

The Sanctity of Human Life

Written by C. O. Etheredge

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In Genesis 1:31 we learn that after God created the universe and its inhabitants He considered His handiwork and saw that it was very good. The entire creation was very good. Not only the things about it, but also the creatures within it. Man has strong arguments for conservation of natural resources, the preservation of places of natural beauty, and the prevention of cruelty to animals. Man, as powerful as he is, has no right to destroy God's created order. Such prerogative rests only with one who has absolute dominion over it. And that one is God. Please listen.

If that truth is sufficient to teach us respect for land, trees and tiny plants, including animals, then surely it is sufficient to teach us to highly respect human life. Verses 26-27 of Genesis 1 teaches much more about man than the fact that we are a part of God's good creation.

God made man different from any other creature. God said, "Let us make man in OUR image, according to our likeness." No other creature can claim the distinction of being created in God's image. Human beings possess a special dignity and value. I now will deal with the Author of life.

According to Genesis, we learn that human beings were created in the image of God and violence is a terrible evil. How does the Bible regard the human embryo, or the little premature infant—a tiny little human being made in God's image or a sub-human mass of tissue? The Bible reveals not only that God regards the unborn as human beings, but also that He is intimately involved with them—the unborn are considered God's handiwork, never to be discarded as an unwanted possession.

Let us now consider David's writing in Psalms 139:13-16. "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of

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the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

David's response to this truth is an example for us all. It is gratitude: I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. When life comes it comes as a gift, never as a punishment. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Ps.127:3). The innocent child is not a mistake, even if its mother has bad conduct.

David said, "Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance." Recently, Elsie and I looked at a sonogram of our tiny great granddaughter at the age of five months. We can say in part what David said.

She was approximately seven inches in length. As we watched with great intensity, the nurse would cause this little baby girl to move its little body parts. We could see the little heart beat, the tiny fingers move, her arms and legs and occasionally her small body. Also we could see her tiny eyes. A time or two we could see her as she seemed to relax, as if to say, "leave me alone." It was indeed a privilege to see God's wisdom and it is so perfect. As David said, "Thou has covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Psalms 139 teaches us more than the fact that God is the author of life in the womb. It teaches as well that the unborn child is a human being, a creature made in His image (vs 15-16). The Bible gives no suggestion that God regards the unborn as less valuable in His sight than other human beings. The Bible (New Testament) records the most powerful evidence for sanctity of the unborn child's life when it recounts the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the great event by which God became a man, completely identifying with human beings, as Jesus went through the full range of human development. Jesus' earthly, human existence began with his conception in Mary (Matt. 1:18-20). Human life begins at the point of conception.

Note very closely. When Mary entered the house to see Elizabeth, she did not enter alone. The Son of God was growing within her. Mary was blessed because "blessed" was the fruit of her womb. Not a blob of protoplasm, mere tissue and cells, but Jesus Christ. In fulfillment of prophecy of Luke 1:15, John was filled with the Holy Spirit and leaped for joy. John was not a blob either, but a person. God personally related to him.

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In conclusion comes the sad disappointment of our modern society—abortion. Abortion is evil. It is destructive to every one involved. The mother who has the little innocent child aborted only increases the pain she already suffers. It represents a tragic verdict that life she knows is not worth living. Abortion is especially tragic in this situation. It destroys the living and the reason for living. Mothers, the guilt will always be there.

Think for a moment. Some day young mother, you may marry and want children. The question may be, "Is this your first child?" "No, this is my second." "Where is your first?" Truth must be told or a lie.

I have some pictures of the abortion process. They are too tragic to look at. In the first few months of pregnancy, two similar abortion techniques are employed. Both rely on a suction tube inserted through the birth canal. Awful to say. A long instrument with a cutting loop shaped like a spoon. This tool is used to chop and mash the developing little innocent child into pieces. Painful, yes indeed, but the little innocent child cannot say, "It hurts mama, help me!" Too sad to talk about. In another procedure, an incision is made in the back of the little head and its little brains sucked out.

I will gladly express my feelings. The one who performs the abortion and the mother who agrees to it will some day suffer greater punishment. Judgment awaits both but the little innocent baby now rests in the precious arms of God. "I will recompense saith the Lord." Take not that which you cannot give back. Thou shalt not kill. Would a doctor or a mother sit and watch their unborn child be aborted? God help this wickedness to stop.

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