

1 Timothy 3:14-4-5 “Affirming the Truth of the Value of Life”

Lutheran Family Service - Kingdom of Left Sunday Sermon

So, what is this book the Bible we read all about anyway? Today reminds us that it is in its entirety, God’s Word. We know that because it is God-given, God-inspired. “Breathed out by God” our text says. It is God’s Word.

It is God’s Word of truth. It is God’s Good News about Him who is the Truth, Jesus. It is God’s Word of truth about His life and suffering and death and resurrection. It is God’s Word of truth about the need for repentance, God’s Word about forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life to those who believe. It is God’s Word of truth that brings these things to us in simple water, in bread and wine, in words of absolution. Yes, this book the Bible is in its entirety God’s Word.

God also reminds us today that God’s Word of truth is profitable for “teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (3:16). It is God’s Word of truth that is needed to dispel false teaching and the “myths” that lead people astray who only want to hear that which “suit[s] their own passions” (4:3). We could certainly point to our culture these days that does not want to hear anything God has to say about His gift of life or His gift of marriage or His gift of human sexuality. But we also need to point ourselves to our own hearts, our own “itching ears” that do not always want to hear what God says. We like to pick and choose what we like or don’t like. For example, we know God says living together before marriage is wrong. Then it happens in our family and we cover our ears from hearing God’s voice and say, “Well, everyone is doing it. God will understand.” We know what God says about gossip and defaming other people. But then we cover our ears to what God says because, well, “You’ve just got to hear what I just heard.”

Today is a good day not just to point at our culture’s lack of interest in what God says, but also to reflect upon those things going on in our lives where we just do not want to hear

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Him. It's a good day to turn back to God's truth with repentant hearts and hear the truth of His love and His forgiveness in Christ for all our sins.

Today we will use this God-breathed Word to dispel a particular myth prevalent in our culture and, perhaps, in our minds in one form or another. It is the myth that the value of life depends upon what a person is able to do or not do. God's Word of truth tells us that the value of life comes from what God had done and continues to do. There are three things that God does that gives every single human being value. [If the congregation has the LFS bulletin insert designed for this Sunday, you may want to refer to it for the following points.]

God creates every human life. The Psalmist tells us that God knits us together in our mothers' wombs (Psalm 139:13-14). Think of it, you were handmade by God! You may have something in your house handmade by a loved one, like one of grandma's old quilts. It might be frayed and thin, but you don't value it because of how it looks or how useful it may be. You value it because of who made it! Human life has value because God creates it.

Next, human life has value because God redeemed it. Redeem means to buy back with a price. God loved what He made with His hands so much that when we were lost in sin, He came into our world to pay the price to buy us back. Paul helps us understand the enormity of that price when he speaks to the Ephesians pastors in Acts 20:28. "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." "His own blood" refers back to God in this sentence! God's blood was the price to buy you back. It wasn't some great teacher who hung on that cross or some martyr dying to inspire you to better living. That was your God in the person of Jesus who shed His blood and paid the price for your redemption. You were

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bought with a very high price and that gives you tremendous value. And remember, Jesus paid the price to redeem everyone. Not everyone knows that, and our mission is to make sure they do, but the blood of God shed on the cross gives value to every single human being.

The third thing God does that gives human life value is that He calls us into an eternal relationship with Him. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:4 that He desires this relationship with everyone. God wants everyone splashed in the waters of Holy Baptism. That gives everyone value.

We use this wonderful joyous truth of God's Word to dispel the myths about the value of life. What are those myths? [Again, you may refer to the bulletin insert.] Our culture would have us believe the myth that unborn life has less value than born life. Believing this myth leads Iowa to kill approximately 3,000 unborn children each year. Nationally the number is around 1.2 million. Many states now allow the killing of the unborn in all nine-months of pregnancy and even allow killing children who survive an abortion attempt.

Another myth is that people with severe disabilities are less valuable than the able bodied. Tell that to the countless couples who have children with such disabilities. A common refrain among them goes like this, "Raising Joey is not without its problems, but he is such a blessing to us and to so many others."

