

## **The Wonder and Uniqueness of Life**

Psalm 139

Grace Church / 1-23-11

### **Introduction:**

About ten years ago the Elders and Long-Range Planning Committee determined that children were a niche God had given to us in the advancing of His kingdom. We set about strengthening that part of our ministry. Consequently we have built a new children's wing and hired a part-time children's director, Kelly Graeber. God has blessed that decision and steps of faith.

At last count there is at least thirty children age three and under who participate at Grace Church. I know of seven expectant mothers. These children are precious individuals. They all have many things in common, two eyes, two ears, one nose, and one mouth (though some are louder than others). Yet each one is so uniquely different. They came from the protective environment of the womb into this noisy world already different. Lea and I have four children and four grandchildren. It is amazing at how different our four children are though they came from the same womb and combined DNA pool. Why is that, you may ask? It is partly because each has been given their own particular combination of DNA. But even more so that each has been given a unique soul by their Creator, God. Does environment and experience determine our personalities? Yes, it does have some influence such as accents and mannerisms but overwhelmingly it is the work of God at conception which creates the "you" in you and the "me" in me. NO, GOD DID NOT CREATE YOU WITH A BENT TOWARDS SINFUL BEHAVIOR.

Now having said that and watched the expressions on your faces of delight and pleasure, I must caution you that this morning's worship in the Word is very somber. Yes, it has to do with children. It has to do with unborn children, those who are completely at the mercy of others. They are absolutely defenseless. We have been given a responsibility from God to protect them. I mentioned earlier that our children have many things in common. An eight week old child in the womb has all those things too; two eyes, ears, arms and legs, one mouth and nose. You could go on with the comparison. The important thing is that already, even before eight weeks the child in the womb has everything which will cause him or her to grow into infancy, through childhood and adolescents and into adulthood. All she or he needs is the opportunity to do so.

On this particular Sunday it is my intention to bring before us as a reminder and a challenge, the atrocity of abortion and the effect it has upon us as individuals and a nation. Some call this "Sanctity of Life" Sunday.

It is likely this morning that a number of us will leave more troubled than when we came. I have already prayed for you. The title of our study is "The Wonder & Uniqueness of Life". I have four goals for our time in the study of God's Word. Let me give them to you.

1. That you would be in absolute awe over the uniqueness of the image of God in human creation and existence.
2. That the Holy Spirit would trouble you with the reality of what abortion is, the taking of defenseless lives, another word is murder.
3. That God would bring healing and comfort where necessary in our lives.
4. That you would leave determined to actively become a defender of the defenseless.

Now right at the outset I need to say, I realize there are individuals here this morning that have either had an abortion or participated in an abortion as one who encouraged or pushed a mother to abort her baby. It is not my objective to condemn or judge you this morning. Every time I speak on this topic I feel like a funambulist, that is a tight rope walker.

As a preacher/teacher of God's people I find myself in the position of needing, on the one hand, to declare forgiveness and hope to men and women who have had and approved abortions, and, on the other hand, to declare the outrage of abortion as something we should oppose with all the wisdom and courage and perseverance and sacrifice that God will give us.

On January 22, 1973 nine men in black robes, protected from any input from the populace of this nation, made a decision which has forever marred the conscience of our society. In a 7-2 decision the Supreme Court legalized abortion.

Today in our country approximately 4,000 unprotected lives are ended on a daily basis. Since 1973 more than 45 million children have been deprived the opportunity of becoming what they already were, citizens of the United States. But even more

than that, created by God uniquely and individually endowed with all the rights which should be afforded to every person. The only thing that has separated them from all the privileges we have is safely traversing a few inches of the birth canal.

In just a few minutes Aleska is coming to sing a song written by Steve Green in memory of those 43 million individuals. As she sings you will see people walk down the aisle and place a rose at the front as a memorial. This is not intended to hurt or shame, though likely it will, but rather to be a moment for us to reflect on who these unborn babies could have become. I hope it will serve as a time for us to realize in a greater way the holocaust that has been happening in our nation.

