

Sanctity of Life

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[0 : 00] Today, as we continue our study of worldview, that is the way we view the world around us, now that Roger has provided us a sound introduction, we'll begin addressing specific issues related to worldview.

And ideally, what we're striving to accomplish through this study is to develop a biblical worldview of the subjects we discuss, which I believe requires a foundational presupposition.

As we've heard from Roger, and I'll reiterate once more this morning, Romans 12 says, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

As Christians, we strive to see the world as God would have us to see it. He does not grant us the liberty to form opinions and moral judgments based on our own desires or our own rationales. Instead, he demands that we learn his will. We must discern his will, which is good, acceptable and perfect. So before we discuss any particular worldview issue, we must begin by recognizing and affirming the foundational truth that the Bible is God's breathed out, infallible, inerrant, authoritative word.

[1 : 40] Third, as Paul writes, all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

If we want to determine what is true, that is, what we should believe, and what is right, that is, what we should do, how we should live, we must affirm God's word as our one and only authority for what is true and what is right.

We must test every claim, every ethic, and every issue that we face by scripture. At the same time, we must deny that our beliefs and our conduct should ever be dictated by anything other than the Bible.

That stands to reason, but I'll make the point anyhow. Culture is irrelevant. Majority opinion, irrelevant. Traditions may be irrelevant.

Personal feelings are irrelevant. Philosophy is irrelevant. God's word is our sole authority as we seek to determine what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[2 : 58] Now, you'll also discover that many of the issues we'll address throughout this series, and perhaps even more that we don't come to address, require a second foundational point.

Namely, God created every person equally in his own image. As divine image bearers, all people have immeasurable value and dignity before God and deserve honor and respect and protection. Everyone has been created by God and for God. God is not. God is. This being the case, it means our socioeconomic status, our ethnicity, our religion, our sex, our age, our physical condition, or any other trait we may possess neither negates nor contributes to our worth as image bearers of God. For our purposes today, let me really stress that human life is inherently sacred, and it's inherently sacred by virtue of our creation.

And because it is sacred, protecting human life is imperative for us. Absolutely imperative. God expresses this point plainly in Genesis 9-6 when he says, Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

[4 : 45] It is wrong to kill an image bearer of God because he is an image bearer of God. With that in mind, will you go with me to Psalm 106, Psalm 106.

Psalm 106 contains a long list of Israel's sins. The people were guilty of rebellion, according to verse 7, craving what they shouldn't crave, according to verse 14, jealousy, according to verse 16, idolatry, according to verse 19, despising God's gifts to them, in verse 24, and on and on it goes.

But it's the last sin of this psalm that grabs my attention and I want to focus on today. Notice verses 37 and 38. The psalmist laments, They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons. They poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. So the writer names sin after sin after sin. Then he stops right here, as though this particular crime is the very worst the people of Israel had committed. They had reached the utter depths of their depravity by killing their own children.

[6 : 30] I mean, why go any further? If we can't see the hardness of their hearts with this terribly heinous act, there is nothing the psalmist could say that would convince us.

Before I go any further, I'd like to actually read the psalm in full. I had a pastor early on in my ministry who told me to never stand and read more than 10 verses in a row, but I trust you don't mind.

Praise the Lord. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Who can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord or declare all his praise?

Blessed are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times. Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people. Help me when you save them, that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.

Both we and our fathers have sinned. We have committed iniquity. We have done wickedness. Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works.

[7 : 41] They did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power.

He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert. So he saved them from the hand of the foe, and redeemed them from the power of the enemy, and the waters covered their adversaries.

Not one of them was left. Then they believed his words. They sang his praise. But they soon forgot his works. They did not wait for his counsel.

But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert. He gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease among them. When men in the camp were jealous of Moses and Aaron, the Holy One of the Lord, the earth opened up and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

Fire also broke out in their company. The flame burned up the wicked. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped a metal image. They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

[8 : 44] They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. Therefore he said he would destroy them.

