

Title: God is involved with People
Date: January 17, 2021
Subject: Pro-Life
Scripture: Jeremiah 1:4, 5

It's inevitable. You know it's coming. You're watching one of those romantic movies or TV shows where the female lead character is talking to one of her friends about the new guy in her life. She goes on and on and on talking about him and them as a couple, how perfect he is for her...blah blah blah blah. She gets misty eyed and dabs at a tear forming as she sums up why he's the one: "He gets me. He really gets me." The friend nods reassuringly that he indeed is the one as she repeats, "he gets you."

There's someone who gets us. He knows who we are and what we need. God gets us. We desire to celebrate what God has done in creating human life as his specially designed creation, not just on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, but everyday.

The reverse side of the sermon notes has more pertinent Scriptures as well as Pro-Life resources. If you're watching by video, these can be found at the end of the sermon transcript.

READ Jeremiah 1:4, 5

I. God knows us.

God tells Jeremiah that his knowledge of the man was before he was even born. God didn't have to wait to see who emerged from the womb.

This past week I had my procedure. The results will be back in a few days. Thanks for praying. The nurse who wheeled me to the procedure room was very pregnant - 36 weeks and felt there wasn't any more room. She and her husband didn't know if it was a boy or a girl, whatever God wanted. They wanted to be surprised at the delivery. Going back to the old school gender reveal party. I think that's the seventh time Jean's heard this story. Apparently, I was quite repetitive on the ride home. There are some things I don't recall, getting into the wheelchair, down the elevator, through the lobby...My lapse of not knowing. God doesn't have that.

God's knowing of us began even before we came into existence. It's extremely difficult for us to imagine that something can be known before it happens. But we're talking about God, who knows all. It's an intimate kind of knowing, up close and personal.

Another man in the Bible expressed his wonder at God's knowing. "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13 - 16).

God's interest in people is "from the womb to the tomb." We really should expand on that. God's interest is from even before each person was in the womb as he knows the person who will come into existence. His interest lasts through the end of time and eternity with all he has planned for his children.

II. God formed us.

The Lord told Jeremiah that he was the one who formed him in the womb. The man was to understand that the Almighty God was intimately involved in him coming into existence. God was the creator of the new life.

The Bible clearly states that God is the one who creates people. The first two he created were Adam and Eve. Their creation was totally different than any other aspect of creation. When it came to the sun, moon, stars, zebras, alligators, blueberries, carrots, any other thing or animal, the Bible says that God spoke and those things came into existence.

Here's what it says about God creating the first human being – "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).

Woman was created in another unique way. The Bible tells us, "So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; And while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh then the Lord made Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:21 – 22).

With both the man and the woman, God was more intimately involved in the formation. It wasn't just speaking. He took his time. He was more deliberate. The word for forming both Adam and Eve was a word commonly used for a potter forming his creations from clay, laboring over it until it takes the shape of what he desires. It was if God bends over his special creation.

The distinction between people and the rest of creation is indicated by these words on the Bible, "Then God said, *Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, over all the creatures that move along the ground.* So God created man in his own image indeed, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26 – 27).

Being made in God's image doesn't mean we are God or can become God. It means we are like God, in that people have some of the attributes of God - will, emotion, intelligence, ability to choose, capacity to give and receive love. We're the most intricately designed of his creations. We alone can enter a personal relationship with him. We are special. It's the key to our self-worth. Actually, since our self-worth comes from being created by God and our unique relationship with him, it really should be called God-worth. There's immense value and reassurance in knowing that the Supreme Intelligence of the universe handcrafted us in his image.

God continues to be intimately involved in the creation of people. I read earlier what King David said as he was awestruck when he thought about the Lord creating people in all of the magnificent complexity (Psalm 139:13 – 16).

Back to Jeremiah. The Lord tells him “I formed you in the womb.”

The Lord continues to do this work today. He is the one who is forming human beings in the womb. Without him there is no creation of a new being.

There are other belief systems and constructs that want to get rid of God and his involvement with people. They want to deny his activity. Charles Darwin is credited with beginning the evolutionary movement which is at the forefront of denying God and therefore his work of bringing about life. This view is stated succinctly by Harvard's Edward O. Wilson who stated, “If humankind evolved by Darwinian natural selection...genetic chance and environmental necessity, not God made the species” (from Acts & Facts, January 2020, p. 18). They believe in a process of time and chance brings together the building blocks of life.

