

Two Nations Are In Your Womb

National Sanctity of Human Life Day 2009

Genesis 25:19-26

The Origin of the Day

Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. National Sanctity of Human Life Day is commemorated annually on January 22, which is the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe vs. Wade*. President Ronald Reagan issued a Presidential Proclamation on January 13, 1984 declaring that this date be set apart “to gather... in homes and places of worship to give thanks for the gift of life, and to reaffirm our commitment to the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of human life.”¹

The proclamation² states,

The values and freedoms we cherish as Americans rest on our fundamental commitment to the sanctity of human life. The first of the “unalienable rights” affirmed by our Declaration of Independence is the right to life itself, a right the Declaration states has been endowed by our Creator on all human beings -- whether young or old, weak or strong, healthy or handicapped.

Since 1973, however, more than 15 million unborn children have died in legalized abortions -- a tragedy of stunning dimensions that stands in sad contrast to our belief that each life is sacred. These children, over tenfold the number of Americans lost in all our Nation's wars, will never laugh, never sing, never experience the joy of human love; nor will they strive to heal the sick, or feed the poor, or make peace among nations. Abortion has denied them the first and most basic of human rights, and we are infinitely poorer for their loss.

We are poorer not simply for lives not led and for contributions not made, but also for the erosion of our sense of the worth and dignity of every individual. To diminish the value of one category of human life is to diminish us all. Slavery, which treated Blacks as something less than human, to be bought and sold if convenient, cheapened human life and mocked our dedication to the freedom and equality of all men and women. Can we say that abortion -- which treats the unborn as something less than human, to be destroyed if convenient -- will be less corrosive to the values we hold dear?

We have been given the precious gift of human life... It is fitting, then, on the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* that struck down State anti-abortion laws, that we reflect anew on these blessings, and on our corresponding responsibility to guard with care the lives and freedoms of even the weakest of our fellow human beings.

¹ Presidential Proclamation 5147 issued January 13, 1984.

² See <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/11384c.htm>

Reagan then issued an annual proclamation. President George H.W. Bush also observed the day by issuing an annual proclamation. Bill Clinton did not continue the practice while in office. However, the current President, George W. Bush, picked up the tradition and has issued a proclamation each year since taking office.

A Painful Subject

I know for many people the topic of abortion elicits various emotions. This is a painful subject in several ways. Some of you ladies will have personally experienced the pain and guilt of abortion. If the statistics are accurate I can presume that about 15-20 women in this room will have had an abortion.

No doubt there are men also in this room who have been directly and personally affected by the pain and guilt of abortion. There are probably women in this room who are unable to have children who also feel uneasy at the mention of abortion. Most likely the majority of us in this room will know someone who has had an abortion.

I am not preaching on this issue to condemn. Rather, in the words of Ronald Reagan, my goal is to “give thanks for the gift of life and reaffirm our commitment to the sanctity of every human life.” If your life has been touched by abortion in the past, then I pray that you are completely resting in the grace and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus, because ***there is no sin, including abortion, so great that it cannot be forgiven***, there is no guilt that He cannot cleanse. None.

The Steadfast Love of Psalm 106

Psalm 106 gives us an example of this. The Psalm briefly recounts the dark days of Israel’s history. Those dark days included a time when Israel intermarried with the nations that God had commanded them to destroy and the tragic result was they embraced the Canaanite idolatrous religion that included child sacrifice.

Psalm 106

*34 They did not destroy the peoples,
as the LORD commanded them,
35 but they mixed with the nations
and learned to do as they did.
36 They served their idols,
which became a snare to them.
37 They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to the demons;
38 they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was polluted with blood.
39 Thus they became unclean by their acts,
and played the whore in their deeds.
40 Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people,
and he abhorred his heritage;*

In pursuit of marital love, God’s chosen people lost their love of His commands and thus fully embraced the demonic idolatry of the land of Canaan. Instead of serving God, they served idols. Instead of

sanctifying their sons and daughters, they scarified to them. The children of Israel spilled the innocent blood of their own children; their own sons and daughters.

And the anger of the Lord burned against them and He hated them for their murderous deeds. God hates the killing of babies. He is not indifferent to shedding of innocent blood. Yet even in the middle of the guilt of killing their own children, when they called out to the Lord, He forgave their sin and granted them grace.

Psalm 106

*44 Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress,
when he heard their cry.*

*45 For their sake he remembered his covenant,
and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love.*

God's capacity to forgive is infinite. His "*mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning*" (Lam 3:22-23). The Lord God, the Father of Jesus, possess an "abundance of steadfast love" that will never run out and He will lavish His grace and love and forgiveness upon us if we ask Him.

