

Sermon for The Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

Date: January 27, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 62:1-5

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Gospel Reading: John 2:1-11

Sermon Text: John 2:1-11

Sermon Title: Christ In our Life

Introit: Psalm 36:5-9; Antiphon: Song of Solomon 2:4

Hymns:

LSB 910 – Now the Silence

LSB 772 – In Holy Conversation (v.1-2) (*Tune: LSB 398*)

LSB 408 – Come, Join in Cana's Feast

LSB 783 – Take My Life and Let it Be (v.1,4)

LSB 771 – Be Still, My Soul, before the Lord (v.1,4) (*Tune: LSB 348*)

LSB 706 – Love in Christ is Strong and Living

Liturgy:

Divine Service: Service Prayer and Preaching



**Sanctity of
Human Life
Sunday**



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Text: John 2:1-11

A wedding took place in the city of Cana {*KAY-na*} in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his disciples had been invited too. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They're out of wine."

Jesus said to her, "Why did you come to me? My time has not yet come."

His mother told the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

Six stone water jars were there. They were used for Jewish purification rituals. Each jar held about 15 to 30 gallons. Jesus told the servers, "Fill the jars with water." The servers filled the jars to the brim. Jesus said to them, "Take some, and bring it to the person in charge of the feast." The servers did as they were told.

The person in charge tasted the water that had become wine. He didn't know where it had come from, although the servers who had poured the water knew. The person in charge called the groom and said to him, "Everyone serves the best wine first. When people are drunk, the host serves cheap wine, but you have saved the best wine until now."

Cana in Galilee was the place where Jesus began to perform miracles. He made his glory public there and his disciples believed in him.

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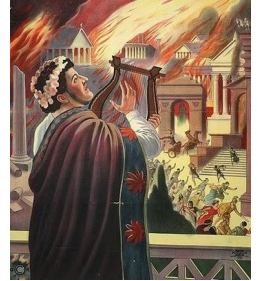
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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

It was difficult to watch the videos that came out a couple years ago concerning Panned Parenthood. The callous nature of those who are still today selling dissected children, for medical experiments and profit, is unbelievable. The uncountable loss of life over the years; the hardship and difficulties that people go through, and that they will continue to go through for a long time to come, are immeasurable.

With that on our minds today's Gospel seems out of place. Jesus at a wedding. How can we approach such a joyous event when confronted with such tragedy in our world? It's not unlike like Nero playing a fiddle while Rome burns.¹ I suppose that would be true even if the those videos had never been released, or the entire killing industry did not exist. There would still be tragedy, pain and suffering all around us. Maybe not so in your face or so well publicized, but it would still be there. There would be, and still are:



- tragedies of people dying at the hands of terrorists, or at the hands of governments vying for power.
- tragedies of workplace murders and domestic violence.
- tragedies of homelessness and starvation.
- tragedies of euthanasia, or what some people call “mercy killing.”
- the tragedies that happen in the lives of people everyday, like cancer, Alzheimer’s, or other debilitating diseases and ailments.

The affect of sin infesting all of creation is never in short supply.

1 According to a legend, Rome’s emperor Nero, an immoral and unpopular man, “played a fiddle while Rome burned.” The expression has a double meaning: Not only did Nero play music while his people suffered, but he was an ineffectual leader in a time of crisis. Since fiddles had not even been invented yet it probably has no basis in fact, but the expression and meaning remain.

Today is also the Sunday we call Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. The day each year that we especially remember, even in the face of all this sin, tragedy and death, that every human life is worth the life of God's Son. Every human life, no matter who they are: the unborn, the weak, the underprivileged, the handicapped, the suffering, the struggling, the unwanted, the elderly, the sick, the poor, those nobody else may care about.



No one that is except Jesus. Every human life is important to Him. Every person is loved by Him. Every human life is a life for which He eagerly and willingly traded His own. He endured Hell² so they would not have too. That is the wonder we would do well to always keep in mind. The love of Jesus for all.

