

Sermon Outline for Sanctity of Life

Sunday on End-of-Life Issues

~ Sermon Based on Deuteronomy 32:39 ~

Introduction: Who is really in charge? In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling regarding the State of Oregon and physician-assisted suicide it can be hard to tell. Today we will let God answer the question.

Theme: When it comes to life and death – who is really in charge?

Part 1: The world often says “I’m in charge”

- A. Explore the flawed reasoning of the world when it comes to physician-assisted suicide
- B. Discuss God's Law regarding the sin of physician-assisted suicide and God's guilty verdict concerning the sinful world that clings to this sin

Part 2: Sometimes I say, “I’m in charge”

- A. Explore how my own human reason can find merit in what the sinful world says regarding physician-assisted suicide
- B. Explain how your sinful nature attacks your thinking on these issues
- C. Convict your people of their sins of buying into and sympathizing with the sinful world's cause – even if it's just in their own minds every now and again

Part 3: God assures us in matters of life and death, “I’m in charge”

- A. Give some brief background of the sermon text
- B. Explain how Moses was quoting God and what God would do for His people
- C. Preach specific Gospel about how the One in charge sent His Son to save us
- D. Talk about the comfort of knowing that Jesus is with us right now to help us through this life – we are not on our own
- E. Talk about reaching out to others with the message about Jesus because the majority of the people in the world simply don't know who is in charge or they refuse to believe the truth about who is in charge
- F. Conclusion

SANCTITY OF LIFE SERMON:

When It Comes To Life and Death, Who Is Really in Charge?

~ Sermon Based on Deuteronomy 32:39 ~

Today is our Sanctity of Life Sunday. I would like to begin by asking you to consider a simple question: When it comes to matters of life and death, who's really in charge? These are very challenging times for Christians. If you keep your eyes on the news, you have seen many challenges, on both the state and federal levels, to God's authority over life and death. One of my neighbors asked the question out loud: "Who's really in charge?" Does the President and his administration have any control? Is it special interest groups? Is it the more liberal crowd in Washington? Is God anywhere in the mix? These days it's easy for God-fearing Christians to be discouraged by what they see and hear when it comes down to who is really in charge of life and death. So today we will lay these matters to rest and let God answer the question of WHEN IT COMES TO LIFE AND DEATH, WHO IS REALLY IN CHARGE?

The first group of people to weigh in on the question is the world around us. As a group, they are pretty convinced who's in charge. Read the response with me. *When it comes to life and death, the world says, "I'm in charge."* Have you ever seen a list of reasons why patients in Oregon make the choice to end their lives through the help of a physician? And for that matter, have you seen the list of reasons why a host of patients in other states are begging for the same thing? I had not seen such a list. So in preparation for today I looked up some web sites to find out where these people were coming from.

It came down to an issue of control. One man wanted to be in charge of his quality of life and said, "A person should be free to **choose** to die when life ceases to be worth living." Another woman said, "The option of physician-assisted suicide would give patients and their families peace of mind." She wanted to have a say in how her loved ones would feel. One man confided that he was pushing to have his life terminated so that he could ultimately be in control of his finances. His treatment was draining the family savings and retirement account pretty fast, and he wanted to be sure that there was an inheritance for his kids. One woman said, "It's pretty simple, really. I want my physician to help terminate my life so that I can finally be free of the pain. I cannot stand the pain." For her, it was all about being in charge of how she felt.

In the midst of all that chatter by the world about how they are declaring themselves to be in charge comes the clear Word from the Creator. In His fifth commandment God clearly says, "You shall not murder." And He expands on that to say that the only One who has the inherent right to end a human life is the Lord Himself. It doesn't matter how depleted the savings account is or how many pain pills you take or what you think your quality of life is. God alone reserves the right to end a human life. He created life and He alone has the right to take it back again. And despite what the Supreme Court might say or what state legislators might decree, God still holds the world accountable for their sins. God says that if the world is intent on

rebellious against His gift of life, then they will pay for it with an eternal death in hell.

