

Acts 7:17-22

Beautiful in God's Sight

Ryan Perz – January 19, 2020

Intro: How many here are under 47 years old? We all share one thing in common: we've spent our entire life with abortion being legal in our country.

There are over 800,000 abortions performed each year, well over 50 million since the Rove v Wade decision in 1973.

<https://abort73.com/abortion-facts/us-abortion-statistics/>

Legalized abortion is the highest injustice in our land, period. So, this morning we will devote our time to the issue of the sanctity of human life.

Let me open with a few things.

1. I've preached Sanctity of life messages almost every year since I began in ministry, and I hope to continue. Why?

You've maybe heard the saying: One generation believes the truth, the next assumes it, the next denies it. I want to make sure we are not assuming.

Illus: I also don't want to assume too much, even in a conservative Bible believing church.

Early in my first pastorate, during a Sunday school teaching, somehow the topic got centered on abortion. I was surprised to hear one person say some things that were sympathetic, along the lines of: *"well, shouldn't we just be thankful that even though abortions are bad and they're done now, that at least they are done safely. People don't have to go down a back alley, where it is unsafe."*

It created a lot of controversy. I don't want to make assumptions that everyone here believes the same thing about protecting life. I want us to be guided by Scripture.

2. We are going to draw from Stephens's sermon, but I want to make it clear: *Stephen's sermon is not an anti-abortion sermon. His sermon points to the redemptive work of Christ.*

****Yet there are some pro-life principles we can draw out for today.**

(v20) Moses was beautiful in God's sight

Premise: Life is beautiful in God's sight. Human life is sacred. From the moment of conception, human life bears the inherent beauty and dignity of being made in God's image.

*My hope this morning is that we see this, and are reminded of it. Life is worth fighting for. Beautiful life inside of the womb and at birth is worth the costly sacrifice.

—Finally, be open to God's purpose for you.

God's delight and design of life (17,20)

- We note that in v17 Stephen mentions how the descendants of Abraham increased and multiplied in Egypt.
- It's evidence that God was doing exactly what he promised to Abraham.
- But it also describes God's purpose in creation.

(Gen 1:28)—After the creation of Adam and Eve, God gives a mandate: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it"

- Further down in Gen 1:31, God beholds a "very good" creation.

The point is that God delights in human beings who bear his image, which is why it becomes a capital offense to shed innocent blood

(Gen 9:6) "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, *for God made man in his own image.*"

Illus: When you don't like something, do you want more of it? Or positively, when you like something, you multiply it. If you like certain food you can afford, there is more of it in your kitchen.

I was eating lunch at a restaurant once with a friend from Austria. He was having trouble with the menu and asked the waitress if they served liver. I almost fell out of my seat laughing but had to tell him that most Americans don't eat liver.

God's delights in image-bearers. So, he tells them to multiply, not to cut the supply short.

- Scripture also speaks of the design.

(Ps 8:3-5)

³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?

⁵Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and *crowned him with glory and honor.*

(Ps 139:13-14)

**It's life inside of the womb that is precious

¹³For 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.

Sum: The starting point for being Pro-life. It's not with what we think, or some political platform. It's with God. God delights and has a design for life.

God's delight and design of life is found in its *beauty*.

- The greek word behind this is where we get our word aesthetics (asteios)—pleasing to look at.

If only that was the whole story

Anti-life forces at work in the world (18-19)

- I've talked to some sincere believers who think that abortion is an America-only issue. It's not.

Globally, there are around 56 million abortions every year (US 800,000). Countries like Russia far exceed the US in abortions per 1,000 women.

[\(https://abort73.com/abortion_facts/us_abortion_statistics/\)](https://abort73.com/abortion_facts/us_abortion_statistics/)

- I've also sensed that some Christians think that America would be a New Jerusalem if only Roe v Wade was overturned.

We need to remember that abortion is a global and historical issue.

Our text gives a historical one.

- It was in Egypt—Pharaoh was worried about a revolt. His solution: if a Hebrew son was born, throw him into the Nile River (infanticide) (Ex 1:22).

- Later, when King Herod felt threatened by a True Jewish King, and has the same reaction.

