

Introduction

Today marks the 51 anniversary of the landmark court decision we call Roe v. Wade. That decision of course was struck down in June 2022. As a result, each state makes its own laws in regard to abortion. As you may know, Wisconsin has a law on the books dating from the mid-1800s. That law resulted in a cessation of abortions in our state from June of 2022 through September 2023. They resumed when a Wisconsin judge ruled that the law does not actually apply to abortion. And so here we are again. We live in a culture of death in which people want to possess the right to kill the vulnerable in the place of greatest vulnerability—their mother's womb.

Let me give you a number that staggers the mind. Since 1973, the United States of America has been the killing ground for some 65,000,000 pre-born babies. The quantity is bewildering. And employers in America wonder where the work force has gone.

It has been a few years since I preached directly and pointedly on the matter of abortion on Sanctity of Life Sunday. One reason is because this church has a history of being boldly and relentlessly pro-life. We have this down. Each year we have a healthy number of members standing along Hwy. 100 to remind passers-by of the holocaust of abortion. And besides there are many, many sins rampant in our day—theft, lying, dishonoring parents, adultery, sexual immorality, coveting, gossip, slander, and murder in general. Most of us have committed most of these and will do so again in many instances to one degree or another in our lives. So why single out abortion? Few of us have done it. Most are completely against it and lack even the capability to abort a baby.

As a pastor I ask, "what do my people most need to hear?" Most don't need another sermon on abortion. But then I ask myself, "How did we get where we are?" How did it come to pass that we as a society have come to be as promiscuous, immoral, and murderous as we have?" Perhaps silence is the reason. Very few persons have spoken up! Most just go along with the flow. If we do not speak up from time to time, it may become assumed that these matters are not that important to us and that we do not really care about them that much.

When you consider the numbers, you get an idea how widespread is the darkness in our day. You have to conclude that child sacrifice through abortion is one of the greatest horrors of our time. Our silence on this issue may result in a failure to educate our children. It may also be taken as approval or complicity. Those who tout the so-called "freedom-to-choose" position are certainly not silent. We must also lift our voices from time-to-time to speak light into the dark. God has not been silent on this issue and we must not be either.

God has spoken powerfully and unambiguously in his word. He declares that human life is a sacred gift. Human life is set apart from all other life by a single and compelling characteristic. This distinguishing feature makes human life distinct from all other created forms of life and sanctifies it in the sense that it is to be revered and respected by all other humans. Reference is made to that distinguishing mark in Genesis 9:1-7. Let's take a look.

[Read text]

As much as any other text in the scripture, this one underscores the sanctity of human life. In fact the substance of each of these seven verses highlights the fact that all human life is precious to God

and should be precious in the world itself. I see four ways in which God himself demonstrates in this text the sanctity of human life. We will consider those four and one more. First, take note of ...

I. God's Blessing and His Corresponding Command.

We see them in verse 1. God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." The importance of this command is evidenced by the fact that it is repeated again in verse 7. "And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."

God stresses the sanctity of human life by mandating that the earth be full of it. His blessing corresponds to the MULTIPLICATION of human beings on the earth. Notice his desire is that humans INCREASE GREATLY and FILL the earth. God is not worried about overpopulation! His concern is with under-population. God made a big universe and God made a big earth. He governs the creation, and as such it is his desire that people are located all over it. He has made an earth that can handle being filled with people. And that is what he wants. He loves the beauty of reproduction and multiplication. He loves the joy of new lives, additional lives being brought forth to populate his earth. Human life is special to God. It is demonstrated by the fact that He wants more of it.

This point is accentuated in Psalm 127. The author, Solomon, declares, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." Children are not an interference with what matters in this world. They are the substance of blessing in this world.

