



Sanctity Of  
*Human Life*  
Sunday



- 2023 -

PASTOR'S PREACHING GUIDE/INFORMATION RESOURCE

A resource guide to help pastors easily and effectively defend unborn life and share the Gospel

# DEAR PASTOR,

With the recent advances we have witnessed in Oklahoma and other states toward protecting unborn lives from abortion, we have much to thank the Lord for and to celebrate.

At the same time, we recognize more work is still ahead of us. As the calendar moves closer to the 2023 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in January, we must redouble our efforts to prayer, preaching, and serving in this vital area.

We must stand together to speak for life, to oppose abortion, and to care for abortion-vulnerable women through our pregnancy resource ministries like Hope Pregnancy Centers.

That is why Oklahoma Baptists and Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children have partnered once again to create Sanctity of Human Life Sunday resources for you and your church.

We ask you to set aside Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 22, 2023, as a time to lead your church in standing for life by becoming informed, participating in opportunities to share our life-affirming views with others and in joining the work of Oklahoma Baptists, as we engage in frontline pregnancy resource ministry, foster care, and more.

Now available to you are new Sanctity of Human Life Sunday Church Resources, including sample sermons outlines, videos, prayer points and more. To access these resources, visit [oklahomabaptists.org/life](http://oklahomabaptists.org/life).

Another opportunity to stand for life and link arms with other life-minded Oklahomans is by participating in the Rose Day Indoor Pro-Life Rally at the Oklahoma State Capitol on Wednesday, February 8, 2023. For more information, visit [roseday.life](http://roseday.life).

Thank you for making plans to participate in the 2023 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. May God find us faithful in protecting His most vulnerable creation and helping those around us in need (Gen. 1:27; Psalm 139; Prov. 24:11; Matt. 25:40).

*Serving Jesus with you,*

**Dr. Todd Fisher**  
Executive Director-Treasurer  
Oklahoma Baptists

**Michael Williams**  
Interim President  
Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children

## COMING **Events**

- SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY  
January 22, 2023
- ROSE DAY - PRO-LIFE RALLY  
February 8, 2023  
Oklahoma State Capitol  
[www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life](http://www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life)

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# THE ETERNAL WORTH OF HUMAN **Life**

*Psalm 139:13-16*

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## SERMON FROM STEPHEN RUMMAGE



Our ideas have consequences. In 1920, two German professors wrote a 132-page book that introduced the idea of *Lebensunwertes leben*, a term that means “life unworthy of life.” These two academics said some living people who were brain damaged, mentally ill, or otherwise intellectually deficient were a moral and financial burden, and disposable. These lives, they argued, were unworthy of life.

In 1933, thirteen years after the publication of that book, Adolf Hitler took the oath of office as Chancellor of the Third Reich. The sickening idea of “life unworthy of life” became policy. The killing started quietly, with one child. An infant, born blind, with one leg and part of one arm missing, and apparently with mental developmental issues, was ordered by Hitler’s personal physician to be killed in a hospital.

From there the child-killing program expanded. Centers were established, inoffensively referred to as “Children’s Specialty Institutions” or even “Therapeutic Convalescent Institutions.” Doctors and administrators proceeded as if the children were receiving medical care. Children were kept in the institution for a few weeks. Then a barbiturate was given repeatedly over two or three days until the child lapsed into continuous sleep and died. Families would receive letters of condolence, usually signed with a fictitious doctor’s name and with ordinary diseases such as pneumonia given as the cause of death.

The criteria for killing so-called “defective” children continually expanded. Eventually, the practice extended from children to adults, and included killing whole groups of people – including some six million European Jews – all because their lives were considered unworthy of life.<sup>1</sup>

Again, our ideas have consequences. If people believe that human life is just a biological accident resulting from the processes of natural selection and evolution, then atrocities like I’ve just described can be rationalized and accepted. But, if we believe that life is a gift from God and that human life is a special creation of God, then it changes everything about how we view life – from conception in the womb.

### **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT LIFE?**

A good place to begin is Psalm 139. In this beautiful Psalm, we see a simple fact: God has endowed human life with sanctity and sacredness. From that simple fact, Psalm 139 teaches several other truths about human life.

#### **FIRST, HUMAN BEINGS UNIQUELY BEAR THE IMAGE OF GOD.**

In Psalm 139:13, David wrote: “You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.”<sup>2</sup> David understood that God had formed and fashioned his body.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of *Lebensunwertes leben*, see Robert A. Graham, “The ‘Right to Kill’ in the Third Reich: Prelude to Genocide.” *Catholic Historical Review* 1976, Vol. 62 (1), pp: 56–76

<sup>2</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version Bible.

That means God made and designed you. He wove your arteries and nervous system. He fashioned your muscles and all the structures of your body. He put together your whole mental, emotional, and physical personality, including your facial features, your hair color, the color of your eyes. All the way down to your toenails and fingernails, your eyelashes and eyebrows whether your earlobe is attached or has that little hanging-down-flappy thing!

God gave you life. God made you in His image. Genesis 1:27 says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

What separates human beings from the animal world? From a biological perspective, our bodies function in the same way as theirs do. Our neurological system works much like that of a dog or a cat. Our cardiovascular system is not substantially different from that of a gorilla. Our gastro-intestinal system follows the same basic principles of that of a fox or a raccoon.

### **SO WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?**

Here’s what God says about you as a human being that He says about no other life form: You are made in the image of God.

The Hebrew word for “image” in Genesis 1:27 refers to something that is similar to the thing it represents. We are made in God’s image. Being made in the image of God means that we can know God and God can know us. We can have a relationship with Him. And the image of God in humanity – though marred and flawed by sin – is present in all of humanity. No matter what our age, our health, our mental or physical capacity – all human beings bear the image of God.

### **SECOND, GOD HAS CREATED HUMAN LIFE WITH DIGNITY AND VALUE.**

Because we bear God’s image, our lives have dignity and value. Psalm 139:14 says, “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.” Human life created by God is “fearful” and “wonderful.” Those words show us that human life has dignity.

According to Psalm 8:5, human beings are crowned with “glory.” In the Old Testament, the word “glory” is the Hebrew *kabod*. The root meaning is of *kabod* is “heaviness.” To have glory means to have weight, significance. When we talk about human dignity and value, we are saying that human beings have something significant about them.

The secular worldview doesn’t see it this way. In his book *Flesh and Machines*, MIT professor Rodney Brooks writes that a human being is nothing but what he calls a “big bag of skin full of biomolecules” interacting by the laws of physics and chemistry.<sup>3</sup> From the non-biblical worldview, human beings are biological machines, and nothing more. But the Bible teaches that every human life is created in God’s image. And, as a result, every human life possesses a God-given dignity and value. Your life matters because God created you.

### **THIRD, HUMAN LIFE BEGINS BEFORE BIRTH, IN THE WOMB.**

From conception, God’s Word describes an unborn baby as a human person. Psalm 139:15 says, “My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.” “My frame” literally means “my bones, my skeleton.” David knew that when his skeletal system was formed “in the depths of the earth” – a Hebrew expression referring to the womb – God saw him and knew him.



<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Nancy Pearcey in <https://religionnews.com/2015/06/10/nancy-pearcey-apologetics-influential/>

So many places in Scripture uphold the truth that human life does not begin at birth, but at conception. God knows the unborn child, and He has a plan and a purpose for us before our birth. In Jeremiah 1:5, God says, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” The word translated “formed” was used of a potter fashioning clay into a vase or other piece of pottery. In the womb, God was fashioning Jeremiah for his purposes.

Amazingly, Luke 1:42 describes John the Baptist – unborn and in the womb of his mother, Elizabeth – leaping for joy when Mary, the mother of Jesus, came to visit. Luke describes an unborn child with the word, “baby.” That’s the same word that Scripture uses elsewhere to describe a newborn. The unborn baby was able to hear and respond. Even more, the baby experienced the emotion of joy. Scripture makes no distinction between a baby in the womb and a baby in its mother’s arms.

## THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE, THE BIBLE PRESENTS THE UNBORN CHILD NOT AS A MASS OF TISSUE, NOT AS A POTENTIAL PERSON, NOT AS PART OF THE MOTHER’S BODY, BUT AS an individual human being, made in God’s image.

According to God, an unborn baby, though unborn, is most certainly a baby! We work hard to protect babies. You can’t leave the hospital with a newborn baby unless you have your car outfitted with a properly fitted, up-to-date child safety seat. Families with small children childproof our homes with safety latches on our kitchen cabinets and protective caps on all our electrical outlets. We want babies to be safe. And yet, wherever abortion remains legal, an unborn baby may be in a very dangerous place, even in the mother’s womb.

We can praise the Lord for the recent overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. But even so, the number of lives still lost to abortion each year, each day, each hour, and each minute should break our hearts. Each unborn child is a precious creation of God, made in God’s image, whose life is sacred and valuable in the sight of the Lord. All human life is worthy of life, because all human life is sacred to God.

### AS WE CLOSE, HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO SHOW THAT YOU VALUE LIFE AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST:

**Teach your children.** Explain to them that they are made in God’s image, and that God loves and has a purpose for every person.

