

SOHL Sunday
What Makes a Person?
012410

Introduction

- 1 We all like to take pictures of our kids especially baby pictures



- 2 It can be a frustrating experience, getting them dressed and having them cooperate once you're at the photo studio but the pictures are worth it.



- 3 And a few years down the road the pictures become priceless.....



- 4 It use to be that you had to wait for your baby to be born in order to take his or her first picture but not anymore.
- 5 There are actually photography companies that special in baby portraits using 3/4D ultrasound technology. You can set up an appointment and keepsake packages starts at about \$130.



- 6 And if your little one is not cooperating that day you can come back for another session. You can even come back after birth for another setting. I guess they call that the “before and after package.”



Just Seven Men

- 1 There are some people that would say this little fellow, as pictured on the left does not have the same right to life as when he is pictured on the right. They say he is not yet a person and therefore he is not entitled to the protection that is afforded him just a few days later as pictured on the right

- 2 That's what seven men decided on January 22, 1973 in a case now widely known simply as Roe v Wade.
 - a Acting as gods and in rebellion against God, together they decreed that the taking of unborn human life is constitutionally protected up until the moment of birth.
 - b Why would they do that? What would possess rationally sound men to make such a determination?
- 3 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.
- 4 It is also a Sunday that can be painful for some.
 - a My intention this morning is not to cause anyone pain.
 - b But I do know that God's truth, even when spoken in love, has a way of exposing the pain in our lives caused by sin. But it also has incredible power to heal us from that very same pain
 - c In fact God can take the guilt and painful memories of the past and turn them into reasons to praise him for his forgiving grace.
 - 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.
 - The memories of his sinful actions could have imprisoned him after he believed in Jesus. Instead they were a constant reminder of God's amazing grace. 1 Tim 1:15-16
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 5 And so this morning we are going to begin our journey with a testimony of God's healing grace by Valinda Lazarus

So what makes a Person?

- 1 Some people say its location? They say when a child is still in the womb it is not a person and then when it is delivered it becomes a person.
 - a But is there really a difference between a baby who resides in his mother's uterus and one who has made an seven-inch journey down the birth canal?
 - b At what point in the birth canal does God's mantle of humanness fall upon an individual?

- c Is there anything particularly mystical about delivery from the mother's body that could be responsible for producing an eternal soul?
 - d Surely the Lord does not look upon the baby inside the uterus with any less love and concern than one who enters the world a few minutes later.
 - e The only difference is that they are in different locations but location does not determine personhood.
 - f What does determine personhood?
- 2 Some people say size.
 - a They look at an ultrasound of a 8 week old fetus and see that it is only about 2 inches long.
 - b And they say to themselves... that could not be a person even though all the organs are present, the brain is functioning, the heart pumping, the liver making blood cells, the kidney cleaning the fluids and the finger has a print.
 - c To that rationale I would ask, "How many inches tall do you have to be then to be considered a person? 15, 20 or 30 inches?"
 - c Because my teenage son is 6'2" does that make him more human?
 - 3 Others say that personhood begins with the ability to think or reason. If that were the criteria for personhood then a one-week-old infant, nursing at his mother's breast would not be a person because he or she does not yet have these powers either.
 - 4 Still other people say a fetus becomes a person when they are no longer dependent on their mother for food and oxygen through the umbilical cord. But if that criteria were upheld we would have to consider everyone who uses a respirator or dialysis to be a "non-person" because their lives are dependent upon being attached to something that provides them with life.
 - 5 We know all these arguments fall short. That's why one state after another are passing fetal homicide laws. 37 states which criminalize injury or death to an embryo or fetus as a result of violence.
 - 6 What is mind boggling about these laws is that they all contain clauses that specifically exclude consideration of abortion.
 - a So we have some laws that condemn the killing of a fetus as murder, and we have some laws that condone the killing of a fetus as abortion.
 - b In first case the law treats the fetus as a human with rights; in the second case the law treats the fetus as non-human with no rights.
 - c What is the difference? The difference is not whether a child is a person or not. The only difference is that in one case the baby is wanted and in the other the baby is not wanted. In other words wanting creates worth!
 - d You see what Roe v Wade did was that it made personhood dependent upon the mother's decision instead of God's decision. The mother/father take the place of God for selfish reasons:

