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Sermon Notes

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God Cherishes Human Life

Sanctity of Human Life... a day both to celebrate and to grieve; a day to feel joy and a day to resolve to fight entrenched evils

Sanctity of Human Life is responsible for some of the most heroic moments in human experience

- This past year, I saw a YouTube video of closed-circuit camera clips of people rescuing other people from death... it literally moved me to tears... it was under the label of “People are Awesome”
 - Several videos of people diving in front of onrushing subways or elevated trains to rescue some person who has fallen on the tracks
 - A video of a teenaged girl who was on the fourth floor of a parking garage ready to commit suicide by throwing herself down, and a man swung down from the roof and kicked her back in to safety
 - A video of a car mostly submerged by a swirling river in a flood, people standing on the bank and pointing, and a man diving in, swimming to the car and pulling someone out
 - A video of a Coast Guard search and rescue team member dangling from a cable hanging from a helicopter to rescue someone off a sinking barge just before it slipped under the surface
 - Video after video of heroic efforts to rescue total strangers, just because they’re human beings
- I read about search and rescue team in the Grand Tetons during a terrible electrical storm that killed one young rock climber and left 11 others stranded on a narrow ledge 60 feet; and Park Rangers climbed down in the wind and rain to secure a cable, and two others hung from a helicopter and got an unconscious climber quickly to

Emergency Care and saved his life... the other ten were lifted hand over hand the 60 feet up to safety

- We all have seen amazing rescue efforts made by teams in disaster areas all over the world... laboring well into the dark of night and through the night to pull survivors from the wreckage of an earthquake or hurricane...
- We have woven into the very fabric of our beings the sacredness of human life, and we see it lived out day after day before us
- The sanctity of human life has driven some of the strongest feelings in the human heart: elation when a baby is rescued from being wedged in a drainpipe, overwhelming grief when a toddler is killed by a stray bullet in a drive-by shooting

Every year at this time, we celebrate the Sanctity of Human Life, though we actually see it lived out day after day

I. God Cherishes All Human Life

A. "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday"... 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. 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

B. Bible Support for Sacredness of Humanity Seen in Many Places

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!"*

Human life is worth so much... actually, our souls are worth more than all the treasure in the world:

Matthew 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Bottom Line: GOD CHERISHES HUMAN BEINGS!!!!

He desires an intimate relationship with each one of us, specifically because we are created in the image of God

Few passages capture that desire as powerfully as Psalm 139

Let's walk through it briefly:

Psalm 139:1-24 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. ⁵ You hem me in-- behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

*⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

¹³ 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. ¹⁵ My frame was

not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

¹⁹ If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! ²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you? ²² I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

This amazing Psalm has such a powerful “You and me, Lord” dynamic to it... and it shows the incredible desire God has to be in an intimate personal relationship with each of us!!

This is the clear message of the Sanctity of Human life... God cherishes all human life!!! Because we are created in His image and because he knit us personally in our mothers’ wombs and because He watches over us moment by moment, we are sacred to Him!

Yet, the Sanctity of Human Life is under constant attack in our sin-cursed world today:

Satan HATES the image of God in us:

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning

So we see some powerfully vital topics in current events that are addressed by a proper meditation on the Sanctity of Human Life...

Abortion... Euthanasia... Racism... Terrorism... Slavery

This morning, I want to show how the Bible's commitment to the Sanctity of Human Life causes us to take a vigorous and powerful stand on each of these issues

II. Because God Cherishes Human Life, We...

A. Love the Preborn, and Stand Against Abortion

1. Today's context: Roe v. Wade, tragic statistics since 1973
 - a. 56 million total infant lives taken
 - b. Nine times the Holocaust of WWII
2. Vital to remind ourselves every year of this ongoing scourge
 - a. Easy to become numb to this topic
 - b. Easy to give up the fight against this, the greatest single injustice in our nation's history
 - c. We should be encouraged at the amazing progress the ProLife movement has made in the last ten years... more and more hearts are being changed; more and more legislation being enacted to shut down abortion clinics; fewer and fewer doctors/nurses willing to perform abortions
3. Key issue: the humanity of the preborn
 - a. We believe that the preborn baby is human from conception
 - b. This is the central issue in abortion... the humanity of the preborn
 - c. We do not have the right to take the life of another person...
 - d. This addresses this issue of how babies are conceived
 - i) Worth as a human being is completely tied to being HUMAN... not who your father was or your mother...

