

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

Life in Christ

John 1-21

Today is **Sanctity of Human Life Sunday**.

“Sanctity” means “sacredness...” holiness... set apart unto God as unique.

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

The SANCTITY of human life means that it is set apart unto God for his precious possession, and that therefore other human beings should be treated like we treat God...

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

So, there is a SIMILARITY in the love we should have for God and the love we should have for all other human beings... it is a LESSER love, but it is similar

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two great commandments... meaning that all ETHICAL BEHAVIOR flow from the idea of the sacredness of other human beings

This was reestablished after the Flood of Noah... before the flood, the heart of man had become evil and corrupt, and one of the results was that the world was filled with VIOLENCE:

Genesis 6:11-12 *Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.*

One of the things God did after the flood was to establish for all time the sanctity of human life in reference to murder:

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.*

So, the law forbidding murder is linked to the fact that God has made man in his image. To kill another human being is to attack the image of God directly. James extends this even to the cursing with the tongue that we do of other people:

James 3:9-10 *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.*

Q: WHY DO WE CELEBRATE the Sanctity of Human Life around the third week of January?:

A: We are commemorating one of the darkest days in the history of our nation... for on January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a 7-2 decision in the Roe v Wade case making abortion legal throughout the nation. Since that time, almost SIXTY MILLION babies have been aborted.

Every year, we at FBC pause to reflect on this issue... we do so with a sense of **grief**, a sense of **repentance**, a sense of **resolve** in prayer and action, and a sense of **hopefulness** about the future

The year in review:

In some amazing ways, the Pro-life movement saw great progress... more and more **pro-life legislation** is being passed **restricting access to abortion**...

Also, we saw the **exposure of Planned Parenthood** as the diabolically wicked death machine it is... as some **shocking videos** surfaced in 2015 that uncovered the cold-hearted selling of body parts of aborted babies for

profit... these videos led to the **defunding of Planned Parenthood** in six states, and a vote for defunding in Congress...

The key issue on abortion always has been and always will be this: the HUMANITY of the preborn

The pro-abortion forces have tried a variety of ways to obscure this... like saying the baby is really a “**fetus**” or a “**product of conception**” or a “**mass of tissue**” and that it depends on the **choice of the mother**, and giving us illogical political slogans like “ABORTION SHOULD BE SAFE, LEGAL, FUNDED, and RARE”. But why should abortion be rare if what is aborted is merely a mass of tissue cells? That makes no sense at all!!

And why should Planned Parenthood shrink back from declaring that they can do these sorts of things with the aborted parts if they’re merely a mass of cells. But they know that the majority of the nation is not so cold hearted as they are...The **backlash in America** proves that many here still have a conscience and are UTTERLY REPULSED by the sale of the parts of human beings for money

In any case, this war against abortion continues to rage... but the truth of the matter is this: abortion is still legal, and perhaps as many as 1.3 million babies were aborted in 2015.

The battle has to be won in OUR HEARTS and OUR MINDS... we have to celebrate the sanctity of human life based on scriptural truth!

And we have to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ as sinners saved by grace... and to extend that same grace to all repentant sinners who have been defiled by this and by every other sin

That’s what today is about!

I. The Gift of Physical Life in Christ Jesus

A. All Life is in Christ

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.**

1. The overall purpose of the Gospel of John: to proclaim the DEITY of Christ AND the Life we can enjoy through faith in him

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

From verses 14 and 17 we learn precisely who this “word” is:

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

So, very clearly in the first 18 verses of John’s Gospel... or really from the very first verse, John establishes the theme of His Gospel: Jesus Christ is God in the flesh

B. Christ and All Creation

John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

1. Everything in all creation was made through Christ

Colossians 1:16 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.

2. Christ constantly holds all things together

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

C. Christ and All Life

1. John gets specific about the issue of life as well

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

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

3. Life itself is a mystery... very difficult to define
4. 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
5. So what constitutes “life”?
 - a. Websites and biology textbooks are testify to the difficulty of defining life
 - 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...
 - iii) John 1:4 focuses especially on Jesus and LIFE...

