

Epistle Texts for Life Sunday - Series A

Christmas 1:

Text: *Galatians 4:4-7*

Focus: *The only thing that surpasses the miracle of childbirth is the miracle of the Savior who was born of a virgin. We take time to reflect on both miracles,*

Theme: *Marvel at the Miracle of Childbirth!*

I. *The Miracle of Birth*

- It's God's amazing, wonderful invention for bringing more people into the world.
- For each new person, God plans out his life, nurtures and carefully forms her in the womb, brings him safely through childbirth into the world.
- Each person is born of a woman, and born under law.
- Yet each new person is born in sin, ever since Eve gave birth to Cain; not one has ever been able to keep God's law perfectly.
- This inborn sin has been in us since our conception, and shows itself in our lives, too. We take God's gift of life for granted – our own, and others'. We fall victim to the world's thinking, that human life is only as valuable as its quality, or its age, or its contributions to society.
- Regardless of man's knowledge and advancements God is still the only one who actually begins life. As technology increasingly influences beginning-of-life issues, God's authority will increasingly be ignored by many.

II. *The Birth of the Miracle*

- As amazing as childbirth is, it is also fairly routine – it's gone on since the beginning of the world.
- So, how absolutely amazing that God should choose something as ordinary as childbirth to enter the world and to redeem the world!
- Childbirth had been part of God's plan ever since he promised that "the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head" (e.g., Abraham, Hannah, Elizabeth).
- Then, when the time had fully come, and everything was 100% ready in the world, God used childbirth to enter his world himself!
- Though he created childbirth, He humbled Himself to experience it; though it was His holy, eternal law, God submitted Himself to be born under it, and live under, and die under it, in place of every other human born of woman.
- Through this miraculous childbirth, we are redeemed.
- As God's heirs, we have heaven awaiting us as our eternal inheritance.

Pentecost 16:**Text:** *Romans 13:1-10***Focus:** *God has given the Church and the State different roles, tools, and responsibilities. But Christians have a role in both! And it's in the realm of the State that we Christians have a special opportunity to let our lights shine.***Theme:** *Let your light shine through Christian citizenship***I. Obey the government**

- God has placed our government over us, regardless of democratic processes.
- God wants his people to obey even evil governments. God set up government to preserve order, not “morality” or “family values,” though these things do promote good order.
- It is sin that makes government necessary; it bears the sword to punish coarse outbreaks of evil that upset order.
- We by nature resent having our freedom limited and being under authority, like when it's time to pay taxes. We are sometimes afraid of the government, perhaps when we see a police car on the freeway.
- Christ obeyed perfectly in our place (“give to Caesar what is Caesar's”) to satisfy God's demand for perfection, and then died at the hands of the secular government to win our salvation.
- We Christians, forgiven forever, have the opportunity to let our light shine as upright citizens.
- Churches are dedicated to sharing God's Word, but individual Christians reflect their faith partly through civic involvement. Christians should not sit back and look for churches to change the government, but should reflect their faith through their civic responsibilities.
- We have the chance in this country to influence the government through our vote, through phone calls and letters to representatives.

II. Love your neighbor

- One of the best ways to be good citizens is simply to love our neighbors.
- All of the commandments are summed up with “love” – doing no harm, protecting, defending, showing kindness, etc.
- There are many ways to show love to our neighbors. Your action should be a reflection of God's love for us.
- There are also many people who cannot speak up for themselves and who need our kindness: we think immediately of the unborn, and we should! But there are also people struggling for life and love on the other end of life: society often neglects the elderly and makes them feel unloved, unwanted, unneeded; physician-assisted suicide and even euthanasia seem like welcome alternatives when family, friends, society, medical personnel all feel and act like your life isn't worth living. What a chance to show love and kindness!