Darwin sought a way to endow the natural world with intelligence, the ability to make choices and the ability to implement those choices. His approach has been described this way. “In short, evolutionary biology needs a designer substitute to coordinate the incidental changes that hereditary transmission passes from one generation to the next, and there is only one naturalistic candidate on the table, to wit, natural selection.....Before Darwin, the ability to choose was largely confined to designing intelligences, that is, to conscious agents that could reflect deliberatively on the possible consequences of their choices. Darwin's claim to fame was to argue that natural forces, lacking any purposiveness or prevision of future possibilities, likewise have the power to choose via natural selection. In ascribing the power to choose to unintelligent natural forces, Darwin perpetuated the greatest intellectual swindle in the history of ideas. Nature has no power to choose” (William Dembski, as given in Acts & Facts, January 2020, p. 18).

If we are the product of time and chance as evolutionary thought holds, there really isn't any purpose. If we're merely accidents in some celestial struggle, the products of random genetic sequencing that took billions and billions of years to evolve into the current state, and there's no one out there that cares for us, why should people care for others or anything else? It's the survival of the fittest where lots of unfit die. Oh well.

If however, as we assert, God is the one who chooses to bring about life, then humanity is given dignity and purpose.

III. We were born.

Jeremiah was born. It's obvious. The Lord was communicating with him. The man walked and talked and did the things humans do when they're alive. His being outside the womb with the ability to breathe air into his lungs was a continuation of his life.

Life begins in the womb. There are lots of scientific facts about the development of children in the womb. Medical advances allow us to see inside the womb. Unborn children have noticeable heartbeats 18 days after conception. Brain waves can be detected as early as 40 days. The unborn child has his own unique set of fingerprints by 8 weeks. The child has its own blood type. And distinct DNA at the moment of conception. The unborn doesn't have the identical DNA of the father or the mother. It's a combination of the two people but distinct from them. It is its own life.

One of the most poignant references to life beginning in the womb comes from the Christmas story. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she would have an unplanned pregnancy, at least on her part. God had planned it. She was told the embryo that would be in her would be the divine Son of God whom she was to call Jesus. The whole thing was startling news for the young girl. She was a virgin. She was ultra-concerned as this was an impossible situation. She left town and went to see her aged relative Elizabeth who was herself going to have a baby. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, the fetus, the baby to be inside her, the human being leaped for joy.

A group called Secular Pro-Life got a booth at the American Atheist Convention 2012. One speaker proclaimed to applause and cheers, “The atheist community is a diverse community. We’ve got people here from all genders, races, religious backgrounds, and sexual orientations.” Kristine Kruszelnicki noticed the inclusiveness didn’t extend to some views. She writes, “But as Secular Pro-Life discovered after setting up an information table at the convention and mingling among the 25,000 participants of the Reason Rally the day before, for many atheists, the enthusiasm for diversity ends where the philosophical line on issues like abortion begins...As a secular pro-lifer I believe my case is scientifically and philosophically sound. Science concedes (providing a link to quotes by leaders of Planned Parenthood, NARAL and others on abort73.com) that human life begins at fertilization, so it follows that abortion is ageism and discrimination against a member of our own species, based on characteristics outside of their control” (lifesitenews.com/news/pro-life-atheists-invade-the-american-atheist-convention).

Chip Ingram has a DVD study on contemporary issues. In the material on the issue of abortion he cites the Harvard Medical School and their research – “The four criteria to determine if a person was dead are - 1: no response to external stimuli. In other words, they don't respond to pain. 2: no spontaneous movements or respiratory efforts. 3: no deep reflexes. And 4: no brain activity by a flat electroencephalogram. If you would say to someone, based on that criteria and did not tell them the age of a preborn baby at 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 weeks they would say, *It's alive. This is a human being.* Ingram concisely states, “It’s fully human just not fully developed.”

C. Everett Coop was the United States Surgeon General during the Reagan administration in the 1980s. He’d been in pediatric practice for 35 years. His assessment was that in all of his time, with the technology they had at that point, there had never been a time when there had to be a decision between the life of the mother and the life of the child. That was almost 40 years ago. A whole generation has come. We’ve had advances in technology. If this statement was true and verifiably true back in 1980s, how much truer today that there isn't a choice between the mother and the child?