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

6. Jesus created and upholds every living thing on the planet

- Every species of plant life on earth was created by Christ and is upheld by Him: every blade of grass that sways on the Dakota plains, every mass of algae that grows in a quiet pond in the Smokies and every mass of plankton that floats in the North Atlantic, every coral reef that flourishes in the South Pacific; every wildflower (the violet, primrose, aster, and baby's breath)... every mighty Redwood and lowly fern... all plant life created and sustained by Jesus Christ
- So also every species of fish, from the tropical fish that school in the warm waters of the Caribbean to the mighty sperm whales that grow to 67 feet and swim in pods off the Continental Shelf... all of them created and sustained by Jesus Christ
- So also every mammal—small and great, every insect—solitary or swarming, every reptile
- ***John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.***

The vast network of living things, the array of them, the food chain, the interlocking ecosystems with all their marvelous variety and complexity, were created by and for Jesus Christ

D. Christ and Human Life

1. Jesus is especially focused on human life, the pinnacle of the physical realm, the SACREDNESS of human life
2. In Christ we were conceived and by Christ we were created, every last one of us
3. Psalm 139 speaks of God's activity in knitting every baby together in its mother's womb

Psalm 139:13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

- a. Putting all this together, we realize that God the Father does this for every single human being BY THE POWER of God the Son
- b. It is in Christ and through Christ that all of us have our being
- c. Jesus is therefore directly active in the processes of knitting together a human being in his/her mother's womb

4. The central issue in abortion: the humanity of the pre-born child
 - a. But the clear evidence of the humanity of pre-born children is conclusive

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE of the HUMANITY of the PREBORN:

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

[Biblically, this is the same as saying "I was HUMAN from birth, HUMAN from the time my mother conceived me!"]

Also, the amazing assertions of the pregnant Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist, speaking to Mary, pregnant with the newly conceived Jesus:

Luke 1:43-44 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

The humanity of the preborn John is established in his LEAPING FOR JOY

The identity of Jesus as LORD and Mary as his MOTHER is clear proof of the humanity of Jesus from the moment of conception

BIOLOGICAL 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

5. The baby looks like a human, has the genetic make-up of a human, has all the organs of a human in the proper place, all the bodily functions present from TWELVE WEEKS on!!

My point from John 1:4... all this development of the baby takes place in its mother's womb by the direct power and working of Jesus Christ

II. The Gift of Eternal Life in Christ Jesus

A. The Whole Point of the Gospel of John

John 20:30-31 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1. Christ entered the world as a human being to SAVE US from sin
2. Sin comes and kills us... it slays our souls and our bodies...

Genesis 2:17 you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins

3. Christ came to give us life

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

4. He does this by dying in our place as a substitute for our sins

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 10:14-15 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-- and I lay down my life for the sheep.

5. He also came to rise from the dead and give us eternal life:

John 10:17-18 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life-- only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

John 14:19 Because I live, you also will live.

John 20:19-21 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!

By faith in Christ, we can live forever! By faith in Christ, we can know full forgiveness of sins

The SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE is best celebrated by repentance and faith in Christ so that we can receive the gift of eternal life in Christ

III. The Nature of Eternal Life in Christ Jesus

As we face the darkness and sin and death of the abortion issue, the only possible hope we can bring to it is the life Christ alone can give.

The Gospel of John Also Describes Powerfully WHAT Eternal Life in Christ is Like

A series of powerful images, metaphors, descriptions

Let's look at five of them:

- Born again by the Spirit (John 3)
- Spring of living water from within (John 4, 7)
- Bread of life (John 6)
- Light of the world (John 8-9)
- Good shepherd (John 10)

A. Born Again by the Spirit (John 3)

John 3:3-6 Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." ⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" ⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

1. Physical life begins at conception... "Flesh gives birth to flesh"
2. Spiritual life begins when the Spirit works repentance and faith in the heart
3. It brings about a change so radical that it's like living an entirely new life
4. Many people corrupted by the abortion issue have found forgiveness and new life in Christ

- a. Abortionist doctors, like Dr. Paul Jarrett, who performed abortions but who later came to faith in Christ and now is very active in the prolife movement
- b. The transformation in his life is completely radical, like being born again

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

B. Spring of Living Water (John 4)

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

1. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well these amazing words
2. She was sinful and searching for meaning
3. To have opened up within your heart a constant supply of life-giving water... it refreshes, satisfies continually... it gives you joy and delight
4. It comes from WITHIN you, deep inside your soul
5. It is the working of the Holy Spirit, giving a sense of the future joys of heaven itself

