

## *Sermon: Sanctity of Life*

Dr. Peter Hammond

***“They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters ...the land was desecrated by their blood.”***  
***Psalm 106:37-38***

Abortion is a modern equivalent of child sacrifice. The births of both Moses and Jesus were accompanied by a massive slaughter of the innocent. Both the Old and New Testaments record widespread infanticide being unleashed in attempts to eradicate the people of God.

Just as God's people opposed Pharaoh's decree to murder new-born boys in Egypt (Exodus 1:15-22), so we need to protect pre-born babies from abortion today. Just as King Herod sought to kill the babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16), so abortionists are attempting to butcher babies today.

The most dangerous place in the world is not Bosnia, Somalia, Sudan or the Congo. The most dangerous place in the world is the womb. Pre-born babies are being killed in their mothers' wombs at a greater rate than any other section of society. The mortality rate for pre-born babies varies from one in four to one in three.

A growing number of Christians worldwide are coming to recognise the abortion holocaust as the greatest crime being committed in the world today. It is an urgent priority for the Church to expose, oppose and end this war against children made in the image of God.

### **It is a Matter of Life and Death**

The sanctity of human life is an essential article of the Christian Faith. The Bible makes it clear that life begins at conception (Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41). The unborn baby is then genetically, physiologically and organically, a distinct person. At that moment life begins. At about three weeks after conception the baby's heart beat can be detected. Six weeks after conception, the baby has its own life-long brain wave.

If the absence of a brain wave is considered a sign of death, why then is the presence of this brain wave not accepted as a confirmation of life? Birth is not a magical act that turns a non-human into a person. Birth is only a change in environment for a life that began many months before. Every abortion stops a beating heart. Every abortion ends a brain wave. Every abortion is the murder of a helpless and innocent human being.

### **It is a Matter of Logic**

It is of the utmost hypocrisy for us to denounce the atrocities committed under apartheid, or to condemn those who stood by and allowed the Nazi and Communist holocausts to be perpetrated – if we allow the abortion holocaust to continue in our own country. How incredible that South Africa has replaced apartheid with abortion!

In the name of Human Rights, “pro-choicers” are depriving pre-born babies of the right to life. Instead of discrimination based upon race, we now have discrimination based upon age. Can we condemn discrimination based on race, while allowing discrimination based on age?

Of what worth is human dignity if babies are denied the right to life? The right to life of pre-born babies is one of the most urgent and important issues confronting society today (Matt. 18:5, 10, 14; Isaiah 44:24; 49:15).

What kind of convoluted logic and mental gymnastics can interpret the “right of life” clause in the Constitution to protect guilty murderers from execution, but not prevent innocent babies from receiving the death penalty through abortion?

If the right to life of the most helpless and innocent members of society – pre-born babies – is not upheld then the Bill of Rights is a worthless piece of paper. A society that is capable of burning, smothering, poisoning or dismembering little babies deserves the wrath of God.

How is it possible that a highly trained and experienced judge - after careful deliberation of all the evidences and arguments, presented by both prosecution and defence, in the calm, objective environment of a court of law - cannot choose to impose the death sentence upon a duly convicted murderer. Yet a young teenager – without the permission of her parents – can make an emotional and spur of the moment choice to have her innocent unborn baby killed through abortion! A tragic decision she may regret for the rest of her life. The parents do not even need to be informed after the fact!

It is also illogical that the mother of an illegitimate baby must now obtain the consent of the father before the child can be adopted; but a married mother can have an abortion without her husband’s consent... or even knowledge!

By making the murder of pre-born babies legal, easy and taxpayer funded, the “Choice of Termination of Pregnancy” Bill defies all logic.

### **It is a Matter of Love**

The heart of Christianity is love. Love for God and love for our neighbour (Mark 12:30-31). The golden rule by which all believers must live is:

**“In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you . . .” Matthew 7:12**

If you as a mother would not like to be attacked and torn to pieces - then don’t allow it to be done to your baby. If you as a doctor would not like to be poisoned to death - then don’t do it to a baby. If you as a member of Parliament would not like to be snatched from your home and dismembered - then don’t legalise and finance such violence against babies: **“do to others what you would have them do to you.”**

If we do not stand up and oppose the legalised killing of babies by abortion then the blood of those innocent children will be upon our heads (Ezekiel 33:1-6).

Christians must love their neighbour - and this includes our pre-born neighbours. Caring for the fatherless, protecting the helpless, defending the innocent and speaking up for the voiceless is true Christian love in action.

**“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this’, does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will not He repay each one according to what he has done?” Proverbs 24:11-12**

South Africa needs to rebuild respect for life. Everyone is made in the image of God and has the right to life - irrespective of their degrees of awareness, health or development. Everyone has been endowed by the Creator with the right to enjoy and defend life and liberty.

**“Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts... let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” Amos 5:15,24**

### **Abortion Atrocity Aided by Apathy**

It has been said that every abortion clinic (abortuary) could hang a sign outside declaring:

“This abortion clinic is open by the implied consent of the local church.”

