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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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Human Life Still Sacred in 2014... And Always Will Be!

Genesis 1:26-28

Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday... a day for us to CELEBRATE the sacredness of human life; to give thanks to God for physical life and even more, for eternal life! It is a chance for us to renew our zeal for life, to be thankful for children, and to commit ourselves to protecting children from the spirit of the age. Satan, the dark lord of this present evil age hates God, and hates the image of God. Jesus said about him

John 8:44 ... the devil... was a murderer from the beginning

But the Bible says that children are a gift from the Lord:

Psalm 127:3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.

So while Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is essentially positive, a sweet celebration of the good gift of God—LIFE—it is annually on a Sunday in January that reminds us of one of the greatest tragedies in American history—the legalization of abortion in the infamous and repulsive Roe v Wade decision in January of 1973. The Roe v Wade decision turns 41 this Wednesday. Since 1973, “the deaths of more than 54 million unborn children have been reported in the United States alone. Every year, approximately 1.21 million more unborn children will be aborted. And nearly 4,000 abortions are performed daily. So Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is a day of SORROW AND REPENTANCE. Abortion is the greatest moral failure of our nation since slavery was abolished.

But Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is also a DAY OF HOPE for the future. Tomorrow is Martin Luther King Jr. day, a day in which we celebrate one of the greatest leaders in the history of our country, a courageous man who fought the wickedness of institutional racism, a man who stood for civil rights for the weak against the strong. As we look back to what Dr. King achieved in Civil Rights, it is right for us to yearn for an end to an even greater injustice—the greatest civil rights issue of our day—abortion. Whereas the Jim Crow laws unjustly deprived African-Americans of rights, freedoms, and access that others had, and it made African-Americans live like second-class citizens, abortion does far worse—it deprives infants of life itself. But Dr. King is an example of hope in the face of overwhelming odds—and we Christians should be people of hope. We can imagine a day when both racism and abortion will be gone forever. In the Kingdom of Heaven, where Christ will openly and gloriously reign on a New Earth in the New Jerusalem, we know that racism and murder will be gone forever!

So Sanctity of human life Sunday is all three: a day to celebrate life, a day to grieve over abortion, and a day to be filled with hope for the future glory of Christ's Kingdom... all of these things are before us.

2014 brings us very encouraging news from the front... pro-life forces are winning the battle for; we are winning the battle against abortion in many ways!

A new report from the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, a former arm of Planned Parenthood, shows the pro-life is winning — first, by winning the hearts and minds of Americans

Guttmacher laments, “This legislative onslaught has dramatically changed the landscape for women needing abortion.” Indeed, abortions are at historic lows. Further, public opinion has changed dramatically. According to Gallup, in 1996 more than half of Americans self-identified as pro-choice, compared to 33 percent who claimed to be pro-life. By 2013, pro-lifers exceeded the number of pro-choicers, 48 percent to 45 percent.

Secondly, the pro-life movement is winning by getting more and more laws restricting abortion passed: Guttmacher says that more laws restricting abortion have been passed in the past three years than in the previous ten years combined.

Guttmacher identified four specific restrictions that “dominated the legislative scene during 2013: abortion bans, restrictions on abortion providers, limitations on the provision of medication abortion and restrictions on coverage of abortion in private health plans.” The institute further noted, “Together, legislation in these four categories accounted for 56 percent of all restrictions enacted over the year. States also adopted a wide range of other major abortion restrictions in 2013, including those on parental involvement, public funding for abortion, waiting periods and counseling, and ultrasound.”

The proof is in the pudding when it comes to whether or not pro-life laws are making a difference. The number of abortions in states that are consistently passing more pro-life laws stopping abortions are down to historic lows — making it so abortions are down to their lowest level nationally since just after Roe v. Wade.

Syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, who is not pro-life, talked about the changing attitudes toward abortion on the Fox News Channel as the “story of the year, culturally.” He explained why the nation has become more pro-life. “The fact that people are becoming aware of how late-term abortions are so near to infanticide. And also how the new technology and the ultrasounds are giving people awareness of how much an infant has developed in the womb. So the movement has stopped, and I think reversed, especially among young people.”

SO... BE ENCOURAGED!!! We are WINNING the battle on abortion in many ways.

But for us as Christians, the battle is ultimately based on **SCRIPTURAL TRUTH**... we have to keep going back to the Bible to answer questions we have in this issue. So today, I will keep it simple by going to five questions and seek to answer them based on Scriptural truth

- 1) What does Sanctity of Human Life mean?
- 2) What Is Life?
- 3) When does Human Life Begin?
- 4) What are the implications for us as Christians?
- 5) How do I overcome my guilt?

