

Pastor Paul Bawden
Grace Evangelical Church
Sunday, January 11, 2009 – Sanctity Of Life Sunday
Life – Priceless
Psalm 139

On January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in its Roe v. Wade decision, struck down the abortion laws of all 50 states.

This action made abortion on demand, at virtually every stage of pregnancy, the law of our land. The United States has one of the most permissive abortion laws of any nation in the Western world.

Intercessors for America reports that, since 1973, abortion has killed more than 50 million preborn children. Imagine that – 50 million preborn children.

Think about the number of American War Casualties in combat related deaths, for which we are saddened, yet grateful for these who gave their lives for our freedom. But note with me some numbers.

Revolutionary War – 25,324 casualties.

Civil War – 498,332 casualties.

World War I – 116,708 casualties.

World War II – 407,316 casualties.

Korean War – 54,246 casualties.

Vietnam War – 58,655 casualties.

Gulf War – 293 casualties.

Iraq War - 4,222 Americans, 4,538 coalition deaths

War on the Unborn – 50 million at least, of the unborn have had their lives aborted or killed.

Amazing what man does when the biblical God is not honored and obeyed.

I understand that more than half of the women obtaining abortions – 52% – are younger than 25, while another 20% are teenagers.

On average, young women give at least three reasons for choosing abortion:

- **Three-quarters that having a baby would interfere with their work, school or other responsibility**
- **Two-thirds say they cannot afford a child.**
- **One-half say they do not want to be a single parent or are having problems with their husband or boyfriend.**

Yet 84% of women who chose an abortion say they would have kept their babies under better circumstances. If abortions were illegal, 72% say they definitely would not have sought one.

And now we have a President elect who has made a campaign promise that he will sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). What would this ACT do?

As I understand it, the Freedom Of Choice Act would eliminate all federal and state laws passed that restrict abortion. **It is the promise made to Planned Parenthood and other abortion supporters in California, New York, Washington D.C. and elsewhere that would do the following to our state of Wisconsin (as given in the Wisconsin Right To Life – Dane County Publication – called "Lifeline" December 2008 issue).**

Note what the Freedom of Choice Act, if signed, would do in Wisconsin.

- **Take away Wisconsin's parental notification rules.**
- **Allow partial birth abortions anywhere in Dane County.**
- **Eliminate waiting periods and additional information for women seeking abortions.**

- **Use our tax dollars to fund abortions here in Wisconsin, anywhere across the county and overseas.**
- **Put doctors at Meriter, St. Mary's and UW and anywhere at-risk of losing their medical licenses if they refuse to perform an abortion any time, on demand.**
- **Puts funding and the legal status of pro-life crisis and counseling services at risk.**

The Freedom of Choice Act would supercede any action taken in Wisconsin to protect its citizens.

Laws in place which have been saving lives since 1973 would be wiped out.

Since the Freedom of Act is Federal and overarching in scope, there would be no hope of passing future laws protecting unborn life. All gains to curtail the destruction caused by Roe v. Wade would be eliminated.

Of course such is a very serious matter, and if signed, the Freedom of Choice Act would have devastating effects on the pro-life movement. Court battles would certainly result.

In fact, this past week both the Wisconsin State Journal and the Chicago Tribune published an Associated Press story about the possible provision of second-trimester abortion procedures from 13 up to 22 weeks at Madison Surgery Center (MSC).. MSC is a private joint venture of the UW Medical Foundation, UW Hospital and Clinics and Meriter Hospital.

A final decision about whether to provide these services will be made by the MSC Board of Directors after each of its members consider the proposal and determines its direction. This issue has already been discussed with the Meriter and UWMF Boards. UWHC will address the proposal with its Board of Directors at its February board meeting.

Nationwide and locally, second trimester abortions account for 10 percent or fewer of total abortion procedures.

For many years, Dr. Dennis Christensen provided these services at Planned Parenthood facilities. With the retirement of Dr. Christensen in late December, there is no area clinic that provides such procedures. Without local availability, Madison-area women will be forced to travel to obtain this service, and may obtain the service under conditions that are less than optimal.

The concerned physicians who brought this issue forward and many UW Health and Meriter leaders believe there is a public-health responsibility to provide these procedures as part of a comprehensive program of family planning and reproductive health care.

Groups including the Arizona-based Alliance Defense Fund and ProLife Wisconsin have issued public statements opposing the plan.

