

Your Family is Pro-Life

I Corinthians 1

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Today is Life Sunday. Your life. My life. The present life. The future life. Life as opposed to death. I am the way, the truth, and the life. That life, too. In those ways and many others, we are in favor of life, we are FOR life, we are pro-life.

But for many people, the life they are FOR stops with their own. As long as they have it, they don't care much whether others live or die; or if others live, they don't care about how they live while they're waiting to die.

We sense that we are living in a time and culture that doesn't have very high regard for human life. For all too many people, life is cheap. Like many other things, our culture has abandoned most universal or divine absolutes. It says, "If you want to honor life as divine or special, that's fine. That's up to you. Just don't expect me to hold the same position."

Just what would it take for me to convince someone that human life is unique, that it is God's special creation, that it is human from the time of conception? Does it follow that if God has revealed in his Word that he has created life and is pro-life in every sense of the word? If God is pro-life, does it follow that his human creatures should be pro-life, too? Does it make human sense to be pro-life? Can others be convinced -- that God's position on human life -- that it is precious and unique, and is the crown of His entire creation -- that it makes perfectly good sense to 21st century human beings?

David wrote in Psalm 139: "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. [14] I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."

Today, based on God's Word, I also want to use the family argument. It is the "family of God" argument, but it applies to all families, because God is the creator of all life and of all families. I pray that you would affirm that since your whole family is pro-life, you ought to be, too.

Your ancestors were pro-life. Your ancestors took strong moral and religious positions holding that human life is God's gift. It benefits from God's creating and preserving activity.

Every once in a while, we hear about a doctor or medical professional who harms a patient by neglect, carelessness, and sometimes even intentionally. It strikes a chord of terror, because of the Hippocratic oath. We may not know what it says, but we feel good that our caregivers swear to it and abide by it.

This is part of what it says:

"I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my Art. "

This secular oath is clear. Those who swear by it will do only helpful things for their patients. They will do no harm, and they will not cause abortions.

Abortion had to be addressed in the oath because there have always been people who thought they were the exceptions to the rule. There have always been people who were willing to do harm by producing abortions. But those are the few. You and I come from a long line of ancestors who have held human life as God's most precious gift. Your ancestors, all the way back to Noah and Adam were pro-life.

Perhaps you've seen a bumper sticker that says simply: Your mother was pro-life. It's hard to dispute. I know it is possible that a woman can have several abortions and perhaps only one live birth. That would cause some to say that that mother was not pro-life. I cannot pretend to know what goes on in the mind of even one woman, much less every woman, but if I were a betting man, I would bet you a paycheck that your mother WAS pro-life or IS pro-life. She wanted to have a child

or perhaps more. She wanted to give her motherly love and attention to another. She wanted her family legacy to continue. She wanted to present a grandchild to her parents. Oh, she had a very good sense of just how problematic a child can be. Some women risk serious health concerns by becoming pregnant and carrying a child. Some mothers even die in the process of giving birth, and many who don't die tell us that giving birth is painful, if not dangerous.

Martin Luther said that God could have populated the earth by creating each new person from the dust, as He did Adam, but instead He chose to bring forth new life through the vocation of parents.

Because of the dedication and love demonstrated by our mothers, we have a relationship with them like we have with no other human beings. Once upon a time, if another kid hollered "your mother wears army boots" a bloody nose or a black eye was sure to follow. We love our mothers because they love us. We defend their reputations. We honor them while they live, and we cherish their memory when they are in heaven. My mother had no bumper sticker on her car, and she never carried a protest sign, but she was pro-life. And your mother was, or is, too.

And so is your father. That may be true for your earthly father, but I know it is true for your eternal father – your heavenly father. He could have stayed out of the life business all together. He could have made and maintained a universe that was awesome and beautiful, and it would have remained unspoiled. But he determined to get into the life business on this planet, and he created all kinds of living things. The book of Genesis tells us that he had plenty of practice, as if he needed any, before he made human beings. He started with plants, and then did all kinds of animals. After everything else was in place, he made man and then woman. From his perspective, the world wasn't complete until it had one unique person. And then another, and then another. Each one unique, each one loved, each one designed to live with the Father throughout eternity.