I. What Does the Sanctity of Human Life Mean?

A. First a Personal Story

Some of you may know this, and I feel very badly about what I am about to tell you; I KILLED A HORSE FIVE WEEKS AGO... I didn't mean to do it, but the horse was standing in the middle of a rural road in a very dark section around a bend, and it suddenly appeared and crushed the front of my car and crumpled in my windshield and rolled off the car into the road and died. I had three of my kids in the car with me... but God protected us and we were all safe. I called Christi, then I called 911.

A moment later, a car pulled alongside mine—my window was down. The woman lowered her window and said very sharply—“Did you call 911?” I said “Yes, I just made the call.” She answered, “Good, because if you don't, I will!” She raised her window and drove off. By contrast, the next person that came by said with gentleness and compassion, “Is everyone okay?!”

A few days later, at a bible study I teach, I wrote on the whiteboard, “People > Animals”...

As Jesus made it plain:

Matthew 10:31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Matthew 12:11-12 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² How much more valuable is a man than a sheep!

That is the SANCTITY of HUMAN LIFE... that people are special, literally sacred, holy, set apart to God from creation... worth more to God than any other physical thing in the universe

B. The Word Sanctity Means “Sacredness”...

1. Concept: Human beings are set apart from all the rest of creation
2. Central to this: creation in the image of God

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

3. There is a sacredness to the creation of man, male and female, in the Genesis account
 - a. The flow of the narrative seems to highlight this moment as a climax... although the highest climax comes when God rests at the pinnacle of creation, sitting like a King to rule over all He's made
 - b. But the flow of the narrative makes the creation of man in the image of God a sacred, a special event
 - c. Everything is set up with man as the culmination of the creation God has done
 - i) Day 1: God separates light from darkness, calling the light "Day" and the darkness "Night"
 - ii) Day 2: God separates the waters above from the waters below... making sky
 - iii) Day 3: God separates the water from the dry land, making oceans... as well as seed-bearing vegetation
 - iv) Day 4: God creates the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night; also the stars
 - v) Day 5: God created fish in the sea and birds in the air
 - vi) Day 6: God created animals to roam the earth... but God also created man to rule over everything on the earth

It's as though everything in the universe was gotten ready for the creation of man... we were made in God's image to glorify Him in ways nothing else can

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

4. Man as the Image of God continues beyond Adam
 - a. In Genesis 5... as Adam's lineage was unfolded

Genesis 5:1-3 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female and

blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man." ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

b. In Genesis 9,... after the flood

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

c. Book of James

James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

5. So... even though the image of God has been severely marred by sin, every human being is sacred specifically because we have all been created in the image of God

C. The Image of God: Five Aspects (Louis Berkhof, p. 207)

1. The soul: God-like attributes of simplicity, spirituality, invisibility, immortality
2. The mind: man's ability as a rational being like God; the intellect and the will
3. The morality: God-like attributes of goodness, righteousness, holiness
4. The body: not as a material substance (God has none); but as a fit organ for the soul, and a vehicle for man to act in this world
5. Man's position of dominion over the earth: God-like rulership

D. The Image of God Sets Man Above All the Earth's Creatures

1. God established man as ruler over the earth

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Man exercises dominion over the beasts and birds and fish... by our superior, God-like attributes of wisdom and power and love, we are given the earth to rule and subdue and protect and nurture.

So, Adam was put into the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Thus, active care for animals is a God-like thing, but cruelty to animals to evil:

God provides for animals:

Psalm 104:27-28 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. ²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

So does man... but cruelty is wicked:

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

2. Psalm 8

Psalm 8:1-9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ² From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. ³ When I consider 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, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- a. Note that we are not put in charge of the heavens... only the earth!!
- b. Looking up at the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars HUMBLE man!!
- c. But man IS PUT IN CHARGE OF the earth and all its creatures and resources
- d. This all flows from the Sanctity of Human Life

E. Especially... it is the Sanctity of Human Life that Makes Murder So Heinous

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder.

Proverbs 28:17 A man tormented by the guilt of murder will be a fugitive till death; let no one support him.

