

Rev. Matthew Versemann  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Decatur, Illinois  
PRO-LIFE SUNDAY  
January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Before I Formed You In The Womb, I Knew You!**

God's PEACE is ALWAYS YOURS in Jesus. Amen.

Hear the Word of God from Psalm 16, "*They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood – the blood of their sons and daughters – therefore, the Lord was very angry with His people; and He handed them over to their enemies.*"

And Deuteronomy 30, "*Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.*"

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Today, as we celebrate the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, I'd like to share with you these words from Dr. Seuss' book, "Horton Hears A Who":

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, in the jungle of Nool;  
In the heart of the day, in the cool of the pool;  
He was splashing....enjoying the jungle's great joys;  
When Horton, the elephant, heard a small noise!

So Horton stopped splashing. He looked towards the sound.  
'That's funny,' thought Horton, 'There's no one around.'  
Then he heard it again! Just a faint little yelp.....  
'I'll help you,' said Horton, 'But who are you? Where?'  
He looked and he looked. He could see nothing there.  
But a small speck of dust, blowing past in the air!

‘I say,’ murmured Horton, ‘I’ve never heard tell;  
Of a small speck of dust, that is able to yell.  
So you know what I think?.....Why, I think that there must,  
Be someone on top of that, small speck of dust!  
Some sort of a creature, of very small size,  
Too small to be seen, by an elephant’s eyes!

Some poor little person, who’s shaking with fear;  
That he’ll blow in the pool! He has no way to steer!  
I’ll just have to save Him, because after all;  
A person’s, a PERSON, no matter how small!

Dr. Jerome Jejeune, former professor of genetics in France, stated, “*Life has a very, very long history; but each individual has a unique beginning – at the moment of conception.*”

Dr. Hymie Gordon, former chairman of the Department of Genetics at the Mayo Clinic testified, “*By the criteria of molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception.*”

Tragically, over the last 48 years, more than 65 million babies have been aborted in our land. Yet, there is no end in sight. Tomorrow alone, another 2500 babies will be aborted in our land. Yet, the cry to defend life at every stage of existence is like a faint little yelp, on a small speck of dust, flying by in the air-virtually non-existent.

Were it not for the sheer mercy and utter grace of God, our nation would already be destroyed. And we very well may still be destroyed for our sins. And it could be sooner than you think. How can I say that? In Psalm 16 our Lord permitted His own people to be destroyed. You may wonder: ‘*Why would a loving God do that?*’ Well, let’s let God Himself tell us why in Psalm 16, where He says, “***They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood – the blood of their sons and daughters; therefore, the Lord was angry with His people, and He handed them over to their enemies.***”

You see, sinners can reject the Lord, His mercy, and the life that He gives, but not without a price. We begin to reject the Lord and His mercy with every sin. We reject the Lord of Life, and His mercy when we insist, “*My choice to abort my baby is a fundamental right*”. Let’s evaluate that claim on the basis of God’s Word.

On the one hand it’s true, that God has endowed us with the ability to make choices. However, God has set limits on what choices are God-pleasing and receive His blessings, and which choices are sinful, and reap His wrath. In Proverbs 6, our Lord tells us, “***These are the things that the Lord hates....that are detestable to Him.... hands that shed innocent blood.***”

In fact, even in societies that demand the “Freedom Of Choice”, there really is no absolute “Freedom Of Choice”, nor can there be! Early in our nation’s history, the Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott decision that “black people were not ‘fully persons’ in the eyes of the Law.” And because of that wrong decision, many people practiced their so-called ‘right to choose’ to have slaves. Until finally someone asked, “*Choose to enslave another person equally created by God, simply on the basis of their skin color?*” ***Absolutely not!*** That choice is a sin against God, and we will not permit that choice. And it took a war to bring that sin to an end.

In the 1930’s-1940’s, in WWII Germany, another group of people claimed that Jewish people were not fully persons, nor were the handicapped, or any other number of groups, and they claimed their so-called right to choose to get rid of such people. Of course, they didn’t call it murder. Hitler said it was merely ‘the elimination of society’s parasites’. Finally, the world stepped in and asked, “*Choose to kill fellow human beings, equally created by God?*” ***Absolutely not!*** That choice is a sin against God, and we will not permit that choice. And again, it took another war to save human lives from an enemy consumed with death.

The question for us is: ‘Will God have to send another war upon our nation, to bring our killing to an end?’ Don’t say He can’t. And don’t say He won’t. He can. And He has. Remember Psalm 16, “***They shed the blood of their sons and daughters – therefore, the Lord was angry with His people, and He handed them over to their enemies.***”

A number of years ago, Dr. Leon Kaas wrote in the journal, The Public Interest, these words, “*We are clearly witnessing the erosion of our idea of humankind as something splendid and divinely created! And clearly, if we choose to view ourselves as meat, then meat we shall become.*”

In other words, if we insist on viewing another person’s life as expendable, then the day may come, when those who survive our killing, may view our lives expendable too. Again, “*while God has endowed us with the ability to make choices...in His wisdom and love, He has also set limits on what choices are God-pleasing and receive His blessings, and what choices are sinful and reap His wrath.*”