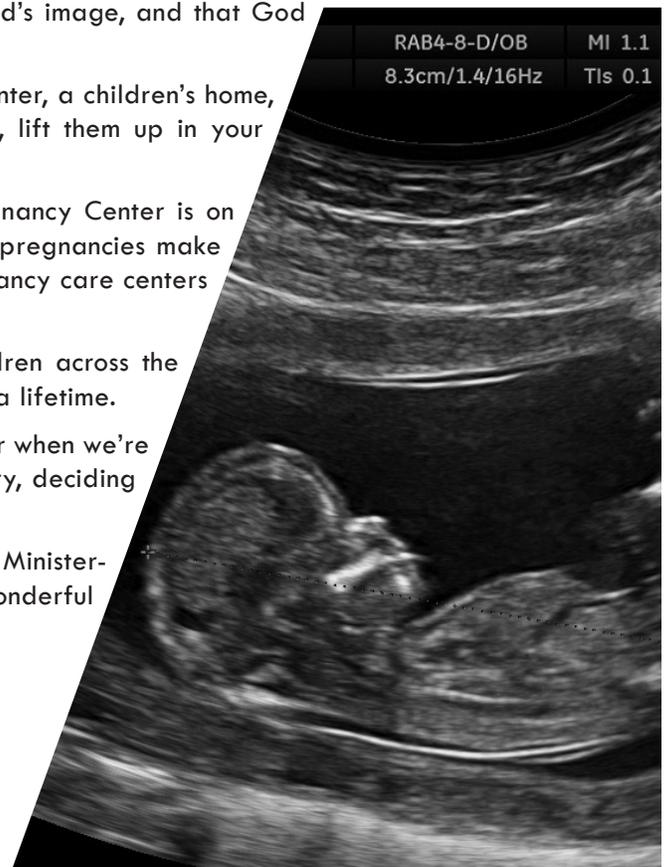
**Pray for a pro-life ministry.** Whether that’s a pregnancy care center, a children’s home, an adoption agency, or some other ministry that upholds life, lift them up in your prayers.

**Support a pregnancy care center.** In Oklahoma, the Hope Pregnancy Center is on the front lines, standing for life, and women and men in crisis pregnancies make decisions that honor life. In our post-*Roe v. Wade* world, pregnancy care centers continue to need our support, perhaps more than ever.

**Support or consider becoming a foster or adoptive family.** Children across the United States need families to be a part of for a short time or a lifetime.

**Vote for pro-life candidates.** Of all of the factors that we consider when we’re voting, a candidate’s position on abortion should be the primary, deciding issue for believers.

**Volunteer with a pregnancy care center or special needs ministry.** Ministering to people in crisis pregnancies or with special needs is a wonderful way to affirm the dignity of every life.



# EL VALOR ETERNO DE UNA *Vida* HUMANA

*Salmo 139:13-16*

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## SERMON FROM STEPHEN RUMMAGE



Nuestras ideas tienen consecuencias. En 1920, dos profesores Alemanes escribieron un libro de 132 páginas que introdujo la idea de *Lebensunwertes leben*, un término que significa “vida indigna de vivir”. Estos dos académicos dijeron que algunas personas que en vida tenían daño cerebral, estaban mentalmente enfermos o eran intelectualmente deficientes, eran una carga moral y financiera, y por tanto desechables. Estas vidas, argumentaron, no eran dignas de vivir.

En 1933, trece años después de la publicación de ese libro, Adolfo Hitler prestó juramento como Canciller del Tercer Reich. La asquerosa idea de “vida indigna de vivir” se convirtió en algo norma. El asesinato comenzó en silencio, con un hijo. Un niño, nacido ciego, con una pierna y parte de un brazo perdido, y aparentemente con problemas de desarrollo mental, fue ordenado por el médico personal de Hitler que fuera asesinado en un hospital.

A partir de ahí, el programa de -matanza de niños- se amplió. Se establecieron centros, inofensivamente denominados “Instituciones Especializadas para Niños” o incluso “Instituciones Terapéuticas de Convalecencia”. Los Médicos y administradores procedieron como si los niños estuvieran recibiendo atención médica. Los niños fueron retenidos en la institución durante unas semanas. Luego se administró un barbitúrico repetidamente durante dos o tres días hasta que el niño dormía continuamente y moría. Las familias recibían cartas de condolencia, generalmente firmadas con el nombre de un médico ficticio y con enfermedades comunes como la neumonía dada como causa de muerte.

Los criterios para matar a los llamados niños “defectuosos” se expandieron continuamente. Eventualmente, la práctica se extendió de niños a adultos, e incluyó matar a grupos enteros de personas, incluidos unos seis millones de judíos europeos, todo porque sus vidas se consideraban indignas de la vida.<sup>1</sup>

Una vez más, nuestras ideas tienen consecuencias. Si la gente cree que la vida humana es solo un accidente biológico resultante de los procesos de selección natural y evolución, entonces las atrocidades como las que acabo de describir pueden ser racionalizadas y aceptadas. Pero, si creemos que la vida es un regalo de Dios y que la vida humana es una creación especial de Dios, entonces cambia todo sobre cómo vemos la vida, desde la concepción en el útero.

### ¿QUÉ DICE LA BIBLIA SOBRE LA VIDA?

Un buen lugar para empezar es el Salmo 139. En este hermoso Salmo, vemos un simple hecho: Dios ha dotado la vida humana de santidad y es sagrada. A partir de ese simple hecho, el Salmo 139 enseña varias otras verdades sobre la vida humana.

### EN PRIMER LUGAR, LOS SERES HUMANOS LLEVAN LA IMAGEN DE DIOS DE FORMA ÚNICA.

En el Salmo 139:13, David escribió: “Porque tu formaste mis entrañas; Tú me hiciste en el vientre de mi madre”<sup>2</sup> David entendió que Dios había formado y diseñado su cuerpo.

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<sup>1</sup> Para una discusión más detallada de *Lebensunwertes leben*, véase Robert A. Graham, “El ‘derecho a matar’ en el Tercer Reich: Preludio al Genocidio”. *Catholic Historical Review* 1976, Vol. 62 (1), pp: 56-76.

<sup>2</sup> Todas las citas de las Escrituras son de la Biblia versión Reina Valera 1960.

Eso significa que Dios te hizo y diseñó. Él tejió tus arterias y el sistema nervioso. Él creó tus músculos y todas las estructuras de tu cuerpo. Él armó toda tu personalidad mental, emocional y física, incluyendo tus rasgos faciales, el color de tu cabello y el color de tus ojos. Hasta las uñas de las manos y las uñas de los pies, ¡tus pestañas y cejas, ya sea que tu lóbulo de la oreja esté unido o tenga esa pequeña cosa colgando!

Dios te dio vida. Dios te hizo a su imagen. Génesis 1:27 dice: “Y creó Dios al hombre, a su imagen, a imagen De Dios los creó, varón y hembra los creó”.

¿Qué separa a los seres humanos del mundo animal? Desde una perspectiva biológica, nuestros cuerpos funcionan de la misma manera que los suyos. Nuestro sistema neurológico funciona muy parecido al de un perro o un gato. Nuestro sistema cardiovascular no es sustancialmente diferente al de un gorila. Nuestro sistema gastrointestinal sigue los mismos principios básicos que el de un zorro o un mapache.

### **ENTONCES, ¿QUÉ NOS HACE DIFERENTES?**

Esto es lo que Dios dice de ti como ser humano que no dice sobre ninguna otra forma de vida: estás hecho a imagen de Dios.

La palabra hebrea para “imagen” en Génesis 1:27 se refiere a algo que es similar a lo que representa. Estamos hechos a imagen de Dios. Ser hecho a imagen de Dios significa que podemos conocer a Dios y que Dios puede conocernos. Podemos tener una relación con él. Y la imagen de Dios en la humanidad, aunque estropeada y defectuosa por el pecado, está presente en toda la humanidad. No importa cuál sea nuestra edad, nuestra salud, nuestra capacidad mental o física, todos los seres humanos llevan la imagen de Dios.



### **EN SEGUNDO LUGAR, DIOS HA CREADO LA VIDA HUMANA CON DIGNIDAD Y VALOR.**

Debido a que tenemos la imagen de Dios, nuestras vidas tienen dignidad y valor. El Salmo 139:14 dice: “Te alabaré; porque formidables, maravillosas son tus obras; Estoy maravillado, Y mi alma lo sabe muy bien”. La vida humana creada por Dios es “formidable” y “maravillosa”. Esas palabras nos muestran que la vida humana tiene dignidad.

Según el Salmo 8:5, los seres humanos son coronados por la “gloria”. En el Antiguo Testamento, la palabra «gloria» es el kabod hebreo. El significado raíz de kabod es “doz”. Tener gloria significa tener peso, importancia. Cuando hablamos de dignidad y valor humano, decimos que los seres humanos tienen algo significativo en ellos.

La visión del mundo secular no lo ve de esta manera. En su libro, *Flesh and Machines*, el Profesor del MIT, Rodney Brooks, escribe que un ser humano no es más que lo que él llama una “gran bolsa de piel llena de biomoléculas” que interactúa según las leyes de la física y la química.<sup>1</sup> Desde la visión del mundo no bíblica, los seres humanos son máquinas biológicas, y nada más. Pero la Biblia enseña que toda vida humana se crea a imagen de Dios. Y, como resultado, toda vida humana posee una dignidad y un valor dados por Dios. Tu vida importa porque Dios te creó.