UW Health and Meriter recognize that in our diverse society there are a broad array of deeply held beliefs and opinions on the abortion issue. Great care is being taken to ensure that the proposal conforms to state laws governing this area of care, including the development of policies and procedures that guarantee that:

*** Participation by physicians, other care providers, students or trainees will be strictly voluntary. Those with religious or moral objections are free to opt out and will not be penalized in any way for doing so; and**

*** No state funds (other than legal Medicaid exceptions) will be authorized or paid to physicians or MSC for the performance of an abortion. Payment will come directly from patients, private insurance and/or other private sources.**

Such is a sad state of affairs if this action takes place! Those for providing abortion make it sound so right – calling it a public health responsibility to provide this so-called procedure. Those with religious moral objections will be free to opt out, for participation will be voluntary – trying not to upset anyone – very politically correct.

What about the unborn baby, the living human being:? Who is speaking out for the unborn baby?

But what does the biblical God say about the abortion issue that plagues this great country? I say, the biblical God, for unless there is a biblical world view regarding the abortion issue, there is only man's view which gives man and woman the option to live as they please without any seeming consequences – just get an abortion.

That's why there is a Sanctity of life Sunday in January, to remind us of the value of the life God has created in the womb, but this Sanctity of Life Sunday, also extends beyond the unborn to those who are disabled, those in care centers, those who are hurting with some of life's ills, perhaps hanging on to life by a thread. In other words, this is the Sunday that we think about all the issues that are affecting LIFE, yes even how we treat each other.

To gain the biblical God's view on LIFE, let's look at the Psalm 139.

1. God is our Creator – The Creator of Life (Psalm 139:13-18) – Our true identity comes from God.

Note what David pens under the direction of the Spirit of God.

(1) You (God) formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb (139:13).

"Form" refers to God creating David in his mother's womb. David knew that he was not the product of evolution but the creation of the biblical God.

(2) Personal pronouns described David (139:14-16).

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (139:14).

"My frame was not hidden from You." (Psalm 139:15).

"When I was made in secret." (139:15). Skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth – a reference to the womb as mysterious and the netherworld.

"Your eyes have seen my unformed substance" referring the embryo (139:16).

"In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them" (139:16).

Here David is saying that God had prior knowledge of him before he was born.

What a personal touch is that on David's life, on each of our lives! We are created by the Creator of the universe. His special touch is on each of us!!

David is stressing that even in his mother's womb he was a person, an individual.

(3) David's uniqueness (139:14).

Note Psalm 139:14 again. I am fearfully and wonderfully made, meaning he was separately created and was distinguished from the other works of God's creation.

****David's physical body was created by God.**

Shakespeare has written this about man: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god -- the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!"

And to think that the our amazing bodies come from just two tiny cells: the female egg (ovum) and the male sperm coming together – life begins. Obviously, God's handiwork.

At the end of a month, the growing embryo has its own circulatory system, at the end of the second month the baby is only an inch long; at the end of the third month a bony structure is beginning to form; at the end of the sixth month the baby is 10-14 inches long; During the seventh month the baby begins to move about, and two more months of prenatal life are added to complete the maturing process before birth.

How much are our physical bodies worth as an adult? I understand that on the level of basic chemical components, we aren't worth a whole lot. I understand that our bodies contain \$7.12 worth of phosphorous, \$5.95 worth of potassium, and about four bucks worth of a dozen other substances for a total of \$17.18.

Writer Patrick Di Justo tracked down the market value of more than 50 bits, pieces, and components of the human body and calculated their market value. In so doing, he assumed that 100 percent of the substances in question could be recovered from the body, and second, by not considering the practicality or cost of extracting them.

So Di Justo looked at the market value of the organs and complex molecules that make-up our bodies.

Our lungs are worth \$58,200.

Our heart - \$57,000.

Our kidneys - \$91,400.

Our liver - \$54,100 – but it's also the source of a bit more than 22 grams of transferrin, which the body uses to process iron, at \$18,900/gram, or a total of \$419, 920.20, or more than seven times the value of the organ itself.

Our DNA - \$9 million at least.

Our bone marrow – our most valuable possession - \$23 million all by itself.

Our total market value in our bodies, according to Di Justo is; \$45,618, 575. 82.

Quite a price tag, but I don't think we will be cashing in on our worth. At the same time, we know that our bodies become older, and eventually we will pass from this planet. Of course, the believer in Christ's living hope is that we are going to have eternal bodies some day, like unto His glorious body.

Our physical bodies are made by the Lord Himself. But our immaterial part, our spirit, our personality comes from God as well. That is the second reason David said he was fearfully and wonderfully made.