John 7:37-39 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

6. The Spirit is given within us, breathing spiritual life at every moment
7. This is the nature of the new life that Jesus alone can give

8. People get into sin problems because of the emptiness in their hearts... they are searching for joy, for satisfaction, for something to slake the thirst of their souls... Jesus Christ alone can do that
9. The Samaritan woman had had five husbands and was with another man who was not her husband
10. About half of the women who seek abortions have had previous abortions... it comes as the result of a cycle of sin that only Christ can break; so it is with all sinners... men and women alike; we seek satisfaction from sex and pleasure and relationships and material prosperity when only Christ can satisfy

C. Bread of Life (John 6)

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

1. Similar to what he said to the Samaritan woman; this time the words were spoken to people he'd fed with loaves and fishes who wanted him to keep feeding them physically
2. Jesus wanted to feed them with far more nourishing bread than that... a bread that will satisfy and keep us alive forever
3. The atoning work of his flesh and blood on the cross frees us from eternal condemnation and gives us joy in his presence forever
4. As a result, we will feast with him in heaven forever!
5. In the meantime, Jesus feeds our souls with nourishment day after day
6. FOOD: provides nutrients that keep us alive and give us energy; it also provides pleasure through its flavor; it provides fellowship, because we sit at table with friends... Jesus does ALL THIS for us through his saving work on the cross!

D. Light of the World (John 8-9)

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

John 9:1 *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.*

John 9:5-7 *While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

1. The man born blind is a physical picture of a powerful spiritual reality
2. Born in sin, we cannot see spiritual truth... the truths of the universe as it really is
 - a. Of God, high and holy, seated on his throne... loving, pure as light, omnipotent, lawgiver, life-sustainer
 - b. Of the Universe... created and sustained by God... and of everything in the universe created for His glory
3. We grope in the dark, blinded by sin and by Satan's lies
4. Jesus instantly gives sight to the spiritually blind, enabling us to see both the physical and spiritual realms as they really are
5. So it is with the sanctity of human life... we could not see other people as created in the image of God... we could not see the preborn as truly human, a life worthy of protection and cherishing... we saw babies as an inconvenience and as a curse, not a blessing
6. Jesus gives us SIGHT by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God; and by changing our own hearts to love and delight in the truth... seeing brings INSIGHT
7. Many women who are in a crisis pregnancy and are torn about getting an abortion change their minds immediately when they see

the amazing 4G images of an ULTRASOUND... they see their baby's face, maybe he or she is sucking their thumb, or making a face or stretching... it was shrouded in DARKNESS and MYSTERY and it was easy to act like "I didn't know it was a person!" But the sight makes everything clear, and they know what they have to do

8. So it is with the gospel... the Word of God and the working of the Spirit give SPIRITUAL LIGHT and you KNOW that Jesus is God and died for you and everything becomes CLEAR

E. Good Shepherd (John 10)

John 10:10-11 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

1. The "Good Shepherd" image is one of the most powerful in the Gospel of John
2. As we've already noted, the single greatest way Jesus acts as our Good Shepherd is by laying down his life for the sheep... by dying on the cross for us
3. But he also comes to give us LIFE ABUNDANTLY... a rich, full, satisfying life that will last forever and ever
4. Satan is the THIEF and the MURDERER... all abortions are done by his dark work in the human heart... he hates the human race specifically because it is created in the image of God, because it is sacred, sanctified by the creation intention of God
5. Satan has lied to us from the Garden of Eden, and has worked murder in us from that time as well

John 8:44 He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

6. Jesus dies to give us an abundant life... so full and rich... captured in Psalm 23 so beautifully

Psalm 23:1-3 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

7. I LOVE how that Psalm ends:

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

8. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is more committed to our happiness and blessedness than we are! He PURSUES us to bless us every day of our lives!