Most of us will have an end point to our physical lives unless Jesus returns before then. We’re very aware of that as family members and members of our church family have died. We value all human life “from the womb to the tomb.” That's why we mourn and grieve over those who die. It's not like we have a huge party and say “good riddance” to the person who's died like Ebenezer Scrooge saw in his vision of the future in Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. People rejoiced at his demise. Not so with us. We mourn and sorrow, sometimes

mingled with relief for the person and ourselves that the loved one doesn't have to go through more pain and suffering. But we value the life.

IV. God set us apart and appointed us.

He has something for each person to be and do. He certainly had a special mission, a unique purpose for Jeremiah to fulfill. He was a prophet at a very difficult time in the history of Israel and was selected to be God's spokesman to speak truth to the people of Israel. It was a humongous challenge, but the Lord told him that he would give him the ability to fulfill that purpose. Jeremiah would be severely tested as to fleshing out his role and even his belief in God. He needed to understand the truth that the Lord was with him and could be counted on to be working at all times.

Part of the message included their captivity in a foreign land...and their eventual return to their homeland. These words of comfort reassured the people that God had a plan for them. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Though these words were to the entire nation, Jeremiah, as part of the nation, could understand God was also watching out for him. We can also know God is watching out for us and cares for us and has plans for us. Jesus told us that the Lord cares for the sparrows as well as the grass of the field and if he does that, he most assuredly cares for us. Much of his plan is when we get to our homeland of heaven.

A fellow prophet, Isaiah, was thoroughly captivated by the thought of God's interest in him that he called out to the rest of creation, "Listen to me, you islands, here this, you distant nations: before I was born the Lord called me; From my mother's womb he has spoken my name... he who formed me in the womb to be his servant" (Isaiah 49:1, 5).

The same kind of amazement that God would choose a person for his specific work was spoken in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul said, "But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb called me by his grace" (Galatians 1:15).

We have unique special purposes for which God created us. Some of the things we are to be and do everybody can be and do. But there are some things that are uniquely ours.

If someone asks, "What's the most important thing?" -- we need to tell them about the one who not only gives physical life but also gives spiritual life. No one other than Jesus can do that. Jesus gave his life on the cross for our sins so we could have life – be in a right relationship with him and have our sins forgiven. We can have life because of the never-ending, far-reaching love of God. You may have heard of the #LoveisLove. The truth is God is Love. Because of his immense love God gave us physical life and longs to give spiritual life to all.

***Video

Pro-Life Bible Passages

God is the Creator of life: Genesis 1:27, 2:7; 1 Samuel 2:6; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 10:8-12, 12:10, 31:15, 33:4; Psalm 100:3, 139:13-16; Isaiah 64:8; Acts 17:24-25; Colossians 1:16

Personhood begins at conception: Job 10:8-12; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 20:17; Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:35-38

Personhood exists in the womb: Genesis 16:11, 25:22-24; Psalm 22:9-10, 58:3, 71:5-6, 139:13-16; Ecclesiastes 5:15; Job 3:11, 31:15; Isaiah 7:14, 44:2, 46:3, 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5; Hosea 12:3; Luke 1:39-44; Galatians 1:15

Children are a gift from God: Genesis 18:10-14, 25:21, 29:31-35, 30:1-2; 33:5, 48:9; 1 Samuel 1:19, 20; Psalm 113:9, 127:3-5, 128:3; Proverbs 17:6; Isaiah 8:18; Hosea 9:11

Pro-Life Resources

Search “Sanctity of Human Life Sunday” and there’ll be lots of sites.

answersingenesis.org/sanctity-of-life

focusonthefamily.com/march/for/life

Free family guide “Valuing Life From the Start”

#LoveEveryHeartbeat

movie - SEE LIFE 2020

videos – “Why I Left the Abortion Industry” and

“From Abortionist to Pro-Life Advocate”

Wisconsin Family Council - wifamilycouncil.org

National Right to Life Committee - nrlc.org

Wisconsin Right to Life – wrtl.org

Counter Culture -- book by David Platt

180movie on YouTube by Ray Comfort

prolifetraining.com – from Life Training Institute. “Training Others to Save Lives: Persuasively Communicating the Pro-Life Message”