

What Makes Human Life Precious?

MTV had 2 hit reality shows “16 and Pregnant” and “Teen Mom.” They were the personal stories of teens who got pregnant and the emotion and trials they faced.

The shows were so popular that last month they followed up with a special called “No Easy Decision.” A few months after the conclusion of the “16 and Pregnant” special one of the couples found out they were pregnant again. The first time the young lady, Markai Durham, decided to keep her baby. The second time she made the difficult decision to have an abortion.

MTV being MTV, the special’s approach was resolutely pro-abortion. But it was a heartbreaker, whatever your perspective on the subject. To quote Ross Douthat in an op-ed column in the New York Times, “Their televised agony was a case study in how abortion can simultaneously seem like a moral wrong and yet the only possible solution — because it promised to keep them out of poverty, and to let them give their first daughter opportunities they never had.”

On the program, everyone tries to help Markai by couching the realities in euphemisms. She’s warned not to humanize the being inside her: “If you think of it like [a person], you’re going to make yourself depressed.” Instead, “think of it as what it is: nothing but a little ball of cells.”

After all is said and done Marki and her boyfriend, James are shown sitting at table with their first child who is now a beautiful little girl. When James calls her now aborted pre-born child a “thing, Marki” begins to weep.

And with tears running down her cheeks she gestures to her infant daughter and says, “A ‘thing’ can turn out like that. That’s what I remember ... ‘Nothing but a bunch of cells’ can be her.”

She goes on to say, “You will never feel my pain. You weren’t the one in the surgery room, I was.” James is struggling, “This wasn’t just a difficult decision for you. If I saw 10 fingers and 10 toes I wouldn’t have been able to do it. We agreed, when we laid out all of our options that we weren’t going to get too attached.”

Marki responds wistfully, “We made our decision but I wonder if we could have made a better one.”

Thirty-eight years ago, on January 22, 1973 the United States Supreme Court did

something truly astounding. It issued 2 rulings that would have farther reaching consequences than the justices could have ever imagined.

The first case, Roe v Wade effectively struck down all state laws prohibiting abortion. The second, Doe v Bolton legalized abortion “after viability.” In other words, through all 9 months of pregnancy if the health of the mother was at stake.

Then the court defined “health” this way, “the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors - physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age - relevant to the well-being of the patient. All these factors may relate to health.”

In other words, health was defined as whatever any doctor declared it to be.

Now just to clarify, please understand, that as a church, we’re not interested in getting into discussions about issues that are merely political. We have people from all across the political spectrum that attend Faith Community Church.

But, when our government makes laws and rulings that involve moral issues, not only should we talk about them, we must talk about them.

Thirty-eight years and untold millions of abortions later we still purposefully end one of every five pregnancies. In 2009 in NYC the number was two of every five!

Why after all this time does abortion still generate so much controversy. What is there about it that stirs up so much emotion?

James summed it up in the MTV show when he said, “This wasn’t just a difficult decision for you. If I saw 10 fingers and 10 toes I wouldn’t have been able to do it.”

The truth is that when you push all the rhetoric aside your left with the stark fact that every abortion stops a beating heart. Every abortion takes a human life.

This is Sanctity of Life Sunday. It’s a Sunday that we set aside to do something very important. That something is not to condemn and pass judgment on the Marki’s of this world.

Just the opposite. She’s a human being that has so much value in the eyes of God that He sent His Son to die on a cross for her. In fact, the Bible says that every human being has that same value.

It says, *For God so loved the world* (that’s Marki and James and you and me) *that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have*

everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16, 17)

God has a passion for people. Why? Sometimes we can be a pretty sorry bunch. What makes human life so precious to God? Why should it be precious to us?

I. Of All Creation, Only Human Life Is Made In God's Image

Human life is unique above all life that exists.