(Mt 1:13)—Angel's warning: "Herod is about to search for the child (Jesus) to destroy him.

- And he made good on the attempt by having all the male children under 2yrs old slaughtered in Bethlehem.

Where does this thinking come from? Just some egomaniacs that fear their thrones are threatened?

(Rev 12:4). And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

It's a gruesome symbolic picture of Satan's opposition to Christ.

****The anti-life focus at work is headed by Satan.**

The entire abortion industry is Satanic, world-wide. Things associated with abortion are also satanic: human trafficking, pornography.

—Just like the enemy is subtle and crafty, and it is how he's working the entire abortion industry.

Illus: Golden globe comment -

Jan 5, 2020 Golden Globe Award, Michelle Williams, used her award acceptance to make a political remark about her Pro-choice lifestyle.

“I’m grateful for the acknowledgement of the choices I’ve made and I’m also grateful to have lived in a moment in our society where choice exists, because as women and as girls, things can happen to our bodies that are not our choice. I’ve tried my very best to live a life of my own making, and not just a series of events that happened to me, but one that I could stand back and look at and recognize my handwriting all over. Sometimes messy and scrawling, sometimes careful and precise. But one that I had carved with my own hand. *And I wouldn’t have been able to do this without employing a woman’s right to choose.* To choose when to have my children and with whom, when I felt supported and able to balance our lives as all mothers know that the scales must and will tip towards our children.”

The forces headed by Satan are hard at work, *which is why God’s people need to be.*

Ways to protect and persevere life (21)

- Jumping back into the Exodus story, there are God-fearing people who protect and preserve. Hebrew midwives. We don’t even know their names.
- (Ex 1:17) But the midwives *feared God* and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded, but let the male children live.
- (Ex 1:20) So God dealt with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. They stood in the gap. They took risks, and a step of faith, and God used it.
- But jumping back to Acts, there is another thing that God uses to preserve: Adoption.

The narrative in Exodus is very moving,

(Ex 2:3-10)

³When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. ⁴And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. ⁵Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. ⁶When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.” ⁷Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” ⁸And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. ⁹And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take

this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, “Because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

- Stephen’s sermon just says that Moses was adopted.

***Adoption is one of the ways that God gives people to protect and preserve life; it’s how he preserved the life of Moses.*

I have Christian friends who also know their calling in life is to adopt. It is the way to protecting and preserving human life.

- Adoption is being like God
- Adoption is at the heart of the gospel benefits.

One gospel reality for every believer is Adoption.

(Gal 4:4-6)

⁴ “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

(1 Jn 3:1)

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

Apply: I’m keenly aware every time that I preach on sanctity of life, that for some, the whole topic of abortion is very painful.

Jesus offers so much hope through his mercy. Abortion is not the unforgivable sin.

The gospel is where your hope lies. God calls you into his family and has a *plan for you to move forward in life through his lovingkindness.*

Illus:

I have a friend who has been serving in ministry since we graduated together in 2006. He spent some time on the mission field, and now serves the broken and needy in Chicago.

Before he was a Christian his girlfriend got pregnant and had an abortion. He had some role in encouraging and agreeing to it, and he had a lot of regret and pain.

****If his identity was tied to a past sin, he could never move forward.**

The gospel says that your identity is not based on what happened 20 years ago....

—Your identity is based on what happened 2000 years ago: Jesus purchased your forgiveness and his blood brings you into the family.

**Not only does the Savior love you, he has a plan for using your life..*

Conclusion:

Let's conclude with that. God who gives life, who has made it beautiful in his sight, wants to use it for his glory. That's how our passage ends (v22).

How does God want to use us to protect and preserve life?

- Some may be called to adopt.
- Mentoring single mothers
- Opportunities at Daybreak
- Fetal Heartbeat bill in the Senate

William Wilberforce (God used to abolish the African slave trade)

“Surely the principles of Christianity lead to *action* and well as meditation.”

Or, a more authoritative source says, “be doers of the Word, not just hearers.”

Beautiful life inside of the womb and at birth is worth every costly sacrifice.