It is that we Christians would play a fiddle while our neighbor suffers, thinking that since God loves them He will take care of them. It is true that He will take care of them, but He calls on us to care for them as well. To show compassion and love as we can, with the gifts the Lord has given us.³ You have opportunities to help your neighbor here facing, perhaps smaller but still very real, tragedies. Showing love, compassion and care to those in need.

For starters you can pray. Do not underestimate the importance of your prayers! As Baptized children of your Heavenly Father you have the access, and the high honor, of lifting up others before the throne of Almighty God. Whether many are praying for them or no one else is praying for them, you can pray for them. What you are unable to do your Savior is able to do.⁴ Saint James tells us that the prayers of the righteous of God's children have great power.⁵

- 2 **1 Peter 3:18-19** – This is true because Christ suffered for our sins once. He was an innocent person, but he suffered for guilty people so that he could bring you to God. His body was put to death, but he was brought to life through his spirit. In it he also went to proclaim his victory to the spirits kept in prison.
- 3 **James 2:14-17** – My brothers and sisters, what good does it do if someone claims to have faith but doesn't do any good things? Can this kind of faith save him? Suppose a believer, whether a man or a woman, needs clothes or food and one of you tells that person, "God be with you! Stay warm, and make sure you eat enough." If you don't provide for that person's physical needs, what good does it do? In the same way, faith by itself is dead if it doesn't cause you to do any good things.
- 4 **Ephesians 3:20-21** – Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- 5 **James 5:16** – So admit your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you will be healed. Prayers offered by

That's what Mary did at the wedding of Cana. Think about it. Such a small need. They ran out of wine. Insignificant compared with the needs of some around us today and then, but she saw a need and she went to the One who could help. Jesus heard, and saw, and helped. Why would you believe that He would not also hear and see and help now? He will. That is why He is at Cana in the first place. Jesus is God in the flesh, Immanuel – God With Us. He has come to deal with the tragedy of sin's affect on the world.

So why does God allow these tragedies to happen? Why doesn't He stop them? ...or maybe, why does He cause them? It's not a new question. It was certainly asked after 9/11, after the Asian tsunami, after the hurricanes and the fires, even as churches fell to the power of natures rage. It's asked often in hospitals, and nursing homes and at gravesides. It's asked especially when we see suffering of great magnitude.

It's a question that in itself is an accusation. An accusation that God has done something wrong or at least been lazy. It suggests that His actions need to be justified and explained. With such a question the Creator is put on trial by His creatures, His created ones. We demand answers. Imagine that! We demand answers from God! The God who created us, against whom we rebelled, ignored and even mock, the God who still suffered to save us.

God does not have to answer to us. We are the ones who owe an explanation. God does not have to explain Himself to us... but He did. Not by telling us all the answers to all of our questions, because we probably wouldn't be satisfied with the answers anyway. He answered that night in Bethlehem by becoming one with us in our suffering. He answered by not remaining aloof and separate from us in the tragedy of our sin but by becoming one with us, wallowing in it.

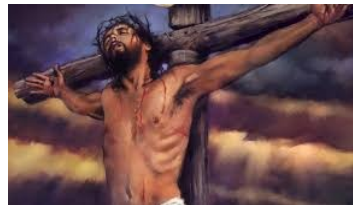
The thing is we don't like that answer. We don't think God should come to us in our sin. He should take us out of our sin and the suffering it causes! He



those who have God's approval are effective.

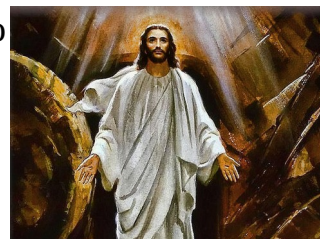
should somehow pull us out of this pain and tragedy, but God deals with it in His way not our way.⁶

So in our world today not one person is feeling a pain, a heartache, a sorrow, a shame, or a grief that He did not feel Himself in His own heart. That is what caused Him to cry out from the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”⁷



