

A Life Sunday Bible Study

I. HUMAN LIFE IS A GIFT WHICH ONLY GOD CAN GIVE

Gen. 2:7 "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

- Only God with his creative power could bring human life into being.

Gen. 1:28 "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'"

- God in his wisdom uses human agents to bring individual human beings into this world, so that mothers today may say with Eve, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." (Gen. 4:1)

Psalm 51:5 "Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

- Only actual people, not tissue which has human potential, can be charged with sin. Such sinfulness, and therefore, real human life, begins at conception.

Acts 17:25 "And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else."

- Human agents and the natural way human beings are conceived and born should not lull us into thinking that God is not the actual source of each and every human being on this earth.

Exodus 4:11 "The LORD said to him, 'Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?'"

- Human beings with impairments are the LORD'S creation.

Genesis 38:24 "About three months later Judah was told, 'Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant.'"

- Read all of Genesis 38 to understand the adulterous circumstances under which Tamar's son, Perez, was born. Yet he became an ancestor of the Savior (Matt. 1:3), an event which God wanted to take place. Even children born in sinful circumstances are there because God wants them to exist and share in his saving love. This does not mean he approves of the sin.

Psalm 139:13,14 "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

- This is a confession of God's love which all human beings can and should make.

II. HUMAN LIFE IS UNIQUE WHEN COMPARED TO ALL OTHER FORMS OF

LIFE Matthew 10:28 "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

- Living human beings consist of a physical body, a feature shared with all animal life, and an immortal soul or spirit which cannot be killed and which is unique to human beings.

Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

- Read all of Genesis 1 to see how man's creation on the sixth day is shown to be the climax of God's creation. God deliberates with himself; he gives human beings the ruling position over all the earth; and he creates mankind in his image, giving human beings the ability to reflect his holiness and to live in spiritual harmony with him. Only human life is spoken of in this way in the Scriptures.

III. ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE VERY PRECIOUS TO GOD

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."

- So precious to God is the life of every human being that he places special safeguards around that life which he does not do with animal life. Anyone who dares to murder loses his own right to live.

Hebrews 2:14 "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is the devil."

- When mankind fell into sin and lost the image of God, God did not forsake the human race. Instead he sent his Son to destroy the Destroyer.

1 John 2:2 "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

- All people have forgiveness of sins in Christ.

2 Peter 3:9 "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to

repentance."

- God gives earthly life to everybody as a "time of grace," a time to come to faith in Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins. God wants each person to have this time in the amount which he chooses to give.

(N.B. All of the passages in this section are part of God's testimony that the life of each individual human being has absolute value in his eyes [quantity of life], and ought not to be judged by its relative worth or usefulness [quality of life].

IV. SUFFERING AND PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS MAY DIMINISH THE QUALITY OF A PERSON'S LIFE. BUT THAT LIFE, TO ITS EARTHLY END, RETAINS THE ABSOLUTE SACRED VALUE WHICH GOD HAS ATTACHED TO IT

Romans 8:22,23 "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

- Suffering takes place in a world under the curse of sin. Even the child of God looks forward to a day of relief from suffering.

John 9:3 "'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'"

- God uses suffering to work out his saving love in a person's life.

Romans 5:3 "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance."

- A time of suffering can increase our patience and trust in the wisdom of God's loving ways.

Luke 22:31 "'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.'"

- As long as a Christian can pray, even the last moments of his life are not useless.

Luke 23:47 "The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, 'Surely this was a righteous man.'"

- The way we face suffering and death may serve as a strong witness of our faith to others.

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

- Our suffering or helplessness may be God's way of providing others with opportunities to perform deeds of faith.

(N.B. Suffering and impairment, whether they occur at the beginning, middle, end, or throughout our lives, are circumstances which God will use for our good and are opportunities for growth in faith and love. They never should be excuses to say, "My life is no longer worth living.")

V. ALTHOUGH DEATH IS NOT SOMETHING THE CHRISTIAN FEARS, HE ALLOWS GOD TO DECIDE WHEN IT WILL COME

Romans 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned..."

- Death is unnatural. It is present as the result of sin.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 "...and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it."

- At death the human body decomposes, but the immortal spirit or soul of man comes before God the Judge.

Matthew 10:28 "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

- Death without Christ is never good and ought to be greatly feared. The unbeliever has only eternal death for body and soul in hell to look forward to, something worse than the worst suffering on earth.

1 Corinthians 15:56 "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- Christ has removed the sting of death (the wrath of God over sin) by his redemptive work.

2 Corinthians 5:8,9 "We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."

- Death for a Christian is not to be feared, and may even be desired, because Christ has turned death into life, eternal life. (See also John 11:25)

Psalms 31:15 "My times are in your hands."

- The Lord still is to decide when death will come.

VI. ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO END HUMAN LIFE

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."

- Because the Lord is God and He alone, nobody else has the right to take human life.

Romans 13:4 "For he [the government] is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer."

- Under certain circumstances (see Gen. 9:6 in Section #3) God uses human agents to exercise his right to take human life.

Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder."

- All unlawful taking of human life is murder and falls under God's eternal wrath.

Abortion which seeks to end a child's life between its conception and birth is murder. (On those rare occasions when a mother's life is truly endangered by her pregnancy, doctors may lose the child's life while saving the mother, but only because they do not possess the skill to save that life, not because they want to take it.)

Infanticide which seeks to end a child's life after its birth for some quality-of-life reason is murder.

Suicide which claims that an individual has the right to take his/her own life is usurping God's right and is murder.

Euthanasia which seeks to hasten death by the application or withdrawal of medical treatment is murder. (What we might call "Imminent Death Care," which is the application or withdrawal of medical treatment that acknowledges that God Himself is taking a life is not murder, nor should we call it euthanasia.)

VII. A CHRISTIAN MAKES END-OF-LIFE DECISIONS FOR HIMSELF OR FOR HIS LOVED ONES ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES SET FORTH IN GOD'S WORD AND FROM A HEART OF FAITH IN CHRIST WHICH SEEKS TO GLORIFY GOD.

Psalms 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

- A child of God cannot make decisions in keeping with God's holy will until he knows what that will is. Searching the Scriptures will provide the divine truth to guide our paths.

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God."

- All of our finest decisions and efforts are tainted with ignorance and sin. Only what our faith in Christ moves us to do is acceptable to God and then only because Christ has washed us clean in his blood.

Romans 14:23 "But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin."

- Two different principles were being applied to the situation in the congregation in Rome. The Jewish believers said that Christians could not eat the meat available in the marketplace because heathen priests had first dedicated it to their gods. The Gentile Christians said that they could eat the meat because it was given to them by the true God and idols are nothing. Paul said that both should follow their consciences and each should apply his Scriptural principle to the glory of God, moved by faith in Christ.

Philippians 1:9-11 "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God."

- This is the conclusion of the matter. The Apostle Paul prays that we would grow in knowledge through the Word, and mature spiritually so that we apply our knowledge in wisdom. This will result in our faith performing deeds of righteousness to the glory and praise of God. Lord Jesus, give us such godly wisdom. Amen.

To God Be the Glory. Amen.