- ii) It doesn't matter how you were conceived... a person conceived by fornication has no less worth than one conceived in a godly marriage
- iii) A person conceived by rape or incest has no less worth than one conceived in a godly marriage
- iv) This is why we stand against ALL abortion, even in those terrible cases... on the simple, clear-headed logic of the humanity of the preborn
- v) A six-year-old who was conceived by rape or incest cannot be mistreated or killed because of that fact... his or her protection before the law and in the eyes of God is this: **THEY ARE HUMAN BEINGS NO MATTER HOW THEY WERE CONCEIVED**
- vi) That is something GOD GIVES... it is not ascribed by courts, or culture, or convention, or the will of the mother... it is **INTRINSIC!!**

4. Scriptural proof of the humanity of the Preborn

a. Psalm 139

Psalm 139:13-16 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. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

b. Job

Job 10:9-12 Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? 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 and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

c. Luke 1 (best of all)

Luke 1:39-44 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And why 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.

- d. Two great proofs in one... because two preborn babies in view
 - i) Preborn JOHN leaped FOR JOY in the presence of Mary, and of Jesus
 - ii) Preborn Jesus was ALREADY Elizabeth's Lord, and Mary was already His mother though Jesus had only been conceived a few weeks before at most!!

5. Biological proof

- a. Fetal development

Concerning the development of the child, prior to the earliest abortions, the unborn already has every body part he/she will ever have; at 18 days after conception, the heart is forming and the eyes start to develop; by 21 days, the heart is not only beating but pumping blood throughout the body; by 28 days, the unborn has budding arms and legs; by 30 days, the baby has multiplied in size 10,000 times; the baby now has a brain and blood is flowing through his veins; by 35 days, mouth, ears, and nose are already taking shape; at 40 days, the baby's brainwaves can be measured; the child's heartbeat (which started three weeks ago) can now be heard by an ultrasonic stethoscope; by 42 days, the skeleton is formed, and the brain is controlling the movement of muscles and organs; the unborn reflexively responds to stimulus and may already be capable of feeling pain... THIS IS ALL BEFORE THE EARLIEST ABORTIONS TAKE PLACE!!!!

6. Legal proof (schizophrenic laws)
 - a. 37 states have fetal homicide laws; but yet ALL 37 of those states also permit abortion

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act was signed into law under President Bush in 2004.

Embryos and fetuses are referred to as “child” and those who intentionally harm them are guilty of killing a human being. Now, if the embryo or fetus is killed during an abortion for which there has been consent by the pregnant woman, the person authorized to act on her behalf is exempt from any prohibition against the killing of the child in the womb!

As the law stands today, if a pregnant woman on her way to an abortion clinic, where the child will be legally killed, is assaulted in the street causing the death of her unborn child, those who assaulted her would be guilty of manslaughter under the Unborn Victims Act. It is noteworthy that when [Scott Peterson](#) was convicted and sentenced to death for killing his wife and killing his unborn son, the law made it abundantly clear that fathers do not have the right to kill their unborn children. However by law, every mother in America has the legal right to kill her unborn child up until the very moment of birth. This is legal insanity.

