

God's Love for the Unborn

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Date: 03 February 2019

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[0:00] Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

! And before you were born, I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So, many of you have heard me preach for over three years now.

As you know, I often begin a sermon with a story or some kind of humorous anecdote or something like that. But, I am not going to do that today.

Given what I am going to talk about today, I simply cannot find anything funny to say. Given our reading from Jeremiah this morning and what has been going on in our state and in our country, I felt that I needed to speak very clearly this morning about the sanctity of life, particularly the lives of unborn babies.

[1:25] Because the sanctity of life is under attack. As you know, our state recently passed the Reproductive Health Act, a misleading name if I've ever heard one, that in effect removed most legal restrictions on abortion.

Just this past week, Virginia considered adopting a similar law. And their governor went on record in support of such a measure, even implying by his comments that there are situations in which euthanizing newborns would be acceptable.

Jesus, help us. Now, this is a sensitive subject. It's one that pastors are sometimes hesitant to address.

We can find ourselves worried about offending people, but I have to be honest, the situation that we are in right now is too dire for me to worry too much about that. We can find ourselves hesitant to take up issues that seem political.

But what is going on right now is bigger than a political issue. This is not politics as usual. We are talking about a moral and a spiritual issue.

[2:47] And Christians are called to be salt and light and to proclaim righteousness to the world. When this topic comes up, we speak for what is right.

We face some serious backlash. I have. I've seen many of you face that kind of backlash too.

People question our motives. People think that we're fanatical tyrants who want to oppress women. I've heard that one before. What about you? I want to be clear that that's not why I am speaking on this today. I was raised by a single mom who is a strong woman.

I am married to a strong woman. Elaine and I are raising two little girls to be strong women. I am not trying to oppress women in my efforts to call attention to the fact that millions of little girls have been killed by abortion.

I am also not speaking this morning because I am pushing a political agenda. I have heard that one too. I am not going to tell you to vote for my candidate.

[3:55] I am not going to tell you what political party to belong to. I will tell you that you should use your Christian conscience when you step into the voting booth. And I would urge all of us to let those running for office know that if they want our votes, they had better be speaking up for the most vulnerable among us, helpless babies.

But I am not standing here this morning as a mascot for any political party or any politician, but as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. So I want to be clear from the outset, I'm not interested in oppressing women.

That's not what I'm trying to do. I'm not trying to make the pitch that you should vote for my favorite political candidate. I am speaking on this topic for one reason only.

I love babies. What about you? You might be wondering why that's the basis for a sermon. So here's why. I love babies because I serve a God who loves babies.

He creates them in His image, and I do not want them to be killed. The gospel that I proclaim, the gospel that we believe, is a gospel of life.

[5:15] And it stands in utter opposition to the worship of death that appears to be so dominant in the culture around us. I mean, think about what we find in John chapter 10, where Jesus says, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Jesus came that we might have life abundantly. Jesus came that we might have victory over death.

Jesus came to save us from our sins, to save us from death, to save us from the evil one. And it is the thief. It is the enemy. It is the devil who comes to steal and kill and destroy.

We are called to resist the devil. We are called to bear witness to the gospel of life. The work of bearing witness to the gospel, bearing witness to Jesus, must include standing against the forces that would deny, by their very actions, the gospel truth, that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. If we believe that, as we say that we do, we must stand up against this killing.

[6:55] Against the practice of little babies, the most vulnerable people in the world, being condemned to death. Standing against that is the stand that our church takes, not just our parish, but our diocese and our province.

Here's our official teaching on the matter. God, and not man, is the creator of human life. The unjustified taking of life is sinful.

Therefore, all members and clergy are called to promote and respect the sanctity of every human life, from conception to natural death.

Amen to that. We respect the sanctity of every human life, even from conception. Because every person, even from conception, matters.

Matters. Matters to the God that we worship. We see that again and again from the Scriptures. In our reading from Jeremiah for this morning, the Lord says to the prophet Jeremiah, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

[8:14] And before you were born, I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations. God formed Jeremiah in the womb.

And before he was born, he mattered to God. God had a great plan for his life. Now, not every baby in the womb is called to be a prophet to the nations.

But you had better believe that every baby in the womb matters to God. See the same thing in Psalm 139, where David writes, For you have 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.

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.

[9:21] In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. God knows these little babies in the womb that he is knitting together.

God knows the plan that he has for these children even before they are born. Their lives matter to God. And we can move to the New Testament where we see yet again that the lives of the unborn matter to God.