The Banner of Steadfast Love

Abortion is not the unforgivable sin. So as we focus on the issue of abortion this morning, we do so under the banner of God's "abundant steadfast love" and grace that is available to anyone who asks for it through the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:21).

Why Talk About Abortion?

Why are we dedicating a day to the issue of abortion? The reason is to raise awareness of this bloody sin and to stop what the American Medical Association in an article in the New York Times in the 1850's called the "unwarrantable destruction of human life."³

The State of the Union

The present statistics are staggering. The Allen Guttmacher Institute (research arm of Planned Parenthood) reports "The United States has one of the highest abortion rates among developed countries."⁴ The Centers for Disease Control reports, "Each year since 1980, the number of abortions in this country has remained relatively stable at approximately 1.3 – 1.4 million abortions per year."⁵

That means that there have been about 50 million unborn children aborted since 1973⁶. That is equivalent to the combined populations of California and Pennsylvania.⁷ Consider for a moment the outcry after the deaths of 2,998 people on September 11, 2001.

³ World Magazine, January 17, 2009, "Lessons from the Past" by Marvin Olasky, p.33.

⁴ "Facts in Brief," Allen Guttmacher Institute, 1995, New York, NY.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control, "Legal Induced Abortion," by Lisa M. Koonin and Jack C. Smith. See <http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/products&pubs/datatoaction/pdf/rhow6.pdf>

⁶ The Allen Guttmacher Institute. See http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html

⁷ Population of California is about 37 million and Pennsylvania is approximately 12 million.

Imagine what the outcry would have been if terrorists had succeeded in decimating the entire populations of both California and Pennsylvania (about 50 million people). And yet this nation,⁸ for the most part, is content to sit quietly while **every day** about 3,500 unborn children lose their lives.

If abortion has not already touched your life in some way, the chances are that it will one day. Right now there are about 20 million high school students in this country. Roughly half of them are girls. By the time they turn 45, about 43% of them will have had at least one abortion.⁹

We cannot ignore this.

What Does God Say?

Does the Bible have anything to say to this issue? Lets look at our text for this morning, Genesis 25:19-26. I'll mention four observations from the text; 1) Life comes from God, 2) there were children in Rebekah's womb, 3) if pregnancy is a struggle, God to the Lord, and 4) we cannot see the plans of God.

1) Life Comes From God

19 These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to be his wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

The first observation is that life comes from God. Rebekah was barren. She had no children. She was not getting pregnant. Verse 21 tells us *"Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived."* Isaac went to the Lord to ask for a child. He asked for a little life and a little life was granted to him. Isaac went to the Lord because only the Lord can grant life.

Genesis 2:7 says, *Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature.*

Moses says, *"...love the Lord your God, obey His voice and cling to Him, for He is your life and length of days..."* (Deut 30:20)

God Open Wombs

God is our life. All life comes from Him and without Him there is no life.¹⁰ Only God has the power to open and close wombs. God opened Rebekah's womb and granted her life. He did the same thing to Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Sarah was 90 years old when she got pregnant (talk about an unplanned pregnancy – from a human point of view. Gen 17:17). Paul says her womb was "as good as dead" (Rom 4:19). She was barren (for 90 years) until God opened her womb and granted life.

⁸ Global estimates range from 50 to 150 million annually.

⁹ The Allen Guttmacher Institute www.guttmacher.org.

¹⁰ All life returns to him after death. See Ezekiel 18:4 *"All souls are mine."* Deut 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6 – *"I kill and make alive."*

Leah (Jacob's wife) was barren but God opened her womb (Gen 29:31).

Rachel (Issac's wife) was barren but God opened Rachel's womb (Gen 30:22).

Hannah was barren but God opened her womb (1 Samuel 1:5-6)

It is God alone who gives life and has the power to open and close wombs.

Isaac was 40 years old when He married Rebekah (Gen 25:20). He was sixty when his twin sons were born. Isaac and Rebekah waited **20 years** to get pregnant. That is an incredibly long period of time. But, finally, in answer to Isaac's prayer, God answered and granted them life.

2) There Were Children In Her Womb

25:22 *The children struggled together within her*

The second observation is that there were children in her womb. This observation is so simple that we might be tempted to pass over it. However, given the language of the proponent's of abortion, this is helpful to see.

Verse 22 is crystal clear – *"the children struggled within her."*

There were children inside Rebekah's belly.

- They were children, not "products of conception."
- They were children, not "the results of pregnancy."
- They were children, not "the contents of the uterus."
- They were children, not "fetal tissue."
- They were children, not "a prenatal mass."
- They were children, not "a blob of cells."

In Matthew 18:14 Jesus said, *"It is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."*

There were two children in her womb.



