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Sermon Text: Psalm 139

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

Once I pondered out loud to an older pastor, “Why did God create such a variety of things? It might have been enough for us if He’d created only the cow and the pig. But He also created the giraffe, the platypus, the hummingbird and the ant – creatures that seem to fill no critical human need.” His reply was, “It shows that when God created the world, He took full delight in doing it.”

If you’d like a glimpse at the delight God took in creating you, then read the beautiful poetry of Psalm 139. We sang a little portion of it a few minutes ago. But allow me to read a section of it to you now: *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.*

You are no mistake. God designed and fashioned your body and soul in your mother’s womb. He gloried in every detail of it. And what a wonder! Why should God have taken such a careful interest in you, in me, to put us together so? And if He was so preoccupied with you in the womb, you can be sure His attention is still just as laser-focused on you today. What grace! What undeserved love!

When you were in the womb God did not regard you merely as a part of your mother’s body, nor merely as an impersonal fertilized egg, a zygote or a merely a fetus. You were you. Already in the womb, God speaks about you here in Psalm 139 as a person, a full person, separate and distinct from your mother. Science today completely backs this up. It is undeniable that the baby in a mother’s womb is not part of her body. It is a separate human being within her. In a similar way, when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, he spoke about Jesus, using the pronouns “he” and “him” already at conception.

It is impossible for us to take in this beautiful exposition of God’s love for us in Psalm 139 and ignore the holocaust of unborn children in our land called abortion. To be clear, abortion is sin. It is murder. If God takes such delight in designing a person in the womb, who are we to terminate that person’s life?

Do not conclude that this sermon is meant to be some sort of political statement. Our interest here is not in politics but in the kingdom of God – more specifically, our personal need for repentance and hope for salvation.

We might think as long as we've not personally had an abortion or been involved in one, we are not guilty of this sin. But we cannot escape being part of the fabric of our own culture and therefore absorbing our own culture's sinful attitudes about life.

Perhaps we've adopted the thought, "Well, who is going to pay for all those extra people if they are all born – likely born into poverty or welfare? Isn't better to avoid overpopulation?" See how quickly the Fifth Commandment gets kicked aside and we thumb our nose at God? And do you hear a sort of underlying implication there, "Cuz I'm not going to help all those people out!"

But isn't getting an abortion just between a woman and her Lord? Well, we're forgetting to factor in that third person: the baby. Does the baby get the right to choose? Actually it affects our entire community and culture because it embraces a worldview that some lives are expendable. Sometimes the argument is made, "If you don't like abortion, don't have one. But don't impose your religious beliefs on me." But that's like saying, "Don't like slavery? Then don't own slaves. But don't tell me that I don't have that choice." As a culture we've embraced a worldview that slavery is unacceptable. No one would argue for that right anymore. Therefore because it embraces a worldview, abortion does not affect the mother and child only, but all of us. Should it be a woman's right to choose? Not any more than it should be her right to choose to rob a bank or point a gun at you and pull the trigger. And nobody ever talks about the psychological damage abortion does to the mother for the rest of her life –if we claim to care about her – nobody ever mentions it.

Even though we are Christians, as part of a national community, a culture, we likely have absorbed a sinful worldview about the value of life more than we realize. Would it bother us more to hear in the news about some teenagers torturing a puppy to death than to hear about the number of abortions taking place?

Perhaps our sin is one of comfort. We make a sort of Faustian Bargain in our minds. As long as our governing authorities are promising to implement such and such policies, we can tolerate the ongoing slaughter of tens of thousands more innocent lives. Or perhaps as long as my life has not personally been touched by anyone having an abortion – in other words, as long as I'm comfortable – then I don't give it much concern. Perhaps I

could have made a difference in someone's life to help them, but opted not to. Perhaps I even feel a little superior to those who have had abortions rather than compassion.

“But, Pastor,” we might interject, “even if abortion were banned throughout the entire nation, that wouldn't expand the Kingdom of God one bit. Nor would it result in the sort of godliness that our Lord desires. The only thing that really makes a difference is the spread of the gospel.” This is true. But let us not conveniently hide behind that truth to make ourselves comfortable with the ongoing atrocity.

The point of this whole discussion is simply to reveal how sin-calloused our own hearts have become, how jaded we are to human life, how we rationalize away the Fifth Commandment, how easily we absorb the culture of this world. Therefore, let us repent. Let us have a change of heart. For our God loves life. He created life. He loves and created you. If you have had an abortion or were involved in one, you are no worse sinner than any others. All of us together are equally guilty before the Lord.

Neither is abortion the unforgiveable sin. No, the same God who took such delight in knitting you together in your mother's womb, has taken just as much delight in sending His Son Jesus Christ to redeem you for Himself by His death on the cross. You see, Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Therefore, His death on the cross has infinite, immeasurable, everlasting value. He did not sacrifice His life merely to atone for small, superficial faux pas. He poured out His blood to cover and wash away real sins, blood-red guilty sins, even the most unspeakable, horrifying, anguishing sins –whether of the heart, or of our deeds. Did He not forgive David, Paul, and Moses who were guilty of similar things? *You* are forgiven!

The One who fearfully and wonderfully made you also intimately knows your sins, and gives you abundant forgiveness and grace for each and every one of them. On the cross it was you He had in mind even as He breathed His last. You know it, because He called you by name in Holy Baptism. The Bible says when you were baptized, you were baptized into His death so that you may also take part in His resurrection.

Therefore, God does not shun you, hold you at arm's length, reject you, or cast you away. No, for Jesus' sake, He restores you to the status of being His child. He embraces you with His peace, wraps you up in His salvation. He by whom you are fearfully and wonderfully made is still engrossed in your life and person and says, “Come, my child. I have redeemed you. You belong to me now and forever. I give you everlasting life. For I am the Author of life. It is true, some sins cannot be undone. But they can be atoned for. And my Son has atoned for all your sins. And I can make all things to serve my good

purpose. Come, walk with me now, as my child, and from now on together let us endeavor to delight in the gift of life, to serve and bless and save all others who have been fearfully and wonderfully made.”