7. There is a tremendous amount of evidence biblically, medically, and legally that the preborn is a fully human person who is sacred to God and should be protected by the laws of the state!!
8. Conclusion: We Love the Preborn and Stand Against Abortion
9. A Word of Comfort to All Who Feel Guilty
 - a. All of us are sinners in need of grace
 - b. The widespread sexual freedoms have led many—both men and women—into sin in this area... men fathering children, and

then pressuring their girlfriends into abortions... women choosing abortion rather than face the challenges of pregnancy, delivery, and motherhood

c. ALL have grounds for guilt here

Romans 5:20 ... where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more

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

B. Love Hope, and Stand Against Euthanasia

1. 2014 saw one of the most famous cases of euthanasia in recent memory... the case of 29 year-old Brittany Maynard
2. She was diagnosed with inoperable and fatal brain tumor and chose to end her life rather than face death passively by the tumor
3. She moved to Oregon, which had passed a “Death with Dignity” law in 1994 for physician assisted suicide
4. On November 1, 2014, Brittany Maynard took her own life with the aid of a physician
5. Because of our commitment to the sacredness of human life, we stand against euthanasia, and stand against all “quality of life” arguments for ending life
6. We know that illness and aging can bring about extreme trials in life... extreme pain, reduction of physical abilities, reduction of mental capabilities, extra burdens in the life of a family, etc. We don't minimize this suffering
7. BUT the sanctity of human life makes LIFE ITSELF greater than any circumstance of life

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"

8. Suffering well can put the gospel on display
9. Euthanasia is a HOPELESS ACT...
 - a. It cuts off the power of God to work in a dire situation... even to heal miraculously
 - b. It cuts off the ability suffering individual have to put the gospel on display by suffering well
 - c. Cancer is an enemy... but that enemy is destroyed by Christ's death and resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

- d. Suffering well, filled with hope, gives a clear testimony to our faith in the resurrection

10. Euthanasia is an ARROGANT ACT as well

- a. We don't have the right to end life... God gave life; He alone can end it!

Job 1:21 "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

Psalm 104:29 ...when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand"

- b. Because of the sanctity of human life, we realize that all human life is GOD'S to give and GOD'S to take... not our own!

John Piper:

“Brittany Maynard sweetened her last days with trips to the Alaskan glaciers, and the Kenai Fjords, and the Grand Canyon. In one sense, this is totally understandable. We were made for beauty. But in another sense, it is puzzling. For there is one thing that standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon does not do for you: It does not enhance your sense of autonomy. It makes you feel small and vulnerable in the presence of greatness and majesty. That is a good thing. For we are small and fragile. We are not autonomous. We were never meant to be. Beauty, Yes. Joy, Yes. Greatness, Yes — *outside of us*, filling us with worship and wonder. We were made for God.”

C. Love All People, and Stand Against Racism

1. Tomorrow is Martin Luther King Jr. Day
2. We rightly celebrate the courage and vision of one of the great leaders in American history
3. The entire platform of his mission against Jim Crow laws and institutional racism was the essential equality of all races in the eyes of God
4. It was all founded on the Sanctity of Human Life... all people are created in the image of God and sacred to Him
5. Racism is an arrogant denial of that basic biblical fact...
6. We are all descended from one man... Adam

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth

7. All Christians are atoned for the same way... by the blood of Christ!

Ephesians 2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

8. All Christians are going to the same heaven, where we will worship in perfect unity

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

9. 2014 saw racism as one of the hottest issues of our time
- a. Several famous incidents in our country in which African-American people had confrontations with police officers resulted in weeks and weeks of discussion on racism
 - b. Many of our African-American brothers and sisters relate real incidents in which they were singled out unjustly for harsh treatment by the police for no apparent reason other than the color of their skin
 - c. Whether or not that happened in this or that specific case, it is obvious to any fair-minded Christian that these bitter tales actually do happen again and again...
 - d. And we Christians MUST STAND AGAINST racism

10. My vision again

John 17:23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

D. Love Peace, and Stand Against Terrorism

1. 2014 saw terrible acts of violence by terrorist groups against innocent people
2. The rise of ISIS in Syria and the Middle East, and the beheadings of children show the terribly hardened hearts these vicious people have... their clear willingness to sacrifice human lives to achieve their religious and political agenda
3. The recent attacks in Paris by two masked gunmen resulting in the deaths of 17 people also flows from the pattern of many Muslims to use terror to display their zeal for Islam
4. The Sanctity of Human Life holds that such attacks are immoral and repugnant to God
5. Christianity has never advanced this way... by terror or by killing