****David spiritual life –immaterial part created by God – made in the image of God – with a mind, an emotion, and a will. For what did God say in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, according to Our likeness. . ."**

When God created Adam out of the dust of the ground, he breathed into Adam the breath of life, and man became a living being. In creating man, God gave him an immaterial makeup like His, not that he was God, but that man would have a mind, an emotion, and will, like God's which could think, love, and act, which man could communicate with God, love God, and obey and serve God. God created man so he would worship Him in all facets of his life.

Of course this reality distinguishes us from the animal world. We have God's stamp, is image upon us, which is why we can think, we can learn, we can talk, we can reason, we can create, we can worship God or we can turn away from God. All of us here, from the youngest to the oldest, bear the image of God.

David knew that his material and immaterial part of was from God. He was a unique creation – infinitely valuable. Each of us here is infinitely valuable as well. Created by God physically, made in God's image spiritually.

(4) David's divine purpose (139:15-16).

Look at those verses again - First verse 15 – Note the words, "skillfully wrought."

These words tell us that David's physical body was embroidered like the working of various colors together on a cloth with a needle. David is portraying the developing unborn child with its delicate fibers coming together during the nine months of pregnancy.

The growth of the child in the womb is like a beautiful rug being woven piece by piece. If such a rug is valued by its maker, how much more is the unborn baby priceless to God, the Creator.

Since God already knew David would be born, He had a divine purpose for him. David's days were written in God's book (139:16). How phenomenal was that for David – he would be born to glorify the Lord. Yes, and for us today. God has a divine purpose for us as well, to serve and glorify HIM!

The big question today is: "When does life begin?"

God has His answer for us in Psalm 139:16 in the words, "My unformed substance."

The word, "unformed" conveys the idea of being rolled up or folded up like a blanket or mantle. It has the idea of being "undeveloped."

Evidently, David was referring to his tiniest embryonic form at the time of his conception when all the members of his body were folded up, or undeveloped, before they began to take on their form and proportions. We therefore conclude that a baby is a human being at conception. Human life begins then!!

God gives infinite value to each individual materially and immaterially – bodily and spiritually.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made – God has put His identity on each of us. Made in His image. And then

(5) David's amazement that God thinks about Him (Psalm 139:17-18).

How precious are God's thoughts to David. Wow. David realized that God thinks about him, has him in His mind. David is overwhelmed that God is with him at all times.

God not only created David in his body and spirit, but also God thinks about David, has him on his mind. God not only thinks about David once, but an innumerable amount of times.

Amazing, God does the same to us. He has us on His mind as well. How fantastic is that!

2. We are to be responsible stewards of the life God has given us (Psalm 139:19-23).

(1) David's righteous indignation expressed against those who are enemies of the LORD – who have no understanding of the divine value of life (139:19-22).

In this section of Scripture David expressed his righteous indignation against those who are against the LORD. These are murderous men (note the word bloodshed – v. 19) who take the name of the LORD in vain.

What David seems to be saying here is that these people have no understanding of the value of life. To them life is cheap, and they take life for their own advantage. In so doing, they show their hatred for God the Author of life itself. Yes, God loves sinners. But those who commit murder, taking a life that God has created, are slapping the Creator of life in the face.

I believe those who practice abortion today are doing just that, telling God, the Author of LIFE, that the life of the unborn has no divine value. How long God in His longsuffering will hold off, I'm not sure. But certainly God's heart is grieved at what is happening in the abortion industry.

I trust the righteous indignation of the Lord within us is roused to pray that those promoting abortion, and those working in Planned Parenthood will be convicted to change their minds. Then to be involved as God gives opportunity.

(2) David in his spiritual life wanted to be right with the LORD (Psalm 139:24a).

****David not only knew the value of his physical life, he knew the value of his spiritual life.**

He wanted his spiritual life to be in fellowship with the Lord, harboring no sin of any kind. So David asked the Author of life and the Redeemer of Life to search out his heart as to how his relationship was with the LORD.

****It seems that David is saying here that we must be responsible stewards of the physical and spiritual life that God has given us.** At the beginning of creation in Genesis 1:26-31, the Lord gave mankind the responsibility to take care of the life God had created. When sin came in, that responsibility was marred deeply, for now man thought he could live as he pleased. He no longer valued the life God gave. Cain killing Abel was the beginning of the cheapening of God's life, and slapping God the Author of life in the face. On through the cross of Christ today can that cheapening be reversed.