Had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to turn away his wrath from destroying them? Then they despised the pleasant land, having no faith in his promise.

They murmured in their tents, and did not obey the voice of the Lord. Therefore he raised his hand, and swore to them that he would make them fall in the wilderness, and would make their offspring fall among the nations, scattering them among the lands.

Then they yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead. They provoked the Lord to anger with their deeds, and a plague broke out among them. Then Phineas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stayed, and that was counted to him as righteousness from generation to generation forever.

They angered him at the waters of Meribah, and it went ill with Moses on their account, for they had made his spirit bitter, and he spoke rashly with his lips. They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord commanded them, but they mixed with the nations and learned to do as they did.

[9 : 56] They served their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons. They poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood.

Thus they became unclean by their acts, and played the whore in their deeds. Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people, and he abhorred his heritage. He gave them into the hand of the nations, so that those who hated them ruled over them.

Their enemies oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their power. Many times he delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes, and were brought low through

their iniquity.

Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress when he heard their cry. For their sake, he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love. He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

[11:05] Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting, and let all the people say, Amen. Praise the Lord. Amen.

In the time it takes to read Psalm 106, more than 300 babies are aborted worldwide.

The United States alone has killed nearly 64 million children since 1973, when abortion was essentially legalized nationwide through Roe v. Wade.

To give you some context, Hitler's genocide of the Jews killed approximately 6 million people. The world has murdered four times that many unborn babies just this year.

Just this year, the United States has aborted nearly as many children as the number of soldiers who died in the Civil War. It may surprise you to learn, though, that abortion is not an exclusively modern problem.

[12:11] The Epistle of Barnabas, a Christian letter written in the early 2nd century, states, You shall not slay the child by procuring abortion, nor again shall you destroy it after it is born.

Now, I can't be certain why someone felt the need to write that, but evidently the need existed. In his commentary on the book of Exodus, John Calvin writes, The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy.

If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light.

Now, granted, Calvin was not addressing abortion as we know it, but he offers an excellent defense of the sanctity of life nonetheless. In the second century, a believer by the name of Tertullian, he wrote, In our case, murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the fetus in the womb, while as yet the human being derives blood from other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder birth is merely a speedier man-killing, nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a man which is going to be one.

[13:44] You have the fruit already in the seed. Written in the first or second century, somewhere in there, the epistle to Diognetus says, Christians marry and have children just like everyone else, but they do not kill unwanted babies.

Now, I cite these sources, several from the early church, and I could cite a few more because I want you to see that, number one, human nature hasn't changed in the last 2,000 years.

And number two, it seems the church has always needed to address the issue of abortion for one reason or another. It seems every generation of humanity has found one excuse or another to murder children.

Now, getting back to the text in Psalm 106, people are usually driven, though this is not what anyone will admit to, but they are usually driven by a devotion to an idolatrous, satanic system and worldview.

The text says they serve their idols. They sacrifice their sons and their daughters to the demons. Is the psalmist describing abortion?

[15:03] No. But Israel's sacrifice of children has obvious parallels to the modern problem of abortion. First of all, they weren't sacrificing bulls and goats here.

they sacrificed their sons and their daughters. Verse 37. The people placed their own biological children on altars, slit their tiny throats and waited for the blood to drain from their bodies. not only did they voluntarily commit countless murders of living people, but they killed those whom the Bible calls a heritage from the Lord, their own children.

But what does the world say? They claim the unborn child isn't a child at all. The pro-abortionist argues a baby in the womb is not yet a person, so it's irrelevant.

But I have to ask why. Is it the child's size? Does a larger person become more human than a smaller person?

[16:22] Is it the child's location? Well, you tell me, how does traveling a few inches down the birth canal turn a non-human into a human?

Do I become more human if I take an extra step away from my mother? Is it the child's dependency on his mother that prevents him from being a real person?

Well, aren't all children dependent on their mothers for years and years? What about the physically and mentally disabled person? Aren't they dependent on others?