Your Father in heaven is pro-life, even though he sees and permits plenty of death. Job 1:21: The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

There is death in the world because sin entered the world, and sin is now and always has been a powerful force, working against God and his design for our lives. We live in a culture of death, but it is most often unseen. We can't help but see the horrific news stories of mass murders of children and teachers. But there is an even more gruesome slaughter taking place in our nation every day. 3,500 unborn babies have their lives ended in a quiet yet violent way every day. The only explanation given is that it is choice. It is a right? Where is the outcry? Where is the mourning? Where is sorrow and repentance? How can we expect God to bless a nation that kills 3,500 babies each day?

God's people need to stand with women who see pregnancy as a problem, and be ready to assist women who make the decision to celebrate birth and life. Adoption is but one of the constructive and loving solutions to be encouraged and enabled.

Your heavenly Father is so pro-life, that he gave his only son to pay the price for sin. The Father could have said, "I gave them life. Death is their problem," but he didn't. His plan of salvation is so elegant and effective. All we need do is embrace the Son, who gave his life for ours. As we put our faith and trust in the Son of God, we enjoy a relationship with God that is not based on what we do, but on whom we know – on whose we are.

So Paul could say in I Corinthians 1: "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge - because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you."

Because of Jesus, our Father in heaven loves us as his children. Your earthly father may have been pro-life. Your heavenly father definitely is.

One of my hobbies is genealogy. I gather information about my extended family and organize it with the help of my computer. My parents never talked much about their families, and they didn't leave many records or photos behind. But my father was always very clear about the fact that he was the only boy in his family. He had a bunch of

sisters, but he was the only boy. As I did research in his home congregation's records, I discovered that he did have a brother. His brother was born before any of his sisters, and lived only a few days. I'm not sure if my father ever knew about his brother.

For all of you who are an only child, YOU may be surprised to hear that you have sisters. And all of you guys who grew up in families of all boys, let me remind you that you have a huge bunch of sisters. It's the way we think of ourselves in relation to our fellow believers. This is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Every other congregation is our sister congregation. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, in all of its sisters, is Pro-Life.

The media may say that the Roman Catholics are the pro-life Christians. They have historically taken a strong pro-life position. The pope has spoken a pro-life position loudly and clearly. The congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention have consistently and repeatedly made it clear that we honor life from conception and defend human life in all its stages and conditions. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is pro-life. Our 6,148 sister congregations are pro-life. And if our collective voices have been weak or silent, we ought to rally them and inform them of the importance of speaking up for the smallest and weakest members of the human family whom God loves every bit as much as he loves us. Yes, your sisters are pro-life.

And finally, your brother is pro-life. Does anybody here need to be reminded of your brother so soon after his birthday? We took our cue from the angels as we sang Glory to God in the Highest on the night of his birth. He knew the peril of the birth canal just as we did, just as our children did. He is our full, flesh-and-blood brother, born into the same world we live in. Your brother knew what it was like to work hard and sweat and have people change their minds and their attitudes. Your brother knew the pain of rejection and isolation. Your brother knew what it was like to be betrayed by his friends. He knew what it was like to be wrongly accused and the victim of lies. Do we think for a moment that his life was somehow different from ours, or better than ours? He was born into the same human

family we were. He was 100% human while he was 100% God.

But your brother wanted something better for you. Your brother was pro-life, and he wanted you to know life could be without the impact of sin, death, and the devil. He said he was the way, the truth, and the life, and he has fulfilled God's plan of salvation for us. John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

After a few decades of sweat, disappointment, sorrow, warfare, betrayal, and after going through the doorway of death, we can live eternally with the whole family of God in happiness and light. He demonstrated by his death that he is, without qualification, pro-life.

There are people in our world today who would classify human beings as either wanted or unwanted. Where do they get that right? Where does one human being get the right to classify another human being as deserving to live or deserving to die because of an opinion. I can say that apple pie is wanted and Brussel sprouts are unwanted, but I cannot say that of another human being, created in the image of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, our brother.

As Paul reminds us: He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the kind of brother you have. But remember, you come from a huge family, and it has a long, grateful pro-life heritage.

Your ancestors were pro-life.
Your mother was pro-life.
Your Father in heaven is pro-life.
Your fellow believers in our sister congregations are pro-life.
And most important of all, your Brother, Jesus Christ, is pro-life.

Paul, to the Corinthians, and to us: "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful."

May our God be praised for that love and
faithfulness. Amen.