II. What Is Life?

A. All Life is Amazing!

1. We are surrounded every day by the staggering complexity of LIVING THINGS
2. The simplest free-living organism known to biology is a tiny parasitic bacterium that lives in the digestive tract of primates... it has 580,000 base pairs in its DNA and 482 protein-coding genes.
 - a. A research team headed by Dr. Craig Venter created a computer model of this bacterium;
 - b. They read over 900 scientific papers that described the inner workings of this bacterium, and isolated 1900 specific parameters that seemed to govern how the cell operates
 - c. They then broke these inner workings of the cell into 28 separate modules that each governed some vital function of the cell; they built and tested each of the 28 modules individually; once they all seemed to be working properly, they joined them all together, harmonizing what each module was contributing to the function of the cell... the program ran for 10 hours, roughly how long it takes for this bacterium to reproduce in real life
 - d. Now let's look at this in very practical terms. In order to be able to match the speed at which the organism operates, this less-than-complete simulation required *a cluster of 128 computers* to get the job done. Think about that for a moment. In order to simulate most (but not all) of the processes that take place in a simulation of what might be the *simplest possible living organism*, the authors needed the power of *128 computers running together!* That should tell us something very clearly:

There is no such thing as a simple living organism.

<http://blog.drwile.com/?p=8161>

3. Most biology textbooks begin with the single-cell paramecium, the simplest living thing discussed in the textbook... whereas the bacteria modelled by that research team has only 482 genes, the paramecium has 39,642.
4. Along with the complexity of individual living things, there is the amazing complexity of the ECOSYSTEMS around us that sustain life in an intricate balance... the various cycles that maintain all living things is astonishingly complex; efforts at creating a closed, large-scale, man-made eco-system

under some dome have ultimately failed... the necessary balance between this system and that usually spins out of control, destroying everything

5. LIFE IS AMAZING!!! And the God who made it is EVEN MORE AMAZING!!

B. God Is Alive, and All Life Comes from God

1. God is ALIVE

Deuteronomy 5:26 For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived?

Unlike the gods of the nations:

Psalm 96:5 For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

2. Clearest statements are in John's Gospel

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

3. All living things were created by God

Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

4. God created all living things THROUGH JESUS

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

5. There is a vast difference between non-living and living things in God's universe

a. Non-living things: rocks... water... metal (gold, silver, iron)... fire...

b. Living things: grass, trees, porpoises, butterflies, eagles, donkeys, human beings

6. Life itself is a mystery... very difficult to define

7. But from the beginning of his Gospel, the Apostle John makes it plain that God the Father has linked Jesus with life... there is no life apart from Jesus
8. Here we are simply speaking of physical, biological life at first... though John clearly means far more than that across the scope of his Gospel
9. But the vast array of living things in this physical world all owe their life to Jesus as original creator AND as constant sustainer
10. So what constitutes "life"?
 - a. Websites and biology textbooks testify to the difficulty of defining life

Life: the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change preceding death

- b. Many just tend to list characteristics of living things vs. non-living things
 - i) Living things are made up of cells
 - ii) Living things adapt to their environment so as to promote their own survival
 - iii) Living things can reproduce organisms of the same type
 - iv) Living things are capable of growth and development at some point over their life span
 - v) Living organisms obtain energy from the environment and use it in unique ways... plants by photosynthesis, animal life by eating food
- c. Genesis 1 speaks of God creating living things of various kinds: plants of various kinds, sea creatures of various kinds, birds, land animals, insects, beasts of the field, etc. A wide array of living things of all types, and Genesis 1 says God created all of them by the word of His power
 - i) God said "Let there be..." and there was
 - ii) John 1:3 tells us it was by the Word Jesus Christ that God did all this...

11. Human life is the highest and most complex life in the world

- a. The human brain is the most complex living physical thing ever created

Gary Larson, "Far Side,": a student with a tiny head raised his hand and said, "Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full!"

But the answer should come back, "No, your brain will never be full!"

Scientific American: The human brain consists of about one billion neurons. Each neuron forms about 1,000 connections to other neurons, amounting to more than a trillion connections. If each neuron could only help store a single memory, running out of space would be a problem. You might have only a few gigabytes of storage space, similar to the space in an iPod or a USB flash drive. Yet neurons combine so that each one helps with many memories at a time, exponentially increasing the brain's memory storage capacity to something closer to around 2.5 petabytes (a petabyte is a million gigabytes). For comparison, if your brain worked like a digital video recorder in a television, 2.5 petabytes would be enough to hold three million hours of TV shows. You would have to leave the TV running continuously for more than 300 years to use up all that storage. If you could harness all your brain's memory power, you could store up to one-quarter of all the books in the Library of Congress!!

C. Physical Life is a Gift from God

1. Clear statement in Acts

Acts 17:28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'

2. God gives us physical life as a GIFT

3. He is directly active in crafting every single human being... personally active!!

Job 10:9-12 Remember that you molded me like clay. ... ¹⁰ Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, ¹¹ clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? ¹² You gave me life...

