

## **Written Copy: John 1:10-14 “Life: God’s Most Precious Gift”**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday @ Epiphany-Life Sunday**

**Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

### **Text: John 1:10-14**

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### **Exegetical Statement**

God the Son, the Word made flesh, existed before anything else came into being, in perfect unity with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Through Him, the declarative Word of God all things came into being. He is the source of physical and spiritual life, both come from Him as His gift to each of us. He came as the revelatory light so that we might know the invisible God who is beyond our complete comprehension, to reveal to us the Truth of who God is for us and to us, and who we are to Him. He came born as a child in His mother’s womb to begin tabernacling with us, walking the earth and living the life we live. He came to those who, in their sinful disobedience, refused to accept Him for who He really is. He came to call all disbelieving men through the gift of faith by faith to believe in Him and His work of atonement and thereby make us to be precious, much loved, dependent children of God, welcomed into His family by the gift of grace. And by the gift of His Spirit, He continues to tabernacle with us throughout our lives on this earth so that when our life is over we will tabernacle with Him forever in eternal life.

### **Focus Statement:**

God the Son is the Creator and sustainer of all life and bestows it upon us as His gift of grace. He came to intimately join Himself to us as a baby in the womb of Mary. To God all life is precious from conception on. He came so that we might know God’s sacrificial and unconditional love for each and every person, and to give us that same love to share with one another. He came to forgive us when we fail to treasure His gracious gift of life, as well as when we fail to show His love to others by protecting that gift of life in the unborn. He sends His Spirit to convert us, making us “born again”, to live with Him now and forever in eternal life.

### **Function Statement:**

#### **Why it’s important to know:**

People argue the merits of abortion with the statement “My body, my choice”, failing to admit that in pregnancy there is another body inside with the same rights as the mother, they fail to see that life is a precious gift of God. We don’t decide the start or the end of it. And those who feel it’s not their business to intrude upon what should be a woman’s decision alone fail to admit that unborn child is much loved by God, and needs to be much loved by us.

#### **What the hearer should do as a result:**

Show our faith in life as the precious gift of God by supporting those agencies that come alongside to help mothers who are struggling financially or struggling through unwanted pregnancies. We show love to those who have chosen abortion by sharing Christ’s atoning sacrifice with them and loving them as our brother and sister in Christ. We show our support for life through our selection of political candidates who support life

### **Subject Sentence: Support and Protect Life as God’s Precious Gift**

## Introduction

As many of you may know, I drive a 1998 Ford Taurus. It may not be much to brag about, but it runs, and it's mine free and clear. It was my mother's car; it was a gift from her as part of my inheritance. It's mine and I can choose to do what I want with it: I can drive when and where I want, however fast I want as long as I obey the laws and drive defensively to protect the life of others on the road. I wouldn't take too kindly to any of you telling me that I can't drive to the store because you think it's too late, or because you don't like that store, or any other reason that has nothing to do with your peace, security, and how you want to live your life.

This is all part of the American dream, the freedoms we enjoy as citizens living in this country. Our Constitution expounds on the inalienable rights we have. We make laws that serve to protect the rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, creed, or gender. And one of those things many Americans have held to be a right available to all is the right to have an abortion. The slogan that was used in the successful campaign to make abortion a constitutional amendment in Michigan, so that it is protected by law, was "My body, my choice."

"My body my choice" has a ring in the ears of those who treasure the right to do with their bodies whatever they wish. There are many outside the Church, and even in the Church who think this is a valid argument. Even those who would never themselves think about having an abortion feel it is not their place to tell another woman what she can and can't do with her body.

As a man, I don't find it easy to preach about this. I've heard what the proponents of abortions say about male pastors who preach and teach against it. They say we have no idea what it's like to be pregnant and carry a child to term, the changes it forces upon a woman's body, and how it changes their life for a long time to come, both with how the world sees them, and the added responsibility to care for a child. That is especially true in this day and age when many women must face raising a child on their own because the father has abandoned them. Add to that the emotionally difficult and scarring experience when that child is the product of rape or incest. Because to this many outside and inside the Church might call me ignorant and judgmental, holding on to values that are out of date and out of touch with the world today, and uncaring about their life by imposing my value judgments upon them. And that would be the "nice" things that could be said.

**So, instead of me speaking for myself, as a man, allow me to speak the truth of God's Word.**

## Physical and Spiritual Life as God's Gift

**John 1:3-4 <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**

Both physical and spiritual life is a gift from God. In our Old Testament Lesson, we see the LORD forming and fashioning both Adam and Eve's bodies, Adam's from the dust of the ground, and Eve's from Adam's rib. But Adam is not a living being until the LORD blew the breath of life into his nostrils, that spark that makes us a living being that comes from God alone. While the mother and father of a child have something to do with a human body being formed in the womb, what they contribute is simply the means by which the LORD creates the miracle of a new life. If what is created in the womb has life, and then is born alive, that is only because of the gift of life bestowed by the LORD Himself. It is the precious gift He has given to each and every one of us here today.

That is definitely true of all women, including those who are expecting. Their life is a precious gift, and they have the right to make many decisions about it. Those decisions should reflect and honor life as the precious gift from God.

The thing is, when a woman becomes pregnant, it is no longer just about her body and her choice. By the miraculous work of the LORD there is now another life existing inside her. This life, this child, has the same right to live, to grow in the womb, and to be born, that the mother had when she was born. To say that her life, the way her body looks, her career, and her future struggles are more important than this unborn child's life is a sinful and selfish attitude. To say that the mother, who has been blessed with the miracle of life, has a right to end that child's life is saying that she has a right to murder the life of another.

