

# **Christian Love & the Sanctity of Life**

*This Cultural Moment, Pt. 5*

*Genesis 9:5-7; John 15:12-13; Mark 10:29-30*

Allan McCullough

*Grace Hill Church*

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# I. PRAYER

- i. As we address a sensitive and politically loaded topic today, give us humility to submit ourselves to what your Word tells us to do.

# II. INTRODUCTION

## a. **This morning, we are going to do another installment of our “This Cultural Moment” sermon series.**

- i. Every once in a while, we take a Sunday and do a part of this series.
  - And the point of this series is to address certain issues and topics that our culture is talking about because these topics are clearly addressed in God’s Word.
  - If our culture is having a dialogue about something and God’s Word has something to say about it, then we want to submit ourselves to the Word of God.
    1. Because we believe that it is God who decides what is true and not true, what is good and bad, what is right and wrong.
- ii. Well, this Tuesday, January 22, it will be the 46th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court Decision *Roe v. Wade* that guaranteed under federal law the right to abortion in our country.
  - Obviously, the topic of abortion is one that our culture has been yelling at each other about for decades and this fight has only gotten more intense, ugly, and unproductive through the years.



- iii. And this topic certainly falls into the category of something that our culture is talking about and God's Word has something to say about it.
  - In fact, God's Word is crystal clear about this topic.
    1. And not only is God's Word clear about the morality of the practice of abortion, it is also clear on the role that the church needs to play in a world where abortion exists.
  - And so this morning, my goal is to be the messenger that communicates to us what God's Word has to say.
    1. I'm not interested in partisan platforms or talking points.
    2. I have no allegiance to any politician.
    3. I'm not interested in what cable news or pop culture has to say.
    4. I am interested in what God's Word has to say to us this morning and how that might change the way we live.

### **III. PART 1 – CHRISTIAN LOVE**

#### **a. So, to start, I want us to take the topic of abortion and set it aside for a few minutes.**

- i. Because the first thing I need to do is establish a fundamental truth that we find throughout the entire Bible.
  - And once we understand this truth and how that plays out in our daily lives, then we can bring abortion back in to the conversation and see how this truth should influence the way that we think about abortion.



## ii. Here is that truth.

- God has designed us, he has programmed us, with the instinct that human life is precious and sacred.
  1. If you were walking down the road and you saw a guy sitting on a bench stomping on ants, you wouldn't think anything of it.
  2. ...if you saw the guy stomping on a puppy or other animal, you probably would call the police on him.
  3. ...if you saw the guy stomping on a child, you would probably put yourself in harm's way to stop him.
- Because we instinctually value human life over all other life.

## b. And this is what God's Word says to us.

- i. In Genesis 9:5-7, God is talking to Noah and explaining to him the value of human life.
  - *<sup>5</sup> "And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; I will require it from any animal and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life. <sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, for God made humans in his image. <sup>7</sup> But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it."*
- ii. God's command to Noah after the flood is to be fruitful and multiply...reproduce human life!
  - And God values human life so much that he attaches a predetermined judgement when it comes to taking human life in our own hands.



1. God has told us to reproduce life and warned us against taking life.
  - And the reason that God values human life so much and has caused us to value human life so much is because all humans are made in the image of God.
    1. This means humans are the crown jewel of God's creation and each and every human being belongs to God.
- iii. **A long time ago as a 22 year old when I did my first ministry internship for a church, I was living with a family that owned three Porsches.**
- Every once in a while I would take them to the airport in one of their Porsches.
    1. They trusted me to drive them.
  - Now, I will never own a car as nice and expensive as Porsche.
  - So, when I drove their Porsches...how did I drive them?!?
    1. I was careful. Took every precaution to make sure I drove responsibly.
    2. Did I want to open them up on the Beltway...of course!
    3. But I didn't because these cars were valuable and they were not mine!
    4. They belonged to someone else and if I was careless with them, I would have been held accountable.
- iv. **In the same way, all human life belongs to God and God has assigned to each human life insurmountable worth.**
- And he has said here in Genesis 9 that if we are careless with human life, then He, the one whom all of humanity belongs to, will hold us accountable.



## c. And it is this truth, the value and sanctity of human life, that Christian love is anchored in.

- i. As Christians and followers of Jesus, we are called to love our neighbor...to love every human we encounter.
  - And this is not a love that is expressed through just being nice to people...no, the Bible paints a picture of love that is anchored in the truth that all human beings have insurmountable worth.
- ii. So, this is how Jesus explains true Christian love...John 15:12-13
  - *<sup>12</sup> "This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you.*
    1. The way that you are to love all human beings is the way that I [Jesus] have loved you.
    2. How is that?
  - *<sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends."*
  - Jesus is calling his followers to value the life of their neighbor more than their own life.
    1. To love, is to be willing to lay down your own life so that others may fully and truly live.
- iii. And Jesus is our example of what true love is.
  - Because we were lost in our sin. We were under the judgement and wrath of God and headed to a place where God would take our life away.
  - But God's love is motivated by the worth that he assigns to life...the value he assigns to those who bear his image.