### **EN TERCER LUGAR, LA VIDA HUMANA COMIENZA ANTES DEL NACIMIENTO, EN EL ÚTERO.**

Desde la concepción, la Palabra de Dios describe a un bebé por nacer como una persona humana. El Salmo 139:15 dice: “No fue encubierto de ti mi cuerpo, Bien que en oculto fui formado y entretejido en lo más profundo de la tierra”. “Mi cuerpo” significa literalmente “mis huesos, mi esqueleto”. David sabía que cuando

<sup>1</sup> Citado por Nancy Pearcey en <https://religionnews.com/2015/06/10/nancy-pearcey-apologetics-influential/>

se formó su sistema esquelético “en las profundidades de la tierra”, una expresión hebrea que se refiere al útero, Dios lo vio y lo conoció.

Muchos lugares de las Escrituras defienden la verdad de que la vida humana no comienza al nacer, sino en la concepción. Dios conoce al feto, y tiene un plan y un propósito para nosotros antes de que nazcamos. En Jeremías 1:5, Dios dice: “Antes que te formase en el vientre te conocí.”

La palabra traducida “formase” se usaba de un alfarero que moldeaba arcilla en un jarrón u otra pieza de cerámica. En el útero, Dios estaba formando a Jeremías para sus propósitos. Sorprendentemente, Lucas 1:42 describe a Juan el Bautista, no nacido aún y en el útero de su madre, Elisabet, saltando de alegría cuando María, la madre de Jesús, vino de visita. Lucas describe a un niño por nacer con la palabra “bebé”. Esa es la misma palabra que la Escritura usa en otros lugares para describir a un recién nacido. El bebé por nacer pudo escuchar y responder. Aún más, el bebé experimentó la emoción de la alegría. La Escritura no hace distinción entre un bebé en el vientre y un bebé en los brazos de su madre.

A lo largo de las Escrituras, la Biblia presenta al feto no como una masa de tejido, no como una persona potencial, no como parte del cuerpo de la madre, sino como un ser humano individual, hecho a imagen de Dios.

Según Dios, un bebé por nacer, aunque no nacido, ¡es sin duda un bebé! Trabajamos duro para proteger a los bebés. No se puede salir del hospital con un bebé recién nacido a menos que tenga su coche equipado con un asiento de seguridad para niños bien equipado y actualizado. Las familias con niños pequeños aseguran sus hogares con agarraderas de seguridad en nuestros armarios de cocina y tapas protectoras en todos nuestros enchufes eléctricos. Queremos que los bebés estén a salvo. Y, sin embargo, dondequiera que el aborto siga siendo legal, un bebé por nacer puede estar en un lugar muy peligroso, incluso en el útero de la madre.

Podemos alabar al Señor por el reciente vuelco de Roe v. Wade. Pero, aun así, el número de vidas perdidas por el aborto cada año, cada día, cada hora y cada minuto debería rompernos el corazón. Cada niño por nacer es una creación preciosa de Dios, hecha a imagen de Dios, cuya vida es sagrada y valiosa a los ojos del Señor. Toda vida humana es digna de vida, porque toda vida humana es sagrada para Dios.

## **A MEDIDA QUE CERRAMOS, AQUÍ HAY ALGUNAS FORMAS PRÁCTICAS DE DEMOSTRAR QUE VALORAS LA VIDA COMO SEGUIDOR DE JESUCRISTO:**

**Enseña a tus hijos.** Explícales que están hechos a imagen de Dios, y que Dios ama y tiene un propósito para cada persona.

**Ora por un ministerio pro-vida.** Ya sea un centro de cuidado del embarazo, un hogar para niños, una agencia de adopción o algún otro ministerio que defienda la vida, levántenlos en sus oraciones.

**Apoya a un centro de cuidado del embarazo.** En Oklahoma, el Hope Pregnancy Center está en primera línea, defendiendo la vida en donde las mujeres y los hombres en embarazos en crisis toman decisiones que honran la vida. En nuestro mundo post-Roe v. Wade, los centros de cuidado del embarazo siguen necesitando nuestro apoyo, tal vez más que nunca.

**Apoya o considera convertirse en una familia de hospedaje o adoptiva.** Los niños de todo Estados Unidos necesitan que las familias sean parte de ellas por un corto tiempo o toda la vida.

**Vota por candidatos pro-vida.** De todos los factores que consideramos cuando votamos, la posición de un candidato sobre el aborto debería ser el tema principal y decisivo para los creyentes.

**Haz trabajo como voluntario en un centro de cuidado del embarazo o en un ministerio de necesidades especiales.** Ministran a personas en embarazos de crisis o con necesidades especiales es una forma maravillosa de afirmar la dignidad de cada vida.



# THE SKELETON IN THE FAMILY CLOSET

*Genesis 38*

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## SERMON FROM CHRIS WALL

Have you ever looked closely at the family line of Jesus? If you really looked closely, you will quickly notice His earthly family was one messed-up bunch. To me, that massive dysfunction is encouraging because most of our families have a dark secret or two lurking in our proverbial closets.

It could be the black sheep, the crazy uncle, the unplanned pregnancy, an abortion, or some other skeleton in the family closet that you pray will never make a Facebook post or Instagram highlight reel.

When it comes to family failures, some are financial. Some failures are relational. Some failures are emotional and some failures stem from bad habits or a lack of discipline. But, when a sexual failure impacts a family, the trauma and pain cut especially deep.

Sexual sin often brings a level of shame that may seem insurmountable. This kind of shame often pushes both victims and perpetrators to silence and isolation.

There is another thing about sexual sin. It tends to shatter families across society. Sexual failure impacts families of every educational level and every racial background. It hits every economic environment and, as we have seen up close and personal over the past several years, sexual failures have even hurt people in the church.

It is the trauma of sexual sin that makes the issues surrounding abortion and the sanctity of human life so very important to process.

This past year, all of us witnessed the overturning of Roe vs. Wade in the United States of America, and to say the response is polarizing would be a massive understatement.

How are Christians supposed to respond to this polarizing debate?

Are you responding well?

Are you responding in a way that brings honor to the name of Christ?

How should a faithful follower of Christ respond to people on the other side of the debate?

I have listened to a lot of good sermons on the issue of abortion. I, like many of you in our service today, am convinced that the Bible moves us to protect the lives of the unborn.

**AS CHRISTIANS, WE CANNOT BE NEUTRAL ON THIS ISSUE.**

We need to respond to the tragedy of abortion in our nation. If Christ-followers don't respond, proponents of abortion will operate completely unchallenged.

But, we have to respond in an intelligent, caring, well-informed and Christ-like way.

Does a Christ-like focus mean we should yell louder? Should we print bigger posters for our picket lines? Should we post more tweets? Should we show more pictures of ultrasounds or show more HD videos of abortion procedures?

It is no secret that abortion proponents have skillfully crafted the debate around women's health. Though they are rightly concerned by issues such as the endangered life of the mother, rape, or incest, most abortions in America center around convenience issues. This is the real issue.

At the same time, let's remember proponents of abortion are not swayed by our biblical arguments. The vast majority of people in the world do not see the Bible as authoritative, so making claims in the name of scripture doesn't mean much.

But for us, scripture holds authority. Without apology, we are committed to the Bible shaping the way we live and the way we think. When we discover a belief that is contrary to the Word of God, we change our beliefs. Whenever we find a practice that goes against the Bible, we change our practices.

**OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO GENESIS 38, AND LET'S ALLOW GOD TO HELP US CATCH TWO THINGS:**

- How to think about sexual sin in the right way.
- How to respond more effectively to those who disagree with us.

Genesis 38 is a rough passage and has got to be one of the least preached passages in the Bible. It is one of the skeletons in the closet of God's people.

In Genesis, God opened the door not only to a scandalous sexual failure, he completely stopped one of the most famous leaders in the Bible from killing his own set of twins. Looking at this passage today is not an attempt to just stir up some dirty laundry. The end result of this scandalous pregnancy literally changed the world.

**LOOK AT CHAPTER 38...**

It is a long chapter so let me quickly summarize the beginning, and because it is a little rough, I will work to keep it censored.

If you know your Bible, Genesis 38 is stuck in the story of Joseph. Joseph is significant because God devoted 14 chapters in Genesis to his life.

Joseph's story starts in chapter 37 and goes through chapter 50. Chapter 38 makes a whiplash move to Judah, but we will soon see why this is really important.

If you are taking notes, the first 12 verses clearly show us how...

## SIN IS PROGRESSIVE.

Look at verse 1...

Judah marries a lady named Hirah and they had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.

Let me just say about Judah's sons: they were a mess and were wicked young men caught up in sexual sin.

All through the Bible God warns us to keep very clear boundaries with sexual sin.

There is a reason God created sex and put it under the umbrella of marriage. Sex is the one human act that has the power of creating life. That is why God placed it under the most sacred relationship known to mankind which is marriage.

The act of sex is a gift from God but, the Bible specifically says we are to avoid all kinds of sexual immorality.

An important verse to memorize is 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6. It says...

**“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God;” 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NIV**

Look at the names listed in chapter 38: Judah, Er, Onan, Tamar. They all face the pain of sexual sin. The crazy thing is that all of them are God's people, but they are acting like pagans who don't know God.

You see, Judah...he is the dad.

Judah was the one who talked Joseph's brothers into actually selling him into slavery.

