

Life Sunday 2025

Genesis 9:1-15; Psalm 8:1-9; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 14:12-20 "I Praise You"

Rev. Rodney Schmeltz, Faith Lutheran Church, Overgaard, Arizona

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"You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14a).

Grace, mercy, peace to you, from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen.

It is vital, it is imperative, that for each and every topic one intends to contemplate, try to truly grasp, understand, or defend; getting to its heart, core, substance, and foundation is a must. Failing or neglecting to do so is kind of like trying to effectively involve oneself with a movie, show, or conversation which was already ongoing, then presuming one's got it all figured out. Unless one is grounded in and competent concerning a matter, topic, or situation, it proves difficult to make any sort of valid or helpful comment, provide counsel, or, for that matter, effectively make a proper decision or determination. Who of us wants to find themselves steered in the wrong direction? Or to steer others in the wrong direction?

With this, officially designated as Life Sunday [as if there is ever a Sunday that's somehow not concerned with or about life] let us ask ourselves: What do we know about life? I'll guess that all of us here today are alive. By a show of hands, who's here this morning and not alive? We certainly know and it is clear, life is not self-derived nor fabricated. We also know each and every life is a gift that has continued on, yes, from our very first parents: Adam and Eve. Eve being named such by Adam since she is "the Mother of all living"! Not so long ago the Genesis Bible Study contemplated these words from chapter 2: "The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." The very same man, the first man, everyone's first father, was described as having been made in the image and likeness of God.

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Genesis 1 declaring: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" And while sin has certainly marred such image and likeness, it does find a major restoration when one is reborn in the waters of Holy Baptism, that new creation of which 2 Corinthians 5 speaks: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Also, due to sin, mankind would now know death, a situation that was not to have occurred. Adam's rebellion secured death for his offspring, as we heard from the Epistle reading, about our already being "dead in the trespasses and sins." Perhaps the most puzzling part of our society and not just ours? Why is there such a fascination with death, usually someone else's, as if doling out or hastening death is somehow a benefit or right, no matter how one might happen to dress it up? Such as: death with dignity! Perhaps some of this is not as far-fetched as it might sound at first; after all, consider Darwin and company, with all of their evolution nonsense, which stresses we are worth oh, pretty much nothing in the first place, we came from it, we go to it. Standing in such stark contrast to our God and Lord who makes clear that each and every one of us is cherished and loved. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." In other words you are precious in the sight of the Lord. So much so that He saw fit to have His one and only Son, He who is the Way the Truth and the Life, put to death on a cross in order to secure and restore life for you, for all who will believe. And this is not just any-ole-life, it also involves eternal life! In John 11 Jesus states: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."

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The life one knows in and through Christ is that of restoring our body and soul prepared for eternal life! Such concern for life is in accord with Psalm 139, which informs us: "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." The Psalmist is clear: The Lord knew you before you were you! This flies in the face of our merely being just some random blob of cells that may, or may not, turn out to be something, or someone, someday.

In addition to the Psalm 139 passage, there are at least five other occasions in which Scripture speaks to how the Lord was already at work while they too were yet in the womb. From Judges 13, prior even to the conception of Samson, the Lord imparts this: "The angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Therefore, be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb ...'" The Psalmist, in Psalm 71 declares: "For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth. Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you." From Isaiah 44 we have: "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: 'I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.'" Jeremiah 1 provides these details: "Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you

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were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” The Lord is always at work for our good. We, you, have purpose! The Apostle Paul has this to say in Galatians 1: “But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles ...”

So it is then that anything, anyone, that detracts from or diminishes the purpose, value, and worth, of any life is not of the Lord, of His way, of His intent. Besides, didn't Christ's death on the cross pay the ransom for all people, for all time, to restore all life? Allow me to quote Horton [the elephant]: “A person's a person, no matter how small.” Plus, it's as if the Lord is trying to make sure we get the idea that we mean something to Him! If human life is simply some disposable quantity, kept or discarded based on one's whim or preference, merely relegated to a “choice,” lacking value or any worth ... then why does the Lord continue to spend and invest so much time, energy, concern, and compassion on us? Our Lord is so invested He's gone to such incredible extremes, working to preserve every last one of us! Can you name anything the Lord created and then just tossed off to the side or neglected? Rather, He goes out of His way to make sure we understand how precious life is and how we are to care for it. Proverbs 31 instructs us to: “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Isaiah 1:17 states: “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.” And this from Jeremiah 22: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow.’” Dear Christian, if we will not speak up for

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nor defend those who are the least able to do so for themselves ... who will we be found defending and protecting?

The Ephesians reading concludes: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." What more value and purpose can one realize, enjoy, be humbled by? "We are his workmanship"—not of our own doing or making. He sustains us, He gives us worth, and in such worth then we will look outside of ourselves to see the value and purpose of all those who are with us in this human race. All of us are unique creations with bodies and souls which will endure into eternity.

Just As ... I Am: The Lord does not make mistakes, the Lord does not ever make junk. We, the people of God, have an incredible message to proclaim with the incredible task to do so before us. We cannot and will not effect change within the lives of others unless they are made aware of how important and precious they are in the eyes of our Creator God, He whose Son died in order to save them, to secure their eternity, as He has secured ours!

Who will we take by the hand, look in the eye, telling them of the Savior who died in order to save them, to give them life? O Lord, give us, give them, eyes that truly see life is and will always be a precious gift from You. Amen? Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, the Life Giver. Amen.

\*\*As a footnote of sorts: Have you ever noticed that those who are for and promote the demise of the unborn ALL had pro-life parents?\*\*\*