This may be familiar passage to some here this morning but I'd like us to look at
Genesis 1 Page 1

The dictionary defines the word "genesis" as "The coming into being of something; the origin." This is how stuff started. This is where we came from! If we want to understand the issues we need to go back to our origins.

Read Genesis 1:26-27

God's Word is clear. Human life is sacred...because God made it in His image.

John 1:3 All things were made through Him

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth

Isaiah 44:2 Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you...

Turn to Psalm 139 pg 554

Read 13-16

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...

The Bible unequivocally, unhesitatingly testifies to the sacredness of human life from the child in the womb to the elderly person in their final moments of life.

Human life has value and dignity because we are made in God's image.

Once we deny that we're creations of God, created in His image, human life loses its uniqueness. Once we buy into the idea that we're all just cosmic accidents then who's to say that human life has any value at all?

But the truth is, down inside we all know this. We may not all know about the God part, but we know that people have immeasurable value.

Last August we were horrified to hear that 33 miners were trapped by a cave-in at the San Jose mine in Chile. Then we saw the video of the men underground and we started to hope for their rescue.

An amazing 69 days later on Wednesday, October 13 the last of the miners was brought to the surface.

It's estimated that more than one billion people saw the televised rescue of these miners. Why? Why was almost 1/6 of the world's population absolutely transfixed by the event?

Let me ask you this, suppose it would have been 33 field mice that were in that mine. Would you have stayed glued to your TV for hours watching their rescue?

Would a billion people have sat mesmerized by each step of the rescue?

Everybody knows that people have immeasurable intrinsic value. Why is that? Because...

I. Of All Creation, Only Human Life Is Made In God's Image

II. Right Motives Don't Guarantee Right Actions

There have been some people who have claimed to have the good of others in mind but were really lying.

Carl Marx tried to pass himself off as a champion of the little guy. His mantra is summed up in the last 3 sentences of *The Communist Manifesto*. "Workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have the world to gain. Workers of the world, unite!"

The thing was, Marx never did a day's work in his life. He didn't even know any real workers. He despised laborers as being beneath him.

His invention, Communism, went on to enslave millions in "worker's paradises" like The Soviet Union, East Germany, Cambodia, and North Korea.

Another was Margaret Sanger. Sanger was the founder of what is today the largest abortion provider in the US, Planned Parenthood. She's looked upon as a woman of great compassion. Actually she liked to sleep around, hence her commitment to birth control.

She was a eugenicist in the sense that she believed that birth control was the key to "stopping the reproduction of the unfit." That's a quote from her publication, *The Birth Control Review* and an article titled *Birth Control and Racial Betterment*.

If you want to read Sanger's outrageous statements in their context, NYU has most of her writings online.

Planned Parenthood tried to put a positive face on her efforts, but her goals were horrendous and destructive.

If you really want an interesting read sometime pick up Paul Johnson's book "The Intellectuals." He shows how so many of the elite people of influence were total hypocrites.

So, there have been some people who have claimed to have the good of others in mind but were really lying.

But there's no question that plenty of others; writers, activists, and average people, that are driven by compassion and care for others. Many people in the pro-choice movement have a genuine concern for women with unplanned pregnancies. They're trying to do what they believe is best.

The same is true for some who promote euthanasia. They've seen terminally ill people suffering and they believe that it's compassionate to assist them in taking their own life.

There's no doubt that any number of scientists working with fetal stem cell research and cloning honestly have the eradication of diseases as their motivation.

The question isn't always motive, but it is always action. Having the right motive doesn't always lead to the right action. Both Norma McCorvey, who is "Jane Roe" of Roe v. Wade, and Sandra Cano, who is "Mary Doe" of Doe v. Bolton, have both renounced their involvement in those cases and have gone back to court to try to have them overthrown. Today they're both active in the pro-life movement because they realized that their actions were wrong.

So how do we navigate through all the confusing issues of our day? How do we make sure that we have the right motives and the right actions?

If there is a God who has created us as thinking, reasoning, communicative beings and we're made in His image, then He's obviously a thinking, reasoning, communicative being Himself.