Judah's name means “praise” but at this point in his life, he was not living a life that praised the Lord. In fact, at this point in his life, Judah was setting a pretty bad example for his entire family.

Judah's sons and family in many ways were just following the example of their father.

This right here causes me to stop and think about what kind of example I am being for my kids. What kind of leader am I being as a husband, a father, now a grandfather, and most importantly, as a follower of Jesus?

Notice what happened to Er and Onan...

Look at verse 7...

**“But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death.” Genesis 38:7**

And Onan, in verse 10...

**“And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also.” Genesis 38:10**

These boys were so wicked, God literally killed them. Think about that.

I said at the beginning, this chapter helps us learn how to think about sin.

## WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THE BIBLE TELLS US...WE REAP WHAT WE SOW.

You will never fool God. He sees everything, notices everything and is literally OMNIPRESENT and God really does care about what we do and how we live. I am not saying this is biblical evidence that God is going to take you out, but it happened here. Don't forget Galatians 6:7-8

**“7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”**

We need the right kind of thinking about sin. The Bible does this for us.

John 10:10 says...

**“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”**

It is like the truth that my youth minister used to tell us, that famous lesson about sin:

- Sin will take you further than you want to go. It will keep you longer than you want to stay. And, it has a price tag higher than you want to pay.

Do you realize that sinful choices will just keep making things



worse? Sin is progressive.

Judah definitely did not learn his lesson with the deaths of Er and Onan, and the progression continued...

Look at verse 11...

**“Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in your father’s house, till Shelah my son grows up”— for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father’s house.” Genesis 38:11**

Let’s grab some context here. At the time Joseph and Judah lived, there was a cultural law that if a brother died, the widow was to marry the next brother to produce an heir in the family line.

Judah blamed Tamar for the deaths of his two older sons; he sent Tamar away from his home and did not do what he said he would do. He did not take care of Tamar, the widow of both Er and Onan. Tamar was afraid and decided to take matters into her own hands.

Now, you might be thinking, “Wait a minute; I thought this was supposed to be a message about the sanctity of human life?”

Where was the attempted abortion? Well, let’s look at the rest of the story.

Look at verse 13...

**“And when Tamar was told, “Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep,” she took off her widow’s garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face.” Genesis 38:13-15 ESV**

**“16 He turned to her at the roadside and said, “Come, let me come in to you,” for he did not know that she was his**

**daughter-in-law. She said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” 17 He answered, “I will send you a young goat from the flock.” And she said, “If you give me a pledge, until you send it—” 18 He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” She replied, “Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand.” So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him.” Genesis 38:16-18**

All sin has devastating consequences, but like I said earlier, sexual sin cuts deeper.

Judah and Tamar both stepped into sexual sin, and the result of it was a scandalous pregnancy, a skeleton in the closet.

There is nothing right about this. Tamar was guilty of sin, and her deceptive plan of pregnancy worked.

Judah was guilty of sin; he had a meaningless sexual encounter outside of marriage.

But, that encounter had huge consequences, resulting in the conception of twin sons.

Look at what happened next...

**About three months later Judah was told, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality.” And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned.”**

## **DID YOU CATCH IT?**

Right there is the move to an abortion. Judah embarrassed Tamar in public and made a decision not only to kill his daughter-in-law but also to take the life of the babies in her womb.

But Tamar was pretty smart. Rather than just staying silent, she spoke up. Judah was caught in his own trap.

Look at what she did in verse 24...

As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-



in-law, “By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant.” And she said, “Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.” Then Judah identified them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.”

OOPS...talk about a skeleton in the closet. There are so many lessons to learn here that my head is spinning.

Lessons like:

## **EVERY PRIVATE SIN WILL EVENTUALLY COME OUT IN PUBLIC.**

There is also a lesson here about hypocrisy.

As we rightly confront polarizing issues like abortion, self-righteousness is sickening.

How many times have we seen some preacher or some leader get up and condemn someone, only to discover that same preacher is a self-righteous hypocrite?

Following Jesus will require us to take stands that are often unpopular, but we have to live consistent lives.

## **LIVE A LIFE THAT DOES NOT DISCREDIT THE NAME OF JESUS.**

Let's remember the words of Jesus.

*“3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”*

*Matthew 7:3-5*

When it comes to this message on the sanctity of human life, rather than turn the attention on the issue of abortion, I think it's time to turn the camera on the lives of believers standing against abortion.

I am sure that in this message today, we will not be able to solve all the issues of abortion in our nation. But I do want to push us to live lives that cause people to consider Jesus.

1 Peter 3:15 clearly tells us...

*“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”*

My desire is that Christians are a part of the solution, and not the problem.

**1. Christ has to be Lord.** - That means the fruit of the Spirit is clearly evident in your life. That starts with salvation

that is a completely free gift that cannot be earned, and it is not deserved. Once Christ saves you, we begin to grow in that walk with Him that is real and personal. Then the fruit of the Spirit starts to grow. You can evaluate how that fruit is growing by monitoring if...

- a. There is love in your heart.
- b. There is joy in your life.
- c. There is peace in your daily walk.
- d. There is patience with others.
- e. There is kindness coming out of your mouth.
- f. There is goodness in your heart.
- g. There is faithfulness in your life.
- h. There is gentleness in your responses.
- i. There is self-control in your reactions.

**2. You are prepared.** As followers of Christ, we need to prepare for the discussion on the Sanctity of Human life. We need to prepare ourselves with the real arguments. Like I said earlier, when it comes to the proponents of abortion, they are not swayed by biblical arguments. Of course we are biblical people, but we need to be able to prepare around the issues. Of course, we know that vast majority of abortions take place out of convenience. Though this is true, we have to prepare for the people we are engaging. Prepare yourself to...

- a. Respond to a person who does not recognize the Bible as authoritative.
- b. Respond to a mother seeking an abortion out of convenience.
- c. Help a person considering an abortion due to economic survival.
- d. Support a mother considering an abortion because of a severe birth defect.
- e. Speak to a family facing the potential death of a mother.
- f. Prepare a response to a pregnancy due to rape or incest.
- g. But also, respond to the question of abortion by simple convenience.

These are difficult questions, but they are questions we must be prepared to answer. Notice that 1 Peter commands us to respond to people with gentleness and respect. God's word clearly challenges us not to back down from what is right. But we also need to...

**3. Choose the path of gentleness and respect.**

Can I take a moment to recommend a really good book? There is a book called Tactics by Greg Koukl. He helped me learn how to make biblical arguments in a respectful way. Koukl talks about the strategy of putting a rock in someone's shoe. As we engage people on this issue of abortion, let's learn to argue with opponents more effectively. Let's learn to put more rocks in people's shoe. Get that book and learn better tactics.

- a. My prayer today is that we can frame the issues and prepare to respond with gentleness and

compassion.

b. Learn to point others to the resources and helps to which we can point those we know facing tough situations in their pregnancies?

Just being against abortion is not sufficient. We need to understand the issues and seriously do something to help women considering having an abortion.

All Christ-followers must start being a part of real solutions rather than just barking about the problem of abortion in our country. I am not saying we do not take stands. We need to stand strong. We must see the end of abortion around the world.

### **BUT LET'S DO SOMETHING.**

Volunteer at our Hope Pregnancy Centers. The resources at those centers are absolutely amazing, and the help extends years after the children are born.

Seriously consider adoption and foster care.

Pray, Serve, Give, Connect with people facing the question of abortion.

I realize the answers here will not be easy, but I pray our

church builds a reputation of help, life, and hope for every pregnancy.

Now, let's bring this sermon in for a landing, going back to Genesis 38. Let's catch (in my opinion) the most important point in the passage.

### **EVERY PREGNANCY IS A GIFT FROM GOD REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION.**

Even though there are difficult pregnancies that take place, the Scriptures are clear: Literally every pregnancy is a gift from God regardless of the situation. This passage reveals this.

Though this is a terrible moment in the history of God's people and a borderline family closet incest story between a father-in-law and a daughter-in-law where most would hope no one ever mentions again. This passage shows this pregnancy produced the greatest gift the world has ever seen.

Look at verse 27...

*"When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, "This one came out first." But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, "So this is how you have broken out!" And he was named Perez.*

*Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah."*

When you start studying your Bible and tracing the story of Judah, you see real quickly that he repented of his sin.

### **REPENTANCE IS REAL, AND GOD'S GRACE CHANGES LIVES FOR GOOD.**

I want to challenge you to look into the story of Judah and discover how he changed and came back to his roots.

Judah actually became an example of obedience to God. God worked in his life and changed all his mistakes into successes.

Judah actually took care of Tamar for the rest of her life and never had sex with her again.

He also remained a faithful father to Perez and Zerah.

Years later, as his dad was dying in Egypt and Judah was surrounded by his entire family, listen to what his dad said about him in Genesis 49:8-10...

*8 "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. 9 You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? 10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his*



feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.” Genesis 49:8-10

This blessing shows us that the hearts of people can change. Repentance and obedience can overcome devastating failures and mistakes.

But, it wasn't just Judah who experienced a real miracle. Tamar's story was remarkable too.

Flip over real quick in your Bibles to Matthew 1. You need to see something that Matthew did as he talked about the line of Jesus. Notice what he said in verse 2...

“2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar.”

Matthew 1:2-3

Out of this terrible pregnancy that from all appearances was a terrible mistake, came the only one who could save your soul.

