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January 18, 2026

Year A

Sanctity of Life

Scripture:

Genesis 1:27

“So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Exodus 20:13

“You shall not murder.”

Psalms 139:13-16

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ 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; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Matthew 5:21

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’”

Let us Pray:

Father, we come to You today grieved by what we see in our country, what is tragically a reality all over the world. A culture of death. A devaluing of life. This devaluing of life begins at conception to the end of natural life. We pray that Your Holy Spirit will come and soften our hearts to Thy will be done, not what is easy or convenient in this moment of time. I pray we as Your children will stand against the evils of the world and protect all life. Let us remember not just today but every day that You sent Jesus Christ, Your only Son, to save us all from the death of sin and to ensure eternal life. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Opening Thoughts:

Life, what a precious thing. I remember as a child trying to grow some pepper plants. We had planted them in a wooden planter sand instead of dirt. We knew planting the seeds in the Georgia clay was not a good idea. The pepper plants needed a lot of attention and water. We needed to make sure they were taken care of everyday. We finally were able to harvest the peppers throughout the summer. Growing those pepper plants in the sand was not an ideal situation. When we can look at life, many of us throughout our life are not living in an ideal situation. That doesn’t mean we need to die or not be born. There is a plan and a reason each and every person is conceived, born, lives and dies. It is not

man's right to supersede God's will. God has knowledge we will never have. We have a limited ability to see and understand the big picture. That is why we need to trust that God has our best interest at hand. Let us take a moment and stop, breathe, pray and listen to see what God has instore in our life.

Opening Question:

What is murder?

Sermon Title: Sanctity of Life

Sermon:

Life and death are important aspects in our Christian life. We can see the importance of life starts the first words of the Bible in Genesis 1:1, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* God created, made and brought into being. Without God, there would be no life here on earth. There is nothing before the beginning.

The difference between life and death is so important the sixth commandment of the Ten Commandments that address the issue of death, Exodus 20:13, *"You shall not murder."* God made it very clear murder is not acceptable and is one of the ten big rules He gave to Moses to put on the stone tablets.

It is not just in the Bible we hear life is important. We can read the teaching of the twelve apostles, a writing from the early Christian church explicitly and uniformly condemned abortion and infanticide. We can read this in text of the Didache, written between 85-110 A.D., which commanded, *"thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them*

when born.” Chapter two in the Didache, is full of other teachings that are considered to be sins according to God and the Bible. This is one of the earliest explicit condemnations of abortion in Christian writings, appearing around the time New Testament books were being written. Abortion must be important enough for the early church to give instruction about how it is forbidden by God.

I know recently there have been campaigns that certain people’s lives matter more than other groups. In God’s view, all life matters. Human life is a gift from God. Acts 17:25 says that God, “*gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*” Acts 17:28 says, “*In Him we live and move and have our being.*” God is the divine source, sovereign creator, and faithful sustainer of life.

When God created life in Genesis 1:27, we can see how He created life. “*So, God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*” The resemblances, man is like God in a series of ways. These ways allow mankind to represent God in ruling, and to establish worthy relationships with God, and with one another, and with the rest of the creation. This “image” and this dignity apply to both “male and female” human beings. The creation of mankind was important to God as well as it is to mankind. Without the level of importance to God, we would be no different in His creation than the animals of the world, the fish of the sea and the plants that cover the earth. Mankind was created to have dominion over all the

earth. There is nothing more important than the creation of mankind in God's eye. We are important to Him and His plans.

Let us look at the most innocent and helpless human life form. That would be a baby. We can see in Psalm 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."*, God makes sure all precautions are made to ensure this new precious life is safely tucked away in a mother's womb. This baby is created in God's image, just like Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. This new life is a gift from God. We can see in Jeremiah 1:5, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*, God knows who you are. This is important. God knows who you are and what He has planned for you. We know God has a plan for this new life. We see in Jerimiah 29:11 God has a plan from your conception, *"For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord."* Unfortunately, mankind thinks they know more than God. The woman becomes distracted by evil. She is focusing on what the world tells her that is right for her new life, and not what God has set forth before her to fulfill God's plan.