We can infer here that since God commanded that the earth be filled with human beings and that they increase greatly that God has made a planet in order to be inhabited. Planet Earth is not to be worshiped; it is to be used for the purpose of supporting the lives that God has commanded be brought forth. It is evident that God is convinced that planet earth is sufficient to support the quantity of life he commands. God made this planet to be inhabited. Sin and the darkness that accompanies it are at the root of the fear of many who are afraid that planet earth cannot handle significant population. It is a disbelief in God or a distrust of his creative wisdom that leads many to support abortion. They fear exhaustion of earth's resources. They fear too many people will result in a climate disaster. They fear these things because they don't fear God. The fear of God leads to a recognition that human life is precious and the more of it there is the better.

God demonstrates the sanctity of human life by blessing and commanding that there be more and more of it. Second, take note of ...

II. God's Assertion of the Supremacy of Man

After delivering a blessing and a command, the LORD asserted to Noah and his sons the supremacy of mankind on the earth. He does this in two ways.

First, he puts the fear of man upon animals and creeping things. Verse 2 states God's decree: "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered." Man is over the creation. All the animals that fill the earth God has set in subjection to human beings. HUMANS do not exist for other creatures. Other creatures exist FOR human beings. Human beings are given stewardship over the animals of the earth. Animals by God's will have a fear of human beings. It reflects the fear we should have of God.

We are going to see this again in a minute, but God made human beings in his image. We are representatives of God in the world so God has ordained that animals possess a fear of humans. It reflects the fear and reverence of God that should abide in the hearts of human beings. It is the lack of the fear of God which leads human beings to disregard the significance and sacredness of human life.

There is a second way in which God asserts the supremacy of human life. Animals become a food source for human beings. Look at verse 3. "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." You can be a vegetarian if you want, but I like meat and I am thankful that God has given cows and chickens and hogs and lambs and fish for food. Certain people think themselves more spiritual or righteous because they will not eat meat. To some, animal life would seem more precious than human life. However, God says otherwise. Human life is sacred. Animal life exists for the sake of humans not humans for the sake of the animals. Now I am not suggesting the mistreatment of animals or abuse of animals. Humans who fear God should do better than that. But the purpose of animal life in God's creation is subservient to the life and well-being of humans. And herein we are informed by God of the sanctity of human life.

Human beings should manage wisely our environment and the plants and animals that dwell in it. We should live thoughtfully and kindly as good stewards of God's creation. But we must never forget that HUMANS are sacred. As God's image-bearers, their importance on earth is superior to all other beings and to the earth itself.

That brings us to the third way God demonstrates the sanctity of human life. It is ...

III. God's Prohibition of Consuming Blood

God gave animals to be food for human beings, but he added one qualification. We see it in verse 4. "But you shall NOT eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." God prohibited the consumption of blood. The point is that even though God allowed the taking of animal life for food, he wanted there still to be regard for the fact that even animal life is life. Animals were not killed before there was human sin. That sin grew and grew from the Fall of humanity forward so that God brought a flood upon the world. Now in the aftermath of the flood, God allows humans to eat animals for food, but they must recognize that their food proceeds from the giving of life. Not eating the blood is a recognition that the meat is able to be eaten because something has given up its life. And the Lord says in Leviticus 17 that the life is in the blood. The blood was to be offered on the altar for the remission of sin.

At any rate, the prohibition of eating blood is a demonstration of respect for life itself. And so if humans were to refrain even from the eating of animal blood because of something sacred about animal life, how does human life rate in comparison? Much more does that express the sacredness of human life. If the taking of animal life for the purpose of humans staying alive and healthy demands respect, how much more does human life demand the highest of regard and reverence!

At last we come to the fourth demonstration by the word of God of the sanctity of human life. We see it in ...

IV. God's Requirement of Reckoning

It comes to us in verses 5-6. "And for your lifeblood [says the Lord] I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."

God holds animals accountable for taking human life. And certainly God hold humans accountable for the taking of human life. In the law of Moses provision existed for the stoning of an animal that killed a human. And here God calls for capital punishment to be carried out against a human being who is responsible for the death of another human being. And here we have before us the reason why human life is sacred above all other kinds of life. Human life is full and uniquely sacred because God made man in his image. This declaration takes us back to Genesis 1:26-27 when God the Trinity took counsel together to make human beings as from one human being. And that human being was made in the image and likeness of God.