Matthew tells us that Judah and Tamar, Perez and Zerah were in the family line of Jesus.

You may be sitting here today, and you feel like your life is a mistake. Maybe you feel you have made too many mistakes and could never be forgiven.

**I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT GOD'S GRACE IS GREATER THAN ANY SIN YOU HAVE EVER COMMITTED.**

I John 1:9 says...

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Maybe you are here today, and you have had an abortion, and no one knows it. Maybe you have other skeletons in your closet, and you hope no one ever finds out.

Jesus loves you, and if you will come to Him today, He will save you and will completely forgive every sin you have ever committed.

We are going to have an invitation and will have people right here ready to help you. Will you come to Jesus today and allow His Holy Spirit to completely change your life?

## Miracle of Development-

- At 4 weeks, a baby is the size of a poppy seed
- At 5 weeks, the tiny heart begins to beat and the body is the size of a sesame seed
- At 6 weeks, facial features are beginning to form
- At 8 weeks, arms and legs are growing as well as developing fingers, nose and upper lip
- At 9 weeks, eyes have developed and sense of smell begins to develop
- At 11 weeks, the baby is almost fully formed and bones are beginning to harden
- At 12 weeks, you can hear the baby's heartbeat
- At 14 weeks, the baby can make facial expressions and may have discovered thumb-sucking
- At 19 weeks, the baby can hear sounds from the outside of the womb
- At 23 weeks, the baby's sense of movement has developed
- At 24 weeks, the taste buds are developing and the brain is growing quickly
- At 27 weeks, the baby can open and close its eyes
- At 28 weeks, the baby may be dreaming; it weighs about 2 ¼ pounds and is about 15" long
- At 32 weeks, has grown fingernails and toenails
- At 37 weeks, considered full term



# DEFINING *Life* AND LOVE

## SERMON FROM KENNY MOSSMAN

For years, we in the church have talked about and protested against the tragedy of abortion. When the U.S. Supreme Court returned the matter to each state on June 24, 2022, it gave a glimmer of hope that the practice would at least be restrained in some places.

Already, abortion advocates have gone on the offensive, attacking pro-life pregnancy centers and contemplating alternative legislation. States that have kept abortion legal have readily accepted out-of-state patients, and some companies now provide free interstate transportation to employees seeking to terminate the life of an unborn child. The disagreement hasn't ended, it has transitioned. There are still many whose desire is to make abortion easily accessible in our country.

We understand the issue. The question is, do we understand the source?

From the time of Satan's conversation with Eve in Genesis 3, he has twisted meanings and confused definitions. Nowhere is that more true than in the definitions of life and love, and it is those deceptions that have landed us in this sea of infant death. Abortion is a result. The cause can be found in mankind's willingness to define life and love in strictly pagan terms.

### LIFE

Webster's definition aligns with that of the world:

- a) the quality that distinguishes a vital and functional being from a dead body.
- b) a principle or force that is considered to underlie the distinctive quality of animate beings.
- c) an organismic state characterized by capacity for metabolism, growth, reaction to stimuli, and reproduction.

The best Webster's can do in its primary definition is to characterize life as the opposite of death. The secondary and tertiary meanings at least give us animation, growth and reproduction. Lost in a homogenized definition is the elevated and intimate position that God gives to human life.

Let's instead consider life from the perspective of the Author and see how it is his

### GOD'S, THE INTIMATE CREATOR

In Genesis 1:26, God, in a passage that may give us our first reference to the Trinity, raises the topic of mankind. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"

Verse 27 adds, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Our eyes cannot simply pass over that text and hurry on to the end of the chapter. No, this is revelation that must bring us to a stunned pause. The One who speaks universes into existence made us ... in ... His ... image.

How can we read that and not be awestruck? How can we read that and ever undervalue life? The very concept of such a thing overwhelms our ability to comprehend it. It should emit from us our most profound worship.

But the Bible doesn't stop there, it adds an intimacy that inclines our hearts. The words of Genesis 2:7, convey that it in this way, "then the **LORD** God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature."

We must guard against an extra-biblical understanding of this moment, but surely, we can sense the warmth and affection being exhibited here. This is a Father gently crafting together that piece of His creation that is most special to Him; that piece for which He will sacrifice His only Son. And then it is His breath that fills its lungs and gives it life.

That care and tenderness is a constant theme on the pages of scripture. God is in the details of our very being. Here is just a sampling of that evidence:

- **Job 33:4** — The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- **Psalms 139:13-16** — For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
- **Jeremiah 1:5** — Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you;
- **Galatians 1:15** — God set me apart even from my mother's womb ...

This is not a distant force churning out of bodies in a cold, sterile process. This is not a matter of producing something that is the opposite of dead. And it's definitely not something solely of our doing. This a God whose complexity and enormity still lives in the deepest DNA of our existence. Like a master craftsman, He looks upon us as His workmanship, and we are precious in His sight, more so than any other aspect of His creation.

## THE VALUE OF A LIFE CREATED BY GOD

Psalm 8:3-5, says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor."

Animation, metabolism and growth, those are simply biological traits. The value of life is found in its Creator and its significance to Him.

And the human context and its circumstances, while significant in the way we regard one another, are but a backdrop to God's purposes regardless of how we may have landed in a set of circumstances. The Lord says that, "all souls are mine," (Ezekiel 18:4).

We nurture and care for that which God has entrusted us, but we dare not interrupt the work of the Master. Ours is to reverently honor Him whose ways and thoughts are higher than ours.

We can scan the great expanse of God's creation and not see anything that matters to our Lord more than a human life. I learned that the hard way. Well past normal child-bearing years, my wife and I became pregnant at a time when we did not expect it. I confess that I did not react with the joy of one whose quiver was filling. In my pride, I was embarrassed and inconvenienced. I was done with little league and school programs, or so I thought. While we would never consider such a thing, a co-worker actually recommended an abortion.

For a week or so I moped around in misguided self-pity. I didn't realize how misguided I was until one night on my drive home from work when my phone rang. It was my mother.

When I answered, and as I recall, without a "hello," she said, "Kenny, I'm concerned about your Christian walk."

"Why," I responded, confused by her assertion.

"I have thought you were a Christian man," she said, doubling down on a clearly broader purpose. I shot back, "What are you getting at?"

She shared that she had been talking to my wife, Amy, who had shared with her my disappointment over an unplanned pregnancy. It didn't sit well with my mother.

"Well, mom, surely you understand how this looks," I said. "It's

not something that happens at our age. Can't you see how that looks and feels?"

What followed was perhaps the most profound thing she ever uttered. It still rings in my ears today.

**"HERE'S WHAT I KNOW," SHE SAID. "GOD CREATED EXACTLY ONE THING ON THIS PLANET THAT LASTS FOR ALL ETERNITY, the human soul, AND HE JUST GAVE YOU ANOTHER ONE. I CAN'T SEE HOW YOU WOULDN'T BE EXCITED ABOUT THAT."**

That's the kind of truth that will re-focus a man in a hurry. I don't remember what I said, but any hint of self-pity evaporated immediately. And the son that was born just a few months later is a delight that we cherish with all our hearts.

Life matters. It matters a lot especially when we understand it from God's perspective. What about love?

## LOVE

Back to Webster's we go for a worldly definition:

- a) strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties
- b) based on sexual desire: affection and tenderness felt by lovers
- c) affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests

There are elements of that definition that fit the Biblical meaning. God is not without emotion. Who among us didn't memorize, "Jesus wept?" Kinship brings to mind visions of family reunions, and benevolence is a line item in most church budgets.

What I might suggest is that the secondary definition, "based on sexual desire: affection and tenderness felt by lovers," has been moved by our culture ahead of the primary definition while many times lapping the third one.

## GOD'S INTENDED PURPOSE

Sexual desire was never intended to be the centerpiece in love. When God gave Adam and Eve their familial marching orders, it had a practical purpose. The directive in Genesis 1:28 says, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."

The Lord's intention has been to fill the earth with this important life He created. Remember what He said to Abraham in



Genesis 15:5, “And he brought him outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Why so great a population? To glorify the Creator. Isaiah 43:7 refers to us this way, “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Procreation has a very practical side, but it’s not only practical. After all, the Bible does include the Song of Solomon. God gave us emotion, and He gifted us with an act of procreation that is pleasurable and fulfilling. If only we had accepted it as such.

### **SELF-FULFILLING OR SELF-DENYING?**

Satan, the master of deception and confusion, meshed love and sex, and now our daily vernacular includes a term like, “making love,” that distorts love and elevates sex to a place it was never intended to hold. The social consequences have been staggering.

Now that sex is idolized and love is a sexual act, marriage and family are no longer essential components for either.

Childtrends.org reports that nearly 40% of births in America are to unwed women, a statistic that has skyrocketed by 28% since 1990. Unsurprisingly, 73 percent of abortions in the U.S., are performed on unmarried women. Most of those women fall into a “poor” socio-economic category, and many already have a child. When love and lust become synonymous, the nuclear family was the first casualty. Thirty-five percent of the children in Oklahoma are growing up in a single-parent household.

That’s where the world’s confused, distorted definition of love has landed us. Sex can be a component within a loving relationship, but it is not a picture of love.

The picture of love is a cross on a barren hill outside Jerusalem’s gates.