15 weeks



19 weeks



24 weeks

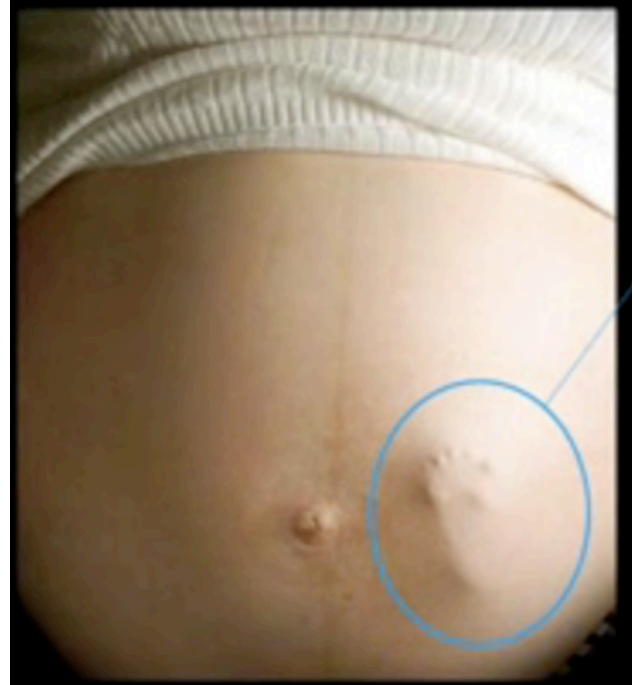
3) Rebekah Took Her Struggle to the Lord

22 *The children struggled together within her, and she said, If it is thus, why is this happening to me? So she went to inquire of the LORD.*

Evidently Rebekah experienced a difficult pregnancy. “The children struggled within her.” There was a lot of pushing and **kicking** between those two boys in her belly.

She says, “What is this happening?” She went to “inquire of the Lord.” She knew where to go. She took her problems and her struggles to the Lord.

Being pregnant can be a very frightening experience, especially if there are problems. Alisa and I experienced two problem pregnancies and it was very scary. With our last child we had to be near the hospital because Alisa went into pre-term labor at 26 weeks. We spent four weeks living at the Ronald McDonald house and making daily visits to the NICU unit for monitoring.



How many of us go first to “inquire of the Lord” when we have health problems? I praise God for good doctors and many doctors’ love the Lord and incorporate their faith into their philosophy of practice, but doctors should not be our first person we inquire of.

4) We Cannot See the Plans of the Lord

Rebekah went to inquire of the Lord and He answered her.

23 *And the LORD said to her,
Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other,
the older shall serve the younger.*

God told her “two nations are in your womb.” What do we see when we look into the womb, “a mass of tissue” or a mighty nation? Do we see a small person or a great nation? Do we see only what she presently is or what she will become? Do we simply see a bump in the belly or a baby boy who will grow up to lay His life down to save people from their sins?

Let’s face it. We have vision problems. We cannot see what God sees when He looks at children in the womb. He sees two nations and we see to obnoxious kids who are fighting all the time.

We see what can't be and He sees what *can* be.

"The Tiny Foot"¹¹ Adapted from "Family News From Dr. James Dobson," December 1993

Several years ago a fragile young woman came to my office, expecting her first baby. One month before she was due, the baby was in a breech position. The death rate of breech babies is high because of the difficulty in delivering the after-coming head and the imperative need of delivering it quickly after the body is born.

During the delivery, I waited as patiently as I could for the natural forces of expulsion to thoroughly dilate the firm maternal structures. At last the time had come, and I gently drew down one little foot. I grasped the other, but it would not come down beside the first one. To my consternation, I saw that the other little foot would never be beside the first one. The entire thigh from the hip to the knee was missing.

I knew what a dreadful effect this would have upon the unstable nervous system of the mother. The family would almost certainly impoverish itself in taking the child to every famous orthopedist in the world. I saw this little girl sitting sadly by herself, while the other girls danced and ran and played.

I could slow my hand; I could delay those few short moments. No one in this world would ever know. The mother, after the first shock of grief, would be glad she had lost a child so sadly handicapped.

The little pink foot on the good side bobbed out from its protecting towel and pressed firmly against my slowly moving hand, the hand into whose keeping the safety of the mother and the baby had been entrusted.

I couldn't do it. I delivered the baby with her pitiful little leg. Every foreboding came true. The mother was in the hospital for several months — she looked like a wraith of her former self. As the years went on, I blamed myself bitterly for not having had the strength to yield to my temptation.