IV. Living Under Grace

A. A Tender Word Spoken to Broken-Hearted Sinners

1. Whenever I preach on the sin of abortion, I am mindful that there may well be some here who have sinned in this very area
2. Perhaps you are a **young man** who sinfully had relations with a girl and urged her to get an abortion
3. Perhaps you are a **father** whose daughter became pregnant and you felt more about your own shame and embarrassment and pride and convenience, and sinfully urged her to get an abortion
4. Perhaps you are a **woman who chose to get an abortion**, and now have to live with the memories of that act the rest of your life
5. Perhaps you are a **public official**—a legislator or judge—who used your position to establish even more deeply the sin of abortion
6. Perhaps you are a **medical professional** who aided in the taking of innocent human life in abortion
7. For ALL OF US... we know there is MORE we should be doing on this issue and we've done very little or nothing
8. You feel overwhelmed with GUILT and don't know where to turn

9. WHATEVER the case may be, there is abundant grace at the cross of Jesus Christ! There is a river of grace and mercy flowing from the cross, and a promise of complete forgiveness for any sinner who is willing to confess his/her sins and ask for forgiveness
10. Come to Him NOW and seek it... and you will find it!
11. Beautiful picture of the flowing of the river of life
12. This is for CLEANSING and HEALING:

Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

B. Be Aware of the Battle

1. When the Planned Parenthood videos came out, the most amazing part to me was how skillfully the **public relations people** and **politicians SPUN** the facts to make it look different than it was
2. Satan is a master at lies and deception... there is nothing he can do to change the reality of the fact of the humanity of the preborn and the sanctity of that human baby... but he is extremely skillful at lies
3. We need to be aware of this battle of lies
4. We need to be willing to speak up, to tell the truth about prolife themes
5. We need to put on our spiritual armor and be willing to fight the ideas and concepts that are involved in this issue
6. Pray for an end to Planned Parenthood and their lies
7. Pray for an end to abortion itself

C. Be Sexually Pure

1. The real struggle happens before this... with the sexual immorality that is often at the root of an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy
2. God has called us as Christians to be sexually pure... to be chaste

Romans 13:13-14 Let us walk with decency, as in the daylight: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires.

3. This is the true frontline of this war

D. Be Active as the Lord Leads in the Pro-life Cause

1. Get active in Pregnancy Support Services here in Durham/Chapel Hill...
2. Take part in the **4000 Steps** fundraising Walkathon for FirstChoice Pregnancy Solutions in Wake Forest on Saturday, April 9th; see Anna Johnsen for details... also read your bulletin
3. Upcoming BFL Class called “Theology of orphan care” taught by Joshua Snyder
4. Others will be led to more direct action
 - a. Getting involved in the pro-life cause politically... helping to get a pro-life candidate elected... or helping to get pro-life legislation passed
 - b. Writing letters, blogs, tweets, Facebook posts
 - c. Being willing to have difficult conversations with family members or coworkers or fellow students who believe differently than you
 - i) I was talking this week to a young lady who has a family member directly involved in the abortion industry... she was asking for ways to talk about this with her family member...
 - ii) Begin with prayer for that person...

- iii) Ask God to give you some unhurried time to share scripture
- iv) The most important thing is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ... the gospel changes everything
- v) But along with that, share the scriptural evidence of the personhood of the preborn... even though they say they don't believe the bible, the scripture has converting POWER... share also the biological evidence for the humanity of the preborn... the 4G ULTRASOUNDS show amazing pictures of these babies before they're born
- vi) And talk about the schizophrenia of the legal system in which, if a woman WANTS her baby and someone hurts her and she loses her baby, that person is charged with a crime (like manslaughter), but if she doesn't want her baby, she can do the harm to the child herself... how can the baby's personhood be ASCRIBED by another person??

E. Other related ministries

There are many, many ways you can be involved in pro-life ministry, and that includes loving and caring for people who are hurting or vulnerable in our own community. As I'm sure you've seen on the news in recent months, the ongoing wars in Syria and the Middle East has caused mass migrations of refugees into Europe and the United States, many simply fleeing from and seeking refuge from the violence that has resulted in so many deaths in that region of the world. If you have a heart for reaching out to immigrants and refugees in the RDU area, two people to talk to in this church body are Nathan Mah and Erin Chessen

F. Be Filled with Hope

1. Someday, LIGHT will drive out DARKNESS
2. Someday, LIFE will defeat DEATH
3. Someday, abortion will end forever and all of Christ's people will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father!