How is that the picture of love? It is love because the Bible defines love not as a self-serving sexual act, but as a self-denying sacrifice. How the two ever got confused only speaks to the quality of Satan’s work in this field. To be fair, Merriam-Webster mentions unselfishness in its definition of love. It’s down there in the fourth, or quaternary, meaning. Clearly, our culture did not read down that far.

The most famous Bible verse, John 3:16, says, “For God so loved that world that he ... gave.” And He gave at great personal cost in the form of, “his only Son.”

Ironically, or perhaps not, 1 John 3:16 takes that example and applies it to mankind, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

Laying down our lives? Seriously? That doesn't sound much like, "making love" in today's world. First Corinthians 13, the love chapter, expands on that notion in verses 4-7, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Every bit of that scripture points to the recipient of our love:

- **We're patient and kind** ... to other people.
- **We're not envious, boastful, arrogant or rude** ... because we don't want to offend others.
- **We don't insist on our own way and we aren't irritable or resentful** ... because our desires are not primary.
- **We're not joyful in wrong-doing** ... because we yearn for righteousness and the well-being of our neighbors.
- **We rejoice in truth, we bear all things, we believe, we hope and we endure** ... because those are the traits of a Christ follower.

This is where love meets the road, so to speak. Real love persists regardless of the personal cost.

One of the moments in Jesus' life that is most identifiable to us is that night in Gethsemane. Under the unimaginable stress of bearing our sin debt, Jesus did what any of us might do. He asked for an alternative.

In Matthew 26:39, he prayed, "'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ...'"

Had we been watching, and had we known what was hanging in the balance, we would have been on the edge of our seats waiting to hear what came next. In fact, the word that came next was the word "love," spelled with 12 letters: n-e-v-e-r-t-h-e-l-e-s-s. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will," He said.

What crystalized in the moment is what Paul later wrote in Romans 5:6-8, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

That's love. For those with no merit, the Holy One of God, forsaking His own pleasure, took the penalty that should have been ours.

That's the definition that has been lost among a crooked and twisted generation.

## CONCLUSION

Abortion became an epidemic in our country when man attempted to find the meaning and origin of life on the pages of a manmade textbook and equated love with personal pleasure. If life is a biological debate and love is sex, the fallout will be the distortion of God's most-prized gift, human life. That's the point where we have and will continue to draw the line in the sand. If Jesus came to redeem life and did so out of His great love for us, then we're not talking about a medical procedure. We're talking about the Gospel.



# A BABY'S CRY THAT WAS NEVER **Heard**

SERMON FROM DR. WALTER A. WILSON

## INTRODUCTION

Thank God that Mary was pro-life. I can't even imagine what this world would be like, if Mary had been persuaded to visit the local baby removal center there in Bethlehem. After all, there she was, never known a man, but she found out she was pregnant. Espoused to Joseph and now she had to tell him that she was pregnant.

Luke 1 tells us that Gabriel went to Nazareth and told Mary she had found favor with God. I need to pause here and say we all want to operate under the favor of God. There's nothing better than operating under the influence of God's favor, but I need you to know that operating under God's favor always comes at a price.

You see, everything was going well with her angelic visit, until the angel told her she would conceive a child and his name would be a name above all names. In vs. 31 the angel said she would conceive a son and she would call him Jesus. The record states He was born in Bethlehem wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger.

I need somebody to help me thank God that Mary was pro-life.

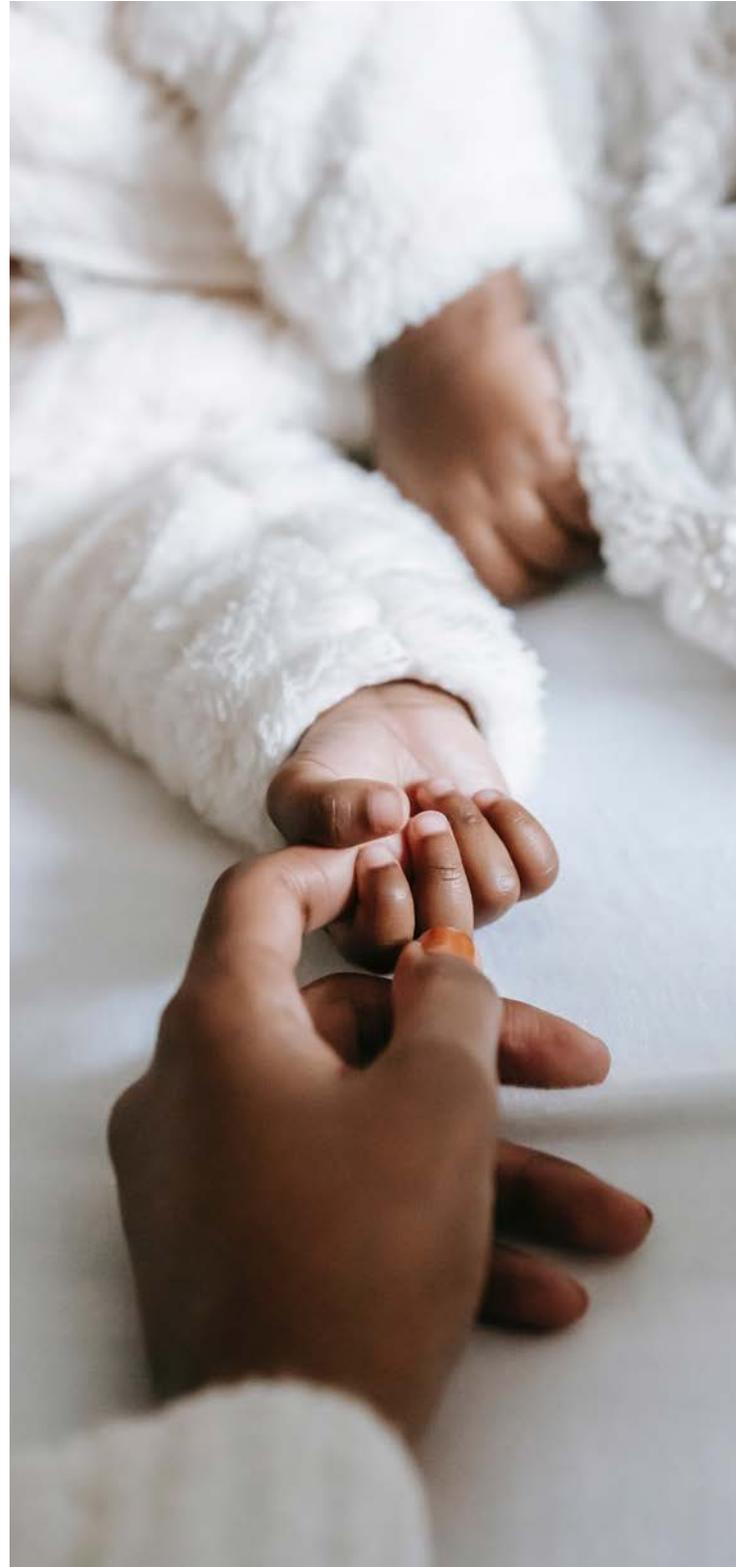
In our text (chapter 1) Moses tells us when the new king of Egypt came into power, he saw the children of Israel as a threat. In verses 15 and 16, the midwives were to kill the males being born and save the female babies. Herein lies the problem, they forgot God is the God who is the Giver of all good and perfect gifts, so this brings me to my first thought.

**IN OUR TEXT** (chapter 1) Moses tells us when the new king of Egypt came into power, he saw the children of Israel as a threat. In verses 15 and 16, the midwives were to kill the males being born and save the female babies. Herein lies the problem, they forgot God is the God who is the Giver of all good and perfect gifts, so this brings me to my first thought.

**FIRST, YOU CANNOT UNDO WHAT GOD HAS ORDAINED—VERSE 17, 22.**

The king has ordered the midwives to kill every Israelite male child being born in order to control the population. The enemy always wants to find a way to control you, so you can't be blessed. He fills your mind with ungodly thoughts of shame and embarrassment. He causes you to think, "Well, I've messed up, so I may as well get rid of the evidence."

I want you to know, when you consider abortion, you decide to play God. Just like the king, you decide who lives and who dies.



Actually, you are telling God, who created man and said it was good, that He needs to work on His creative skills because not everything was good. The king said if I can systematically control their birth rate, I'll be able to stunt their growth. In today's world, my brothers & sisters, we do it to ourselves.

From the pages of "Black Lives Matter" I read that 55 percent of African American women, ages 20-24, have 40 percent of all abortions, and 19 percent of them are teenagers. I also read that African American women are three times more likely to seek an abortion than Anglo American women, but as bad as that sounds, it's not the worst. The book also says 53 percent of these women identify themselves as Christians.

Your Bible says the devil is like a roaring lion; a liar and a deceiver. The king has come up with a plan that is outside of the will of God. Try as he may, verse 20 says the midwives followed God and were blessed and the people multiplied and became mighty.

In the New Testament, Jesus summoned the children to Himself and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

You can't undo what God has ordained.

## SECOND, GOD WILL ALWAYS MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE THE PERSECUTION—VERSES 19, 20.

The abortion rate seems to greatly increase when the facts and figures are gathered from our less fortunate population. The truth is, the "well to-do" are more often able to hide their abortion facts and figures than the "down and out."