Do you want to know, though, what kind of scared me as I visited all of those pro physician-assisted suicide web sites? I found that my own human reason didn't find the answers that people were giving to be outlandish and terrible. For crying out loud, how bad can it be that a man simply wants to leave his children an inheritance? That seems like a pretty selfless act and a downright thoughtful thing to do! And is it really so awful that a person just wants to be free of pain, the kind of pain you and I probably haven't ever experienced. When the medication doesn't seem to be working and the depression has set in, and you haven't felt like yourself for such a long time, and you're always so tired. Doesn't part of you just want to scream out, "Oh, come on – have a heart, will you? If a person wants to be free of these things by having his doctor give him some medication so that you just drift off to a permanent sleep – can that be so wrong?" You see, the painful truth is this – and read it out loud with me: "*When it comes to life and death, sometimes I say, "I'm in charge."*"

Part of us says, "If I were in that kind of pain and facing that kind of prolonged suffering, I think I'd like to have the option of having my life terminated, too. I'm not saying I'd actually do it, but it should at least be an option. I can sympathize with those terminally ill folks because I can imagine what it's like to be in their shoes." Our sinful nature will always tell you, "You are the master of your fate. You are the captain of your soul. Nobody but nobody has the right to tell you what to do. The only one you are answerable to – is yourself. As long as you are Ok with life or death on your terms, then nobody has a right to tell you anything." And God comes to you and me and He says, "How dare you presume to take the place of Me when it comes to determining what is fair and good and reasonable in matters of life and death; and how dare you take the side – if even in your own mind – of those who think that way. Perhaps you have forgotten what I had my Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians, "*You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*" God makes it really simple, doesn't He? You are not in charge here! And if we can't get that straight – no matter what the circumstances are in our life or someone else's life – God warns us that we can think it over with the unbelievers in Hell because they are clinging to the same sin.

Do you remember the question? Who's really in charge here? Who's really in charge in good times and bad, through the sniffles and terminal illness? Read it together with me: "*God assures us, I am the One who is in charge of life and death.*" And that, my dear Christian friends, is the best news of all. Moses was speaking his farewell address to the Israelites and in the sermon text that I read to you, Moses was quoting the Lord as God talked to His people about being there for them and fighting their battles and not being afraid of the enemy or what would happen to them in their life. Do you remember how God put it? He said, "*There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life.*" God is in control of everything. He has a plan for everyone and everything. He is stronger than any congress, state legislature or president. He promises that if it is His will, you will live to serve Him in whatever station in life He has placed you. And when it is time for you to be delivered from this life to the next, God will see to that, too. He's the One in charge.

That's a comforting thought, isn't it? It would be awful if the One who was in charge, the One who controlled your life and the events in it were a lousy, no good tyrant and bully. But that's simply not the case, is it? Do you remember those words from Paul that we mentioned before? He said that we have a loving God who bought you and your life at a very high price. The One in charge knew that we would land ourselves in Hell because of our lousy attitude toward life and life issues, so our God sent His Son to win for us eternal life. Our gracious and merciful Savior went to a cross and gave up His life so that we could have life to the full. That has always been God's intention – that we have life and have it to the full. Jesus paid for our sins so that heaven would be ours.

Because we love Jesus so much, we are willing to wait through whatever comes along until He determines that it's the right time to take us from this life to the next. But it's not like Jesus simply says, "Hey, life could get pretty bad, pretty painful, pretty cancerous so just hang in there and I'll get to you when I get to you." No, Jesus promises that He will be right there by our side helping us to get through all the difficulties until He takes us to heaven. Our lesson said that Jesus will help us fight our battles – and that includes the battles that come with our health and our physical life. Jesus promises that He is still in charge.

But here's the thing: not everybody knows that. There are millions and millions of people who either don't know that God is in charge or they simply have, up until now, refused to believe it. It's our job to go out and tell them. Model it for them. Show by your Christian life and witness that you trust that Jesus Christ is in charge – maybe in how you handle your own health issues or your own personal trials in your life. Pray for other people that they might come to know that Jesus is their Savior so that they can have that peace of knowing that they don't have to be the one in charge. Jesus is so much better at directing the life of a Christian than anyone else. And speak out in your defense of life. If the One in charge tells us in His Word about principles of life and death, then we will promote those ideas as best we can.

Today our Lord left no doubt about who is really in charge. He gives life. He takes life. He provides eternal life through His Son. Now let's go out into the world and really show them who's in charge. Amen.

By Pastor Mark C. Kom

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