If you're God and you have a message for all people of all times and cultures, the best way to get that message out is through a book. The Bible claims to be that book. The Bible is God's method of communicating to all generations.

We don't have time this morning to go into all the striking evidences for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures like fulfilled prophecy, historical accuracy, and scientific accuracy. We have some messages online that cover in depth. But here's what the Bible claims for itself.

Turn to II Timothy chapter 3 page 690

Read verses 16 & 17

Literally that says, "All the writings are breathed out by God." God breathed His message out through human authors. That makes the words they wrote authoritative. In Hebrews 4 it says, *The word of God is living and powerful.*

The Bible says, *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* (Genesis 2:7)

Just like God's life was breathed into Adam, God's life was breathed into the Bible. That's why Timothy goes on to say it's useful for teaching truth, for correcting our wrong ideas, and for putting us on the right path. It equips us for life.

The living Word of God not only impacts our motives, but it also impacts our actions. We get to see life God's way.

Our view of life is so skewed at times. The Bible is a light in the darkness. The Bible brings life into focus by allowing us to see it through God's eyes.

What we know intuitively about the value of human life is all over the pages of the Bible.

If my motive is to help a woman with an unplanned pregnancy, discover a cure for a disease, or best care for a person at the end of life, my motives need the structure of God's eternal truth.

I. Of All Creation, Only Human Life Is Made In God's Image

II. Right Motives Don't Guarantee Right Actions

III. Once We Deny God's Truth We've Opened The Door For Almost Any Evil

This past Wednesday the news services carried this article: Prosecutors charged a Philadelphia abortion doctor with murder on Wednesday, claiming he killed viable babies by cutting their spinal cords after removing them from mothers late in their pregnancies.

Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams charged Dr. Kermit Gosnell and nine associates with seven counts of murder involving babies, but said hundreds of others likely died in the squalid clinic that Gosnell ran from 1979 to 2010. Prosecutors said Gosnell made millions of dollars over three decades performing thousands of dangerous abortions.

"My comprehension of the English language can't adequately describe the barbaric nature of Dr. Gosnell," Williams said at a news conference.

State regulators ignored complaints about Gosnell and the 46 lawsuits filed against him, and made just five annual inspections, most satisfactory, since the clinic opened in 1979, authorities said. The inspections stopped completely in 1993 because of what prosecutors said was the pro-abortion rights attitude that set in.

(In Maryland veterinary clinics are regulated but not abortion clinics!)

We think, "Man, how could anyone be so barbaric?"

Listen to this: Oxford philosopher/bioethicist/eugenicist Jonathan Glover redefines the "sanctity of life ethic" as follows: "It is always intrinsically wrong to destroy a life that is worth living." Only a "person" possesses a life that is worth living. Since unborn, born, and human children, as well as many ill or disabled adult human beings do not have this "quality of life", they do not have a "life that is worth living".

Peter Singer, currently Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University's Center for Human Values, is the founder and first President of the International Bioethics Institute at the U. N., and the founder of "animal rights." Singer actually argues that the higher primates, e.g., dogs, pigs, apes, monkeys are persons, because they exercise "rational attributes."

However, some human beings, even normal human infants, as well as disabled and ill human adults, are not persons. He said, "The notion that human life is sacred just because it is human life is medieval. An animal experiment cannot be justifiable unless the

experiment is so important that the use of a brain-damaged human would be justifiable."

American philosopher/bioethicist Richard Frey who's a Senior Scholar at The Hastings Center actually published an article in a major international bioethics textbook that says, since many adult human beings are not persons (e.g., Parkinson's patients, the mentally ill and retarded, the frail elderly, etc.), and since many of the higher primates are persons, then these adult human non-persons should be substituted in purely experimental research in place of the higher primates who are persons.

I'm not making this up folks. These are recognized bioethicists in leading universities writing articles in textbooks used by medical students.

