

Psalm 139:13-16; Jer. 1:4-5; In Support of Life I. The Call for Justice II. The Source of Life III. The Defense of Life

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, abortion is a plague on our nation and our world. Approximately 50 million babies are aborted world wide each year- while 600K are taken from their mothers' womb in the US alone. What was once unthinkable has become the norm. Listen to these new facts on abortion- in Illinois you can now kill a child up to the point of birth- and possibly let that child die even if they were born alive but not wanted. Abortion Mills no longer need a licence and need not submit to health checks. In fact, the Illinois State Health department no longer keeps record of the amount of abortions performed within the state. Our elected officials continue to push for greater access and less oversight. But just last week we saw the public outcry after 2000 dead babies were discovered at Klopfer's residence in Joliet. A society that praises death cannot long endure. We are now in the midst of the "40 Days for Life" campaign- so it is fitting to be reminded where life comes and why life is so important for us. Today we consider this theme: Jesus Christ gives life to all men so that they might praise Him.

I. The Call for Justice

We begin with the call for justice- how the unjust shedding of blood cries out for vengeance. All we need to do is remember the very first family conflict. When Cain took the life of his brother Able, that blood cried out for vengeance as Gen. 4 states. The shedding of blood arouses the anger- even wrath and vengeance of God against those who attack their fellow man. Even animals that attack human beings will be judged. As Gen. 9 states, for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning- from every beast and from every man. The promises that follows is this- whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed- for God made man in His own image. We will see this image of God concept again in our second point, but suffice it to say that God takes an attack on His image bearers very seriously! In fact, it was this rampant bloodshed and violence on the face of the earth that set the stage for the flood. We find the same thing in the book of Exodus where it was the wickedness of the Canaanites- including the killing of their children in the fires of

Molek as child sacrifices- that led to their removal from the land. So to summarize, there is both an individual and communal consequence to the shedding of man's blood. Not only does the individual anger God- there is a corporate significance. We need only look at the history of the Roman Empire- one of their most grievous sins was their infanticide. Any unwanted child would be left out in the cold- exposed to the elements and left to fend for themselves. What we note is that after a period of great violence and bloodshed- there was a great fall and a day of reckoning. But we are facing a world wide epidemic- millions of babies are being killed- and their blood is crying out to God- How long until you avenge our murder? We are living- as it was in the days of Noah- in a time of great violence and bloodshed! This begs the question- how long until time runs out on our nation and world- when He will return in justice, fury and wrath! God's people were designed to be different! The Law of the LORD established in Israel set them apart from the bloodshed of the nations. Not only does the LORD forbid murder in the 6th commandment- He also gave various laws to protect life in the OT. What may be surprising- there are even laws to protect and defend the life of a child in the womb. (Read Ex. 21:22-25) This Law states that if two men are fighting and a pregnant woman gets caught in the middle and she is struck, if that child in her womb dies the one who struck the mother forfeits his own life. If the child or his mother is harmed- the judgement is life for life. In this way, the call for justice in the OT makes it clear that God places a high priority on the preservation of life. To murder is to cut short the life that God had given- making it unable for that one to serve and praise God in the land of the living.

II. The Source of Life

Now that we have considered how the Law was given to protect life- in our next point we see the source of that life. In other words, where does life come from? Your view concerning the origin of life directly influences how you view life itself. For example, if you believe that man is simply a developed animal- if we have only become human by way of evolving- then it stands to reason that if you are less developed you are not yet human. If human nature is only a developed, thinking mind that is independent and self-sufficient;