- So, Jesus becomes a man and lays down his life on the cross so that we may live.
  1. He experiences the torture and ridicule of the wrath of God in our place so that we might have our sins forgiven and enjoy eternal, joyful life.
- iv. **And as those who have been given eternal life, we are free to love others in this world by laying down our lives so that they may have life.**
  - This is true Christian love.
    1. We put others before ourselves. Because that's what Jesus did for us.
    2. We love others at our own expense.
    3. We serve. We give of our resources. We love our enemies. We open our homes. We listen. We care.
    4. We inconvenience ourselves to serve others.
    5. We love the unlovable, because that's what Jesus did for us.

**d. This is why any sort of abuse, disparagement, bullying, violence, slander, belittling, discrimination, name-calling of any human being for any reason is an assault on the image of God and is about as anti-Christian as one can get.**

- i. All of that is seeking to tear another down. And God hates it.
- ii. One cannot be pro-life and disparage those of a different race and ethnicity.
  - One cannot be pro-life and a gossip.
  - One cannot be pro-life and be indifferent to the poor.
  - One cannot be pro-life and a jerk.



- One cannot be pro-life in word only...but it has to be in deed.
- iii. This is Christian Love, that we value every human being so much that we are willing to lay down our own lives so that others may live.

## **IV. ABORTION**

### **a. So, with this truth of the value of human life and how that relates to Christian love, let's talk about abortion in relation to that.**

- i. What is the definition of abortion?
  - The dictionary defines abortion as this: “the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy.”
    1. So, deliberate meaning that other humans are making the conscious choice to terminate another human while in the womb.
- ii. And before we analyze the morality of that act, we should look at research to discover the reasons people get abortions. According to the Guttmacher Institute, the research wing of Planned Parenthood<sup>1</sup> –
  - 25% of abortions in the US were because the parents were not ready for a child or indicated that it was not the right timing.
    1. There have been 61,000,000 abortions in the USA since Roe vs. Wade was decided (that's 10x the amount of Jews killed in the Holocaust).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf>



2. That means 15.25 million children have been aborted because the parents were not ready.
  - 23% of abortions in the US were because the parents were not financially ready.
    1. So, 14 million children aborted due to financial reasons.
  - 19% of abortions in the US were because the parents were already finished raising children.
    1. That's 11.5 million children not with us because the parents indicated they were done with child-rearing.
  - 8% because the mom was not ready to be a single mom.
  - 7% because the mom felt too young.
  - 4% because it would interfere with educational or life plans.
  - Another 7% due to health concerns with the mom and or the fetus.
  - Less than .5% due to rape or incest.
    1. That number might be higher because we know rape is vastly under reported.
- iii. **The research indicates that the vast majority of abortions in our country are due to inconvenience and fear, not due to health and or tragic circumstances like rape and incest.**
  2. And let me say, I am not going to invalidate the feelings of fear on a woman who has an unwanted pregnancy...we'll talk about that in just a minute.



- But if we are brutally honest, if we are applying this truth of the value of human life and the ethic of Christian Love, we must first concede here that the act of abortion is the deliberate laying down of someone else's life, not the act of laying down my own life.
  1. The act of abortion is the opposite of what Christ has done for us and called us to do.
  2. Jesus came and laid his life down so that we may have life and has called us to do that for others.
  3. Abortion is the deliberate laying down of someone else's life, so that I may live.

**b. Now, obviously, if everyone agreed that the fetus inside of a womb was a true human life that had inherent dignity and insurmountable value, all of what I just said would not be controversial.**

- i. Usually the debate around abortion is not centered on if it is okay to terminate a human life out of fear or inconvenience.
  - The debate is centered around at what point a child in the womb becomes a valuable human life with rights that should be defended.
- ii. Historically, Christians have advocated that life begins at conception, the earliest stage of pregnancy, while abortion advocates have argued that life begins at a later time, some even arguing that life begins at birth.



- Now, this debate about when life begins has usually been argued on both sides by using science.
  1. And as we have become more advanced in our research, science has not been a friend to the pro-abortion cause.
- However, the Christian position that life begins at conception is also anchored in Scripture and moral philosophy.