There are many things that affect who seeks an abortion in this day. Pregnancy as a result of rape is just as rampant now as it was in biblical days; pregnancy because of incest was declining, but now it's on the rise again; and there are those who find themselves in a bad, unplanned situation.

Just as God made a way for the Israelites way back when, He will do it for you right now. The king commanded the midwives to kill all the new-born male children. Little did he know that God had already infiltrated His kingdom and planted some God-fearing women amongst the midwives.

I don't know who this may be for, but God wants me to tell you; if you find yourself in trouble, just call on the Him, and He will give you a way to escape. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding; In all thine ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path."

No matter what others say, trust the Lord; no matter what your friends say, trust the Lord. Remember that baby you may be carrying is a gift from God. Trust God to provide whatever you need. He will always provide you a way to escape the pressure and persecution of your peers.

## THIRD, AND LASTLY, GIVE THE BABIES A CHANCE AND AVOID THE WRATH OF GOD.

Grown-ups were not born already grown up. The tract starts with a little embryo who, when kissed by the Holy Spirit, begins to grow, and at the appointed date in the fullness of time, that little blessing's cry is heard.

I don't know how you feel about it but when I read verse 22, it caused my heart to bleed. I want you to come near as I close and use your Holy Ghost-powered imagination.

Can you hear Pharaoh as he gives the order that every male Israelite child was to be thrown into the river? Can you hear with your heart those mothers as they cry out for their children? So many children whose cries were never heard.

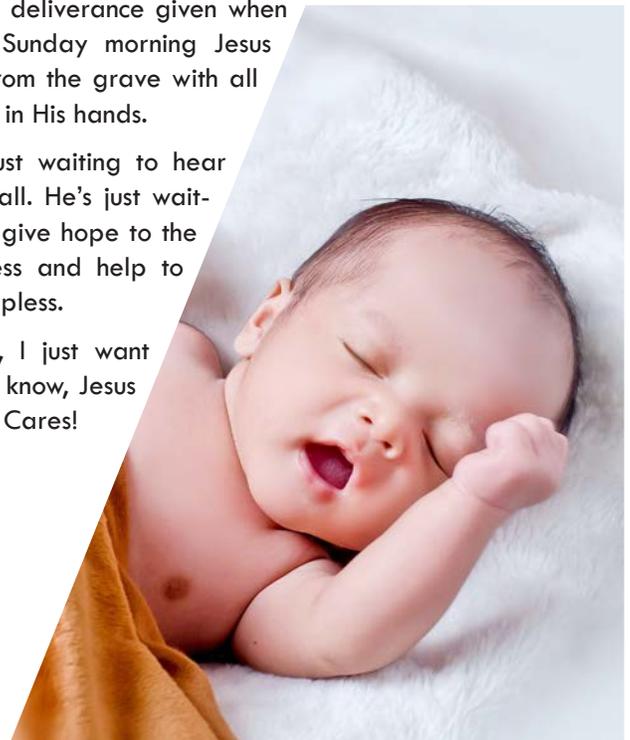
You may say, all of this is good, preacher, but my mind is made up; you just don't understand what I am going through.

Well let me ask you, what will you say when you stand before the judgment seat of the Lord and the child you condemned to death; the child whose heart had begun to beat; the child whose voice deserved to be heard is called to testify and says, "Lord I could have been the doctor who cured cancer, but I wasn't given a chance; Or I could have been a teacher, but I wasn't given a chance; or I could have been the evangelist who won thousands for the body of Christ, but sadly I wasn't given a chance."

As you ponder what God would have you to do, I want to remind us that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ hung, bled and died on a hill called Calvary; so all of us would have the right to live life everlasting. Let me remind you of the gift of deliverance given when early Sunday morning Jesus rose from the grave with all power in His hands.

He's just waiting to hear your call. He's just waiting to give hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless.

Finally, I just want you to know, Jesus Really Cares!



# VALUING **Life** LIKE GOD DOES

*Psalm 82*

## SERMON FROM HEATH TUCKER

Historically, Sanctity of Human Life Sunday has been about the unborn. And, rightly so.

### SCIENCE AND FAITH ARE **NOT** AT ODDS

(At conception) life in the womb is *not mom, not dad*, but **NEW DNA**.

- Heartbeat 4-6 weeks
- 8 weeks, recoil from pin prick
- 10 weeks, functioning organs<sup>1</sup>

On the other side of abortion are **real women**, real situations, hopeless situations, helpless situations, difficult situations and many of them are carrying tremendous burdens (of the choice they made).

What about **Orphans? Widows? Alcoholics? Etc.**

Do we value life like God does?

**Psalm 82** shows how God values life.

**V1 “God presides in the great assembly;  
He renders judgment among the ‘gods’:**

**V2 “How long will you defend the unjust  
and show partiality to the wicked?”**

*(Psalm 82:1 & 2) NIV*

The text starts with **God as judge** (*the scene opens up with God calling all other authorities together and He is about to give judgment*). This is serious stuff.

**“gods?”**(v1) Those given the responsibility of representing God on earth and interpreting and applying His law. (Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34.)

**Vs. 2:** He is calling people out. (The text seems to indicate that the question is for those who know God). He seems to be speaking to people who know God’s heart but do nothing when it comes to justice. To be perfectly clear, He is talking about orphans, widows, the unborn, foreigners and strangers. God is consistently for such people throughout Scripture.

**Selah** (an invitation to pause and contemplate what has just been said before God reveals what He desires of His people).



### • REFERENCES •

- 1 [Americanpregnancy.org](http://Americanpregnancy.org)
- 2 [cafo.org](http://cafo.org)
- 3 [who.int](http://who.int)
- 4 [change.org](http://change.org)
- 5 [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org)
- 6 [numberofabortions.com](http://numberofabortions.com)
- 7 [bible.org/illustration/starfish](http://bible.org/illustration/starfish)
- 8 [okfosters.org](http://okfosters.org)

## #1 GIVE JUSTICE (V3)

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Our nation prides itself on the justice system. Yet, today there are 150 million orphans<sup>2</sup> worldwide. **16,000 children die daily<sup>3</sup>. (Children and grandchildren like yours).** Count to 5 and 1 will have died. 12 per min, 720 per hour. Who is doing something about this?

**3 billion survive on \$2.50 or less daily.<sup>4</sup>**

**Where are the Christians?**

**21 million in slavery.<sup>5</sup> (Describe the different kinds of slavery). Who is standing in the gap?**

**Since 1973 more than 60 million aborted in U.S.<sup>6</sup> (Nearly 1 mil annually). Who speaks for the unborn?**

**The beef God has with His people** is that He has a heart for justice, and He sees very little of it going on from His people; so He calls for justice.

**Do something (through legislation, missions, organizations).**

**Be a voice for the voiceless.**

**Get in the fight!**

## #2 RESCUE SOMEONE (V4)

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Not the government's job to rescue but the job of the Church. James 1:27 (We can't do all, but all can do something).

### THE STARFISH

I recently read about an old man, walking the beach at dawn, who noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Catching up with the youth, he asked what he was doing. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. 'But the beach goes on for miles and miles, and there are millions of starfish,' countered the man. 'How can your effort make any difference?' The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. 'It makes a difference to this one.'<sup>7</sup> Who is the "one" you are making a difference in?

### WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Adoption/Foster
- Support adoption/foster families
- Compassion International
- Serve as a mentor through a local school
- Adopt a "grandparent" at a local retirement home
- Volunteer at Hope Pregnancy

(Note to self: speak encouragingly to women who have had an abortion. There are many in church today who are carrying a tremendous amount of guilt and shame because of their past: **"I can only imagine how you feel"** (describe the pain and regret they must be going through, even years after the abortion). When your hurt and the Healer collide, the Healer wins every time.

**No one knows the hurt like you (those who have gone through an abortion in the past). You have the greatest voice for the unborn if you are willing to use it.**

**LET GOD USE YOU TO RESCUE SOMEONE ELSE AND FEEL THE JOY AS YOUR SOUL IS SET FREE.**

## #3 SHOW THE GOSPEL (V5)

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The point of #1 and #2 is to get to **POINT #3.**

How are 10,000 Oklahoma kids<sup>8</sup> (rounded up) in DHS going to know Jesus if we do nothing?

How will their parents know Jesus if we do nothing?

They walk in darkness (like the text says). How will they see the light?

### PERSONAL ADOPTION STORY

My wife and I have adopted 2 girls. Kathryn (3) has special needs and Emerson (2) is her biological sister. There are certain things they will never know. They will never know what it is like to have a parent abuse them. They will never know what it is like to be neglected. They will never know what it is like to go hungry or be fearful of me as a father. They will never know what it is like to have a parent abandon them.

They have been adopted. Girls who were not my daughters now have the right to be called my daughters, just like my 3 biological kids. They have been brought into the family. **Just like we have been adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1). We have the right to be called sons and daughters because of Jesus (explain the Gospel).**

Every time we give justice and every time we rescue the needy, we show the gospel like no other time.

David Platt: "We care for orphans not because we are rescuers, but because we are rescued."

We are invited into God's story and it is in His story of redemption that we experience real life and real joy.

### VERSE 8

God's Kingdom is advancing. (Is it advancing through you)?

