

The Stench of Death and the Law of Love – *Romans 13:8-10*

Introduction – 41 years and well over 50 murders later: that is the ongoing legacy of Roe v Wade and our nation's conscience. Many of us cannot remember a nation that didn't have a right to have an abortion; it has been the law of the land. Although many of us have participated in marches, protests, helped out or supported crisis pregnancy centers, encouraged adoption, called legislators, and argued with friends, the years go on and it seems to settle into our bones as well – this just is the way that it is. Some try to renew our commitment to pro-life activities, but we must be careful for that so easily fades. Renewal must be in Jesus Who is the source of life, law, and love.

The Law of Love (Rom 13:8-10) – Love sums up the law. But we have to understand that statement rightly. Love, defined by the law, sums up the law, which never allows us to sin against others. Look carefully again, especially at v10, "*Love does no harm to a neighbor.*" Consider another atrocity in our land today – sodomy and all forms of homosexuality. According to the secularists and even overly-sentimental so-called Christians, we should stop being so unloving in our demands to stop two individuals from loving one another. But love does no harm to its neighbor and love is the fulfillment of the law – and the law says that such activity is harmful lawlessness. It is sin; it is not love.

Who is My Neighbor? – When Jesus was asked this question, He would never have entertained a question as to whether a man robbed and left half-dead was a person (Luke 10:29ff). Similarly, there is no argument to be entertained about the full personhood of someone of a different race, about someone who is mentally or physically disabled, or someone who has all the DNA we all have but is simply still developing in a womb. My love for my neighbor is defined by the law of God. And if a person is simply in need of time, nourishment, and protection – those needs do not decrease the personhood of the person. They only increase our opportunity to love.

The Law of God for my Neighbor – Every man is created in the image of God and that image is a shield against lawless bloodshed (Gen 9:5-6). There is no "personhood fairy" in the birth canal or some days later; John the Baptist leapt for joy in the womb (Luke 1:41) and the psalmist marvels at God's work in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16). The law of God protects the unborn with the same rights as any other person (Exod 21:22-25). Most here probably already believe this and do not need to be convinced. However, I think there is a greater danger among us.

The Danger of Sentimentalism – Sentimentalism is effective...and dangerous. And Americans are generally addicted to sentimentalism. American Christians are addicted as well. It is faithful to teach what the Bible says about when life begins. It is sensible to discuss scientific proof of what goes on at the moment of conception and the early days and weeks of an embryo. But the marketing power is in the ability to show pictures and tell stories. We may have hoped for too much when Kermit Gosnell was convicted of murder last year for his gruesome abortion practices in Pennsylvania. It was out there in the open; outside the womb and illegally late-term. The unbelieving world could see its own hypocrisy in trying to decry these acts in Gosnell's clinic as horrific. Unsanitary, maybe – but murder?

This Should Not Be Sanctity of Human Life Sunday – That is to fall into one kind of misuse of sentimental theory. Mankind is not basically good or holy or deserving of any life. Human life is not intrinsically sacred. God's law is sacred which results in the dignity of human life – a dignity protected by God's law. Human life is not sacred; all of the descendants of Adam deserve death (Rom 6:23), but only God's sovereign hand and law can authorize the taking of it.

God's Sovereignty Acknowledged – In order to acknowledge God's sovereignty and respond appropriately, all sentimentalism must be set aside. God requires the taking of human life in certain circumstances (again, Gen 9:5-6, and built into Rom 13:1-7). God was not breaking any law when He commanded that particular rebellious enemies at a particular time be put to death (i.e. Deut 20:16). And God gives nations that hate Him over to their sins; abortion is the judgment of God upon an unbelieving nation (Prov 8:36, Rom 1:28-29). God gives us over to our idolatries. These are children offered to the god of choice and convenience. These are children considered so contemptible that their own parents slaughter them. If there is no repentance, as there has not been for decades now, infanticide and forced euthanasia will become law as well. There is no logic to their arbitrary lines; there are no brakes to this insanity.

Repentance and Renewal: Not in Pro-Life, But in Christ – There is no logical pro-life standard or purpose outside of Christ. But in Christ we find life for us and for the world (Eph 2:4-5, Acts 4:12, John 14:6). In Christ alone can we find a Lawgiver and a law which will consistently oversee the dignity of mankind (Matt 5:17, Rom 10:4). And only by abiding in Christ can we find a working definition of love that lasts (1 John 4:8, 16).

Christ in the Public Square, or Not – Repentance and renewal must begin in our hearts and in the church. We must turn and listen to Him and we must show the world how to do so while preaching His gospel of forgiveness and grace to a world with blood dripping from her hands. Only Christ's blood will take care of that blood-stain – and every other stain and stench. That must be the foundation of any pro-life movement.

Notes for Little Saints

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You may wonder about what exactly is abortion. And I am afraid that I must tell you that it is a terrible sin where a mother who is pregnant decides to have the child inside her put to death.

She often does so trying to tell herself that it really isn't a child yet. But this is a lie. Sometimes she tells herself this lie on her own; often she is told this lie today over and over again in schools, on the radio, by doctors, and even in some churches.

But what does the Word of God say?

Psalms 139:13-15 (NKJV)

¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, ...

Who knit you together in your mother's womb?

So what was in your mother's womb – a thing, or you?

You are alive because God made you. How do these verses describe how you were made?

F_____ and W_____

We should look at human lives and say of God –

M_____ are Your w_____.

And so, a baby in the womb is a person – he or she is a neighbor.

Romans 13:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Are we allowed to murder our neighbor?