

# “Who Chooses You?” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Sanctity of Life Sunday May 13, 2023

- I. **Ephesians 1:4-5** – <sup>4</sup> even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup> He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ
- II. **Today we celebrate Mother’s Day and Sanctity of Life Sunday.**
  - a. It is fitting that we remember the importance of life on the day that moms all across the nation are honored for bringing life into the world.
  - b. Many people cringe, because this is when pastor hits us over the head with all these unpleasant topics – abortion, right to die, euthanasia, and generally any way in which life is diminished
  - c. Maybe it’s unpleasant for you because death is unpleasant, even though we do everything possible to sanitize it make it easier.
    - i. Notice how we use words to make things sound better than they are – to describe death:
      1. We say a person “ended a pregnancy” instead of the more graphic reality of murder at worst, or ending a life at best.
      2. If a person decides they want to drink poison to die on their own terms, it’s “death with dignity” rather than committing suicide.
      3. Or when a person dies, we say things like, “we lost them,” or “they are in a better place” or “God needed them”.
    - ii. There is a reason we use softer language to describe things, because it is difficult to face the realities of death... as death is not God’s original plan.
  - d. Now, let me be very clear today – these issues are incredibly sensitive – incredibly difficult to navigate – and when they come into our lives like a freight train, we try to deal with them the best we know how.
    - i. A pregnant, single girl without hope for a father in the future... “How can I do this alone? What will my family and friends think? How can I possibly afford this?”
    - ii. A fatal disease without cure... “Pain and suffering are my only options, why shouldn’t I just go early?”
    - iii. A spinal or brain injury that requires caregivers around the clock and constant suffering... “Maybe this person would be better off dead than going through all this?”
    - iv. In each of these examples we may have had our own experiences, and we are not always equipped to go through them.
  - e. Yet there is a mindset that comes straight from our faith and the Bible – we do not aim for death – we aim for life.
    - i. Just think about it, why do people aim for death?
      1. If a person is terminally ill we trust that death will be the solution

2. If a pregnancy is unplanned or maybe tests show a birth defect or genetic problem, we trust in death to solve that problem.
  3. When an older person requires more and more care, many people (including the person being cared for) believe that death is the best thing to end the loneliness and health problems.
  4. People trust in death over trusting in God and His promise of life.
- f. All of these issues surrounding death and life have to do with trust in God as we aim for life.

III. **Life is the main theme of the Bible.**

- a. Life was given at creation, and we human beings were brought to life by God's love and desire to make us in His image.
- b. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve broke away from God's desire and introduced sin, death and evil into the world...
  - i. Even the very first children ended in murder as Cain trusted in death to solve his problem with his brother Abel.
- c. Yet, God also promised from the beginning that He would bring the solution to death and sin – and that promise came in the offspring of Eve, the first mother...
  - i. It was not a child she would have directly, nor her children after her for thousands of years, but that life would come into the world save ours.
  - ii. I know this might be an overused idea, but can you just imagine what might have happened if Mary were found pregnant in today's world?
    1. Mary's fear might have led her to trust in death rather than trust in God's plan and will for her and His plan to save us all.
- d. Jesus the Savior did come into the world as a newborn baby, just like all of us... but His life would become the ultimate fulfillment of life over death.
  - i. You see, through Jesus, God chose you... God chose to keep you... to adopt you into the family of "abundant life" (John 10:10)... to call you His own...

IV. **Paul writes a prayer of praise and thanksgiving in Ephesians today.**

- a. It's his desire to lift up the ways that God has given us blessings and life through Jesus.
- b. In a sense, it's just stating the truth about God and what He's done through Jesus – which includes choosing us from the foundation of time, adopting us, redeeming us from sin and death, forgiving us, and overcoming anything that might separate us from His love.
- c. Ephesians 1:1-10 is one of the most beautiful pictures of God choosing us in Christ – it is a wonderful picture of the Gospel.
- d. In so many ways, it reminds us how much God is for us... and how much He has done for us to bring us into relationship with Him.

- i. I'm reminded of Romans 8, as Paul says, "<sup>30</sup> And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified he also glorified. <sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:30-31)
- ii. God chooses YOU!
- iii. And if God chooses us, who or what can be against us?
- e. Can death be against us? Suffering? Disease? Trials? Tribulation?
  - i. Of course that is the end of Romans 8 as Paul says that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Savior.
- f. When we fear the outcome of whatever trial we face and place our trust in our own designs and plans... (our own truth rather than God's truth)... we are ignoring the amazing gift of life that God promises to us.
- g. The trouble is we cannot see the blessings and grace God has in store for us – especially in the midst of struggle...

V. **A story was once told about a man who got lost in the desert.**

- a. After wandering around for a long time, he was terribly thirsty... and just about the time that he thought he might die out there, he saw a shack in the distance.
- b. So he makes his way over to it, and unbelievably, there was water!
- c. It wasn't what he expected though... as he found a small jug of water right next to a water pump... and a note: "Pour ALL the water into the top of the pump to prime it. If you do this, you will get all the water you need."
- d. What a dilemma... He could drink down the sure deal right in front of him, or take a chance on pouring it into the pump.
  - i. Enough for the moment... or enough for the moment and the long journey ahead...?
- e. He decided to risk it... pouring the whole jug into the pump – and then working the handle frantically.
  - i. At first nothing happened, and he got a little nervous... was this some kind of cruel joke?
  - ii. He pumped even harder, and then suddenly, water started gushing forth... in fact, so much water came out that he drank all he wanted, took a shower, and filled all the containers he could find.
- f. The man had resisted the temptation toward momentary satisfaction, he trusted the note, and he received all the water he needed and more.
- g. Now the note also said: "After you have finished, please refill the jug for the next traveler."
  - i. So, the overjoyed man refilled the jug and added to the note: "Please, trust me on this. Prime the pump, it works!"
- h. God is telling all of us, "Trust me on this..." as we navigate the very difficult journey of life in this world.

- i. We don't trust death, we trust God and His Word of truth, as it says:
  - 1. You are mine, I have called you by name (Isa. 43)
  - 2. Jesus says, I came that you may have life and have it abundantly." (Jn. 10:10)
  - 3. God the Son would die so we might live (John 3:16)
  - 4. God chooses us through Jesus to be His children (Eph 1:4-5)
- i. Yes, we trust in God – we stand firm in Christ – the one who chooses us!