- “having a baby would dramatically change my life” (inconvenience)73%
 - “I can’t afford a baby (finances) 74%
- gutmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf

- 7 At its very root abortion has the rejection of God’s sovereignty. It’s a story as old as Adam and Eve, and Satan is still whispering the words... *you shall be like God...* you shall have the right to confer personhood.
- a They can call it whatever they want, the right to choose, the right to control your own body, reproductive rights, the right of privacy... they all mean one thing... the right to play God.
 - b And this is the essence of the fall of man into sin.... preferring to be god rather than worshipping and enjoying God.
 - c And the result is that 50 million babies have been aborted since 1973. 4/10. One baby aborted every 26 seconds, 150 every hour, 3,600 every day
 - d And the most stunning piece of information is the fact that one in six abortions are done on women identifying themselves as "born again" Christians and 31% are done on women who say they are Catholic.
 - e That means that the abortion industry could not survive financially without customers who believe in Jesus Christ
 - f That means that pastors are not doing their job. They have submitted themselves to itching ears or sold their soul to political correctness. But they are not teaching the sanctity of God-given life and the sheep remain ignorant.

So what makes a person? ...The image of God

- 1 In the beginning, Genesis 1:27 says, *God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*”
- 2 Then Genesis 5:5 says,
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.
 - a The fact that Seth was made in the likeness of Adam who was made in the likeness of God meant that the likeness of God is passed on from generation to generation.
 - b In other words it was not just the first pair who were in the image of God.
- 3 Then in Genesis 9:6, Noah is warned by God,
Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
 - a Even after all the wickedness, which was punished by the flood, the image of God is retained in man ... damaged, distorted, but retained.

b So even though men are sinful, there is still enough likeness to God remaining in them that to murder another person is to attack the part of creation that most resembles God, and betrays a desire to attack God himself.

4 Then James 3:9 says,

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

5 From the first man and woman to each succeeding man and woman down to our own day, human life begins with the image of God. And therefore human life... all human life is sacred.

6 And that sacred human life begins in the womb and that's why every time the Bible refers to a child in the womb it refers to them as a person. There are 51 direct references to this in the Bible and 100's of indirect references to this truth. Let me give you a few examples:

a *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... Psalm 139:13*

b *This is what the Lord says – your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord who has made all thingsIsaiah 44:24*

c *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations Jeremiah 1:5*

d *But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace ... Galatians 1:15 RSV*

The Leaping Baptist

1 The situation is that Elizabeth and Mary are both given a child in the womb. Both pregnancies are miraculous.

a Elizabeth because she is too old, and she had always been barren. She becomes pregnant with John the Baptist.

b And Mary, because she is a virgin. But the Holy Spirit comes upon her, and she becomes pregnant with Jesus, the Son of God

2 The story begins with Elizabeth getting pregnant

²⁴*After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.* ²⁵*“The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”*

3 Then the story shifts to Mary

²⁶*In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,* ²⁷*to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.* ²⁸*The angel went to her and said,*

“Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.” ³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” ³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God.” Luke 1:26-37

- 4 Initially Mary had a hard time believing the angel and said how shall this be? To which the angel gave two words of encouragement
 - a With God nothing is impossible
 - b Elizabeth is also having a child
- 5 When the angel had gone, and Mary knew what was happening to her, she made a beeline to Elizabeth.