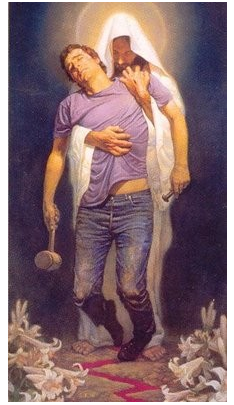
That was His hour, on the cross, the reason He came. To take this world that Adam wrenched out of whack with sin⁸ and set it all right again.⁹ Right not with us but with His Father. Not by abolishing sin but by paying for it; by forgiving it. You see if He were to simply wipe out sin what would happen to us? What about us born in sin, and stained with sin to the very marrow of our bones?¹⁰ If He came to wipe out sin then we too would be wiped out, but that is not why He came. He comes to joins us.¹¹

He joins us in our Holy Baptism, He suffers and dies so that we are forgiven. He rises again so that we are redeemed, reconciled, and rescued.



- 6 **Isaiah 55:8-9** – My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways,” declares the Lord. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.
- 7 **Matthew 27:46** – About three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (3:00pm was also the time of the daily Temple sacrifice of a lamb for the sins of the people.)
- 8 **Romans 5:12** – Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin. So death spread to everyone, because everyone sinned.
- 9 **2 Corinthians 5:17** – Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence.
- 10 **Psalms 51:5** – Indeed, I was born guilty. I was sinful when my mother conceived me.
- 11 **2 Corinthians 5:21** – God had Christ, who was sinless, become sin so that we might receive God’s approval through him.

That day, that Friday we call ‘Good’ was Jesus’ wedding day. It was a day of both tragedy and joy. That day after leaving His Father¹² and then His mother,^{13,14} Jesus joyously clung to His Bride – His Church.¹⁵ Clinging to you on the cross. Clinging to you and your sin, your suffering, your brokenness, your shame. Making it all His. Becoming one flesh with you¹⁶ and all that you are, to make you His own.



He did that so after the suffering, after the pain and death, after the tragedy of sin is dealt with, on the third day¹⁷ there is joy. The best for last. A resurrection to a new life eternal.

It is the exact opposite of the way of the world, isn't it? Just like at the wedding at Cana everything is turned around. The manager of the feast wondered about this, because everybody else does it differently. It is usually the best now, first. We want it that way and want God to do it that way. We want to

12 **Matthew 27:46**

13 **John 19:26-27** – Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing there. He said to his mother, “Look, here’s your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Look, here’s your mother!” From that time on she lived with that disciple in his home.

14 **Genesis 2:24** – That is why a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Matthew 19:4-5 – Jesus answered, ... “That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and will remain united with his wife, and the two will be one.”

15 **Ephesians 5:21-29** – Place yourselves under each other’s authority out of respect for Christ. Wives, place yourselves under your husbands’ authority as you have placed yourselves under the Lord’s authority. The husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. It is his body, and he is its Savior. As the church is under Christ’s authority, so wives are under their husbands’ authority in everything. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. He did this to make the church holy by cleansing it, washing it using water along with spoken words. Then he could present it to himself as a glorious church, without any kind of stain or wrinkle—holy and without faults. So husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. No one ever hated his own body. Instead, he feeds and takes care of it, as Christ takes care of the church.

Revelation 19:6-8 – I heard what sounded like the noise from a large crowd, like the noise of raging waters, like the noise of loud thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! The Lord our God, the Almighty, has become king. Let us rejoice, be happy, and give him glory because it’s time for the marriage of the lamb. His bride has made herself ready. She has been given the privilege of wearing dazzling, pure linen.” This fine linen represents the things that God’s holy people do that have his approval.

16 **Genesis 2:24** – That is why a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh.

17 **John 20**

escape the suffering of this world, the sin and horror, now. We would rather go now, leave now, die now, before the tragedy gets any worse.