We are asked to believe the myth that people with terrible diseases like Alzheimer's are less valuable than others and financially burdensome or that the elderly are less valuable than younger people. In countries and states that have legalized doctor-assisted suicide, such people become vulnerable to abuse by others who may pressure them to end their lives or, in the case of euthanasia, end it for them. As Christians we do not see such people as burdens

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who would be better off dead. We help carry their burdens and see them as people with lives to live.

Such are some of the myths. You can dispel these myths with three words, can't you? Created, Redeemed, and Called. Every human being whether a baby in the womb or grandma curled up in fetal position unresponsive in a nursing home bed, every human being regardless of the state of their physical or mental health has value because they are created by God, they are someone for whom Jesus died, and someone God either has called or desires to call to become His very own child. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS!

This great God-breathed truth about the value of life needs to be affirmed in our churches. God's people need to be reminded of this lest with “itching ears” they turn away and buy into some of the myths about the value of life. We need to affirm the value of life in our churches so that we can then affirm the value of life in our culture and bring our influence to bear. After all, Jesus does call us to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. One of the ways we do this is being a voice for life in the public square.

Now, we will pause here briefly to dispel another myth. That is the myth that Christians and Christian churches should not be involved in political issues. Noted LC-MS professor and author, Dr. Gene Veith, writes, “When they [rulers, political systems or cultures] violate God's law, they are to be called to account. Citizenship itself is a vocation, and Christian citizens are right to criticize evil wherever they see it, including in their leaders, and to work for social, political, and cultural righteousness in the public square.”¹

¹ Veith, Gene Edward Jr. *The Spirituality of the Cross* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 99.

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Christians can have differing views on things like tax reform or health care and I would have no business preaching to you about how to address these. God Word does not speak directly to such issues. But in the life arena, things like killing unborn children and doctor-assisted suicide, God breathes His will very clearly. These violate His law and are to be called into account. We are compelled to be a voice for God's truth. Oh, to be sure our God asks that our voice be used with deference, respect, and in a spirit of gentleness. But that does not mean it cannot be loud and persistent!

Action is needed in Iowa right now. [Refer to insert if appropriate.] The Iowa Supreme court recently ruled that our state's constitution gives women the right to have an abortion. This ruling will nullify all previous restrictions on abortion. An amendment declaring the constitution DOES NOT guarantee such a right is the ONLY way to reverse this. It would need to be passed in two General Assemblies and then by a vote of the people, a 3 to 4-year process. The process begins in the 2020 legislative session. Be a voice for life! Let your elected officials know your stance. Call them to account. Pray for them.

Also, a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide (PAS) waits in the wings. So far, it has not made it out of committee. But this could change. Plus, there are other paths that can be used to legalize suicide in Iowa. Be a voice for life! Let your elected officials know your stance on this. Call them to account. Pray for them.

To keep these things from happening, maintaining a life-affirming legislature in the 2020 elections is critical. We must work to make Iowa a place where life at all stages and in all conditions is valued and protected. Pray that people who respect life as a gift from God will run for and be elected to the legislature.

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Now I want to pause and insert something here. God's Word also compels us, His Church, to loudly proclaim His love for sinners and His compassionate desire to forgive sins, including sins against life. Sometimes those pressured into an abortion decision or those who have made mistakes regarding end-of-life decision feel that maybe such sins are too big to be forgiven. Not so! Every sin we bring to the cross of Christ with a repentant heart is forgiven, wiped clean and we are seen as pure and holy in His sight. No one should leave here today burdened by any sin no matter what it is. Christ has taken that burden. You are forgiven and set free.

This book the Bible that we read is in its entirety God's Word. It is God's Word of truth that enables us to identify those myths in our culture that violate God's Law. It is God's Word that compels us to be a voice affirming His truth about life in our churches and in the public square. But most importantly of all, it is God's Word that points us to Jesus, His love, His forgiveness, and the value He gives to life. That is the reason we do what we do. We affirm life, not just because we live in culture that doesn't, but because we serve a God who does. Amen!