

The Sanctity of Life

January 16, 2022

(Note: these devotions are not about the politics or legality; they are about morality)

1. Sunday, Jan. 23 is Sanctity of Life Sunday. It is the day we remind ourselves of the sacredness of life. What makes life *sacred*?
2. For decades some people have argued that the baby in a mother's womb is "a blob of tissue." The inference is that to remove that tissue is nothing different than removing scar tissue after an operation. Tissue is not a person.
3. At what point does a baby in the womb become a "person?" Conception? After a certain trimester? When the baby is viable on its own? At birth? Amazingly and sadly, there are now prominent lawmakers who argue that the baby does not become a person unless the mother wants the baby, and reaches some point of either physical, rational, or moral development months after birth.

DAY 1: Created in the image of God; The uniqueness of people

4. One of the seminal verses in the bible is Genesis 1:26ff. God defines what it means to be human. There is something very distinct between mankind and every other creature.

*Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us **make mankind in our image, in our likeness**, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

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

5. What do you think it means that people are made *in the image of God*?

6. God adds, "...in our *likeness*." What does He mean?

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

7. Theologians call this verse the "cultural mandate." We are not just to exist to meet our needs like the rest of the animal kingdom. We are to manage it, to care for it, as good stewards of God's creation. This is a distinct mandate given only to people.
8. Genesis 1 depicts God's overall acts of creation, which includes the animal world. But when He comes to creating mankind there are distinct differences! These verses depict human beings as distinct from every other creature and created thing.
9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Mankind, Made in the image of God, but corrupted

1. To be made in the image of God involves at least these things:
 - a. Personal: we are more than just animal creatures.
 - b. We long to know we matter, that our lives are important.
 - c. Volitional: we have the capacity to choose what is good, to choose against our own needs when required, to sacrifice for others.
 - d. Rational: including critical thinking, the capacity to ponder the great philosophical questions about God, life and the hereafter, morals, and ethics.
 - e. Relational: we long for a kind of relationship that no animal is capable of having.
 - f. Emotional: we have the capacity to feel things deeply, to enjoy things deeply, and also to go against our emotions when needed.
2. We are not just made a little niche about the monkeys. We are categorically different. What strikes you from the list above?

3. The bible describes that there is something “corrupt” in human beings. That corruptness takes many forms. To corrupt something means to ruin, damage, mar, or twist something that was good into something bad including ourselves and our relationships.

4. The bible clearly teaches that this corruptness is in our very nature. When does it appear? Does it appear in our “terrible two’s?” Sooner? When?

5. After David committed adultery with Bathsheba he repented. Psalm 51 is his prayer of repentance. Notice when the bible depicts the beginning of corruptness of David’s nature.
*Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, **sinful from the time my mother conceived me.** ⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.*
6. From whence does David identify the corruptness of his human nature beginning?

7. This corruptness combines self-centeredness as priority, and our independence from God or anyone else as central. We foolishly believe that control is our greatest asset.

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: When does human life begin?

Psalm 58:1 Do you rulers indeed speak justly? Do you judge people with equity?

1. David, the psalmist asks the leaders of the nation two rhetorical questions. They are timeless questions that all government officials and judges should ask themselves.

2. David answers the questions.

Psalm 58:2 No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth.

3. The leaders are guilty of speaking unjustly and judging with inequity. The question becomes “Why?” To what does David point as the fountainhead of these wrongs? (v. 2)

4. The problem begins in the heart, in our inner being and mind. It then finds expression in our behavior and actions.

5. When does this heart problem begin? After college? After being abused? After growing up in terrible circumstances? Because of poverty? Listen to David’s answer.

Psalm 58:3 Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies.

6. The problem begins in the human heart long before anything bad can happen to it. We are inborn with this problem. It begins at conception. No matter how dastardly we’ve been treated as children or adults, the roots of our deepest problems come not from what was done to us as victims. We have a deeper problem—our waywardness and perverseness (v. 3).

7. The bible sees people as human beings at conception, and at every step during gestation. “Blobs of tissue” alone do not have a sin nature.

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: Jeremiah, Job, the lifeblood, and creation

1. The book of Jeremiah begins with Jeremiah's call to ministry.

Jeremiah 1:4 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

2. What does God say about His knowledge of Jeremiah? (v. 5)

3. When did God set Jeremiah apart for the ministry? (v. 5)

Job

Job 15:14 "What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous?"

4. How does Job add to the problem of human nature that begins right from the start?

The lifeblood

5. Old Testament criminal law, civil law, and religious food laws all incorporate this issue of "life." We will look at what the Moses called "lifeblood."

Genesis 9:5 And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; I will require it from any animal and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life.

*Leviticus 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the **blood that makes atonement for one's life.**
12 Therefore I say to the Israelites, "None of you may eat blood, nor may any foreigner residing among you eat blood."*

6. Human life is sacred. One of the pictures of this is the sacredness of human blood. It is seen in criminal law, dietary law, and the sacredness of blood in making human atonement with God.

*Genesis 5:3 This is the written account of Adam's family line. When God **created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God.** ² He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them "**Mankind**" when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.*

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: The personal side of life; wrong choices; forgiven, cleansed, renewed

1. For many women who had an abortion, as well as some men who encouraged an abortion, this is both an emotional experience and a painful one.
2. Sometimes in life we make decisions when we were younger that “make sense” to us at the time without realizing the implications of our choices or the consequences of our choices.
3. But sin, no matter how great or small always ends up costing us a lot. It opens the door for shame to come in and torment us. “How could I have been so foolish? Why didn’t I know better? I did know better and went ahead anyway? Why didn’t I listen to people who loved me?” The list is endless. Satan torments with dozens of “If only _____.”
4. We will finish with David’s prayer of confession after committing adultery with Bathsheba and then arranging for the death of Bathsheba’s husband in battle. **Underline the words that strikes you.**

Psalm 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

5. What strikes you from today’s devotional?