That is not our Lord's way. Instead He says, "I am with you, always."¹⁸ He does not take us out of the trials and troubles of this world, but comes into them with us, for us. He comes to you, for you, in Holy Baptism making Himself one with you. He comes to you in His body and blood, in His Holy Supper, with His promise of life and salvation. He does that so that sin and sin's affect in the world, and the tragedies of life, would not overcome you.¹⁹ His forgiveness, life, and victory are yours. They are yours to share with all those around you who are still in desperate need of hearing it, No matter what they've done, or where they've come from. Today who better can we think of than those victims of a child killing industry. Those who work in it and those who still suffer the scars from its lies.

As we live in this world we live not by sight but by faith.²⁰ Faith in His promise.²¹ His promise that He sees, He knows, He cares, and that He is here, working and saving still.

Does it look that way in your life right now? Probably not, but that is really the wrong question to ask. Ask the disciples if they saw salvation on that cross. They didn't, and we don't, but what we see is not all there is see.²² The cross shows us that God is with us in our suffering, and working in our suffering, in ways that we do not know and cannot see. Faith believes it.²³ He has promised it. Faith believes that He is here, just as He is in war torn countries, in hospitals, nursing homes, and even in abortion clinics.



18 **Matthew 28:20** – Teach them to do everything I have commanded you. “And remember that I am always with you until the end of time.”

19 **1 Corinthians 10:13** – There isn't any temptation that you have experienced which is unusual for humans. God, who faithfully keeps his promises, will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist. But when you are tempted, he will also give you the ability to endure the temptation as your way of escape.

20 **2 Corinthians 5:7** – Indeed, our lives are guided by faith, not by sight.

21 **Hebrews 11:1** – Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see.

22 **Isaiah 55:8-9** – My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways,” declares the Lord. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

23 **Hebrews 11:1**

Knowing that, we live by faith, in two ways:

First like Mary we offer up our prayers and petitions for those in need.²⁴ We pray, ‘Lord, they have no food, they have no water. Lord my neighbor is in trouble.’ We help as we are able, understanding that prayer is not an excuse for inaction,²⁵ but a recognition of our limitedness, that only He whose love is perfect, and whose ways are purely good, can truly help.

Second we repent. Because repentance takes us outside of ourselves to look to something much greater. In repentance we cling, not to our sin and suffering, or to our wisdom and understanding, or to our answers and what we think is right and reasonable. Repentance looks and clings to the cross. It is to let God be God and our Savior be our Savior.

On the cross we see the sanctity of our life and the life of each and every person, and we see the love of our Savior. Then receiving His forgiveness and love we live and give the same to others. Joining them in their suffering. Standing along side of them. Looking forward to the day when we drink the new wine of the kingdom of heaven, in the wedding feast that has no end.²⁶



That day in Cana, we are told:

He made His glory public there and His disciples believed in Him.²⁷

24 **John 2:3** – When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They’re out of wine.”

25 **James 2:14-17** – My brothers and sisters, what good does it do if someone claims to have faith but doesn’t do any good things? Can this kind of faith save him? Suppose a believer, whether a man or a woman, needs clothes or food and one of you tells that person, “God be with you! Stay warm, and make sure you eat enough.” If you don’t provide for that person’s physical needs, what good does it do? In the same way, faith by itself is dead if it doesn’t cause you to do any good things.

26 **Revelation 19:6-9** – I heard what sounded like the noise from a large crowd, like the noise of raging waters, like the noise of loud thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! The Lord our God, the Almighty, has become king. Let us rejoice, be happy, and give him glory because it’s time for the marriage of the lamb. His bride has made herself ready. She has been given the privilege of wearing dazzling, pure linen.” This fine linen represents the things that God’s holy people do that have his approval. Then the angel said to me, “Write this: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the lamb’s wedding banquet.’” He also told me, “These are God’s true words.”

27 **John 2:11** – Cana in Galilee was the place where Jesus began to perform miracles. He made his glory public there, and his disciples believed in him.

In this building each time we celebrate a Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or hear God Holy Sacred Words, our Lord 'makes His glory public' for us too, for our life and for salvation. May the same be said of us. That in all that we do, in all that we say, in all that we live – we believe in Him, and what He can do.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.