David realized that God had made him responsible for what he did with his physical life and spiritual life before the Lord. He was to be a faithful steward of who he was before the LORD, for he was accountable to the Lord

for how he lived out his life. May we recognize the same, that it is required of a steward that he or she be found faithful with the physical and spiritual life God has given.

Which brings us to our last part of verse 24 in Psalm 139.

3.Christ's redemption for us provides us a double value for life (Psalm 139:24b).

Note the verse: "And lead me in the everlasting way, or the way everlasting."

We know from Romans 4:6-8 that David was a justified man, that is he was declared righteous before God because of His faith in God – He believed God in the revelation that He gave him. David knew what it meant to be led in the way of everlasting, even though he had many challenges in his life and with his family – still God forgave him, for he belonged to the Lord.

Today Christ has come, fulfilled the Old Testament worship system, and through His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, has provided us access directly to the heavenly Father, through faith in HIM.

When the believer accepts Christ as personal Savior, Christ comes to life in the believer, Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). The believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature, (II Peter 1:3-4), and the believer possesses the very resurrection life, the eternal life of God.

This means that followers of Christ have a double value before God.

****Believers in Christ are created by God in His image.**

****Believers in Christ are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ – possessing His eternal, with the living hope of someday having a new body like unto the Lord's glorious resurrected, ascended body.**

We should emphasize as well that God's love reaches out to those who have had an abortion for they need God's love and forgiveness. God's love is greater than all of our sin, and those involved need God's healing love and touch.

****What this means for the believer is that only true sanctity of life comes through the cross, burial and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ – only through the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

It's only through accepting Christ as Savior does a person really begin to understand that God is one's Creator and Redeemer – what the true value of life is – Created and Redeemed by the Lord.

That's why there needs to be those on the front lines today holding up the value of God's life given to the unborn, and to others who are disabled, needing constant physical care, and with other needs.

Yes, since God created us with His identity, made in His image, and has redeemed us through faith in Him, we should also have the Lord's respect and honor for one another.

It's easy to get all excited about being pro-life, and praying for those involved in the abortion industry that God will change their minds, but then not treat one another with respect as husband as wife, or not treating one's children with respect and honor, children not treating each other with respect and honor in the family.

Like the child who didn't know his name wasn't "shut up" until he was seven. Little sanctity of life there.

Sanctity of life can be practiced at school and on the job, since disrespect can happen at school and on the job as well.

This Sanctity Of Life Sunday should be commemorated every day of the year, giving God's value to life from conception to going home to be with the Lord. No matter what one's age, no matter what one's status in life, each person is eternally valuable to the Lord. That is why the Lord came to earth, to die for each us, to pay the penalty for our sin so that we can believe in Him and have an eternal relationship with Him, and respect each other and serve one another.

We should also pray for those who have chosen not to have an abortion but to give birth to their babies, keep their babies, or give their babies up for adoption. We are grateful for those who have been led to adopt the babies born when the mother realizes she is not able to raise the baby as she would like.

In fact, Care Net in our city, is involved in helping those with crisis pregnancies and other services.

In your bulletin this morning, you found an insert from Care Net, located on MacArthur Rd here in Madison. They have Elizabeth House a residential maternity program, plus providing other services as well.

They have sent us a brief video of the kind of ministry they are involved in – as they show the love of Christ and minister to these with particular needs.

Show Video.

Pray for Care Net. Notice on the brochure how you can be involved.

- **Volunteer – men and women invited.**
- **Financial partner**
- **Assist with fund-raising, marketing and other activities**
- **Partner in prayer**
- **Church Contact**

Chuck Colson in one of his recent Breakpoints was commenting that once Satan realized that God had invaded planet earth, he let loose a vicious counterattack.

And where did Evil strike? It attacked life in its most vulnerable form. The very first assault of Satan after the birth of Christ is against society's weakest members-infants. He attacked the "least of these."

Even today, the Enemy's mode of attack hasn't changed much. We're painfully aware of the slaughter of the unborn, and the devaluation of the elderly, the poor, the disabled, and the prisoner.

But the good news is our Savior has come. He has established the beach-head. And He will have the victory.

At this time, God uses us to carry that victory out in his power.

May we be people of prayer and be involved as we can. The "40 Days For Life" is coming again to Madison in the next month or so. Prayer is where the battle is won.

Let's be prayer warriors for LIFE every day.

Let's respect each other every day, giving God the honor and glory He deserves!

Let's pray.

Affirmation of God's Life!