

## Isaiah 49:5-6

<sup>5</sup>But now the LORD,  
who formed me from the womb to be his servant,  
to turn Jacob back to him,  
so that Israel might be gathered to him,  
so that I will be honored in the eyes of the LORD,  
because my God has been my strength—  
<sup>6</sup>the LORD said:  
It is too small a thing that you should just be my servant  
to raise up only the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the ones I have preserved in Israel,  
so I will appoint you to be a light for the nations,  
so that my salvation will be known to the end of the earth.

## The Sanctity of Life

### I.

Life Sunday. For our congregation it has been held during the Epiphany season for several years. January happens to be the month of the anniversary of the Roe vs Wade Supreme Court decision. It happened January 22, 1973. Since that fateful day, more than 55 million lives have been terminated in this country alone. Some people have rightfully compared it to the Holocaust.

At the root of the problem lies a loss of appreciation for the sanctity of life. I suppose we could go through all kinds of Biblical reasons to condemn abortion, but anyone who knows their Scriptures, even a little bit, realizes that God does not sanction abortion. Those who condone or promote abortion clearly hold a view of life that is in conflict with the Bible.

### II.

Abortion is a sin because it disregards what the Bible teaches about the sanctity of life. God is the author of all life. God is telling us: “I give life, and I take it away. Don’t try to play God. I have made life sacred. I want you to regard it as precious. Protect it, nurture it, cherish it.” That is how God interprets for us the meaning of his commandment: “You shall not murder.”

In Psalm 139, King David beautifully states God’s special plan for each human life. “For you created my inner organs. You wove me together in my mother’s womb. <sup>14</sup>I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and my soul knows that very well. <sup>15</sup>My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. <sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my unfinished body. In your book all of them were written. Days were determined, before any of them existed” (Psalm 139:13-16, EHV). God extends his protecting hand over the child in the womb. As children of God, we can do no less.

### III.

This is the same view of life Isaiah shows us. “But now the LORD, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to turn Jacob back to him, so that Israel might be gathered to him” (Isaiah 49:5, EHV). This is the Messiah speaking, telling us about his mission, more than 700 years before he was born. Even as Jesus is taking shape in the womb of his

mother, God views him as a person. He's a servant. He has a mission to perform.

His mission is to bring Israel back to God. But there's even more. "The LORD said: It is too small a thing that you should just be my servant to raise up only the tribes of Jacob and to restore the ones I have preserved in Israel, so I will appoint you to be a light for the nations, so that my salvation will be known to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6, EHV).

If there is one thing God is intent on doing, it is to give us the chance to enjoy the kind of life he had in mind for us when he created us. When God looks at our world and sees the kind of life we've made for ourselves, it grieves him. He knows what life *could* be, and he's determined to give us a chance at it.

#### IV.

As a person who grew up in South Dakota, I've been to the Black Hills more than a few times. One of the things that is both sad and awe inspiring is to look at places that once were teeming with life and vibrance and beauty that have been devastated by forest fires. The scene is just total devastation. Pictures don't give you quite the same sense, but we've all seen devastating pictures from California after wildfires or any number of communities that have been flattened by tornados.

Those images must be something like what God saw when he visited the Garden of Eden after the Fall. All his hard work was destroyed. All the beauty gone when his lovely creatures discarded his image in favor of their own life style.

But God doesn't give up easily. He said to his Son, his only begotten Son, "I will appoint you to be a light for the nations, so that my salvation will be known to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6, EHV).

Do you know what abortion does? It wipes out that opportunity even before God gets a chance to reclaim that tiny life for himself. It eliminates the time of grace for that child even before it is born. Abortion shows no regard whatsoever for the sanctity of human life.

In 1973, Supreme Court Justice Blackman said: "The Word 'person' in the Constitution does not include the unborn." For a Christian that is not the issue. For us, the point is that *all* life conceived in the womb is human life. Human life is sacred. God does not give us the option to stop what he starts, regardless of whether we call it a person or not.

#### V.

When it comes to the question of abortion, God does not give his people "choice" in the matter. Nor does God give us a choice as to whether or not we wish to become involved in the controversy this issue has raised. When Christian principles are being subverted, he expects us to stand up for the truth. *How* we will become involved he leaves up to us to determine.

We can become involved both as citizens and as Christians. As citizens, the issue is a civic one. The religious question is answered for us on the basis of God's Word. The civic question is answered on the basis of natural law, which underlies our Constitution. Natural law is the name we give the instinctive knowledge of right and wrong we have after the Fall.

If the question is asked: "How do we use our religious convictions in dealing with a civic issue?" the answer is, "we don't." As Lutherans we cherish the principle of separation of church and state. We don't advocate that legislators use the Bible to decide issues of the state, nor do we determine what we believe and practice as Christians by appealing to the state for answers. In fact, some of the strongest civil arguments against abortion were written by non-Christians.

As *citizens* we have opportunities to be involved in our communities in various forms

where we can make our views as citizens known to others. Such efforts are important in getting the attention of the community and raising pro-life issues in the public forum. If, as citizens, we don't *want* to get involved in some way or other, we lose by default. When we fail to get involved, a crime that is eating away at the fabric of our society continues to destroy our way of life.

As *Christians* there is another way we can stand up for the sanctity of life. We can support with our prayers and our offerings the work Christian Life Resources does on the national level, as well as within Michigan. Holy Trinity has put her money and time where our mouths are on this issue in years past. There might not be lots of public fanfare involved in our efforts, but year after year you donate money and supplies to Christian Life Resources and various WELS groups that support and defend life.

Your support helps Christian Life Resources save lives through counseling. Women are reminded that if God could forgive David for the murder of Uriah, then he can also offer and give them forgiveness—even for the sin of violating the sanctity of life.

“But now the LORD, who formed me from the womb... <sup>6</sup>said:... I will appoint you to be a light for the nations, so that my salvation will be known to the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:5–6, EHV). *That* tells you something about the sanctity of life. Jesus came to bring salvation to the ends of the earth, and to make that salvation known to the ends of the earth. Amen.