process of salvation, it's impressive, it's overwhelming to think about. Jesus, a member of the triune Godhead, God himself humbles himself, taking on human form, being born in an obscure village, sleeping in a manger his first night on earth.
He then lives a sinless life. putting himself in position to be the spotless lamb of God in order to take the punishment for the sins of the world on the cross at Calvary.

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He was a good man. He is a great man, and he is God in the flesh, who chose to live among his creation. Then three days after he was buried in the tomb, he rose again from the dead, showing that he has the power over sin and death in order to provide eternal life to all who place their trust in him.
[24:29] John chapter 1 is an amazing passage, amazing section of scripture. I encourage you to read it. John chapter 1, verses 1 to 18. If you want to sit there and read it before you leave today, I encourage you, you will be blessed.

Because the word of God took on flesh and dwelt among his creation, and his own people rejected him. His own creation didn't know him.
But he revealed God to us and was still killed for being a good man. The mere fact that our all-powerful creator chose to take on a fragile body so that he can offer us salvation is a strong indicator of the value of human life.
the value that we hold. Because what God has done, has said and done for us. And it's interesting because this action of love and sacrificial concern that Paul points to is the model to be emulated in the Christian life.
Listen to Philippians 2, verses 5 through 8. Just listen to this. If you want to close your eyes and listen to this, listen to it. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.
[26:02] Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

Can I share with you what it says even before that? What Paul says to his readers there in Philippi? If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy being of the same mind. Having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
Then I'll start launching into, oh yeah, let me tell you about Jesus. This is what he did. Because there's a value in creation.
There's value laid out for us in the law. There's value in our salvation. The value of life, unfortunately, is being diminished in our self-satisfying culture of me-first-mindedness.
[27:23] The selfishness that is on display left and right, and that's just from the guy in the mirror, is appalling. And we see it laid out and played out in society.

We read about it in myriad of media sources. It doesn't matter what bent you go with. It's there. And the value of life is being diminished.
Our petty desires and wants are being granted at the great cost of human life. Sexual pleasure is desired, but not at the inconvenience of a baby, so abort it.
Thrills and enjoyment are desired, but not at the inconvenience of a terminal disease, so end your life or the life of someone else when you're ready to do so. It's unfortunate to see the devaluing of life, and it's getting worse.
But as I pointed out to you from Scripture, God has clearly made clear how valuable human life is through creation, through the law, through salvation. So let's stand up and proclaim the value of human life by informing people of the greatest price ever paid for our lives, the life of Jesus Christ on the cross for my sins and yours.
[28:43] And if this is indeed how valuable life is that God has created and what God has done for us, then how should we be approaching and engaging with people on a daily basis?

It doesn't matter if they're a dirty, rotten scoundrel or not. Created in the image of God. Let's pray.
Lord, I thank you for this time in your word, and I thank you for the truth that it holds.
I thank you, Father, for all you have done to show us the value of our lives. Lord, there are people here who do not think their life is significant or worth anything.
But Lord, you have proved us wrong through your word. You have created us in your image. You have saved us through your Son.
You yourself taking on human flesh to live among people who would hate you. to die for people who shake their fist at you.
[30:08] But you love us. Lord, I pray that we would take whatever it is your Spirit is putting on our hearts and our minds right now.

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Help us to take it from these walls and implement and apply it and meditate on it when we're at home. Lord, I pray for anyone here who doesn't know you, who doesn't understand their value. Maybe this is the first time they've heard about Jesus and what he did for them. Lord, I pray that you would draw them to yourself, that, Lord, they would call on you for salvation, that they would seek to have a relationship with their Creator God who loves them and values them above even himself.
I love you, Lord, and I thank you for this time of reflection in looking at the truth. In Jesus' name, amen.
Let's stand. We're going to sing, in closing, hymn 344, Grace Greater Than Our Sin.

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