Psalms 139:13-14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

4. It is also only by His will that we continue to live

James 4:15 you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

D. Eternal Life is also a Gift from God through Jesus Christ

1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ ¶ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

John 10:27-28 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

E. Eternal Life Defined and Described

1. Defined

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

2. Described

- a. Joyful, like the highest quality wine poured out in abundance at a wedding (John 2)
- b. Radically new, like being born-again (John 3)
- c. Deeply refreshing, like having a spring of water welling up within your heart (John 4)
- d. Nourished and sustained by Christ's death, like bread from heaven (John 6)
- e. Like having streams of living water flowing from within you to others around you (John 7)
- f. Like being born blind, then suddenly being able to see radiant colors for the first time (John 9)
- g. Like having a Good Shepherd who leads you in and out and gives you pasture and lays down his life to protect you from the wolves (John 10)

3. Plainly asserted

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. "

F. Find Your Significance in these Two Places

1. Since you are a human being, you are created in the image of God... you are of immeasurable value; your worth in God's sight is greater than all the material possessions on earth

Matthew 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

2. If you are a Christian, you are also alive in Christ... you have eternal life; so your value is that of a BLOOD-BOUGHT ADOPTED CHILD OF GOD

This is where your significance comes from!! Not from anything you can achieve or any special ability you possess

III. When Does Human Life Begin?

A. At the Center of the Abortion Debate: When Does Life Begin?

B. The Personhood of the Preborn is the Key to Everything

1. If the pre-born infant is just a conglomeration of cells, then it really is a private decision on the part of the woman to have it removed... not any different whatsoever from having a benign tumor removed from her digestive track
2. BUT if the pre-born infant is truly an identifiable and genetically separate human being, it should be protected by the laws of the state... it is no longer a private decision, a woman's right to choose... any more than she would have the right to choose to kill her toddler two years after he's born
3. The "toddler test": treat the child inside the womb the same as one two years old... that removes any distinction between a child conceived by marital sex, premarital sex, adultery, rape, or incest... as far as the child is concerned, all that matters is that he or she is a HUMAN BEING... how they were conceived is irrelevant, as it is when it is two years old
4. The WHOLE QUESTION comes down to the personhood of the infant still in the womb

C. Biblical Evidence

1. We've already seen God's direct action in forming the baby step by step inside the mother's womb

Job 10:9-12 Remember that you molded me like clay. ... ¹⁰ Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, ¹¹ clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? ¹² You gave me life...

Psalm 139:13-14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

2. But is it human from conception?

Psalm 51:5 Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

Psalm 58:3 Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

The doctrine of original sin... David was sinful from the moment he was conceived... sinful IN ADAM... therefore, he was fully human from the moment he was conceived

3. John the Baptist's joy: pregnant Elizabeth meeting pregnant Mary

Luke 1:44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

4. Mary's status as the mother of Elizabeth (and John's) Lord:

Luke 1:43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Jesus was only conceived a few weeks before that!! Mary was definitely in the first trimester

D. Scientific Evidence

- 18 days after conception, the baby's heart starts beating. Most mothers don't yet know they are pregnant at this early stage.
- 21 days - pumps own blood through separate closed circulatory system with own blood type.
- 28 days - eye, ear and respiratory system begin to form.
- 42 days - brain waves recorded, skeleton complete, reflexes present.
- 7 weeks - photo of thumbsucking.
- 8 weeks - all body systems present.
- 9 weeks - squints, swallows, moves tongue, makes fist.
- 11 weeks - spontaneous breathing movements, has fingernails, all body systems working.
- 23 weeks - 15% chance of viability outside of womb if birth premature.
- 24 weeks - 56% of babies survive premature birth.
- 25 weeks - 79% of babies survive premature birth.
- This is what Jesus does to craft every human being born all over the world...And yet, there is all this controversy about when a baby becomes a human

E. Science is Helping to Win the Day

1. Ultrasounds are giving CLEAR PICTURES of the babies in their mother's wombs
2. These ultrasounds are winning the day against abortion...

