

Life Sunday 2026

John 1:1-5 "The Giver of Life"

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[lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:1-5).

Life. What an amazing gift. Scripture leaves to our imagination what it was like for Adam when he took his first breath. The Lord breathed life into him, and suddenly he was alive. Scripture leaves to our imagination what it was like for Adam to awaken to see the wonder and the beauty of the woman the Lord had given him. He was not alone! There was now one like him and yet so different, wonderful, and amazing. Scripture leaves to our imagination what it was like for these two lovers to walk with their Lord in the cool of the day in the beauty of the Garden that God had made for them.

God the Son, the Word who became flesh, is the agent of that life given to Adam and Eve and to us. "He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." We were and are fearfully and wonderfully made through Him. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Jesus Christ is the Giver of Life.

But that Life was opposed. The evil one sought to conquer the life and light. Scripture leaves to our imagination what it was like when Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden. They listened to the voice of darkness and rejected the very source of life

and light that had created them. We can only imagine the agony and sorrow. Their rejection of the One who is life brought the very death He said would come.

"Oh, Adam. What has happened? Abel! Abel! Get up! Adam! He's not moving! Oh, my dear, sweet son. What has happened?" Death. The agony. The pain. The grief. The darkness.

Throughout the centuries since, the darkness has tried to extinguish the light and the life. The Egyptians ordered the enslaved Israelites to kill their baby boys to keep them in subjection. The Israelites, though later rescued from slavery in Egypt and given the Promised Land, descended into idolatry and sacrificed children to the Canaanite god, Molech.<sup>1</sup> The Romans practiced infanticide by exposure.<sup>2</sup> "Even ... the Greek philosopher Aristotle recommends that parents should be compelled by law to expose deformed or handicapped babies."<sup>3</sup> Darkness.

Our "modern" day culture follows similar practices in what many think is a more humane and medically approved manner. But is it more humane?

In 2013, registered nurse Jill Stanek testified before the House Judiciary Committee about her time working in the labor and delivery ward of Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn, Illinois. She described what it was like to discover that babies who had survived abortions were being placed in a utility closet to die.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [[The Cult of Moloch](#)]

<sup>2</sup> [[Infanticide In The Ancient World - EARLY CHURCH HISTORY](#)]

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> [[HHRG-113-JU10-Wstate-StanekJ-20130523.pdf](#)] quoted in Allie Beth Stuckey, *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion* (New York, NY: Sentinel, 2024), 7.

To leave babies to die in a utility closet is no more humane than ordering Israelites to throw their babies in the Nile.

So just how dark is the darkness of abortion? In 2020, in the United States, according to the Guttmacher Institute, 930,160 babies were intentionally aborted.<sup>5</sup>

But the darkness isn't confined just to abortion. A December 2024 BBC News article reports that, "Assisted dying now accounts for one in 20 Canadian deaths."<sup>6</sup> The report gives examples of how dark this practice has become. A woman with a severe sensitivity to chemicals was granted her request for euthanasia after she failed to secure housing that could have met her medical needs. Another cancer patient in Nova Scotia was asked twice if she was aware of assisted dying as an option. Darkness.

Then, in what may demonstrate just how desperate our culture is for the light and how engulfed it has become in darkness, "Guy Edward Bartkus, 25, detonated an explosive device in his car the morning of May 18, 2025, outside the American Reproductive Centers clinic in Palm Springs."<sup>7</sup> A website that contained no name, but appeared connected to the bombing, laid out the case for "a war against pro-lifers" and said a fertilization clinic would be targeted.

The bomber, who perished in the explosion, was a pro-mortalist, someone who believes that death is better than life. They postulate that it is best for people to die as

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<sup>5</sup> [[Abortion statistics in the United States - Wikipedia](#)]

<sup>6</sup> [[Assisted dying now accounts for one in 20 Canada deaths](#)]

<sup>7</sup> [[Fertility clinic bomb suspect had 'nihilistic ideations.' What's that?](#)]

soon as possible to prevent future suffering.<sup>8</sup> He was linked to the anti-natalist movement. Anti-natalists believe it is morally wrong to bring children into this world. They teach that "procreation is unethical or unjustifiable and thus argue that humans should abstain from making children."<sup>9</sup> Darkness.

But the promise remains: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Why? Why has darkness not prevailed? Why has darkness not overcome the light? Because Jesus Christ has conquered the darkness. Jesus Christ is the giver of life.

#### 1. Jesus Christ Creates Life.

As John begins his Gospel, he proclaims about the Word, "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Each child conceived is knit together fearfully and wonderfully through God the Son.

The Christians in Rome believed this. As noted earlier, Roman citizens discarded unwanted or deformed infants at birth. They were legally required to abandon the deformed. But Christians in the catacombs disobeyed this law and rescued many of these children.