**c. We've already looked at the Scriptures and seen how God places insurmountable value on all human life as his image bearers.**

- i. And the Scriptures also speak of people in the womb as those who have an identity, people specifically created by God, people whom God loves.
  - Examples...
    1. Psalm 139:13 - *"For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb."*
    2. God says of the Prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:5 - *"I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*
  - The Scriptures are written with the assumption that human life and identity begins at conception...even before conception!
- ii. But, here is why all people, even people who don't accept the Bible, ought to live as if human life and dignity begins at conception.



- As we already said, everyone instinctually values human life more than anything else.
  1. And if that is true, then we are morally obligated to act with extreme care and caution when it comes to human life.
- We call this the doctrine of carefulness – let me explain.
  1. If I was running an errand and I brought my son with me. And I took every precaution to make sure he was properly strapped in his car seat and the car seat was properly installed in my car. And I got in a car accident that was not my fault and my son was killed...would I be held responsible for his death?
  2. I technically endangered my son's life by making him ride in a car...but I was careful with his life. I drove responsibly and I ensured he was properly in his car seat.
  3. Although my decision to take him on the errand resulted in his death, due to my carefulness, I am not responsible for his death.
  4. Now, let's say I left a loaded gun on the coffee table in my living room and my son grabbed it and shot himself and was killed?
  5. Would I be held responsible for that?
  6. I had no desire to harm my son. I am devastated it happened. I love my son and have no murderous intention.
  7. But I would be prosecuted and put in jail because I was careless with my son's life by leaving a gun in a place where he could reach it.



- The doctrine of carefulness says that we value human life so much, we must take every precaution to ensure we don't take human life away.
  1. We must ere on the side of life beginning at conception because any other estimate as to when life begins is just that...an estimate, a guess, and therefore it's careless.
- iii. **So, yes, abortion is the deliberate laying down of the life of another human being so that I may live.**
  - And Jesus has called us to the opposite, to lay down our own lives so that others may live.
  - And this is why we as Christians, must oppose and fight the practice of abortion in our country.

**d. But before we move forward, I would like to mention that I know there are women in this room who have had an abortion.**

- i. And I am sure there is not a day that goes by without feeling some guilt and shame for that decision.
  - But you need to be reminded this morning, and every day, that Jesus loves you not just in word but in deed.
    1. He laid down his life so you could be forgiven for that choice.
    2. There is grace and mercy for you and the last thing I want is for you to feel that you have to hide that part of your story out of fear of being judged.



- Yes, this is a sin that needs to be repented of but it is also something you need to be healed of as well.
  1. And if you need to talk to someone or pray with someone after this sermon, because I am sure this is not easy, Dan and Esperanza La May will be up front here after the service and will be available to talk to you and pray with you if you need.

## **V. APPLY CHRISTIAN LOVE TO OUR FIGHT AGAINST ABORTION**

### **a. But I'd like to spend the remainder of our time talking about the role that we as a church can play in fighting the practice of abortion.**

- i. And to do that, I want to be honest about something.
  - I fear that the pro-life movement has become more about political power and victory and less about the valuing and protection of life.
- ii. And maybe our pro-life efforts need to be taken beyond marches, voting, or allegiance to one party and we need to begin applying the ethic of Christian love that we talked about in the beginning to the way that we fight against abortion.
  - I want to be a part of a church filled with people who value each human life so much that everyone is willing to lay down their own lives so that abortion isn't even an option.



1. A church that is willing to step up and meet needs, open their homes, open their wallets, befriend moms who are scared, and lay down their lives so that someone doesn't even consider abortion.

**b. There is a passage in Mark 10 I want us to look at.**

- i. And in this passage Jesus is talking about the sacrifices that we will make in this world when we choose to follow Him but he also refers to the gifts one receives when they follow Him.
  - **Read Mark 10:29-30.**
    1. This is a promise from God that when someone sacrifices things in this world in order to follow Jesus.
    2. Family, money, relationships, persecution, whatever it is.
    3. That that person is walking away from something they valued in the world but they are walking into something that is even more valuable...a community of brothers and sisters in Christ who are there for them.
    4. Jesus says this is something you will receive now in this life and he is referring to the church.
    5. The church is to be the remedy and balm to our wounds from the sacrifices that we make in this world to follow Jesus.
    6. And Jesus says that this is a hundred fold the value of the things you are sacrificing in the world.



ii. So, let's apply this passage to the sacrifice that one might make through choosing not to abort a child.

