

The Wonderful Works of the Creator of Life

Psalm 139

Theme verse: "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well" (Psalm 139:14).

Martin Luther, the great reformer, addressed the pastor's role in facing the greatest evil of his day:

"If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proven, and to be steady on all the battle fronts besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point (Martin Luther, Source document not known)."

May it never be said of Redemption Hill Church that we address every portion of Scripture EXCEPT that point which the world and devil are attacking. This morning I ask for much grace from as I seek to address a very hard issue, the issue of abortion. You may even be thinking, "It's cruel to bring up the subject of abortion." I believe there is an illusion that grace means that we shouldn't talk about the hard issues. Let me ask you this, if we don't talk about these hard issues, how will men and women who are suffering in silence find forgiveness and healing? We must address these hard issues, but we must do it with grace and truth. This is my goal today. Now, I don't give a rip for being Republican or Democrat. What means everything to me is the glory of God in Jesus Christ. So this morning we are going to work through Psalm 139 with an eye towards its implications on the sanctity of human life, specifically abortion. First, let me offer a word of mercy to those touched by abortion.

To **women** who have had abortions, **men** who may have encouraged or even demanded it, **grandparents** who have supported it, **doctors** who have performed it, **leaders** who have permitted it, and **Christians** who have done nothing for the cause of abortion, I know you are here. In the U.S., there are 1.4 million abortions every year, 3,000 every day, and one every 20-25 seconds. More than 1 out of 3 women in the U.S. will have an abortion by the time they are 45 years old. I also know that a message on abortion is painful for you to hear. I want you to know that my aim is not to make you miserable. May this word of Jesus provide you much hope today:

"And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners (i.e. those who give and get abortions)?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:11-13).

Jesus is in pursuit of sinners, not righteous people. He came as a physician to show compassion. I'm a sinner and I speak to you today as one who has failed in many ways. The good news this morning is that through faith in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness. All sins are wiped away, even abortion, and there is justification over against every kind of sin you have ever done. How is this? Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many, to bear the wrath of God in our place. The most important thing that could happen today is not for you to become prolife, but for you to embrace Jesus as the supreme treasure of your life. This is where we start and this is great news, but we must move forward to call each other to radical living. I want to urge us all to greater and greater passion, sacrifice, and love for the cause of life, born and unborn.

The point: You should value life because of God's great knowledge, presence, purpose, and pardon.

Where do we start as we seek to tackle this issue?

"I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God" (Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, 2).

"The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God...In all her prayers and labors this should have first place" (Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, 4).

"How may we form a right idea of God's greatness?...The first [step] is to *remove from our thoughts of God limits that would make him small*...For an example of what the first step involves, look at Psalm 139" (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 85).

1. Value life because God knows you (and the unborn) intimately (1-6).

Reflections on the text:

- The Psalm begins with "you have searched and known me" (vs. 1) and ends with "Search me and know me" (vs. 24).
- God knows all things about everybody all the time. God knows you better than you do.
 - All of my activities (sitting, standing, walking, sleeping, all of my ways).
 - All of my words even before I speak them
 - All of my inmost thoughts (i.e. motives)
- God's hand could allude to his protection and blessing.
- This knowledge was beyond David's ability to comprehend ("it is too high for me").
 - God doesn't have to "access" information as a computer might retrieve a file. All his knowledge is always immediately and directly before his mind.
 - God doesn't have any need to learn. He has never learned and cannot learn.

Implications for God's omniscience:

- If God doesn't know all things how can he predict the future?
- If God knows all things, including bad things, why does he allow it to happen? He's given humans responsibility

How should you respond to God's knowledge?

- You can hide from me (your heart, your past, your future plans) but you can't hide from God.
- This may cause you great fear if you have something to hide
- For those who know God through a relationship with Jesus, this is sweet news.
- Nothing we do will ever surprise God or cause him to change his mind

"No talebearer can inform on us, no enemy can make an accusation stick; no forgotten skeleton can come tumbling out of some hidden closet to abash us and expose our past; no unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since He knew us utterly before we knew Him and called us to Himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us" (Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, 57).

- God's knowledge reminds me that he hasn't forgotten about me, no matter what you are going through.

2. Value life because God is with you (and the unborn) continually (7-12).

Reflections on the text:

- Two polar opposites: “wings of the morning” = the farthest east where the sun rises; “the uttermost parts of the sea” = the far end of the Mediterranean Sea, to the west of Israel
- There is no place that God will not be present to lead and to hold (7-10). In other words, there is no place beyond God’s care.
- “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3).

Implications for God’s omnipresence:

- “It means simply that *God is here*. Wherever we are, God is here. There is no place, there can be no place, where He is not” (Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, 58).

How should you respond to God’s presence?

- Reflect on this: what if you spent every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipresent Creator?