- a. Anecdotal evidence shows that many women who see the ultrasounds of their babies decide not to get abortions... though this evidence is hotly debated
 - b. A hotly contested law was passed in June of 2013 in the state of Wisconsin requiring all women to get ultrasounds before having an abortion...
 - c. In all other medical cases, the general direction is to give the patient as much relevant information as possible... even signing statements concerning possible side effects and outcomes...
 - d. But pro-abortion folks hate the ultrasound bill... because they know how effective these simple views of the babies has on women
3. In any case, abortion and the humanity of the preborn is one case in which science clearly supports the bible's teaching

IV. What Are the Implications for Us as Christians?

A. This Truth Has Consequences

1. If all babies are human from conception, then Christians stand under some moral implications
2. Let's face them together

B. Implication #1: Christians Should Hate Abortion

1. Abortion should cause us revulsion... we should hate it because it is wickedness
2. Our study of the bible on this, and our study of biology on fetal development, should settle forever the humanity of the preborn
3. We should hate what abortion does to the primary victims: the babies themselves
4. We should hate what abortion does to the women who get them: they are often deeply scarred, feeling they have nowhere to turn with their guilt (more on that in a moment)
5. We should hate what abortion does to every doctor, nurse, technician, secretary, and advocate in the country
6. We should hate what the availability of abortion does to the sexual morality of our nation

7. We should hate abortion all over the world... the gender-based abortions done in China
8. We should hate how abortion twists the minds and hardens the hearts of our people; our laws in our country are schizophrenic...
 - a. If a pregnant woman driving to an abortion clinic to abort her baby is struck by a drunk driver and she has a miscarriage, he is guilty of manslaughter...
 - b. But if she completes the drive and the baby is aborted, that is morally acceptable and legal

C. Implication #2: Christians Should Never Get an Abortion

1. One of the most tragic aspects of abortion is how many Christians have yielded to this terrible temptation
2. Studies show that between 110,000 and 125,000 women identifying themselves as “born-again” and “evangelical” get abortions every year
3. Two forces may lead in this direction: first, more shame than the world feels at sexual sin that may have led to the conception of the baby; second, a misuse of the grace of Christ as a license for a second sin on top of the first one... “Jesus will forgive me” they say **AHEAD OF TIME**
4. This is what Satan does: speaks so-called “grace” before the sin, and condemnation afterward
5. We must keep the standards of sexual purity very high
 - a. We live in a sexualized culture in which people are being assaulted daily with sexual temptation
 - b. Sexual purity among teens and on college campuses is stunningly low and mocked
 - c. The church needs to help young people not lead themselves into temptation sexually...
 - d. I am very concerned about dating between people who are not ready to get married... Joshua Harris wrote *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*... parents need to read this book before permitting minors to date; people who have no intention of getting married need to read this book and understand the dangers of recreational dating
6. Our culture needs to embrace **BOTH ASPECTS** of the grace of God

- a. Grace to say NO to sin

Titus 2:11-12 or the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age

- b. Grace to cover us when we do sin (more in a moment)

D. Implication #3: Christians Should Pray for the End to Abortion

- 1. God is able to end this scourge

Matthew 21:22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

1 John 5:14-15 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.

E. Implication #4: Christians Should Persuade Others Concerning Abortion

- 1. Get Randy Alcorn's book, *Why I Am Pro-Life*
- 2. Study his answers to the issues and questions...
- 3. Be willing to speak up for the sanctity of human life
- 4. Be willing to be a fork in someone's road
- 5. Be willing to suffer rejection and insults for your stand

F. Implication #5: Christians Should Care Actively for Women in Crisis Pregnancies

- 1. Pregnancy Support Services of Durham is constantly looking for volunteers to help with women in crises pregnancies... **BABY BOTTLE BLESSINGS**
- 2. Be willing to sacrifice your time and money to provide a beautiful support system for
- 3. **ADOPTION:** the best answer in many cases to women who are in crisis pregnancies and see no alternative

G. Implication #6: Christians Should Seek to Change Abortion Laws

- 1. Christian lawmakers all over the country are doing precisely this... as we've noted earlier...
- 2. Many new laws being passed to reduce the number of abortions in America

3. We should PRAY for those with the skill to make these laws, and support them when we can
4. We should stay in touch with LifeNews.com and find out what legislative efforts are coming that we can get involved with

V. How Do I Overcome My Guilt?

A. Many Forms of Guilt on this Issue

1. Sins of commission: women who have gotten an abortion; men who have urged women to get an abortion; medical personnel who have been involved in the abortion industry; lawmakers/politicians who have opposed good laws or made bad laws on this issue; individuals who have spoken wrong doctrines on this
2. Sins of omission: failed to get involved; failed to pray; failed to speak up

B. Christ's Blood Sufficient for them All

Matthew 12:31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

C. Regrets Now Are Helpful If They Lead to Repentance and Faith

Romans 6:21-22 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.

D. Repent and Believe!!

Mark 1:14-15 Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

E. Bring Forth Fruit in Keeping with Repentance

Luke 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

What is God saying to you about this issue?? What does He want you to do??

F. No Regrets in Heaven!!

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.