then anything less than this total independence is not fully human. However, if being human is more than thinking or being self-sufficient, then that humanity extends to all those who share the characteristics of that humanity. At issue is this- what makes man- a man? What makes us human and separate from the animals. It is not our independence- that we can take care of ourselves- No- it is our created nature from God that makes us man. The fact that we were created special and in the image of our God. It is not our age, ability or appearance- but the fact that we were created unique- to be like our God- to reflect God's dominion. Mankind alone has a body/soul unit that was made to be in communion with God. Since we are unique and life is a gift from God- the life we have needs to be protected and defended. Both at the beginning and at the end of our lives, we tend to be more dependant. During these vulnerable times, we need help from others to assist us. But that need for assistance does not diminish the value of that life. In fact, as I Cor. 12 puts it, the parts of the body (or the members of the church) that are weaker are indispensable- and should be treated with greater honor! We were made to be in fellowship with God. This close connection between God and His child is made evident in our reading from Psalm 139:13. Here David states that the LORD'S knowledge of him and his ways extend all the way to the womb. You knew my mind- you understood my self- you formed by being. And then David continues by saying- you knit me together in my mother's womb. Literally- God covered David's bones- he wrapped his body with flesh- putting David together while yet hidden in his mother's womb. There is such love and concern- such gentleness and intimate care that is going on here. Like the care that goes into crocheting a baby's blanket- David was knit together himself- made into the being and person he was. It is God who forms us- and not natural selection or the carnal ways of man. Each baby is His handiwork. Made by the LORD- and for the LORD'S purpose. As is said of Jeremiah as well- before we are born the LORD knows us- for He formed us. This wonderful creation moves David to praise the LORD! As v. 14 continues- I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made! Life is a gift from God- and a reason to praise God! Thank you for making me- and for the gift of life! By way of the Holy Spirit, man's body becomes a life-filled spirit or a living, spiritual being. There is no life

apart from the work of God the Spirit. Remember also, that Jesus came so that we might have life- and life to the full as John 10 puts it. His mercy is new each morning – His grace greater than all our sins! As wonderful as the gift of life is- we have the added benefit of new life! If we should praise God for given us breath- how much more should our praise be given for the Spirit of life! We must rejoice because of our salvation by His shed blood- so rich and so free! You see- Jesus gave up His life so that we might have true life! So to summarize this point, our God is the God of life! Sin and Satan lead to death and bondage. But it is God who gives life and liberty- and by the work of the Spirit through the Gospel- it is God who gives renewed life to the body and soul. The work of Jesus today is to restore us to communion with God- for He has secured renewed life for our bodies and souls. But this new life is built on natural life. We need to be alive before we can be born again. For the dead do not praise the LORD as Psalm 115 states. That is why murder is such a grave offense- it cuts short the time we have to praise God- the opportunity to be born again- to repent and believe is built on the physical life that our God has given us. Now that we understand where life comes from, what remains is the defense of that life.

III. The Defense of Life

One of the ways that we as a church can protect and defend life is to see children and their generation properly. Whose children are these- and in what context should we find them. Give thanks to God for your own life- and the life of your children! If children are a gift- a blessing and heritage from the LORD- than we should treat them and speak about them as such. And if one of the things God was looking for- if God was seeking Godly offspring from covenant marriage- then we should encourage Christian couples to have children. One of the ways we can show our watching world the blessing of children is by having children. Indeed- as the LORD said to Adam and Eve- be fruitful and increase in number. The second way we can defend life is with proper teaching on marriage and sex. If we keep the marriage bed pure- if we have a high view of marriage and chastity- we will be displaying a lifestyle that forms the proper context for the reception of children. The fact is, most abortions happen in the context of extra-marital sex. And one of the

most vulnerable groups are those who are poor. The third way to defend life is to support Christian ministries that minister to those in need and at risk. Most mothers do not want to abort their child, but they feel that they have no other option. They see this as their last resort- so showing love and support is one of the ways that we can defend life. Remember that we are called to love them both- the child in the womb and the mother as well! A fourth way in which we can defend life is by supporting adoption and by becoming foster parents. If we, as Christians, take a stand on the sanctity of life, then our love and support should extend to the life of others at all different ages. Finally, the important work of prayer must continue. Pray that abortion mills would be closed. Pray that those considering abortion would have a change of heart. Pray for the Christian ministries that defend life. Pray that those who have already had an abortion would hear the gospel and find forgiveness, comfort and grace. Because at the end of the day, abortion is not the unforgivable sin. Not to make light of this sin, but many of our heroes of faith once took the life of another- men like Moses, David and Paul. These all received forgiveness after their grave sin. So we must learn to be compassionate and considerate when speaking to those who are defending abortion- as many of them have had an abortion. In this way we can show the world that we are people of light who love life!

To conclude, one of the fallacies of our day is the supposed right to do what we want with our own bodies. To this false teaching the Christian says- I am not my own, but I belong body and soul to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ! He has paid for me! My life is a gift- and my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. As the LORD said in Dt. 30:19- I call heaven and earth to be witness today- that I have set life and death before you- so choose life- so that you may live! Jesus Christ gives life to all men so that they might praise Him. So may we as a church and as families delight to live our lives- and to defend the lives of others- so that we might together glorify our God for life!