

“Choose Life!”
The Sanctity of Human Life and the Gospel

Sanctity of Life Sunday

Texts: 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31; 1 Thess. 5:15; Psalms 22:9-11

Each year the Christian Church in the United States dedicates a Sunday in January to intentionally reflect and celebrate what God has said about the Sanctity of Human Life. On this Sunday, Believers intentionally reflect on three important biblical realities related to the Sanctity of Human life.

Why do the elders at PBC feel it is important to take a Sunday each year and prayerfully devote it to the Sanctity of Human Life?

First, we seek to remind ourselves that God values the life of every Human and holds that life sacred.

- He created each person in His own image,
- He destined human beings for glory and honor,
- He appointed them to display His glory and represent His honor through the earth,
- He redeemed them by means of an immense price of incalculable worth.

Second, we seek to review the indisputable, shocking evidence that the World around us does not value Human life nor does it hold that life sacred – and this is particularly evident in the immense devaluation and intentional destruction of the life of unborn infants.

- Of the multiple, undeniable, and inescapable evidences that the world at large has devalued human life, perhaps the most shocking is the intentional destruction of the life of billions of unborn infants over the last 50 years.

⇒ 65.5 million legal abortions in the USA since 1973; just under 1M per year; the overwhelming vast majority of which were not done to save the life of the mother. The vast majority of the lives aborted were healthy, normally developing unborn infants.

- ⇒ 73 million children aborted every year in all the countries where organizations like the Guttmacher Institute or the WHO keep statistics on abortion.
- ⇒ Between 3 and 3.5 billion infants had their lives aborted before birth in the last 50 years. (That is over $\frac{1}{4}$ of the earth's current population of 8.1 billion people).

- These statistics are both staggering and deeply disturbing!
- And as Christians, we must come to grips with much more than just how we might feel about the immensity of this stunning loss of human life . . . we must come to grips with what how God says He feels about it in His Word and respond submissively and appropriately by aligning our own values, feelings, and actions to what God has said about the sanctity of human life in His Word.

Finally, we must seek to understand and embrace how the Gospel should shape our response to both of these stunning realities.

- Put differently, the Gospel informs our understanding and shapes our response to both the immense value God places on human life and the stunning destruction of human life taking place every day in the world around us.
- Through the Gospel of His Son God has purposed to ***restore the value, preserve the sanctity, magnify the beauty, and redeem the lives*** of His image bearers.

We need to think biblically about ***five important questions that will help us seek authoritative answers from God's Word so that we might shape compassionate responses that reflect the transformative power and redemptive grace of the Gospel.***

- I. **With regard to my own life:** *Does God give me the ultimate right to choose what to do with my body?*
 - A. ***We are not our own . . . we are bought with a price so we must use our bodies for His purposes and pleasure and not merely our own.***

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

B. *We have been given freedoms and rights by God to use our bodies to pursue paths in life that fulfill us; for which God equipped and designed us; and that please and honor him.*

Romans 12:1-2 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

C. *Because we were created in the image of God our life is sacred to God and it must be held sacred by us.*

- Created in His image as an image bearer (Gen 2:27)
- Sacred to God above all other kinds of life (Gen 9:5-6)

And for your lifeblood 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.⁶ “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

II. *With regard to the life of another: Does God give me the individual right to intentionally harm the life or well-being of another person?*

- ***Direct Command*** – Thou shalt not kill! (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17; Mt. 19:18)
- ***Extreme Penalty*** – Capital Punishment (Gen 9:6)
“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
- ***NT Ethic*** – Paul told the Thessalonians to *always seek to do good to one another and to everyone* (1 Thess. 5:15)

So, we have reached two important conclusions from the Scripture about the Sanctity of Human Life:

1. I don't have the ultimate right over my own body.
2. I do not have the right to do harm to someone else's body. This brings us to the next question:

III. *With regard to the origin and beginning of life: When does a person become a person?*

- This is the key question – because - if what is growing in a woman’s womb is a person - then I must not do harm to that person.
- All of us would agree – abortion in any form is the intentional termination of a pregnancy. What we really need to know whether or not we are terminating the life of a person.
- And we ultimately need more than human opinion on this – we need to know whether God sees what is growing in a woman’s womb as an unborn person.
- With this in mind, let’s look at some key texts in order to observe and understand the spiritual implication these texts reveal about the personhood of unborn infants.

