

What We Knew

I'd like to begin this morning by asking every one to stand who's been born since January 22, 1973. That would be everybody 34 years and younger. Now I'd like everyone to look around and see the number of people who are standing.

Please be seated. Those people who stood are all people who have lived their entire lives in a society where abortion is completely legal.

For anyone growing up in the past 34 years it probably seems completely natural. For every body who stood it's the only context for life they've ever known.

Tomorrow will be the 34th anniversary of one of the most controversial decisions ever made by the United States Supreme Court. It's also one of the most disunifying decisions they've ever made.

With the stroke of a pen 9 men declared abortion to be a right, protected by the Constitution of the United States.

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 touch on moral issues not only should we talk about them, we must talk about them. We need God's perspective on all moral issues.

Because a society baptizes a moral issue with political overtones doesn't suddenly take the decision out of the realm of morality.

Abortion, stem cell research, euthanasia, designer children, daily we're confronted with issues that transcend science and transcend politics. These are issues that get to the core of who we are as a nation and who we are as Christians.

Roe V. Wade and its companion case, Doe vs. Balton effectively legalized

abortion though all 9 months of pregnancy and struck down every state law restricting abortion.

In ruling in *Roe v. Wade* the Court said, "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

So not knowing when life begins, the court effectively decided it anyway by saying that an unborn person has no right to life afforded by our constitution.

Obviously if there's a question among bioethesists as to when life begins we would want to err on the side of caution.

But the court said rather than protecting life there was another more pressing issue. The right to privacy.

Of course, the supposed right to privacy isn't so obvious in our constitution.

The court said, "Constitution does not explicitly mention any right of privacy." The court found that a "right of privacy" located in the Due Process Clause of the Constitution is "broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."

Justices Byron R. White and William H. Rehnquist wrote emphatic dissenting opinions in this case. Justice White wrote: "I find nothing in the language or history of the Constitution to support the Court's judgment."

Justice Rehnquist wrote, "To reach its result, the Court necessarily has had to find within the scope of the Fourteenth Amendment a right that was apparently completely unknown to the drafters of the Amendment."

The issues of unplanned pregnancies, unwed mothers, when life begins, how we can best help people and at the same time respect the sanctity of human life, are all fundamental issues that we need to think though and respond to wisely.

This Sunday that falls closest to January 22 is what we call Sanctity of Human life Sunday. It's one in which we especially focus on foundational life issues.

This is not a Sunday where we berate, or attack women who have been deceived by the rhetoric and followed the path of abortion.

But it is a Sunday where we allow the Bible to expose us to God's truth. It is a Sunday where we're reminded of how very special we all are to God. It's a Sunday in which we celebrate life because we serve the Lord of Life.

This past week as Doug Hanson and I were talking about His ministry in New Guinea we both marveled at the grip that culture has on any people.

Whether it's the Christians in New Guinea who can't completely shake the old ways of spiritism or Christians in the US who are blinded by materialism we're so often held captive by our culture and don't even realize it until we get out of our culture and are able to see things differently.

We buy into the spirit of the age and don't even question certain cultural assumptions.

In an article entitled "What We Didn't Know," Carrie Gordon Earll who is a fellow with the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity writes:

What do we know now about the impact of abortion that we did not know when it was legalized in 1973?

We did not know that the number of abortions performed nationally would skyrocket reaching more than one million each year.

We did not know that promises of less child abuse and fewer out-of-wedlock births were false.

After legalization, the reported number of child abuse cases quadrupled and the number of births to unmarried women more than tripled.

We did not know that the vast majority of abortions would be for reasons other than rape, incest and the life of the mother, or that most would be among single women.

These "hard case" categories represent approximately 1 percent of all U.S. abortions. Two-thirds of all abortions are among never-married women.

We did not know that abortion advocates would knowingly exaggerate the number of illegal abortion deaths prior to 1973 in order to boost their political case for repealing abortion prohibitions.

The figure that was used was 10,000 deaths a year. The truth is it turned out to be approximately 500 deaths a year. One is too many, still but far from the stated number.

We did not know the physical and mental health risks associated with abortion.

Two years ago The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology published the results of Finnish and American studies that showed an elevated risk of death from cardiovascular diseases in women who had had abortions.

The American study found that compared to women who delivered, those who had abortions were nearly three times more likely to die of circulatory disease and five times more likely to die from cerebrovascular disease during the subsequent eight year period. Researchers believe that higher levels of depression and anxiety following abortion may explain this result.

The Finnish study of suicide after pregnancy found that “the suicide rate after an abortion was three times the general suicide rate and six times that associated with birth.”

We did not know that abortionists would develop barbaric late-term abortion methods, such as “partial-birth abortion.”

We did not know that medical advances would allow physicians to perform surgery on preborn children in the womb.

We did not know that developments in obstetric imaging resulting in 4D-ultrasound technology would allow us to come face to face with preborn children before birth.

We did not know that the two women listed as plaintiffs in the U.S. Supreme Court cases that resulted in legalized abortion, Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, would later regret their involvement and ask that these landmark cases be reversed. Today both Norma McCorvey and Sandra Cano are staunchly pro-life.