If you ever visit the ancient Christian catacombs scattered about the outskirts of Rome, you'll see countless small tombs dug into the walls, only a foot or two across. These are the burial places of infants, cast out of their pagan homes and left to

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<sup>8</sup> [[What we know about the suspected Palm Springs bomber Guy Edward Bartkus - Los Angeles Times](#)]

<sup>9</sup> [[Antinatalism - Wikipedia](#)]

die of starvation and exposure. Though abortion was practiced in the ancient world, this form of infanticide was a far more common way to get rid of an unwanted child. Many of these rejected children were rescued by Christians, nursed back to health and given homes, in obedience to Christ's command to serve the least of His brothers and sisters. But all too often, the only act of love the early Church could offer these children was to bury their little bodies and offer prayers of mourning for them.<sup>10</sup>

The practice of caring for orphans continued into the Middle Ages. But when it started, it was illegal.<sup>11</sup>

We are invited and called to believe and respond as these Christians did that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by our Heavenly Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the giver of life.

## **2. Jesus Christ Redeems Life.**

The One who is the light and life "... became flesh and dwelt among us." John then reports, "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father ..." Later in his account, he tells us that this glory is the glory of the cross. Jesus asserted this when He said to Philip and Andrew, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Then He prayed, "Father, glorify your name." A voice came from heaven, "I

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<sup>10</sup> [A Lesson from the Catacombs - Pro-Life Action League]

<sup>11</sup> Encyclopedia of Early Christianity pp.498-499, published 2014, Downers Grove, Illinois.  
[[https://archive.org/details/isbn\\_9780830829439/page/498/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/isbn_9780830829439/page/498/mode/2up)] referenced in [Fact check: Early Christians always obeyed the law]

have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Jesus was about to be lifted up on the cross to the glory of God and to draw all people to Himself.

It was on that cross that Jesus bore every choice made in darkness. He carried every immoral action, every death, even every death deliberately chosen. Then He entered into the darkness. For three eternal hours He experienced the judgment and wrath of God. He was forsaken. He was laid in the darkness of the tomb. Easter morning, the Son arose with all of His brilliance. His cry in the darkness, "It is finished!" was not a cry of surrender but a victor's cry. Jesus Christ, the light, had conquered death and darkness. He gives new life to all who repent and believe.

Consider the person in this story told by Rod Rosenbladt, a Lutheran pastor and theologian:

She was a middle-aged woman who needed help. She went to her pastor and said, "Pastor, you know that I had an abortion a number of years ago?" "Yes," the pastor replied. "Well, I need to talk to you about the man I've since met." "All right," replied the pastor.

"Well, we met a while back and started dating and I thought, I need to tell him about the abortion. But I just couldn't. Then things got more serious between us and I thought, I need to tell him about the abortion, but I just couldn't. A while later we got engaged, and I thought, I need to tell him about the abortion. But I just couldn't. So I needed to talk to someone, Pastor, and you're it."

The pastor replied, "You know, we have a service for this. Let's go through that together." So they did—a service of confession and absolution.

When they were finished, she said to him, "Now I think I have the courage to tell my new husband about my abortion. Thanks, Pastor."

And the pastor replied, "What abortion?"<sup>12</sup>

Jesus Christ redeems life. Choices made in darkness are forgiven and forgotten. The light has come. Life is made new.

### **3. Jesus Christ Promises Eternal Life.**

I suppose the most famous verse in the Bible is John 3:16. It occurs just a couple chapters after the opening words of this Gospel. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Whether these were the words of Jesus Himself or the comment of the Apostle, it doesn't matter. Jesus Christ, the giver of life, promises eternal life.

This is the answer to the confusion of those like Guy Edward Bartkus, who tragically took his own life in an attempt to harm those who are in favor of life. Death is not better than life, for this life is not the end. There is an amazing life to come, eternal life with God who so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Tullian Tchividjian, *It Is Finished: 365 Days of Good News* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2015), June 6.

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C.S. Lewis used the term "shadowlands" to contrast this world with the one to come. We live in the shadow of that coming reality. In this world we experience pain, suffering, and tears. But some day, God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. We will experience the reality of a world without heartache, loss, and death. We will experience the world that God intended for us when He fulfills His promise of eternal life through the death and resurrection of His Son.

This Good News of forgiveness and eternal life is for the woman who has had an abortion. It is for the man who encouraged or even pressured her to abort her child. It is for the doctor who performed the abortion. The Good News is for you. God intends this Good News to reach every person who is living or has lived in the darkness. This Gospel of living in the forgiveness of all our sins and in the promise of eternal life is for everyone, yes, even for those who commit abortion.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are even more fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. Someday all who confess Christ will be fearfully and wonderfully made eternally alive through Jesus Christ, the giver of life. Amen.