A. **Psalm 139:13** — God formed and fashioned us in the womb. *“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.”*

B. **Psalm 22:9-11** — God intimately knows and personally relates to us while we are still in the womb. *“Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God!”*

C. **Jeremiah 1:5** — God calls and appoints certain of His servants while they are in the womb. *“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.” (see also Isaiah 44:1-5)*

D. **Psalm 51:5** — David recounted his personal moral standing before God by recognizing his sin nature existed from the moment of his conception. *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

E. **Luke 1:40-44** — Elizabeth’s infant, John the Baptist leaped in her womb **for joy** at the sound of Mary’s announcement that she was pregnant with Jesus. In other words, Elizabeth’s baby felt emotion and responded with joy while yet in the womb!

*And she (Mary) entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **And when Elizabeth heard greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.** And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ **For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.***

These texts reveal the inescapable and undeniable reality that a person becomes a person from the moment of conception and exists as a person the entire time they are in the womb of their mother. This means that when an abortion happens, ***what is aborted is in fact a person, not just a fetus.***

IV. With regard to Government: *What God-assigned responsibility does a government have to protect the life and well-being of its citizens?*

- A. ***Protect the lives of every person*** by demanding the life of those who wrongfully terminate the life of another. (Gen 9:6; Rom 13:1-5)
- B. ***Protect the life of the innocent and the righteous*** (Ex 23:7) *“Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked.”*
- C. ***Value and protect the life of the unborn*** (Ex 21:22-25) – a person who caused a woman to miscarry (even unintentionally) resulting in the harm or death of the infant would pay in kind – life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, etc. *“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.”²³ But if there is harm, **then you shall pay life for life”***

- Clearly, God charged the human governments He instituted with the responsibility of protecting and preserving the sanctity of Human Life – including the unborn.
- This is an important consideration for those of us who have been granted, by the providence of God at this time and in this place, the right to participate in the appointment of those who lead our particular form of government through our vote.

V. With regard to the Church and the Gospel: *What does God want His people to do when the sanctity of human life has been violated by others? How does the Gospel address all of this pain and brokenness in us and around us?*

A. Millions of unborn people have been and are being murdered in our land – this should disturb us deeply.

- We should grieve over this profoundly.

- We should think about this biblically.
- We should voice our objection to this boldly.

B. The life and soul of the parents of aborted infants have been spiritually damaged and affected – this should move us profoundly.

- We should pray about this persistently.
- We should guard against this personally.
- We should seek to minister to those whose lives have been affected by abortion compassionately.

C. The gospel brings grace and hope to all of this – this should encourage and motivate us personally.

- We should recognize the cross of Jesus can forgive and redeem all of this in the life of a person.
- We should create a culture of gospel grace and hope that helps people contemplating abortion to choose life.

D. What if I am someone who has had an abortion or encouraged someone to abort their child?

- Run to Jesus as fast as you can for forgiveness!
- Hang on to Jesus with all the strength you can!
- Believe Jesus when He said “I forgive you”
- Rely on the grace of Jesus every day, hour, moment.
- Rejoice in the hope of the Gospel that is yours!

Conclusion:

- The life of every image-bearer is precious to God and therefore it must be precious to us.
- We must learn to look at life from God’s perspective and not our own. And, when we do we discover that we are not our own. We do not belong to ourselves but to God and therefore, we must strive with all our might to discern and do His will for our lives at every point in our journey, even when we find ourselves at a particular place because of our own sinful choice or a tragic moment at the hand of another.

- Our bodies are not our own – they belong to Him therefore we must use them to glorify Him, to advance His purposes, and for His glory, honor, and divine pleasure.
- Just as our bodies are not our own, neither are our children – they belong to God who has entrusted them to us that we might love and care for them and raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord to Whom they belong.
- Put plainly, the decision about whether it is best to bring a baby into this world is not one that God has entrusted to us – that is His decision alone.
- And, at the end of the day, this is why the sanctity of human life matters. Not because it is politically correct or incorrect or whether it is socially accepted or despised. Sanctity of life matters because life does not belong to us but to God.

***We are stewards and not owners of our own life,
and the lives of those God has entrusted to our care.***