3. Value life because God created you (and the unborn) wonderfully (13-18).

Reflections on the text:

- These verses illustrate the point of 11-12 by describing a particular “dark place” where the Lord saw and cared David, namely, his mother’s womb. David realizes that even before his mother knew she was pregnant, the Lord was already showing his care for him. His personal life began in the womb and God had already laid out its course.
- There could be an allusion to God creating a spiritual and physical being (13).
- Though the unborn is visibly hidden from man, he/she is never hidden from God.
- Personhood begins at conception
 - “Unformed substance” suggests God’s knowledge even to his earliest development in the uterus.
 - “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5).
 - Only persons can be considered sinners.
- Even when unborn, the Lord had a purpose for the undeveloped embryo.
 - God knows all of the days of my life even before I know one.
- Praise is the proper response to God’s knowledge, presence and purpose.
 - V. 18 seems to picture the hopelessness of trying to count God’s thoughts: the number is so large that one would fall asleep; and even so, God will not abandon his faithful (I awake, and I am still with you).
 - “Even David’s rudimentary knowledge of the marvels of the human body led him to be in awe and wonder” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, 892).

Implications for God’s work in creating life:

- Everyone owes their existence to the Creator-God and his works are wonderful. You are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). This is the foundation of the doctrine of the sanctity of human life.

- “If the unborn is not human, no justification for abortion is necessary. If the unborn is human, no justification for abortion is adequate” (Gregory Koukl).
- Even before murder was forbidden by a direct command not to murder (Ex. 20:13), unjustifiable killing was a violation of the special dignity God has vested in human beings (c.f. Gen. 4:8-16).
- To be made in the image of God means at least that the aim of God in making us in the womb is that we might image forth God. Our meaning on earth is to image forth that divine reality. That is why we exist.
- Abortion is about God because children are made by God in the image of God for the glory of God. He fashions them, values them, knows them, calls them, and names them
 - “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5).
 - “Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God” (Ps. 22:9-10).
 - “But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace” (Gal. 1:15).
 - “Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name” (Is. 49:1).
- Ultimately, abortion is wrong because it is an assault on the person-forming work of God in the womb and it is a failure to be satisfied in God as your supreme love.
 - Unplanned pregnancy threatens desires and longings: a pleased boyfriend or husband, education, financial security, career, freedom from morning sickness, diapers, runny noses, sleepless nights, terrible twos, homework, sports, band, drama, transportation, college expenses, wedding expenses, etc.
 - You desire all these things and all this freedom, but along comes a baby, and your desires are threatened, and you are tempted to get rid of the troublemaker, the baby. That's where abortion comes from.
 - God created you so that he might be your supreme love and satisfaction. When God becomes your supreme delight in life, he frees you from all of these selfish longings that lead to abortion.
- What about in the case of rape or incest?
 - “If it is wrong to put such a child to death after it is born (and surely this is wrong), then surely it is wrong to put that same child to death before it is born. The preborn baby should be treated as a person in the image of God” (ESV Study Bible, 2539)
- What about in the case of physical disabilities?
 - See John 9:1-3 and the man who was born blind.
 - “Jesus answered, ‘It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him’” (John 9:3).
- What about embryonic stem cell research?
 - “For this reason, embryonic stem cell research, which involves the creation of human embryos in order to harvest their stem cells for medical uses, should be viewed as the intentional creation and destruction of distinct, individual, tiny human lives. Other sources of stem cells should be used instead, where the removal of cells does not harm a human being” (ESV Study Bible, 2539).

4. Value life because God judges justly but forgives entirely (19-24).

God is the righteous judge:

- Not everyone delights in God's knowledge, presence, and purpose in creation. David is describing a person who actively opposes God and his gracious purpose.
- They are destructive, scheming against the Lord, and rebellious to his rule. This picture of "bloodthirsty men" implies that they had a lack of respect for life and regard for justice and righteousness.
- If these people do not repent, God will slay them.
- David doesn't take matters into his own hands; he commits them into God's just hands.

God forgives entirely. He heals deeply. He restores completely. He redeems fully.

- In contrast to the wicked, David desires nothing less than conformity to God's will. He asks God to search and know his heart. This will expose any grievous way and will lead to faith in the way everlasting.
- "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12).
- "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Implications from the text:

- Will you ask God to search and know your heart and lead you in the way everlasting?
- Will you turn from you sin and find forgiveness in Christ?

Our Response

1. Receive forgiveness now. None of us has done all we should regarding this great sin in our land and our world.
 - a. Share your burdens from the past
 - b. Share your struggles in the present
2. Learn about abortion (look at the pictures, listen to the victims of abortion)
 - a. www.abort73.com
 - b. *Prolife Answers to Prochoice Questions* by Randy Alcorn
3. Pray that God will deliver children, parents, doctors, and nurses from the assault on God and pray that you will know how to help.
4. Support Daybreak Pregnancy Resource Center
 - a. Volunteer and get into the lives of those in need
 - b. Pray for them
 - c. Financially support them (grab a baby bottle today)
5. Consider adoption (Foster care, international)
6. Serve unwed and under-aged moms