Now — three decades and more than 40 million abortions later — we know!”

Bernard Nathanson who was an abortionist and an early pioneer for abortion rights (He was one of the co-founders of NARAL) had performed thousands of procedures without giving it a second thought. Then he radically rethought his position.

Listen to his own words: “I am often asked what made me change my mind. How did I change from prominent abortionist to pro-life advocate? I became director of obstetrics of a large hospital in New York City and had to set up a prenatal research unit, just at the start of a great new technology which we now use every day to study the fetus in the womb.”

That technology was the sonagram. Once he saw life in the womb and fully understood what he was seeing he became staunchly pro-life.

Up until then Nathanson was a declared atheist. He would later write “Although I am not a formal religionist, I believe with all my heart that there is a divinity of existence which commands us to declare a final and irreversible halt to this infinitely sad and shameful crime against humanity.”

But now I want us to see, the fact was we did know. We didn’t want to see the truth, but we did know. God told us the facts in the Bible but we as a society have willfully ignored those truths.

What did we know?

I. We Knew That human Life Was Created In The Image Of God

Three thousand, four hundred years ago God inspired Moses to record the account of the creation of human beings. **Turn to Genesis 1 pg 3**

Read 1:27

God created human beings in His own image. That doesn’t mean we look like God because God is spirit. What it does mean is this...

As close as we might seem to the animal kingdom at times, in reality we’re light years apart. Here’s some aspects of the image of God we see in people.

We are creative. No other species of animal, including the apes, are able to create and understand images of art and drawing.

We have consciousness. Human consciousness is a mystery that has evaded decades of intensive research. One article put it this way: "Despite decades of effort by philosophers and neurophysiologists, no one has been able to come up with a remotely plausible explanation of how the hunk of gray meat in our skull gives rise to private Technicolor experience."

We have personality. Joseph LeDoux, a neuroscientist at New York University: "We have no idea how our brains make us who we are. There is as yet no neuroscience of personality."

We can think abstractly. Daniel J. Povinelli, from the University of Louisiana writes: "Humans constantly invoke unobservable phenomena and variables to explain why certain things are happening. Chimps operate in the world of concrete, tangible things that can be seen. The content of their minds is about the observable world."

And then we can make moral judgments. Dr. Jerome Kagan (a developmental psychologist) points out in his book *Three Seductive Ideas*, "Not even the cleverest ape could be conditioned to be angry upon seeing one animal steal food from another." There are no non-human animal models for human pride, shame, and guilt.

All of those things are a reflection of the fact that we're created in God's image. That's what gives us worth and value. That's why when someone dies it grips us so.

You might shed a tear when your goldfish goes belly up, if you and he were really close, but you'll get over it.

But it isn't that way with human beings, is it?

When I was 8 years old a construction crew was pouring cement for a foundation next door to our house. I was watching when one of the men dropped to the ground. An ambulance was called but by the time it arrived the man had died. That was 50 years ago.

I've forgotten a lot of goldfish over the years but I'll never forget the death of that man. Why? Because he was made in the image of God. His life was infinitely significant. I didn't know him but I knew he was a human being. All of those characteristics of the image of God may get distorted in our life because of sin, but down inside we know there's something absolutely unique about human life.

John Anderson, in his book *Cry of the Innocents* writes this about the question of whether life begins at conception: "...we understand what is meant when this question is asked, and how it is to be answered. But in a majestic sense God's answer is no! Human life had only one beginning, and that was when God created the first human life in His image. Into that initial gene pool He placed all the potential for all human life that was to follow."

"He gave the procreative right, the right to continue to reproduce life in cooperation with Himself, to man and woman, committed for life to each other, their beautiful, joyous, loving union by choice would bring forth children, a heritage from the Lord."

I. We Knew That human Life Was Created In The Image Of God

II. We Knew That God Sanctified Humanity In Jesus Christ

Turn to John chapter 1 pg 938 Read 1-3 vs 14

When it came time for God to provide redemption to a world full of people made in His likeness He entered human history taking on humanity.

The story of the Bible is a story of humanity on the run from God.

From the very beginning, humans have chosen their way over God's way. Some of us do it in obvious, dramatic ways. Some of us in more subtly ways but we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

God says the wages of that sin is death and separation from Him. The only solution is God's solution of salvation which He provides.

God took on humanity to be the sacrifice for humanity's sins. God took on human flesh in order to die as a perfect sacrifice for sinful humans.

In the virgin birth God sanctified humanness. He didn't come as an animal to be sacrificed. He came as a human being.

We knew the value of human life because God clothed Himself in humanity as our Savior.

I. We Knew That Human Life Was Created In The Image Of God

II. We Knew That God Sanctified Humanity In Jesus Christ

III. We Knew That Satan Plots Death And Destruction

Turn to Hebrews 2 page 1062 Read vs 14

In John 10:10 Jesus said, *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

The Bible says that God gives life to all things, is the Lord of life. Job said, *The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.* Job 33:4 Since God is all about life, then Satan is all about death and destruction. He's about anything that confuses people and opposes God.

His agenda can be played out in ways that on the surface seem innocent.

