

The Meaning of Life: A Gift from God

First Sunday: Life Is a Gift to Be Defended From Any Who Would Take It

“My parents say they don’t want to be a burden. They want to die with dignity. Is that OK?”

Sermon Outline:

Sermon Text: Deuteronomy 32:39

Sermon Theme and Parts:

My Life is the LORD’s

I. It’s a First Commandment Thing*

II. It’s a Common Sense Thing*

* Substitute the word “Issue” if you prefer more formal parts

Introduction:

“Death with dignity.” It sounds good doesn’t it? “Death with dignity.” That would be nice. That would be proper. None of us wants to be a burden. But did you ever think maybe God wanted you to be? We’ll get back to that in a couple weeks, but for now think of that concept of death with dignity.

That concept of “death with dignity” is the thought used to excuse 341 murders in the state of Oregon in the last decade, 49 in 2007 alone. At least that is how many have been reported. The “Death with Dignity” movement is also responsible for almost one in ten of all deaths in the Netherlands, where it has been legalized and practiced for some time now. Since 1997, the state of Oregon has had legalized physician-assisted suicide, and other states have considered similar measures.

It’s the latest thing – people taking their own life, and calling it good. Have you heard of it? Terms like mercy killing, euthanasia (which literally means “good death”), physician assisted suicide – they are all becoming more commonly accepted. Of course, God has another term for each of those things: murder...sin.

You see, that thing called life is not something we have the right to take. That’s what our text reminds us of today. As we study this text from Deuteronomy, God reminds us, each of us, that **My Life is the LORD’s**. Our text is Deuteronomy 32:39. **“See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”**

For the next three weeks we’ll be talking about how we view our life, specifically when we think about death. And I know, we just don’t like thinking about death, but it is one of the most certain facts of life. And the way we handle our own death or the death of a loved one affects so intensely our own lives and the lives of those we care about. In fact, it could even affect those lives for all eternity. So thinking about our death and understanding that my life is the LORD’s, that is vital. God reminds us of that today. And he shows that really, it comes down to being a first commandment issue.

Transition: Introduction to the series

- I. It's a first commandment issue (you'd think 5th commandment) – but people were thinking they'd handle it their way – like we do when sudden death decisions arise.
 - a. Background of text – Israel's story
 - b. Reminders of text – God's in charge
 - i. Gives death and life
 - ii. Wounds and heals
 - c. Why we need to hear it today
 - i. We want control.
 - ii. Medical advances God has given us make us feel like we have control.
 - iii. Sure, maybe not euthanasia, but what about pulling feeding tube, etc.
 - iv. Public cases of debate about pulling feeding tube – Terri Schiavo, etc. (A quick Google search can supply ample information.)
 - v. Comes down to lack of trust in God and pride in self

Transition: We need the reminder of our text that “My Life is the LORD's”

- II. It's a common sense issue – he made, redeemed and guides – of course he gets to make the call and only he can make the call – and when we realize that, things will be so much better
 - a. He brought to life.
 - i. Creation – humans in his own image
 - ii. Miracle of childbirth
 - b. He controls death.
 - i. We like to pretend that there is no control, but God is in control
 - ii. He knows best time for each
 - c. He has wounded.
 - i. He took the credit for allowing the defeat of Israel, but promises healing
 - ii. He allows us to experience troubles
 - d. He will heal
 - i. Never too much – 1 Corinthians 10 passage
 - ii. Examples of questions – feeding tubes, dignity (no such thing as death with dignity), etc.
 - iii. Healing – Malachi promise – healing from sin
 - iv. Jesus – death without dignity to bring us dignity
 - e. He keeps us in his hand.

Conclusion: Death with dignity – no – but the dignity of being held in the powerful hands of the LORD of life.