- A single mom is pregnant. She has no money or job. The father has bailed. And she fears that bringing a child into this world will only cause suffering for her and for her child.
  1. There's no way she can afford to properly raise a child. What kind of life would she give this baby?
- But, someone from a church has convinced this scared, pregnant mom that God desires for her to have this child.
  1. Now, if that is the only involvement that this church had. Guilting this mom into having the baby but not seeking to meet any need...is that pro-life?
  2. Is that soothing the wounds and the fears that this woman legitimately has?
  3. Maybe some say...well she shouldn't have gotten pregnant in the first place...this is her fault.
  4. No No No...there is a child in that womb...an image bearer of God...the crown jewel of God's creation...and we are called to lay our lives down for this mom and this child...regardless of mistakes...because we value life...and we are all about redemption.
- And so, Mark 10 compels us as a church not to just plead with this mom to have her baby, but to enter in to the fear, to meet needs, to help her raise this child, to lay down our lives so that they may live.
  1. To be a hundred fold the value of what she's walking away from.



- iii. The church has been willing to fight abortion in this county but has the church been willing to be the fulfillment of Mark 10...to be prepared to be the remedy to the wounds that come from the sacrifice of following Jesus?

**c. Grace Hill, I want us to fight abortion through true Christian love.**

- i. Laying down our lives to love and serve those who are considering aborting their child.
  - To take their fears seriously. To be in the business of validating these women, not invalidating them with our religious guilt.
  - I want us to value every human life and be a part of building a culture of life in our town.

**d. So, I have four practical ways that every one of us can begin to lay down our lives to fight abortion and build a culture of valuing all human life.**

- i. #1 - Be a good friend to your neighbors and those you regularly encounter.
  - It will be hard for us as a church to know how we can help meet needs in our community if we don't know people outside our church and position ourselves to where they might share these needs with us.
    - 1. This happened to some friends of ours. The wife had become a good friend to her hair dresser over the years.



2. Well one day, her hairdresser shared that she was pregnant and was considering abortion.
  3. And through many conversations, our friends in pleading with her not to abort the child offered to adopt the child.
  4. Well, the woman declined and I am not sure what happened.
  5. But this is an example of being a good friend to someone and how that positioned our friends to love this person with true Christian love.
  6. Because they were willing to lay their lives down so a child could live.
- Are you positioned in our community to hear about needs and to meet needs?
- ii. **#2 - Consider becoming a foster parent, adoptive parent, or supporting parents who are.**
- The foster care system in America is over loaded and there are thousands of children waiting who have no home.
    1. This all feeds into the culture of abortion that we have in this country.
    2. If the situation were flipped and we had more families willing to open their homes to children than children in the system, then parents opting for adoption rather than abortion might be more common.
  - Listen, if 1 family out of every 7 churches in America fostered a child, every child would have a home.
    1. This is something that the church can solve.



2. Yes, it does mean inconveniencing your life. It does mean laying down your life. But this is the essence of Christian love.
- Kim and I are foster parents with Fairfax County and have adopted through Fairfax County as well.
    1. It is hard but you will never regret the decision.
    2. My wife will be at a table in the lobby after the service with information on Foster Care and Adoption in Fairfax County if you would like to talk to her.
- iii. **#3 – Consider sponsoring a child through Compassion International.**
- If you want to do something simple but provides profound impact to a child in poverty, sponsor a child.
    1. This is a great way to begin to build a culture of life in your home and to teach your children how to value life.
    2. We want to raise our kids willing to give up of their own resources so others may live and this is a great way to start to practically do that.
  - Annie John does work with Compassion and she will also be at a table in the lobby with information if you're interested.
- iv. **#4 – Donate or volunteer with Young Lives.**
- Young Lives is an organization that we partner with at Grace Hill that seeks to minister to teen moms and pregnant teens here in Herndon over at Herndon High School.



1. Young Lives is looking for people to help donate supplies and clothing to these young moms.
  2. They are also looking for mentors to volunteer to spend time with these ladies.
- Here is a very practical way that we can begin to meet the needs of young, vulnerable moms in our town.
  - Laura Kane works with Young Lives and she will be in the lobby at a table if you want to get more information.

**e. These are four good places to start. All of them require sacrifice. All of them require laying down our lives for others.**

- i. But that is how we are called to make an impact in this world.
  - Through loving people as Jesus loved people. By being the fulfilled promise of Mark 10.
- ii. Allow me to close with some words from Scot Sauls in his book “Befriend.”
  - *“...wouldn't it be great if communities existed where any mother, married or unmarried, felt welcomed and loved and knew that her needs and the needs of her child would be attended to? If the Church everywhere does what the Church is called to do, then there will be no poor or disregarded or demeaned in our midst. In short, I favor building community and dialogue that promotes a society where abortion, due to the love ready to be given*



*to any child and any mother, is not merely illegal...but unthinkable.”<sup>2</sup>*

- iii. This is the way that God has called us to fight abortion in our town.

## **VI. PRAY**

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<sup>2</sup> “Befriend” by Scot Sauls, Pg. 158.