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the **baby** leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ 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. Luke 1:39-44

 - a That’s the only time you’ll see a Baptist leaping for joy!!
 - b There are three implications here when it comes to personhood

The Baby was a Baby vv41,44

- 1 That word *baby* is not a specialized word for the unborn. It has no connotations of “embryo” or “fetus.” It is the ordinary word for *baby* (Greek *brephos*).
- 2 We know this because it is also used in 2:16 of Jesus in the manger
*So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the **baby**, who was lying in the manger. Luke 2:16*
- 3 In other words what Jesus and John were outside the womb they were already inside the womb.
 - a Jesus was the God-man in Mary’s womb.

- b When the Holy Spirit caused Mary to be pregnant, she was not pregnant with anything less than the Son of God. The baby inside was the same as the baby outside.

The Baby experienced joy

- 1 When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, *the baby leaped in her womb.*"
- 2 Then in verse 44, Elizabeth interprets that leap like this: *As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the **baby** in my womb leaped for joy.*
- 3 And this wasn't Elizabeth speaking... it was Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit prophesying. In other words, the Holy Spirit prompted her to say that this leap of the baby in her womb was a leap of joy and fetal tissue does not have emotion but people do.

The Baby was filled with the Holy Spirit

¹⁴ *He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,*
¹⁵ *for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Luke 1:14-15*

- 1 Only persons are filled with the Holy Spirit. You can't fill fetal tissue with the Holy Spirit. You can't fill non-persons or pre-persons with the Holy Spirit.
- 2 You have to have a spirit and soul to be filled with the Holy Spirit and a spirit and soul means you have personhood.

What do we do?

⁸ *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Live as children of light*** ⁹ *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)*
¹⁰ *and find out what pleases the Lord.* ¹¹ *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, **but rather expose them.*** ¹² *For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.* ¹³ *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,* ¹⁴ *for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "**Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.**" Ephesians 5:8-14*

- 1 Live as children of light (or as Jesus said in Matthew 5 let your light shine through radical love and good deeds)
 - a **Be a supporter of or volunteer for Crisis Pregnancy Centers**
 - **CareNet (PSL) (Walk for Life, Abstinence program)**
 - **Crisis Pregnancy Center of Ft. Pierce**
 - b Consider adoption or helping someone adopt, foster care or orphan support
 - c Sign the Personhood Amendment

2 Expose darkness

- a It is not enough to come to the place where you say “I think abortion is morally wrong” That’s like saying all we need to do is glow.
- b Light has a function... not just to glow but to expose darkness or expose the half truths and lies about abortion in our culture.
 - And to do that we need to be educated. There is a list of websites available in the atrium along with all the other information where you can begin a journey to discover the plight of the unborn.
 - Why don’t we at least feel as strongly about babies in the womb as earthquake victims in Haiti.
- c Abortion is one of the darkest works of the human race... it is genocide. And the only way it can survive is for darkness to survive. And the only way for darkness to survive is for the light to just glow but not shine. do nothing and say nothing.

3 Wake up from our sleep

- a I think we all realize the wrongness of abortion. The question is though... how wrong is it. How alert are we to its wrongness. Are we fully awake?
- b Is the Biblical truth of personhood, enough to change us at our core?
- c Is it enough to overcome generations of political persuasion and stop voting for candidates who support the killing of unborn children? “Yes but he/she (the candidate) does so much good,” you say. To that I replay, “How much good does it take to make up for 50 million murders?”
- d When you and I stand before God one day he is not going to ask me what I did about the economy, He is going to ask me what did I do about the least of these.

Rescue the weak and needy Ps 82:4a

Open your mouth for the dumb, For the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth ... and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy Prov 31:8-9

God speaking through the prophet Jeremiah to Johoiakim about his righteous father Josiah..... *He pled the case of the afflicted and needy; Then it was well. Is not that what it means to know me? Declares the Lord Jer 22:16*

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Websites:

personhood.net

personhoodfl.com

wallbuilders.org

carenettc.com

str.org (Stand to Reason)

nrlc.org National Right to Life)

family.org/pregnancy (Focus on the Family)

christianliferesources.com

aul.org (Americans United for Life)

Adoption and Orphan Care

icareaboutorphans.org

bethany.org

rlcr.org (Real Life Children's Ranch)