Aren't we all dependent on others to some degree or another? Does that make us less human? Is it the child's level of development?

Well, the most recent science says a human brain isn't fully developed until the age of 25. Does that mean we can permit and excuse the murder of anyone who's, say, not old enough to rent a car?

[17:32] Try as they might, the pro-abortionists cannot avoid the fact that the unborn child is just as much of a human as anyone else. To say otherwise is to argue against science, biology, logic, and most importantly, it argues against the word of God.

In Psalm 139, David says, Lord, you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

In Psalm 22, he says, from my mother's womb you have been my God. Now, a second parallel to abortion exists in this text.

They poured out innocent blood. Verse 38. They poured out innocent blood. The children are innocent and that they are free of blame.

They've committed no crime worthy of death, yet someone has put them to death anyhow. It's the equivalent of shooting a random person on the street. Abortion is the execution of a living person who does not deserve to die at the hand of another living person.

[18:49] God says, you shall not murder. Now, to be clear, the Bible explicitly defines an unborn child as a living person.

According to God's law in Exodus 21, starting with verse 22, when men strive together and hit a pregnant woman so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined as the woman's husband shall impose on him and he shall pay as the judges determine.

But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Now, if this law were applied to a case of abortion, that means those responsible for killing an unborn child would have to at the very least swallow some deadly poison.

and if that doesn't work, then we'll have to find a way to violently suck them up with a kind of vacuum.

[20:12] And if that doesn't work, well, we'll just tear them apart piece by piece. Now, I'm not trying to be graphic for the sake of sensationalism.

I'm merely describing what has been and what will continue to be in some parts of the country the legal process of abortion by which millions of children have been murdered.

Millions. And while people scream for women's rights, they say nothing for the true victims in this. What about the unborn child's life?

What about justice for them? Should a woman's so-called right to avoid the inconveniences of childbirth outweigh a baby's right to live? There's a third parable I see in this text to abortion, and that is motive.

The motive. Again, verses 36, 37, they serve their idols. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons.

[21:24] Now, what could motivate an otherwise rational person to think murdering an unborn child is justifiable? I don't think the reasons are substantially different than they were for those who sacrificed their children to Molech or any other false god in the Old Testament.

People once sacrificed their children to Molech because they believed he would protect them. He would protect their nation. He would bring blessings upon them.

In other words, it was a self-serving act, right? They did it for themselves. It's not as though they were volunteering to sacrifice themselves. They were ensuring their own well-being by forcing their children to pay the price.

people sacrifice their children today for the same self-centered rationale. They don't do it for the child's sake, though that is often the claim.

They do it for themselves. Ultimately, according to the psalmist, they do it in devotion to idols and demons. Maybe the idol of a would-be mother is the convenience of not having a baby to whom to raise or put up for adoption.

[22 : 40] Maybe the idol is avoiding the pains of childbearing. Maybe it's an unfounded assumption that the child would be better off dead than alive. Regardless, it's all idolatrous.

Abortion will always be an idolatrous, devilish act. Jesus told some of the Jewish leaders in his day who, of course, wanted him dead, you are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning. Now, to be candid, I truly hope that I am stirring up some righteous indignation this morning.

I want us to hate abortion. I want us to despise it. I pray the thought of it just makes us sick to our stomach. I pray we see the injustice of it.

Just as Canaan once was, our land is polluted with blood. The blood of millions of murdered children. The United States has become unclean by this act as the nation, according to verse 39, plays the whore in its deeds.

[23 : 57] And in turn, verse 40, the anger of the Lord is surely kindled against us. Even so, even so, there's another side to this psalm we need to see, and that's the reason I read it in full.

Did you notice how it begins and ends with a call to praise God? Though the psalmist offers a list of Israel's sins, he presents that list right in the middle of what is one long doxology.