(song, while roses are brought to the front)

I realize this is an emotionally issue for many. I encourage you this morning to approach this sore upon our society from a theological viewpoint. Is theology devoid of emotion? No, far from it. God has a heart, he is described as pure love. It was the theological truth of God's love that sent Jesus Christ into the world.

John 3:16 (ESV)

16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 4:9 (ESV)

9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

That is a theological truth. Does it cause emotion to rise up in my heart and mind? Absolutely it does. I am simply cautioning us not to use emotion as the basis for truth but allow truth to drive our emotion.

Jesus wept over the plight of God's people. Our emotions are finicky and can lead us astray. Our hearts can become cold and enable us to justify decisions that are absolutely morally wrong.

Some may already have responded, "prove to me life begins before birth" to which I reply "no, you prove to me life does not begin before delivery". If I am wrong in saying life begins at

conception, the consequence is one of only inconvenience. If you are wrong and life does begin at conception, the consequence is far greater; it is the taking of the life of a defenseless individual. Another word for it is murder.

I could have asked Dr Trina Scott or Dr Juliana Kaminski to come and share all of the scientific evidences of life beginning at conception. Perhaps we will do that at another time.

This morning I want to point you to the Word of God as a way of us appreciating the uniqueness of our existence. I want to make three statements which I hope will achieve the four goals I stated near the beginning. Here is the first observation.

### **1. Terms used to describe the unborn and born are the same.**

Both Hebrew and Greek languages, the two languages which the Bible was written in, do not make a distinction between the born and unborn. An example would be the account of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ found in Luke's history of the beginnings of Christianity.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been informed by the Spirit of God, we call that the Holy Spirit, that she is going to become pregnant through the supernatural power which God has always had. She is delighted by this news and goes to another town to tell her friend Elizabeth the good news. Upon arriving this is what takes place.

Luke 1:41 (ESV)

41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,,

Luke 1:44 (ESV)

44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

The word baby, βρεφος, is not a specialized word. It has no meaning of fetus or embryo. It simply means baby. What makes this so significant is that the same word is used in Luke 2:16 to refer to Jesus in the manger. Luke 2:16 (ESV)  
16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

What we see today is that there is no difference between the baby which Mary held in her arms and the baby protected in Mary's womb. When Mary greets Elizabeth, Elizabeth is filled with God's Spirit which causes the yet to be born, John the Baptist, to leap within her womb. This word leap is one that is used to express joy. It was a leap of joy which John made in his mother's womb because he had come into the presence of the Lord Jesus, though both were yet to make the journey through the birth canal.

With all the science and technology available for us today, it has only become easier to see and believe in the uniqueness of God's creation of humanity. Ultrasound and other technologies have given us stunning pictures of a baby as it grows through this stage of existence. The baby at nine weeks old has been observed sucking its thumb in the womb, reacting to pricks from a needle and responding to sound. All of our organs are present at this time. The brain is functioning, the heart is pumping, and the liver and kidneys are doing their particular roles of making the body function properly. Finger prints have developed. Yet almost all abortions happen later in the pregnancy than this.

Take a look at this video of the progression of the baby in the womb. You may see this at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0211-kvKomg>

## **2. It is God who has brought about this miracle of creation.**

Psalm 139:13 (ESV)

13 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.

The context of this psalm is the wonderful knowledge of God and His interest in His creation. Listen to the first six verses.

Psalm 139:1-6 (ESV)

1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and

are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.**

The human body is the most complex and unique organism in the world, and that complexity and uniqueness speaks volumes about the mind of its Creator. Every aspect of the body, down to the tiniest microscopic cell, reveals that it is fearfully and wonderfully made.

For instance, information needed for the replication of an entire human body, with every detail covered, is stored in the double-helix DNA strand found in the nucleus of each of the billions of cells in the human body. The system of information and control represented by our nervous system is amazingly compact in comparison to man's clumsy inventions of wires and optical cables. Each cell, once called a "simple" cell, is a tiny factory not yet fully understood by man. As microscopes become more and more powerful, the incredible vistas of the human cell begin to come into focus.