Planned Parenthood's web site says, "Planned Parenthood health centers offer high-quality sexual and reproductive health care, including family planning, gynecological care, STI/STD testing and treatment, and pregnancy testing."

That makes them sound like a helpful organization the just wants to assist people but has specific agenda.

Unfortunately the roots of Planned Parenthood tell a different story.

At a march 1925 International Birth Control Seminar in New York City a speaker warned about "The danger posed by the black and yellow peril."

He wasn't a clansman or a Nazi. He was Dr. Adolphus Knoff, a member of the American Birth Control League.

Another colleague, Lothrop Stoddard, who became a member of the board of

directors of the American Birth Control League authored a book entitled, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*."

He called the Nazi concept of a superior race, "scientific" and "humanitarian."

Dr. Harry Laughlin, who was also on the board of directors, gave an address at the "National Conference on Race Betterment" entitled, "Calculations on Working Out A Proposed Program Of Sterilization."

The American Birth Control League, under the direction of Margaret Sanger eventually changed it's name to Planned Parenthood.

Margaret Sanger, who's presented a a great crusader for women's rights by Planned Parenthood saw the poor, minorities, and even most working class laborers as a threat to society.

Birth control for her was about two things, being able to pursue unrestricted sexual freedom, and limiting the poor.

In "A Plan for Peace," in 1932 Sanger suggested Congress set up a special department to study population problems and appoint a "Parliament of Population." The "Population Congress" would be "to raise the level and increase the general intelligence of population." This would be accomplished by applying a "stern and rigid policy of sterilization and segregation."

In 1968 Alan Guttmacher, who was then president of Planed Parenthood, wrote in his presidential letter "Abortion and sterilization on request should certainly be introduced before family size by coercion is attempted."

Guttmacher said, "We are merely walking down the path that Mrs. Sanger carved for us."

Planned Parenthood's official name is now Planned Parenthood World Population.

it's become the single largest entity in the abortion industry both in performing abortions and referring people to those who perform them.

The Evil one's words sound so appealing. "Promoting women's reproductive health, freedom and dignity."

The real underlying truth is death, destruction, and domination.

I. We Knew That Human Life Was Created In The Image Of God

II. We Knew That God Sanctified Humanity In Jesus Christ

III. We Knew That Satan Plots Death And Destruction

IV. We Knew That God Commands Us To Defend The Defenseless And Minister To Those In Need

I've been in the ministry for 28 years. All that time Roe has been the law of the land.

Over the years I've had women tell me about past abortion decisions. They've told me how they've been haunted by the memories and only found freedom from the pain when they were able to hand over all of their past to God.

I've had them tell me with tears streaming down their faces how at the time it didn't seem like there was any other way. Nobody, not even their family, was there to help. Some were even pressured by their family to have the abortion.

There's something desperately wrong with a society that makes women feel like abortion is the only choice.

In Luke 10 Jesus said we're to love our neighbor as ourselves. Immediately a guy pipes up and says, "Who's my neighbor?"

Look at Jesus' answer. **Luke 10 page 918 Read 30-37**

Our neighbor is not just the guy we're friends with next door, it's anyone around us.

That's why we have a food pantry and a benevolent fund. It's why we take teams up to the Baltimore Rescue Mission, the Ordnance Road Detention Center, Knowlwood Manor Nursing Home, and the Crownsville Teen Behavioral Center.

People have needs and God wants us to have a part in meeting those needs.

That's why we work hand in hand with the Bowie Crofton, Severna Park Pregnancy Clinics. They provide free of charge: pregnancy testing, pregnancy

counseling, sonograms, STD testing, and a whole host of educational programs.

Here are some of those programs: Budgeting, Fathering, Health, Relationships, Job Search/Resume Building, Parenting.

God forbid that young women in our area should believe there's no place to go for help and no one who could understand what they're going through.

God wants us to stand for life, but to do it with a heart of compassion and mercy.

We don't have time this morning to get into all the other bioethical questions of our day.

This past Thursday The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the same embryonic stem cell bill that President Bush vetoed last summer. That's the bad news.

The good news is stem cells have been found in fat, umbilical cord blood and tissue, bone marrow, and amniotic fluid. More therapies using adult stem cell should be soon available in the medical arena.

Where do we start in a confused, mixed-up world? How do we make difficult decisions about abortion, euthanasia, invitro fertilization, stem cell research?

We start with God's clear truth about the Sanctity of human life. We begin with a changeless constant that's not based on confused reasoning. Then we move out from there to tackle the hard issues we're presented with.

Let me just say, if you've fallen for the deception and had an abortion or encouraged someone else to have an abortion, come to Jesus Christ by faith and receive His forgiveness.

We can't undo the past, but we can find the healing touch of God through the cross.

The truth is we're all sinners in need of a savior.

The Bible gives us hope. We can know and be assured of abundant life while

on the earth--and everlasting life in eternity with Christ. We can know where we've come from, why we're here, and where we're going.

The Bible says: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

That's God's Good News to us.

Before we go this morning, 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.

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
\$100.00	2 abstinence presentation for a local high school
\$ 200.00	1 4D sonogram

We'll collect those bottles back on February 18. 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.