Our hospital stages an elaborate Christmas party each year for the staff. This past year, three lovely young musicians on the stage played softly in unison with the organ. I was especially fascinated by the young harpist. She played extraordinarily well, as if she loved it. Her slender fingers flicked across the strings, and her face was upturned as if the world that moment were a wonderful and holy place.

When the short program was over, there came running down the aisle a woman I did not know. "Oh, you saw her," she cried. "You must have recognized your baby. That was my daughter who played the harp — the little girl who was born with only one good leg 17 years ago. We tried everything else first, but now she has a whole artificial leg on that side. Best of all, through all those years, she learned to use her hands so wonderfully. She is going to be one of the world's greatest harpists. She is my whole life and now she is so happy ... And here she is!" The sweet young girl had quietly approached us, her eyes glowing.

Impulsively I took the child in my arms. Across her warm young shoulder I saw the creeping clock of the delivery room 17 years before. I lived again those awful moments when her life was in my hand. As the last strains of "Silent Night" faded, I found the comfort I had waited for so long. (Condensed from the book, *Christmas in My Heart*, by Joe Wheeler, Review & Herald Publishing Co., 1993)

We simply don't know what the Lord will choose to do through the lives of little children. We have no idea. We see a handicap. The Lord may see a harpist.

When Sarah heard the Lord say that she would have a baby, she laughed because she thought it couldn't happen. But with God all things are possible.

Gen 21:7 *And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."*

¹¹ Adapted from "Family News From Dr. James Dobson," December 1993 <http://www.heartlink.org/directors/abortion/A000000571.cfm>

Sarah laughed. Abraham laughed. The name Isaac means “he laughs.”

Children bring laughter.

How Should We Respond

So what can we do? Let me offer five things you can do.

1) Pray for Awakening

Make a commitment to pray that this nation will be awakened to the reality of the horror of abortion. Pray that the Spirit of God will convict us of our sin. Pray that God will convict the conscience of medical professionals to stop killing little babies. Pray that men and women will seek satisfaction and fulfillment in God the Father rather than in illicit sexual relationships.

2) Get Informed

Learn the truth about abortion. Do some research.

- Visit www.abort73.com
- Visit www.beavoice.net

3) Speak the Truth in Love

When you have opportunity to speak truthfully about abortion, do it in love (Eph 4:15). Angry words do nothing but stir up strife. Be sure that love and compassion is the banner under which you speak the truth.

4) Resolve Not to Ignore This

We cannot ignore the shedding of innocent blood because God hates it. God is not indifferent to this.

Proverbs 6:16-17

There are six things the Lord hates, seven are an abomination to Him; 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood...

Psalms 106:40 says that God “abhorred His heritage.” It means He hated Israel because they were “pouring out the innocent blood of their sons and daughters” (106:38) through child sacrifice. Israel had fallen far from where they first began.

And we are no better than they. We are no more righteous than they. Abortion is a form of child sacrifice. They sacrificed their children to please some local god. We sacrifice the lives of our children in order to please ourselves and maintain a comfort life free from the exercise of parental responsibility.

The only difference between the ancient practice of child sacrifice and present day practice of abortion is that one took place outside the uterus and the other takes on the inside. We have not become more distinguished, only more discreet.

We’ve exchanged the image of the idol for the image in the mirror. We sacrifice our children to demonic idol of self-autonomy.

God hates the shedding of innocent blood and we cannot pretend that we don't know anything about it.

Proverbs 24:11

*11 Rescue those who are being taken away to death;
hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.*

*12 If you say, Behold, we did not know this,
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it,*

5) Support Alternatives to Abortion

We have Elaine Russo of Daybreak Pregnancy Resource Center here with us this morning. As a church, we support Daybreak. Elaine come share with us.

Val & Diane will be available to pray with you at the end.

John Newton said at the end of his life, "Two things I know: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior."

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
January 15, 2009

National Sanctity of Human Life Day, 2009¹²

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America

All human life is a gift from our Creator that is sacred, unique, and worthy of protection. On National Sanctity of Human Life Day, our country recognizes that each person, including every person waiting to be born, has a special place and purpose in this world. We also underscore our dedication to heeding this message of conscience by speaking up for the weak and voiceless among us.

The sanctity of life is written in the hearts of all men and women. On this day and throughout the year, we aspire to build a society in which every child is welcome in life and protected in law. We also encourage more of our fellow Americans to join our just and noble cause. History tells us that with a cause rooted in our deepest principles and appealing to the best instincts of our citizens, we will prevail.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 18, 2009, as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. I call upon all Americans to recognize this day with appropriate ceremonies and to underscore our commitment to respecting and protecting the life and dignity of every human being.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

GEORGE W. BUSH

¹² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2009/01/print/20090115-1.html>