Consider the single fertilized cell of a newly conceived human life. From that one cell within the womb develop all the different kinds of tissues, organs, and systems, all working together at just the right time in an amazingly coordinated process. An example is the hole in the septum between the two ventricles in the heart of the newborn infant. This hole closes up at exactly the right time during the birth process to allow for the oxygenation of the blood from the lungs, which does not occur while the baby is in the womb and is receiving oxygen through the umbilical cord.

And someone said "but that is true for all mammals" and you would be correct. There is a major difference however of aborting an unborn calf and an unborn baby.

### **3. We are created in the image of God**

This is not said of any other part of God's creation. Animals and plants do not have souls. Oh they definitely have personality but what separates us from them is the soul which God has created and placed within each of us at the time of conception.

Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

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

That image is then passed along to every human through the process of procreation.

Genesis 5:3 (ESV)

3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he **fathered a son in his own likeness**, after his image, and named him Seth.

There has been much debate in recent weeks concerning the abolishing of the death penalty in the state of Illinois. The two branches of our state legislature have passed legislation abolishing the death penalty. The last I heard it was on Governor Quinn's desk waiting to be signed. It is not my intent this morning to debate the necessity of this bill, but to use it as illustrative of the taking of human life. Capital punishment is a given directive from God. We find it in Genesis 9:6.

Genesis 9:6 (ESV)

6 "Whoever **sheds the blood of man**, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

What does it mean that we are created in God's image? Without going into a long discussion let me abbreviate for us this morning. It means we are living creatures who have determinative wills by which we make both creative and moral decisions. By creative I mean the ability to take something and make it into something else. All of us are creative beings by nature. We express that creativity in different ways and degrees. By determinative I mean the ability to use rational in planning and decision making processes.

Why is the taking of another's life, considered capital punishment? Because it is an attempt to destroy a part of God's image.

Personally I support the concept of the capital punishment for capital infractions, the taking of another's life. What I cannot support is the fallacy in the system which

pronounces the death penalty. The state of Illinois does not have a good record in this area.

Here is the point. If one of those found guilty by a faulty system of justice were to be wrongly executed it is a travesty, a horrible wrong, never to be undone. Abortion is in the same category. Though you may present all types of ideas as to why life does not begin in the womb what if you are wrong and proceed with an abortion. You are then dead wrong. It is an action which can never be undone. Listen, death is forever. And by that I mean when we cross the threshold we call death it is the point of no return.

Everything spiritual and scientific points to life beginning at the moment of concept. Someone might say, but can it survive outside of the womb at those early stages to which the answer is of course, no. The reason is that that which is essential for life has been cut off. The same thing would happen to you if your life support, the need of oxygen and fresh blood supply were suddenly cut off. In less than six minutes you would be dead. In both cases a murder has just taken place.

### **So What?**

Oh how I want to be so careful this morning to share with you the grace of God and the forgiveness that comes only through His Son Jesus Christ.

And at the same time pray to God that your conscience would be stirred into action. That not only Christians but all in our society would recognize the gift of life which God has granted to humanity. There ought to be moral outrage at what is taking place in our nation. Why do I say that?

Because abortion is:

- Absolutely fatal for all aborted children
- Damaging to the psyche and well-being of women
- Hurtful and corrupting to men
- Destroys the fabric of our culture and places it on an animal level
- Mutilating to our language and human reason

- It is an assault on Jesus Christ through whom all things have their being.

As Christians we are called to be salt and light of the world. It is time we became more intentional as light when it comes to the taking of innocent life. We must do this in a loving but determined way. Bombing abortion clinics is not the way. But as we share the uniqueness of God's creation of humanity with others perhaps we will begin to turn the tide and then one day overturn a law which has cost the lives of our nation's most prized possession, our children.

Here are a few websites that will help you discover what you can do.

Abort73.com  
Humanlife.org  
Birthright.org  
Caret.org

What can you do?

- Pray, Pray, Pray
- Participate at Pregnancy Resource Center
- Write your congressman or Senator
- Encourage those intending to end the life of their unborn child not to follow through
- Consider adoption

Let me pray for us as we close this time of worship in God's Word.