Another person put it this way:

“Satan is counting on each of us in the coming year to mind our own business while he gets away with murder. He is counting on us to be more concerned with our comforts, conveniences, and prosperity than with the lives of helpless babes. He is counting on us to make excuses for why we should not get involved in ‘social or political’ issues. He is counting on us to say we oppose abortion and then to fold our arms, while our actions lag far behind our rhetoric. He is counting on us to stay out of his way.”

All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good people to do . . . nothing.

### **Sanctity Life Sunday**

The strategic focus of this right to life campaign is Sanctity Life Sunday. The closest Sunday to 1 February has been selected as it is the closest Sunday to the anniversary of the legalisation of abortion in South Africa (1 February 1997).

The goal is to have most pastors in South Africa preach on what the Bible teaches on the subject of abortion on the 30th January. Sanctity Life Sunday should be a solemn and serious day as we reflect on our Christian responsibility to deal with the ugly reality of abortion in our society. It should be a national day of repentance for the national sin of abortion.

According to the South African Christian Handbook there are over 13 million church members and 3 million adherents, in South Africa.

If most of these church goers could understand what the Bible teaches about when life begins, the sanctity of human life and our Christian responsibility to stand up for the right to life of the pre-born - then we could save thousands of babies from abortion.

Most of the medical personnel in our country are church members. Most of the mothers go to church. Most of the voters in South Africa claim to be Christians. If Christians in South Africa could stop and look at the abortion holocaust in the light of Scripture; if we could understand something of the heart of God on this disgraceful abomination then we would be roused to action.

There are over 36 000 churches and preaching points in South Africa. There are over 30 000 ministers in the country. If just half of them could be inspired to study what the Word of God says on when life begins and what is abortion; if only half of the churches in South Africa observed Sanctity Life Sunday in Bible study, repentance and prayer - then we could begin to end the legalised killing of babies in South Africa.

**“Could you men not keep watch with Me for one hour?” Matthew 26:40**

### **Seven Priorities to Promote the Sanctity of Life**

The National Alliance for Life (NAL) (which includes Africa Christian Action, Christians for Truth, Doctors for Life, Pro-life, United Christian Action and many other pro-life ministries) has identified the following seven goals as our priorities in the fight for the right to life of pre-born babies:

1. To inform most Christians in South Africa about when life begins and what abortion really is.
2. To inspire thousands of Christians to make a public stand against abortion in the Life Chains.
3. To encourage mothers in crisis pregnancies not to abort their babies. Adoption is one loving option.
4. To persuade medical personnel in SA to have no part in child killing.
5. To challenge voters not to support candidates who support abortion.
6. To save the lives of pre-born babies and recruit volunteers for crisis pregnancy centres.
7. To mobilise most pastors to preach on when life begins and the sanctity of life on Sanctity Life Sunday.

### **What Should You Do?**

#### **Be Informed**

*“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.” Hosea 4:6*

**Obtain and read:** “Fight for Life - a pro-life handbook for Southern Africa” and “Making a Difference a Christian Action Handbook for Southern Africa.” Write to Africa Christian Action and request free copies of “Scripture and the Sanctity of Life”; “It’s My Body” and “Abortion - The Facts”. You can also request a Resource List of available pro-life videos and books.

#### **Be Interceding**

*“If My people who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14*

Abortion is a tragic national disgrace and we should pray for God to have mercy upon us and to revive His Church to oppose this evil. Pray for the mothers in crisis pregnancies, pray for the counsellors at crisis pregnancy centres, pray for the medical personnel who are faced with life and death choices, pray for those who make the laws, pray for the voters and for the judges. Pray that God’s will may be done, and that lives will be saved.

#### **Be Involved**

*“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did it for Me.”*  
*Matthew 25:40*

Our first priority is to see that our congregation is informed, interceding and involved. Each of us must be involved in prayer and persuasion to save lives. Pray for mothers going through crisis pregnancies, for pre-born babies who are in danger of abortion and for pro-life ministries.

Try to organise for a pro-life speaker to address your school or work place and for pro-life videos such as “Eclipse of Reason”, “The Hard Truth” and “City of Refuge” to be shown to your youth group, women’s group or home fellowship. Join ACA and order a copy of the Christian Action Starter Pack. Then encourage some other concerned friends to join with you in starting a Christian Action Group or Pro-life ministry in your home, workplace or church. Distribute pro-life literature.

Volunteers to help at a Crisis pregnancy centre are always needed. Go through your cupboards and see if there are baby clothes and accessories, in good condition, that you no longer need and can donate to a crisis pregnancy centre. Consider adopting a child.

Start now to educate and enlist others in the campaign to end abortion. Mark your calendar and encourage others to plan now to take part in the next Life Chain, 1st Sunday in October (and if possible join ACA outside Parliament on the closest Sunday to 1st February (the anniversary of the legislation of abortion in South Africa) – for a prayer vigil and placard protest. We can all do something. We must all do something positive – to love our neighbours and to save lives.

Children are a gift from God for blessing the family, the church and the world. Life is precious. We are called to love our neighbours and this includes our unseen pre-born neighbours.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” Proverbs 24:11

**Will you** put feet to your faith?

Lives are at stake.