

“The One Who Gives Life” – Sermon January 21, 2024

Matthew 18:1-5

Today marks the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. We join with thousands of churches across America in upholding the value of all human life from the moment of conception to the moment of death. In 1973, the Supreme Court handed down its infamous Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion on demand in America. Since that day, more than 63 million unborn babies have died, not based on biblical morality but because of a human court decision that would fundamentally change American society. The question for many of us is how we should think appropriately about abortion and value life over the killing of the unborn. If we take a practical look at thinking about the children who have vanished since 1973, the rate would be at a rate of 700,000 children per year, wiping out the equal to fifteen states.

Because this is a sensitive issue, many people prefer not to think about it simply because of the overwhelming spectrum of opinions and experiences. Some would find themselves angry, brokenhearted, guilty, frustrated, unsure where they stand, or want to change the subject, and it is almost impossible to find anyone neutral. The simple question is: What does it mean to be pro-life? First, allow me to give you the stance of our denomination. ECO strongly opposes abortion in all cases, except when the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother, where the exception is only meant for the most extreme circumstances and other exemptions have been eliminated.

This morning’s opening scripture from Psalm 139 is the strongest statement in the Bible on God’s prenatal care. How much does God know about the unborn baby growing in the womb? Everything! Like a skillful weaver, God takes the tiny hands and legs and joins them to the body. He forms the heart and then sets it beating. He watches over the thumb and makes sure it finds the mouth. So, who makes babies? God does. From Jeremiah 1:5, “I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. Let’s take a moment and pray.

Eternal God, you have revealed Yourself as the Father of all life. We praise you for the fatherly care which you extend to all creation, and especially to us, made in your image and likeness. Father, extend your hand of protection to those threatened by abortion and save them from its destructive power. In this, we pray, Amen.

When we see the unborn, we ought to worship God because they are his creation. We ought to proceed with holy caution and respect for life. God is at work in the womb, and his fingerprints are everywhere. The handiwork of God. We should all recognize the story of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, and Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. When these two expectant mothers greeted each other, Elizabeth’s unborn child leaped for joy in the womb, providing a biblical understanding that the unborn child is fully human. Who gives life and gives cause to a baby to survive inside the womb? Who takes the little hands and feet and eyes and nose and lips and assembles them in the womb? God Almighty!

If we believe in the Bible, then we believe in the sanctity of all human life, born and unborn. From the moment of conception, a baby is made in the image of God with a human soul for whom Christ died. When a baby is aborted, it is not simply the termination of a pregnancy; it

is the killing of an innocent human being in God's image. And so, the Bible places a high value on human life that stands in stark contrast to the moral delusion of this age. Therefore, the worth of unborn children is just as valuable in the sight of God as those who happen to make it out of the womb. The most dangerous place to be in America is inside a mother's womb, where there is a one-in-four chance of not making it out alive.

Consider the words of Proverbs 24:11-12., a passage asking us to consider a sobering reality. We read, "Rescue those being taken off to death and save those stumbling toward slaughter. If you say, "But we didn't know about this," won't he who weighs hearts consider it? Won't he who protects your life know? Won't he repay a person according to his work?" Let's take a moment and picture the thousands of people herded into railroad cars bound for death camps where none of them return. They are heading for murder. What do we do as the train slowly chugs out of the station, and it is too late to do anything? The abortion issue has almost become a national sacrament, like a moving scene from the true-life story in *Schindler's List*. At the end of the film, Oskar Schindler, a rather ordinary man who acts in accordance with his conscience despite the evil around him, is filled with remorse that he saved so few people from the Nazis. Thirteen hundred Jews, to be exact. And then he cries, I could have saved more, and in knowing his pain, the survivors present him with a gold ring inscribed with a saying from the Talmud: "Whoever saves one life saves the world entire."

Then there is the triumphant true story of a courageous Christian woman of the Holocaust and anti-Nazi underground: Corrie Ten Boom. Her famous quote still rings loud and clear. "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength." It was she and her family who hid Jewish refugees by the hundreds. When she saw the Jews being herded off to the concentration camps, her Christian faith propelled her to action, only to become discovered and sent to one of the camps eventually. When asked why she got involved, she replied, "I had no other choice." Take a look around you. We might not be able to do everything, but we can do something, for if we see ourselves as Christian, we have no other choice.

Brothers and sisters, we must tell the truth to a generation that does not want to hear it. This generation does not want to listen, for when you kill an unborn child, you have violated the Sixth Commandment: "You shall not murder." It is not politically correct to say that these days and those from the liberal left have said, "No, you have to back off." If perhaps we choose to be pro-life, we cannot use words like kill or murder. When the Bible speaks, we must talk. When the blood of the unborn has stained this nation to the tune of more than 63 million dead since 1973, isn't it time for us to stand up and start telling the truth? Please understand that this is not a popularity contest. It is a truth contest. If we are on the side of truth, then we are on the side of life. But what will it take?

Truthfully, God has given us a weapon the unbeliever does not have, and that is the weapon of prayer. It is a weapon that can change the world. Each day across America, hundreds of women choose life because we have places like Pregnancy Ministries gently persuading them not to have an abortion. The reality is that most women do not want to do it only because they

feel backed into a corner by some awful life circumstance and cannot see any other way out of a bad situation. If we genuinely believe in pro-life, we can do seven things to change the world.

First, it is time for the church to pray for the leaders of this country, for leaders of both parties, for the members of Congress, and for the justices who sit on the Supreme Court. Second, we need to speak out in the name of Jesus Christ, taking a stand for life on the job, in the classroom, and our neighborhoods, and yes, when we talk to friends or loved ones. Third, we need to reach out with a message of love to the women who have had abortions to say we are not mad at you nor condemn you. We love you, and we want to introduce you to the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, who calls out to forgive all sins. Fourth, we need to take our pro-life convictions into the voting booth. If we do that, we can see a change in America. Fifth, we need to support those who are on the right side of this issue. This includes pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, foster parents, people who are taking in unwed mothers, and those who, through gentle persuasion, help in this area. We need to support the doctors and nurses who treat and care for infants and young boys and girls. We need to support those who teach our children. We need to rescue children from brutality, abuse, slavery, and sexual exploitation. Sixth, we need to get down to the root of the problem, practicing sexual purity, which begins with teaching our teenagers and children right from wrong and to abstain from making foolish choices. Lastly, we must do whatever we can to protect our children.

In this dangerous world, God has called us to take care of the babies. We want to make sure they arrive safely and have a safe place to grow up healthy and strong. We should believe that every child deserves our love and care. We should do what Jesus would do. We must keep lifting the name of Jesus, for as he taught us in John 10:10, “the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

In closing, abortion is not an unpardonable sin. Yes, it is a sin, but it is not the worst. Nowhere is Romans 3:23 more needed in today’s discussion. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” That applies to all of us regardless. We are all driven to the cross of Jesus Christ because that is our hope of forgiveness. It doesn’t matter what your past is. It doesn’t matter what you have or have not done or where you have been. It doesn’t matter where you have been sleeping. If you are struggling with guilt in any part of life, I have some fantastic news for you. God still loves you. He has never stopped loving you, and he never will. The light is on in the Father’s house. Jesus stands at the door waiting for you to come in. Amen.

Reflecting its Reformed heritage, ECO believes that, as a consequence of the [Fall of Man](#), humans lost [free will](#) and are incapable of turning towards God. Salvation is made possible by only the [irresistible grace](#) of God, who [chose the elect](#) before the world was [created](#).^[20]