Look at what we read about John the Baptist when he was a baby, when he was still in the womb. We read in Luke chapter 1, In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah.

And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

[10:44] The baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy. Leaped in worship. Now this is important, because potential persons don't worship.

Potential persons don't know joy. Only persons created in the image of God worship. This little one in the womb of Elizabeth who worshiped Jesus Christ was a little person made in God's image, was a little person before he was born.

We have to ask ourselves, where do we find our value as human beings? Where do we find our personhood?

What makes us human beings? What is it that makes us people? That is an important question, because those who would insist that abortion is okay attack the very personhood of those in the womb.

Claiming perhaps that they're just a clump of cells. Claiming that they are just potential people. Claiming that because they can't live outside of their mother's womb, or because they're not able to do certain things, they're not really people.

[12:06] Now if we look at human history, it's apparent that those who want to justify victimizing others always find ways of characterizing them and treating them as less than human.

What is it that makes us human? What is it that makes us people? What makes a human life a human life? We read in Genesis 1, verse 26, then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness.

We are human. We are people. We have value because we are created in God's image, because we matter to God.

It doesn't matter how independent we are. It doesn't matter how much stuff we can do. It doesn't matter if we can live on our own without help.

None of that stuff takes away from our humanity. Otherwise, it would be reasonable for any of us to be taken out back and gotten rid of as soon as we stop being as useful as we once were.

[13:17] That could happen by injury, by aging, by illness, you name it. And it's no surprise that those who think this way are also open to getting rid of sick people in the elderly.

Because in their mind, our personhood is basically measured by what have you done for me lately. Our personhood, our value, our humanity does not depend on how useful other people think we are.

It doesn't depend, again, on how independent we are or our ability to live without help from other people. Our personhood, our value, and our humanity, that comes from being made in God's image.

Our personhood, our value, our humanity, it comes from the fact that we matter to God that He created us. We have every indication that this applies to the unborn, or say, the seriously ill, as much as it applies to anyone else.

That means that everyone from conception matters and has dignity, and we had better, as believers in this God who creates us all in His image.

[14:44] We had better be standing up for the dignity of others, especially the babies or anyone else who can't speak up for themselves. If we believe in a loving God who creates us all, we cannot stand silent in the face of the fact that abortion hurts people.

It hurts babies. It hurts our society as it causes us to lose sight of the great value of human life. It hurts women who so often carry around guilt and regret with them after having had an abortion. I want to speak very clearly on that point this morning. Statistics indicate that nearly one in four women will have an abortion sometime in her life.

statistically, that means it is not unlikely that someone who has had an abortion is sitting here this morning.

I don't know if that's true of anyone here this morning or of anyone who might listen to this sermon later on the website, but if it is, I want to speak very openly.

[16:10] if you have had an abortion and you are carrying guilt and regret, I want you to know that I am not condemning you this morning.

I am not attacking you this morning. I want above all else to tell you that there is no sin that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot wash away.

There is healing and forgiveness in Jesus Christ for everyone who repents and trusts in Him. And I want to say to anyone wounded from having had an abortion, Jesus can heal you.

And I want to assure you as your pastor that you can come to me and talk to me about it or about anything. I want to assure you that I will not condemn you I will point you to Jesus and the grace and forgiveness that is found in His name and I will walk alongside you and support you.

For the rest of us, I will speak with more firmness. We need to wake up. Most of us have either elected people who are against protecting the unborn or we have stood relatively silent while they have been elected.

[17 : 46] Pray for the repentance of those elected leaders who have passed such wicked laws. Many of us have failed to seek out women in crisis pregnancies and crisis pregnancies and have failed to find out what we can do to help.

Many of us have been relatively silent and complacent when we should have been speaking up while our little unborn neighbors have been going to their deaths.

It is time to fall down at the foot of the cross in repentance for what we have done and what we have failed to do. If every Christian in the state of New York were to speak up, our elected leaders would listen because they like keeping their jobs.

If every Christian in the state of New York were committed to helping women in difficult situations and helping their unborn children, we would see the abortion rate drop dramatically.

so I say this morning, let's go to Jesus together seeking His healing, seeking His forgiveness for our failures, what we have done and what we have failed to do.

[19 : 10] Let's get serious about repentance and let's seek the grace of the Holy Spirit to embolden and empower us to speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves.

Why? Why? Because the thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. But Jesus came that we may have life and have it abundantly.

So we pray, Lord Jesus, help us. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.