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

6. We cannot yield to terror, but must overcome it by living and dying for Christ
7. Many brothers and sisters will have to lay down their lives to win people who are presently Muslim to faith in Christ
8. The Sanctity of Human Life is an issue in which Christianity can clearly shine over Islam and over the terrorism that many feel they must do to display their zeal for Allah and Muhammad
9. We delight in peace, so we stand against terrorism

E. Love Freedom, and Stand Against Slavery

1. We may think that slavery is a thing of the past, but illegal human trafficking is very much alive and destroying the lives of countless thousands

Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others.

traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to control other people for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex or forcing them to provide labor services against their will. Traffickers use violence, threats, deception, debt bondage, and other manipulative tactics to trap victims in horrific situations every day in America. All trafficking victims share one essential experience – the loss of freedom

The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally, including 5.5 million children. 55% are women and girls.

The International Labor Organization estimates that forced labor and human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry worldwide.

There is no official estimate of the total number of human trafficking victims in the U.S. With 100,000 children estimated to be in the sex trade in the United States each year, it is clear that the total number of victims nationally reaches into the hundreds of thousands when estimates of both adults and minors and sex trafficking and labor trafficking are aggregated

2. Slavery is a direct attack on the Sanctity of Human Life... it debases all who are drawn into it and reduces them to property
3. Often times, it's young girls taken through deception from poverty-stricken parents... the parents are promised that their young girl will have a good job and be well cared for in the city, and they pay the parents up front... then they enslave the girl to serve in prostitution
4. One of our church members, Amanda Halbrooks, has been involved in winning girls from this life in East Asia... in a few weeks, she'll

be returning here... her mom, Mary Halbrooks, is organizing an event for FBC women discussing this ministry

5. The church of Jesus Christ has led the way worldwide in the centuries-old battle against slavery... William Wilberforce, an English evangelical, stood courageously against the slave trade and then against slavery itself in the British Empire in the 19th century...
6. At the root of this battle is the conviction that human beings are created in the image of God and must not be treated inhumanely

III. The Cross of Christ Displays the Sanctity of Human Life

A. God Cherished Human Life and That's Why He Sent Christ as Human

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?

[A single human soul is worth more than all the material possessions of the entire world]

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Hebrews 2:16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.

B. Christ Cherished Human Life, and Healed Sinners from Disease and Death

Mark 1:40-42 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

C. Christ Cherished Human Life, and Died in our Place as a Substitute

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."

D. Christ Cherished Human Life, and Rose from the Dead

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

IV. How Can We Live Out the Sanctity of Human Life

A. Meditate on God's Delight in Human Life...and how much He Desires to Have a Relationship with You (Psalm 139)

B. Embrace the Cross of Christ by Faith

C. Cherish Others... Especially Their Eternal Destinies

C.S. Lewis, "Weight of Glory": "It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load or weight or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities... that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

D. Embrace the Five Applications Here

1. Love life, and pray for an end to abortion

a. Give to PSS

- b. Be willing to challenge people's thinking about abortion with good, sound argumentation
 - c. Be sexually pure and don't get in a situation where you as a man would push someone to get an abortion, or you as a woman would get on
 - d. Be willing to minister grace to people in just those situations, so that you give them strength to choose life
2. Love hope, and pray for an end to euthanasia
- a. Reject "quality of life" ethic
 - b. Be willing to suffer in disease and death to put the gospel's hope on display
3. Love all people, and pray for an end to racism
- a. Review the Scriptural support for the unity of the human race as descendants of one man and as atoned for by Christ's blood
 - b. Fight racism in your own heart IF IT'S THERE, and wherever you see it
 - c. Listen to the stories of African-American brothers and sisters
4. Love peace, and pray for an end to terrorism
5. Love freedom, and pray for an end to sex trafficking and all other forms of slavery
- E. Be Thankful for Life, Especially Eternal Life