

Preparing to Die Well

Lesson 9 – December 18, 2011

Opening Hymn: Whate'er My God Ordains Is Right (Blue Hymnal 94)

Sanctity of Human Life

Scripture Speaks of the Sanctity of Human Life

The Bible tells us that God made us in His image and formed us in the womb.

Job 31:15

15 “Did not He who made me in the womb make him, And the same one fashion us in the womb?”

Psalms 100:3

3 Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

* Psalms 139:13-16

13 For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. **14** I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. **15** My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; **16** Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

Isaiah 46:3-4

3 “Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel, You who have been borne by Me from birth And have been carried from the womb; **4** Even to your old age I will be the same, And even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; And I will bear you and I will deliver you.”

Isaiah 49:5

5 And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength)

Jeremiah 1:5

5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

A man is never to take the life of an innocent person under penalty of his own death.

* Genesis 9:6 (God speaking to Noah after the flood)

6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.”

Preparing to Die Well

Exodus 20:13

13 You shall not murder.

1 Samuel 31:3-5 (Saul's death by suicide)

3 The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers. **4** Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it. **5** When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him.

2 Samuel 4:11 (after the murderers of Saul's son Ish-bosheth brought his head to David)

11 How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I (David) not now require his blood from your hand and destroy you from the earth?"

* 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? **17** If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

We are not our own but we belong to Jesus Christ who paid for us with His own precious blood.

Romans 12:1

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Do Not Commit Suicide

- You are not your own, but you were bought with a price.
- Your body is God's temple, and you are commanded not to destroy God's temple.
- Problems that might seem unique to you are really common to all men, and Christ gives us the hope and the power to overcome them.
- If you are *not* in Christ, then your problems are only starting. Repent and turn to Christ in faith.

Do Not Seek Physician Assisted Suicide

- Sometimes sought by patients who are depressed or don't want to "be a burden" to their loved ones.
- Legal (or at least not illegal) in several countries including Belgium (2002), Columbia (1997), Germany (in limited situations), Luxembourg (2009), The Netherlands (2002) and Switzerland (in limited situations).

Preparing to Die Well

- Currently legal in the U.S. in Oregon (Death with Dignity Act, 1997), Washington (Death with Dignity Act, 2008) and Montana (Baxter v. Montana, 2009).
- The pre-1964 Hippocratic Oath states clearly:

“I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art.”
- The post-1964 Hippocratic Oath states instead:

“But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.”

Do Not Condone Euthanasia

- The next step beyond physician assisted suicide, the physician administers death and may even initiate the process
- Perceived by supporters as a medical “treatment” that can reduce medical costs
- Legal only in Belgium (2002), Luxembourg (2009) and The Netherlands (2002)
- Basis
 - Voluntary – the patient requests death
 - Non-voluntary – the patient cannot request death (for example, in a coma)
 - Involuntary – the patient does not request death
- Means
 - Passive – for example, withholding necessary treatment
 - Active – for example, administering a lethal injection

Modern Medical Technology

- Christians are responsible to seek cures when they are available.
- The goal for treatment should be palliative care in which pain is managed.
- Issues around prolonging life in incurable situations:
 - When is it appropriate to discontinue a particular treatment?
 - When is it appropriate to seek home or hospice care?
 - When should experimental treatments (e.g., Phase I clinical trials) be sought?
 - When are resuscitation measures appropriate?
 - When should artificial hydration or feeding be employed?
- Some legal courses of action that help ensure a death with dignity on your terms:
 - Living will
 - Do-Not-Resuscitate order
 - Health Care Surrogate

Discussion, Questions and Answers