In the first verse, he says, praise the Lord. In the final verse, he says again, praise the Lord. It's interesting. Then, sprinkled throughout this psalm, are expressions of gratitude for God's mercy.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Verse 1. Verse 8. He saved them for his namesake that he might make known his mighty power.

Verse 10. He saved them from the hand of the foe and redeemed them from the power of the enemy. Verse 23. He said he would destroy them had not Moses stood in the breach before him to turn away his wrath.

[25 : 15] And on and on it goes. According to this psalm, whom is God redeeming by his steadfast love and mercy?

The answer is Israel. The very people who sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons and poured out innocent blood. As Christians, you know, we often find ourselves talking about abortion amongst ourselves.

And not only do we identify it as sin, but we also, generally speaking, feel the kind of righteous anger we should feel when we think about it.

We despise it. And equally important, we also feel compassion for the victims. We hurt for the victims. Now, perhaps we should talk about it even more to prevent ourselves from growing cold or indifferent to it, but we address it, we talk about it.

Unfortunately, though, we don't always talk about the solution. What do we do? In recent years, I've heard a lot of discussion around matters of social justice, and specifically the church's involvement in forms of social justice.

[26 : 38] No one seems to agree, however, what exactly the church is supposed to do to rectify these injustices in our society. What's our role in the fight against, say, abortion?

Should we protest outside of Planned Parenthood? Are we supposed to sign petitions? Should we call our congressmen? What exactly are we supposed to do? Now, if you're waiting for a list of options, you may be a little disappointed, because I'll give you only one today, but I believe it may be, it's certainly in the top of the most important things we can do as the church.

Everything else we do should probably be framed by this one action, and I'll even summarize it with a single word, grace.

Grace. The reason the psalmist can rejoice despite Israel's heinous sins is because God is merciful. will be faithful. Though he admits we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedness, he can also give thanks because the Lord is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

[28 : 04] God the psalmist can praise God not because Israel was without sin, but because God is gracious.

He saves his people, and he forgives their sins. How exactly does God save and forgive? Writing to the Corinthians, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, at the very start of the chapter, he says, I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and

by which you are being saved.

I deliver to you of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

believers. Let's be clear about something. A Christian is not inherently better than, say, the abortion doctor. The only thing that separates the believer who opposes abortion from the abortionist with literal blood on his hands is the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

That's a big difference, but that's the only difference. If not for redemption, through the atoning work of Christ, we'd all stand guilty before God.

[29 : 36] In other words, God's grace is the solution to the abortion problem or any other problem we have in this country. Jesus said, if you want to enter the kingdom of God, you must be born again.

abortion, you must enter into an altogether new life. Maybe you once had an abortion, or maybe you once perceived abortion to be little more than an issue of women's rights.

You weren't against it. You didn't see any moral problems with it. Maybe you once protested in favor of abortion. None of that matters once you are saved through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world may be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned.

The most significant thing we can do as believers to combat the moral decline of the nation and the injustice that looms all around us is to preach the gospel.

[30 : 57] That's pretty simple, right? Preach the gospel. One of the last things Jesus told his disciples before his ascension into heaven was, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Let's take a moment to break that down. First Christ says, go. Implied in this is don't sit idly by as the world deteriorates and countless children are killed in this case.

Go, get busy, be proactive. Psalm 106 says, blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times. Doing nothing is really not an option for us.

Jesus said, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. second, he says, go and make disciples.

Now, wait a minute. I thought our goal was to prevent injustice, to stop abortion. That's right. But how do you propose we change people's minds regarding this inherently moral issue without changing their hearts?

[32 : 20] And how do we change their hearts apart from the gospel, which is our means by which we come to know God and His grace and what constitutes true justice?

If we want to turn the world upside down as the apostles once did, making disciples, that's our priority. We must preach the gospel, give people Christ before all else.

We can strategize endlessly about the steps the church should take in changing the culture of this nation, but the most substantial tool we have outside of prayer is the gospel itself, the good news of our Savior.

yes, pray for this country. Talk to people about abortion. Try to persuade them to the best of your ability.