**Psalms 139:16 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.**

David witnesses to the fact that when he was in his mother's womb the LORD knew Him as a human being who was much loved and precious to Him, about whom the LORD had plans and purposes for his future. That is also true for you, for me, and for every child conceived. Those who argue "My body, my choice" never recognize the same truth for a child in the womb, that the unborn child is a life who should be afforded the same right to live and thrive.

## Christ Who Came to Give Us the Father's Love of All Life

So how does Jesus feel about that life in the womb? He chose to enter into our world not as a full-grown man, but as a baby born to the virgin Mary. God the Son supernaturally and permanently joined Himself with humanity as an unborn fetus in her womb.

In His ministry, when it came time to teach His disciples about what it means to be great in His reign and rule, He calls a young child into their midst, a child that, while loved by his parents, would not have been considered in an agricultural society to be important until it could contribute to the provision of the family. But for Jesus, a child's humility and simple faith that doesn't question why, but just believes, that is what He finds important and worthy, the child-like faith.

When Jesus was teaching and parents were bringing their children, the disciples judged that Jesus didn't have time for these youngsters. Luke's Gospel tells us that these weren't just older kids, these were babies in the arms of mothers. Jesus set His disciples straight concerning even the youngest of children with a strong message of command. He told them straight up: **"Let them come! Stop preventing them!"** How does Jesus feel about newborn babies? He took them in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them with all that He came to give them, faith that brings life with Him now and eternal life to come.

Jesus is God the Son who came to be the atoning sacrifice that saves all humankind, even babies in the womb. He came to forgive all of our sins, even those who sinfully put their bodies and their life before the body and life of the unborn baby in the womb. He loves them just as much as He loves the babies they carry. He is the source of their physical life, and He came to give one and all who were born dead in their trespasses and sins a new life of faith lived with Him now, and for eternity to come. And what does He call this miraculous giving of a new spiritual life when He was teaching Nicodemus? Jesus calls it being "born again". And what does He call us when we are baptized into faith in Him? We are made precious children of the Heavenly Father.

Christ certainly sees children as important, both children inside and outside of the womb. He loves them and us with a very special love, a love that is sacrificial and unconditional. And as a part of His gift of faith He shares that love with us, His precious children, for us to share with one another.

## **How We the Church Can Share His love to Expecting Mothers**

How can we, as the Church show that love for the unborn and those mothers who are carrying them? We can come alongside women who get pregnant and offer our love and support, especially to those who are struggling financially and those who are single mothers. We can come alongside, talk, and pray with those who are thinking of getting an abortion. We can share with them how precious life is, theirs and their unborn babies. We can share with them the love of Christ for all, and His promise to be with them and their baby no matter what is to come, and that as His Church we will be there with them too. We can give them what we have in our hands to support them: our time, talents, and treasures.

We can and do support those agencies committed to helping women expecting as well as their newborn babies. We support the Pregnancy Resource Center of Flint who provide counseling to pregnant women, especially those who are considering an abortion. They provide clothing, formula, and diapers for those in need. And they provide counseling for those who have experienced a pregnancy loss for any reason. We support Heartbeat of Flint with our crib set up in the Narthex to collect clothing, diapers, formula, highchairs, and cribs for donation to expectant mothers in need. We support Wellspring Lutheran Services who minister to young families who are struggling, and provide adoption services for those children born to mothers who can't or won't care for them. Through our support we show the love of Christ to these individuals who need to receive it.

## **What About Rape, Incest, Health of the Mother?**

Those who support "The Right to Choose" bring up, "What about cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is in danger?"

Women who are the victims of rape certainly need the comfort and love of Jesus Christ poured out upon them. They need our prayers and understanding and love. That is a life changing tragedy that has long lasting effects. The man who raped her deserves all that the law calls for as punishment. But the one that does not deserve to be punished is that unborn child. To say that it is okay to kill a child for the sin of the father is a greater wrong. If the emotional suffering is too great, better the mother put the child up for adoption than put it to death.

Another tragic situation is incest. Along with the emotional scarring, there is a real chance of birth defects. But once again, to cite this as a reason for abortion would be to kill the child for the sins of the parents. If the LORD has given that child life, even if the child has physical disabilities, who are we to take the LORD's gift of life from it.

Then there are those rare cases where the health of the mother is at stake if she carries the child to term. In this case the decision to have the child or to abort it should rest with the mother alone. But we, the Church, should be willing to stand by her and pray with her. And if the mother should choose to go ahead and have the child, putting her life in danger, she is showing the same sacrificial and unconditional love that Christ showed to her, to that child, and to us in His giving His life to save all men and women. And our God is an amazing God who can work miraculously beyond what doctors can understand. Both mother and child can be put in His gracious loving, powerful hands.

## Conclusion

Pause for a moment and consider what kind of love our Heavenly Father has for us. He gives to us the gracious gift of our life in this world and all that we hold in our hands. When it comes to those things, we do have many choices that no one else has any right to speak against, as long as what we are doing what is lawful. He wants us to live our lives knowing all we have is a gift from Him. And the most precious gift is our life of faith lived with Him now and into eternal life to come.

He gives that same gift of life now and eternal life to come to the unborn child in the womb. They have the same right to live as you and I do. Christ died and rose again to have a faith relationship with them that begins in the womb and continues until the LORD decides it's time to welcome them home. Christ calls us, His Church, to share that love He has given to us in our baptism through our support of the unborn, and struggling mothers through the gift of our time, talents, and treasures. We demonstrate Christ's love through our support of those agencies that provide assistance for them. We want both mother and baby to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior now and join us in eternal life to come. Amen.