In Luke 18, God’s Word says, “***People were bringing babies to Jesus, to have Him touch them.***” And the greek word for “babies” - which is ‘brephos’ - is used here for little babies between birth and 2 years old, that the people were bringing to Jesus to have Him bless them. But now, notice something big, our Lord uses the same greek word for “babies” that are already born, as He does of the baby John the Baptist while he is still in his mother’s womb. In Luke 1, it says, “*When Mary entered the house, the ‘BABY’ in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy.*” In other words, Jesus uses the same greek word for babies already born, and babies who are still in their mothers’ wombs. Then Jesus adds these words: “***Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.***”

For 48 years now, our nation has hindered over 65 million babies from coming to Jesus, and receiving God’s kingdom, in the waters of Baptism, and through the Word of God. Were it not for God’s mercy and His long suffering, our nation would already be destroyed.

From the time of Christ until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christian opposition to abortion was spontaneous and universal. Less than 100 years after Christ’s death and resurrection, the Christian document ‘The Didache’ already said: “*You shall not murder a child by abortion.*” The early church fathers declared the same. Clement of Alexandria wrote, “*Those who conceal their immorality – referring to having sex outside of marriage – Those who conceal their immorality by taking drugs to bring about an abortion, completely lose their humanity, along with their fetus.*”

Tertullian wrote: *“To hinder a birth is merely to speed up its’ murder.’* And finally, The Apostolic Constitutions stated, *“You shall not kill your child by causing abortion....for everything that is shaped by God, and has received a soul from Him, if it be killed, will be avenged.”*

It’s only been in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that many erring Christians have begun to condone, and even defend abortion, while others have given up the fight due to “abortion apathy”. In Deuteronomy 30 God’s Old Testament people were preparing to enter the Promised Land. They had been wandering and dying in the wilderness for 40 years, because their forefathers had made a CHOICE to not follow God. And the consequence of their rejecting God was that, that whole generation died in the wilderness. But God in His mercy raised up a new generation that was now standing on the verge of the Promised Land. But before they entered the Promised Land God asked this new generation, *“Would they follow their Lord, Who had redeemed them because He loved them, and placed infinite value on their lives; or would they CHOOSE to turn away from Him, and die?”* Deuteronomy 30 says, *“Behold this day, I set before you life and death....now choose life, so that you and your children may live...And the Lord is your life.”*

True life is NOT found in satisfying ones’ sinful desires, simply because you can legally eliminate the consequences of your sin. NO! For the Lord is your life! So *Deut. 30 concludes by saying, “For if your heart turns away from Me, and if you are drawn to worship other gods – and remember, ‘other gods’ can include yourself – then I declare to you this day, that you will surely be destroyed.”*

Molecular biology tells us, genetics tells us, history tells us, and the Word of God tells us that life begins at conception, and it is a sacred gift of God to be protected at every stage of existence. Psalm 139 says, *“O Lord, You knit me together in my mother’s womb, and I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* And Jeremiah 1 adds, *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you!”*

Christians more than anyone else need to stand together in our opposition to abortion because of what God has done for us in Christ. Not only did He create us, and protect our lives in our mother’s womb,

but even more than that, when you and I were not the children God wanted us to be; when we were handicapped by sin; enemies by nature, and there was nothing in us that could improve God's quality of life; when our very sins required the death of God's own Son for us to have life; when God could have aborted us, it was then that God had a CHOICE to make – and GOD CHOSE LIFE! The CHOICE God made towards imperfect, handicapped, and sinful children was not to sacrifice us, but to save our lives, by sacrificing His only Son; so that we could all be children of our heavenly father, by adoption, through the waters of Baptism.

We have a Savior, Who loved us so much that He bloodied His hands, to save us from all of the sinful blood we have on our hands. We have a Savior Who loves us so much that He nailed Himself to the cross, so that we don't have to keep nailing ourselves for the wrong choices we make! We have a Savior Who loves us so much that He has forgiven even the cannibalism of abortion, and in return He has given us His own body broken, and His own blood shed, to eat and to drink for the complete forgiveness of our sins. This is how loved every life is to Jesus. And now that our lives are wanted by God, and we've been spared, saved, and forgiven by Jesus, it changes us to be those who love, defend, and choose life over death, at every stage of existence.

In closing, the late Dr. Jean Garton, former pro-life leader in our synod, who was a champion for life for many years, related the story of a village in Europe during WWII. All of the men and boys were off fighting. Only the young children, women, and elderly remained! And then the day they all feared finally arrived, as they saw the dust of the oncoming army rising in the distance! The mothers packed up their children, and ran in the opposite direction. The old people picked up a few belongings and did the same thing. But one old lady picked up a broom, and ran in the direction of the oncoming army! All the people yelled at her, "You crazy old lady. What are you doing? What good will a broom be against guns and tanks?" And the old lady held her broom high and said, "It may not do any good. But at least they'll know whose side I'm on. And if nothing else, I will delay their killing you." 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5 says, "***Christ died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and came to life again.***" Dear Christians, it's time to raise up a broom for life, wherever you are! AMEN!