Sign a petition. Protest if you feel you should, always peaceably, of course. Call your congressman, but above all else, share the gospel.

[33 : 39] Obey the Great Commission. Make disciples, people, because only then will you actually see any real change take place. Ultimately, what this country needs is not new legislation or more conservative politicians, not exclusively, anyhow, but Jesus Christ.

That's what we need. You know, so don't waste your time talking to someone about abortion if you never mention how God created man in his own image.

Don't bother protesting if your chants or your signs don't contain the words for God so loved the world that he gave his only son. Sinners need Jesus.

Not science, not politics, not arguments of logic. Sinners need the gospel. Amen? Now, as I'm sure everyone knows by now, we have tremendous reason to be very thankful today.

After nearly 50 years, Roe v. Wade has been overturned, and I think that's something we should smile about. That is something we should praise God for. That is something we should be overjoyed about.

[35 : 03] But, while a great number of lives may be spared in the near future, and I certainly pray they do, perhaps the worst thing the church can do right now is celebrate her way into complacency.

Only God knows the future, but I fear that some of the most populous states in this country are about to become even more aggressive in their pursuit of a pro-abortion agenda. I've even heard a handful of lawmakers recently promote and propose abortion not only up to the time of birth, but after birth.

And, while a part of me would like to be very rational and think in a common-sense manner and assume that everybody else is rational and thinks with common sense and say that will never happen, I'm sure we have seen a lot of things in our lifetime that someone at some point likely said that will never happen.

So, my strong exhortation to myself, my family, my church, to everyone and I know is please continue praying.

[36 : 25] Do not stop. Continue fasting. Continue preaching the gospel to as many people who will listen. Praise God for the end of Roe v.

Wade, but continue praying earnestly because the world has not stopped pouring out innocent blood just yet. Can we pray again?

Our heavenly and gracious Father, we do certainly praise and thank you for the Supreme Court decision this last week.

We thank you for every life you have spared along the way, though abortion has been illegal nationwide for 49, almost 50 years.

There have been many moments when you have allowed somebody to cross paths with maybe a distraught mother who was about to go into one of these abortion clinics and you stood in their way, you changed her heart, you changed her mind, and Lord, we thank you for each and every instance of that.

[37 : 29] We thank you for intervening with any woman who maybe has considered abortion but has not gone through with it. Lord, we thank you for all of the wonderful blessings that have been born into this world, and each one of them is a heritage from you.

It is your prized possession which you grant to us as a blessing in our life, and Lord, I pray that we all see children as just that. They are truly a remarkable and wonderful gift to this world and to each of us.

I pray more hearts will see it. I pray more hearts will understand that we're not talking about a lump of cells. We're talking about someone who is fearfully and wonderfully made, knitted together as he or she is in his or her mother's womb.

Lord, you know these children. They have identities. They have dignity. They are made in your image. Lord, I pray that we will do all that we know how to do to protect them, to defend them, to speak out for them.

And as time passes, and I don't know what the future holds, but Lord, I pray you will continue to be with this country and roll back these legal abortions more and more if it be your will.

[38 : 54] We want to see the end of the senseless murder of children. Lord, we want to see justice prevail. We want to see you glorified through life, not through the killing of these children.

Lord, I pray that you would give us a mind to know what to do. When the opportunities present themselves, be it talking to a neighbor, a friend, or whatever it might be, Lord, we see the injustice, but we don't always know how to act.

So give us a mind to discern situations, the wisdom to know exactly what to say, what to do in all cases. Lord, ultimately, we want to see life preserved, but we want to see you glorified through it all. And at the same time, we look forward to a day, Lord, when we know that justice will prevail, you will be glorified, and the sins we've committed will be a thing of the past.

And all of this is by your mercy, your grace, your everlasting love, and the atoning work of your Son on the cross. We owe it all to you.

[40 : 06] In Christ's name I pray, amen. We're dismissed.