Once we deny God's truth we've opened the door for almost any evil.

When bioethicists at Oxford and Harvard are teaching that the unborn and the newly born aren't even persons, why not sever their spinal cords? What's wrong with getting rid of the unwanted?

If human life isn't sacred then abortion is Ok under any and all circumstances. If human life isn't sacred than any person should be allowed to end their own life at any time, for any reason. If human life isn't sacred then let's get rid of anyone who doesn't meet our standards for "quality of life." If human life isn't sacred then lets clone people so we can harvest their body parts.

See why so many were warning about the "slippery slope" back in 1973 when Roe v. Wade was passed?

See why once you remove God and His truth from the cogitative processes of any society you loose all standard for right and wrong?

What is our basis for truth? Our founding fathers knew:

George Washington: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

Abraham Lincoln "But for [the Bible] we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare...are to be found portrayed in it."

Noah Webster: "The religion which has introduced civil liberty, is the religion of Christ and his apostles, which enjoins humility, piety and benevolence... This is genuine Christianity, and to this we owe our free constitutions of government."

For decades now we have chipped away at the foundation which was the basis for law and order.

We've said, "We don't need God. We don't need the Bible. We'll give lip service as a nation to religion, but we've chosen be our own gods.

The religion of the day is relativism. I have a book in my library called *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*.

That's where you are without a standard to measure truth. Somehow, no matter what the facts are, people are willing to believe what sounds good to them.

So how should we respond? First we should be very careful not to judge the Markis of this world.

Most women who decide to have an abortion honestly feel like there's no other way out for them.

So often they're pressured by their boyfriends, husbands, or even mothers to end their pregnancy. I've had women tell in confidence that they've had an abortion in the past because they honestly didn't think there was another way. But after the procedure they were flooded with remorse and guilt.

They don't need more guilt. Just like all of us, they need to be set free. Jesus said, *If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.* (John 8:36)

We all have a past. Jesus Christ died and rose again to give us a future. God wants to take our guilt, our shame, and all of our regrets and give us life.

He is the Lord of life. The Bible says, *For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:6-8)

If you've fallen for the lie and had an abortion or encouraged someone else to have an abortion, come to Jesus Christ by faith and receive His forgiveness. It's full and free, bought and paid for by the cross.

In fact if you haven't had an abortion or encouraged someone else to have an abortion, you still need to come to Jesus Christ by faith and receive His forgiveness. The Bible says all have sinned and all need a Savior.

This morning you might be wondering "What can I do to make a difference? I'm just one person, and not a very influential one at that. What can I do?"

First of all you can pray. Pray for our Country. Pray for our president. Pray for our lawmakers to look past the slogans and rhetoric. Pray that reason and truth would prevail.

Along with praying, and of course being politically aware, let me give you a practical way of encouraging and supporting life.

We've done this for several years now and not only is it fun, but it's a tangible way to get started showing care and concern.

Out in the foyer there's a bassinet with baby bottles. Take a baby bottle home and put it in popular spot like your kitchen counter. Let that bottle be a reminder to pray for the Bowie/Crofton/Severna Park Pregnancy Centers and the women who come there. We've been ministry partners with the pregnancy centers for decades now.

They do an outstanding job of assisting women in crisis pregnancies and helping young mothers learn how to raise a child.

For the next four weeks put your spare change in that bottle and at the end of the four weeks we'll collect them.

Here's examples of what spare change can buy:

\$1.70	A pregnancy test
\$15.00	Emergency baby formula for 2 weeks
\$ 25.00	10 Bibles for women & men who come to the centers
\$100.00	2 abstinence presentation for a local high school so that fewer people will need the pregnancy centers
\$ 200.00	1 4D sonogram. If a woman is supposed to make a choice then she needs all the facts.

We'll collect those bottles back on February 20. Through this simple act of caring we can make a difference.

We can have a practical touch that may make a life-long difference to a mother and a child.