**LET'S DO OUR PART TO STAND FOR LIFE.**

# PRO-LIFE Testimonies

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## ARTICLE: GROWING HOPE BY GAYLA WHITE

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God truly has done a marvelous work in our state by making the performing of abortion unlawful, and in our nation with the United States Supreme Court's Dobbs decision leading to the overturn of Roe vs Wade! Sadly, in the words of Senator James Lankford, making abortion illegal does not make it unthinkable. In many other states, abortion sadly is still widely available for those overwhelmed with life circumstances and unprepared to parent.

Fortunately, Oklahoma Baptists are here and prepared to meet the need. Hope Pregnancy Center's mission, "to help young men and women have hope and choose life in the midst of an unplanned pregnancy" continues to be the focus of this ministry. And Hope is growing!

By early 2023, there will be two additional Hope Pregnancy Center locations in Alva and Shawnee. Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children has had ongoing ministry in northwest Oklahoma with the Hope support services of Empowered Parenting classes and the LifeWize program. LifeWize is a six-week program in Alva and Cherokee middle and high schools that presents biblically-based principles. It helps students focus on their goals and future by teaching goal setting, decision making, sexual risk avoidance and the delay of sexual activity. Hope will soon expand this ministry to include pregnancy testing and ultrasounds to Alva and the surrounding community.

Charity Lyon is the director of Northwest Ministries and the future pregnancy center. Hope is seeking a registered nurse or sonographer and support staff for the center. Additionally, volunteers are needed at Hope and in local schools for LifeWize. Charity can be reached at [charity.lyon@obhc.org](mailto:charity.lyon@obhc.org).

Like northwest Oklahoma, Pottawatomie County has been an unserved area for pregnancy center services with women having to drive 45 minutes to reach Hope's south Oklahoma City center. Shawnee, Aydelotte has recently added pregnancy testing and ultrasounds to their Engage Free Medical Clinic in northern Pottawatomie County and is open every second and fourth Tuesday and Thursday evenings of each month. Hope Pregnancy Center will be open 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and will include parenting, fatherhood and abortion recovery programs. These ministries will be available to Pottawatomie, Lincoln and surrounding counties.

Dee Ann Schroyer is the director for the future center in Shawnee and is passionate about serving those who experience an unplanned pregnancy.

"For 18 years, I held a women's Bible study in my home with ladies who became precious to me as we shared life and

grew in Christ together," she said. "I had grown up in church, served in the church and even taught Sunday School. Yet there was something deep inside me I could not share with them. They knew I was carrying a deep shame because every Tuesday night during Bible study, I could not hold back my tears.

"While I had confessed my sin to the Lord, I had never forgiven myself. When I was 19 years old, I had an abortion. I was alone with a two-year-old from a previous relationship. The father of this child didn't want to be a father, and I knew I couldn't feed another mouth. In my silence and tears, I wanted to tell my friends but thought they would surely think I was a monster to have ended the life of my child.

"After many years of prayer and heartbreak, I finally accepted God's mercy and grace. It was then I knew He wanted to use me as a witness to others by telling my story. He was calling me to help women and men make the decision to keep their precious gift of life by saving the unborn and their families from the destruction and regret of abortion. After more than 40 years, I said 'OK, Lord, Your will be done. I am yours.' Along with six Bible study sisters who have walked this journey with me, God has opened many doors, and soon Hope Pregnancy Center will be opening its doors in Shawnee. Women facing an unplanned pregnancy, just like me, will be empowered to make an informed decision about their pregnancy, choose life and have the support of the Shawnee community encouraging them!

"Just like me, God may be asking you to get involved in showing the hope and the love of Christ to those facing an unplanned pregnancy in the Shawnee area. Hope Pregnancy Center, Shawnee has staff and volunteer positions available. Contact me at [deeann.shroyer@obhc.org](mailto:deeann.shroyer@obhc.org)."

Watch the progress of the Hope Pregnancy Centers in Alva and Shawnee by following us on Facebook: PartnersForHopeOK.

You can contact Holly or Monte Dean for more information on the Engage Free Medical Clinic at Shawnee, Aydelotte at [preacherswifeld@gmail.com](mailto:preacherswifeld@gmail.com).

If you are like DeeAnn and have an abortion in your past, Hope offers Forgiven & Set Free Bible studies to help facilitate the healing and forgiveness our Lord so generously offers. Classes are available across our state. All Hope services are free and confidential. Visit [obhc.org/hope/healing](http://obhc.org/hope/healing) for more information.

All of these developments are attributable to the Lord's kindness and moving in our midst. Indeed, it is exciting to see Hope growing.

# PRO-LIFE Testimonies

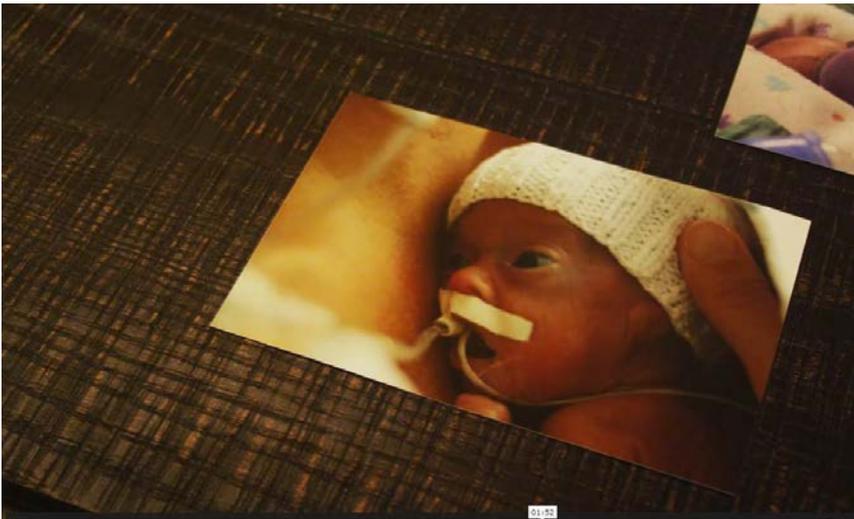
VIDEO: SEE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BABY IN THE WOMB

See the miracle of life as it is formed over 9 months in the womb.

[oklahomabaptists.org/life](http://oklahomabaptists.org/life)



VIDEO: 'MIRACLE BABY' BORN AT 24 WEEKS THRIVES



Watch the beautiful story of a baby born at 24 weeks not only survive, but thrive.

[vimeo.com/345493077/ed0155d1e5](https://vimeo.com/345493077/ed0155d1e5)

## DID YOU KNOW?

The first Oklahoma Baptist crisis pregnancy center opened in 1986.

## TWO WEEKS OF **Praying** FOR LIFE

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**Day 1** | Praise God for where abortion is being stopped. Pray for the complete end of abortion everywhere.

**Day 2** | Pray that God would help women choose life in the midst of an unintended pregnancy.

**Day 3** | Pray for the mothers who have had an abortion and are seeking the healing and peace that only God can offer.

**Day 4** | Pray that God would protect children in the womb from those who would perform or encourage an abortion.

**Day 5** | Pray that through the proclaiming of God's Word more people would be persuaded to value life at every stage.

**Day 6** | Pray that Christians would become involved with their local pregnancy resource ministry.

**Day 7** | Pray that people would give generously to support pro-life ministries.

**Day 8** | Pray for Godly wisdom and discernment for our legislators and judges as they hear multiple arguments,

face many bills and feel political pressures that will affect the unborn.

**Day 9** | Pray for people to place great value on God as being our Creator. For when we value God, we will value His creation.

**Day 10** | Pray for the staff members and volunteers who work with abortion vulnerable mothers at pregnancy resource centers.

**Day 11** | Pray for the fathers. Pray for God to change the heart of those who are encouraging a woman to get an abortion. Pray for those who are grieving over losing their child.

**Day 12** | Pray that our churches will not accept complacency toward the atrocious act of abortion.

**Day 13** | Pray for our pastors that they are bold and faithful to preach and teach God's Word regarding the sanctity of human life.

**Day 14** | Pray for the families who are longing to adopt a child.

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## TAKE ACTION FOR **Life**

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- 1. Participate in Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.** Set on the third Sunday every January, churches across America are encouraged to emphasize the value of human life from conception to natural death. Find out more at [www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life](http://www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life).
- 2. Support your local Pregnancy Resource Center.** There are more than 39 faith-based pregnancy resource centers across Oklahoma that help women and men choose life amid an unintended pregnancy. Look for ways to support these centers with your time and treasure. See [www.pregnancynet.org](http://www.pregnancynet.org).
- 3. Pray for an end to abortion.** Since abortion was legalized, millions of unborn children have lost their lives to abortion. Pray daily that God would end abortion, and pray specifically that people would choose life until legalized abortion ends everywhere.
- 4. Attend Rose Day.** At the Oklahoma State Capitol in February, join other pro-life Oklahomans at the annual Rose Day Pro-Life Indoor Rally. Find out more at [www.roseday.life](http://www.roseday.life).
- 5. Promote foster care and adoption.** Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children's One Such Child foster care program can help you or your church make an impact for life through foster care. Find out more at [obhc.org/services/foster-care](http://obhc.org/services/foster-care).

For more information, visit [www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life](http://www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life)



John 1:3  
“THROUGH HIM  
All things were made”

# SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE Resources

## VIDEO RESOURCES

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## WEBSITE LINKS

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[www.roseday.life](http://www.roseday.life)

[www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life](http://www.OklahomaBaptists.org/life)



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