At this point, let us remember we are all sinners. We are distracted from God's plan in our life. We know the plan of correction is repentance. This is the same plan for someone that takes the life of an innocent child in a womb by abortion. It is a tragedy of the loss of life. Death of an innocent child is painful. The loss is irreversible. What can be done? All parties involved in this tragedy need to discern their behavior, and repent to God for taking a life. We are sinners. A sin is a sin. God can forgive if you ask Him. When we repent for our sins, our life will be restored in Christ. The goal here is to never repeat this behavior again. One life was lost in abortion, but there are many that are changed forever; the mother, the father, the grandparents, siblings, family members, friends and society at large, only to name a few. Nothing will ever be the same again. We know as a flawed human, we make mistakes. Don't make another mistake by taking an innocent life of a gift from God. There are so many other options that can take the situation of an unplanned pregnancy and be a gift to someone else. Don't think you are taking the easy way out. Think about the life God has entrusted to you. Adoption can be a blessing to everyone involved.

Once we get past the point of conception and the new life has been born, we must continue to protect life. It is not acceptable to take human life to make things easier for the person, their family or society. In Matthew 5:21 *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'"* Taking a life before God's time is not in God's plan. All life is important to God.

Mankind does not have the right to place values on human life that are different from the Creator. Just because one is not perfect in appearance or ability, or have lost their usefulness, that does not mean they do not have value in God's plan for the person or for their plan on this earth. I remember when my father was very ill with a brain tumor. He was dependent on twenty-four-hour care. At the time I can remember asking myself, why doesn't God take him and end his suffering. In time I learned there was a reason. I was the reason. I needed to be with my father in his last days and hours. I needed to tell him I loved him and thank him for my life. He would have died, or they would have ended his life before the time God wanted him to come home, I would not have been granted the gift of time with my earthly father. It was extremely painful at the time, but looking back it is a gift I thank God for every day. Ending my father's life before his natural death would have been murder. We would have been liable for God's judgement in his death. I could not see God's plan at the time, but thank God I was given the opportunity to let God show me the reason for my father's final days of life. This goes back to God having a plan for our life, Jeremiah 29:11. God's plan was not just for me, it was for all involved in my father's life.

Closing Thoughts:

Life is important to God. Our life is so important we can see in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son, whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." Mankind was created in God's image. God knows life is messy. We are

easily distracted by the world. We make decisions that do not fit in God's plan. Mankind is like the peppers I grew as a child when I lived in Georgia. They weren't planted in the right soil and needed constant attention. We humans are the same. There are situations we find ourselves in that need constant attention from God. We need to be open to His plan and direction in our life. We need to listen to God with prayer and discernment. We all make mistakes and are sinners. We need to remember to ask for forgiveness and repent for our actions. No matter what our sin may be, Jesus can intercede with God to forgive us for our transgressions. We need to try our best not to repeat the behavior in our life. If we continue to listen to God, we will be able to harvest a joyful life like I was able to harvest peppers from plants that were planted not in the best situation. God will take where we are and lead us to Him by following Jesus Christ.

Closing Question:

How do we survive after we have made a decision that has changed our life?

Let us Pray:

Heavenly Father, the beauty and dignity of human life was the crowning of Your creation. You further honored that life when your Son became one with us. Help us to realize the sacredness of human life, and to respect it from the moment of conception until the last moment at death. Give us courage to speak with truth and love and with conviction in defense of life. Help us to extend the gentle hand of mercy and

forgiveness to those who do not reverence your gift of life. To all, grant pardon for the times we have failed to be grateful for your precious gift of life or to respect it in others. This we ask this in Jesus' mighty Name. Amen.