

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
The New Birth and The New Life
012908

I INTRODUCTION

- 1 This is Sanctity of Human life Sunday. It is a Sunday we set aside once a year to look at what the Bible says about the value of unborn life and the wrongness ending it through abortion.
- 2 It is also a Sunday that can be difficult for some because of unhealed painful memories.
- 3 Please believe me when I say to you that my intentions are not to cause anyone pain this morning. Rather my intention is to preempt the pain in others and advocate the sacredness of life. And I think by doing so promote God's healing in this place.
- 4 So I would like to begin by reminding us all of God's graciousness to forgive and heal.
 - a The apostle Paul stood over the killing of early Christians because he thought it was the right thing to do. He was wrong of course and later he with God's help realized it.
 - b The memory of his sinful actions could have imprisoned him after he believed in Jesus.
 - c Instead they were a constant reminder of God's grace.

Here's a word you can take to heart and depend on: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I'm proof—Public Sinner Number One—of someone who could never have made it apart from sheer mercy. And now he shows me off—evidence of his endless patience—to those who are right on the edge of trusting him forever. 1 Tim 1:15-16 The Message

- 5 Everybody in this room has done things they have been ashamed of. But when the sun rose this morning we awakened to yet another day full of God's mercy manifest in the cross of Christ.
- 6 And because of God's mercy when we think of our past, whether it's yesterday or 20 years ago, we can be reminded of God's grace rather than our failure.

II THE STORY OF A NEARLY ABORTED BABY

Exodus 1:1-22; Exodus 2:1-10

⁸ Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

- 1 Israel was different. They were not Egyptians. They didn't really belong.
- 2 They were ethnically and culturally and religiously alien to the Egyptians. And they were growing. That's the threat.

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites (so Pharaoh intensified the slavery)¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with hard labor in

brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.

- 1 Apparently that did not stop the Hebrews from multiplying. God was supernatural boosting their fertility rate
- 2 So Pharaoh does something reprehensible.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ¹⁶ “When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.”

- 1 Apparently the two leaders of all the Jewish midwives were Shiphrah and Puah and they were told by Pharaoh to make it a policy to kill Jewish baby boys upon delivery which in essence was a partial birth abortion.
- 2 Even if the baby boys were fully delivered and then killed it would still be an abortion.
- 3 There is no fundamental difference between a baby who resides in his mother's uterus and one who has made an eight-inch journey down the birth canal.
- 4 There is nothing magical about delivery from the mother's body that creates a human soul
- 5 It is irrational to think that human life begins once the umbilical cord is severed.
 - a A baby is no less a person when attached to the umbilical cord than after it has been cut
 - b The provision of oxygen and nutritional assistance through the umbilical cord does not mean an unborn baby is no less a human being
 - c If that were the case we would have to say every one hooked up to a respirator or feeding tube is no longer human and worthy of protection
 - d And if a baby in the womb at nine months is fully human and worthy of protection what about 8 months? What about 8 weeks. Did you know by the eighth week all body systems (heart, stomach, liver, kidneys) are present and functioning and unique finger prints are forming. From this point until adulthood the only changes in the body are dimensional
- 6 The Hebrew midwives did not know all that but they knew that babies came from God and are made in his image and so they refused to obey Pharaoh's order

¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

- 1 They disobeyed the man's law in order to obey God's law. This could be called righteous civil disobedience
- 2 And, as you might expect, Pharaoh calls them on the carpet about it

¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?” ¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”

- 1 This is an interesting excuse for their actions and we can only speculate what was happening.
- 2 The Hebrew midwives could have purposely responded slowly or it might have been true that the Hebrew women delivered quickly. But surely the midwives knew that or they could have anticipated it and still carried out Pharaoh's orders. But they didn't.

- 3 That kind of disobedience normally would end in death but Pharaoh does not kill the midwives which supports the argument that Pharaoh ordered what amounted to partial birth abortions in order to disguise his intentions.
- 4 He could have simply ordered the killing of all the male babies as King Herod did in Jesus' day.
- 5 Instead he tried to make the deaths look like still births. And if he would have punished the midwives he would have been admitting what was really in his heart all the time ...infanticide.

²⁰ So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

- 1 God blessed them for doing right and disobeying Pharaoh to obey His moral law
- 2 Whether they should have lied in the process is debatable. The least we can say is that it did not stop God from being pleased with their courageous pro-life refusal to kill the babies
- 3 They did not stick their heads in the sand so to speak ... as many do today.
- 4 Many people, including believers in Jesus Christ do just that. In their hearts they know that abortion is inherently, morally and biblically wrong but their actions, or lack thereof, betrays their heart.
 - a They know Psalm 139 says that the growing life in the womb is the unique creative work of God knitting together a being in his own image.
 - b They know the prohibition against the shedding of innocent blood in Psalm 106:38.
 - c They know Ps 82 which says: ² *How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Selah* ³ *Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.* ⁴ *Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*
 - d They know that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15) and that something non-human cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit and that it would be sacrilegious to suggest that the Holy Spirit fill mere "fetal tissue"
- 5 But the mind sometimes perceives reality selectively in order to justify what the heart desires.
- 6 For example if showing pictures of mutilated babies threatens one's desire for abortion on demand, then the pictures are emotionally manipulative or in bad taste or irrelevant. But if showing dead sea otters or oil slicked cranes or mutilated manatees helps the cause, then this is simply telling it like it is and forcing people to come to terms with reality
- 7 So good folks says to themselves this debate is too messy or political for me. And that is the first false excuse. It is a moral issue and therefore calls us speak up and speak out with loving conviction.
 - a Now I'm not talking about standing up in the lunch room at work and lecturing every one there about the moral wrongness of abortion.
 - b I'm talking about that scenario when a family member is considering it and in the name of family peace we don't say anything. Is that wrong? Let me answer that with scripture.
Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Rom 12:9.