He was made like God in character. He was made like God in his ability to relate with God. And he was made like God to be the visible image of God on the earth. Therefore, human life is NOT to be taken. Murder is a grievous sin. To strike against a human is to strike against God. It is to refuse to fear God.

Human life is sacred. We see it over and over in seven short verses in which God himself speaks. We know human life is set apart and sacred because God desires that humans multiply and fill the earth greatly with other human beings. We know human life is set apart and sacred because God has established humanity as supreme in the world. Furthermore, we know human life is sacred because God even wants us to regard the blood of animals as sacred. We know that human life is sacred because animals and humans are accountable to God for the taking of human life. In fact the highest penalty that can be meted out upon a human being is prescribed by God for humans who take the lives of other human beings.

And I am going to give you one more demonstration in addition to the ones we see in this text that we know that human life is sacred. We know that human life is sacred and set apart because of ...

V. God's Provision of Salvation.

God does not provide eternal life to plants or animals. God does not provide salvation even for angels. Once Satan and his comrades fell from heaven their doom was forever sealed. However, God provides salvation for human beings. The writer of Hebrews says, "For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham" (2:16).

God so loved the world [of human beings] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Romans 5 says that "One MAN's trespass led to condemnation for all MEN, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all MEN. For as by the MAN's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one MAN's obedience the many will be made righteous."

While human beings were still sinners, Christ died for us. Listen, in order to provide salvation for human beings, God had to pay the supreme price. The price was the life and death of his son. And certainly this ransom demonstrates the superior value God has placed on human beings.

We must see that human beings made in the image of God though we aren't worth much since we are sinners, to God we are worth the death of his own son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A week or so ago, I watched the movie, "His Only Son." It is a depiction of Abraham's journey to Moriah with Isaac, the son of promise, to sacrifice him there in accord with the command of God. It

helped me imagine the tension that was in the air as Abraham raised the knife to lower it into Isaac. Oh what a relief for Abraham when the Lord said, "Abraham, Abraham, Do not lay your hand on the boy." What a glorious provision of God—the ram that was caught in the thicket. It was then that Abraham called the name of that place "The Lord will provide."

The Lord has provided a Savior since all of us like sheep have gone astray. All of us in Adam sinned and have sinned countless times and ways of ourselves. We human beings who despite our sin are precious to God, are provided a savior. Here is hope for those who have disregarded the sanctity of human life. We have all done so in many ways. There are those who disregarded the sanctity of human life to the point that they have had an abortion or encouraged others to do so. They have killed their baby. You too can be forgiven. Jesus shed his blood for sinners and that includes you just as much as it includes anyone else. When the convicted sinner becomes aware that they are powerless to redeem themselves, their question is what must I do to have eternal life. The answer is, "it has already been done by Jesus." He died as a substitute for sinners on the cross. The only way you can receive forgiveness and life is as a gift. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

The sin of disregarding the sanctity of human life is most clearly and outwardly expressed in murder. It is murder of the pre-born. It is murder of the already born. But murder is more than just taking a life. Jesus gave important instruction in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."

Before we start throwing stones at others, let us deal with the planks that are in our own eyes. Then we will see clearly how to help others take the specks out of theirs.

Conclusion

The Bible makes clear that human life is sacred. People dispute the sacredness of human life for many reasons. They are atheists. They are permissive of sin of all kinds. They are selfish. They are darkened in their understanding. They are faithful to the spirit of the age in which we live.

Either way we who know and believe in the sanctity of human life must do what we can to protect life. We should advocate for life. Speak for the children. Speak for God. We must lovingly warn of judgment for the sin of abortion. We must support agencies and efforts which affirm human life as precious and who seek to supply assistance and movements to defend and protect human life. We should vote for candidates whose policies will protect life. And last but not least, we should preach the gospel. It is the only hope for the world such as it is.