- d I'm not talking about running for political office or starting an advocacy group. I'm talking about helping our local Pro Life organizations with time, money and prayer. There is an opportunity to help one of those groups, Care Net, next month in their annual walk for life on Feb 9th. Information is available at the INFO booth.

III ABORTION AND RACISM

- 1 Abortion is not just one of our social ills it is the mother of all social ills. Therefore if the subject matter is improving the quality of life in our country, at the top of the list should be an all out effort to end abortion in our country.
- 2 I am not minimizing any other social injustice. I am just saying that the greatest injustice of our time should not be dealt with so passively. And by passively I mean saying something like this ...nobody really knows when life begins.
 - a That is an old argument that is invalid in the age of modern medicine and four dimensional ultrasounds.
 - b No one who knows anything about prenatal development seriously doubts that individual biological life is present from conception or at least within the first two weeks after conception.
- 3 The issue really is this.... when does that little human being in the womb acquire moral rights. At what point does that baby in the womb become protected by law? When does that infant acquire civil rights?
- 4 Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday and tomorrow is Martin Luther King Day. As I read this story from Exodus it dawned on me that the struggle against abortion and the struggle against racism are very much the same. And the reason is, is that abortion and racism are both a disregard for God-granted human life and God-granted human dignity.
- 5 And both abortion and racism are found in our story this morning.
 - a Pharaoh's initial justification for enslavement of the Jews was national security. Verse 10 says, *Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.*
 - b But behind the excuse of national security was racism which is revealed in verse 13 where it says the Egyptians came to "dread" the Israelites.
 - c After the Jews were enslaved and no longer a "supposed" national security threat the Egyptians still dreaded them. The Message translation says it this way, *But the harder the Egyptians worked them the more children the Israelites had—children everywhere! The Egyptians got so they couldn't stand the Israelites.*
 - d Both racism and abortion flowed out of the same sinful and demonic spirit that is so pervasive in the world today
- 6 And the answer for both can only be found in God. I was reading an old sermon about it the other day about it and this is what the preacher said

If there is anything about this Christian faith that means anything to us, it says that lives can be changed. There is a Nicodemus standing before Jesus asking about it. Jesus cries out, "You must be born again" *and therefore* implies that you can be born again. We must live by that and we must believe it. Like the parable of the prodigal son *who* strayed away to some far country of sin and evil, I must still believe that there is something within them that can cause them one day to come to themselves and rise up

and walk back up the dusty road to the Father's house. I want to tell you this evening that I believe that Senator Engelhardt's heart can be changed! I believe that Senator Eastland's heart can be changed! I believe that the Ku Klux Klan can be changed into a clan for God's kingdom. That is the essence of the gospel. Everyone must be born again. Martin Luther King

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3

- 1 We are born physically alive but spiritually dead. We need to be born twice or born again.
- 2 We call this the new birth and with a new birth comes a new identity

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

- 1 Our old spiritual identity has gone. We are now children of God and as such are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 And the fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence is ***love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*** Gal 5:22-23a

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Rom 6:4

- 1 Even though we have been made new doesn't mean we will live a new life
- 2 We have to walk it out in the power of the Holy Spirit
- 3 And the greatest threat today to the pro-life movement, the greatest threat to racial equality does not come from the world but from people who have a new identity in Christ but they are not living out the values of this born again life
- 4 So when I say the new birth is the answer I'm talking about the whole package.... The new birth with the new way of living. That is the answer to racism around the world. And that is the answer to abortion around the world.
- 5 That is the answer to the millions of Chinese baby girls being aborted because they are viewed as a liability instead of an asset like sons.
- 6 That is the answer to the racial unrest in Israel, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Rwanda, Sudan and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- 7 Only God can put love into a human heart that values the dignity of every person, especially those who have no voice, the unborn.

IV THE REST OF THE STORY

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live." Ex 1:22

- 1 In the very darkest season of the worst child-killing, Moses was born.
- 2 His parents defied Pharaoh's decree and hid him. But they were not the only ones as we will see

Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, ² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. ⁵ Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. ⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. ⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" ⁸ "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." Ex 2:1-10

- 1 And he would lead God's people up out of Egypt to the promise land. Moses, the deliverer, the rescuer, and the savior of the Israelites.
- 2 Centuries later another prophet like Moses would escape the same kind of infanticide. An angel gave instruction to his parents to call him Jesus and he said that his mission was to deliver people from Red Sea of their sins thereby making it possible to live in the promise land of heaven forever.
- 3 The final ultimate Rescuer, Savior, Deliverer lived a perfect life and died for sinners and rose again.
- 4 But he is infinitely greater than previous deliverer's like Moses.
 - a Moses delivered the people who were being oppressed. Jesus delivers the oppressed and the oppressor.
 - b Moses delivered the hated race. Jesus delivers the hated and the hater.
 - c Moses couldn't deliver babies discarded into the Nile, but Jesus delivers the babies, the mothers, the abortion providers, the irresponsible boyfriends and the godless politicians and judges.
 - d He loves and saves every sinner who trusts in him.

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