

Text: Psalm 103  
St Stephen's

Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007  
Sunday

## Life and New Life

Dana's testimony this morning comes in the middle of a two week focus on Life. Thank you, Dana.

We are **people of life** here at St Stephens because God is a God of life. Life is one of his great gifts. God is the **creator** of your life, the **author** of your life, the **sustainer** of your life - and of the life of everyone else.

**So from the moment of conception to the time of natural death we cherish life and honor life and protect life.** Because **God makes people and gives them life**, they matter to him. **All people matter to him.** God is the God of life, and deep on his heart are the least and the last - and the little ones. So they are on our hearts, too. Unborn babies deserve a shot at life.

But did you notice that women with a crisis pregnancy avoid biblical Christians? They hear our voices as voices of judgment, of criticism, of condemnation. And they move away from us. I think it is because we are better **known for what we are down on than for what we are up on.** The Pharisees were like that, too – and people with a life crisis ran from them. They flocked to Jesus and ran away from the Pharisees. We need to think about this!

Long time pro-life writer Frederica Matthews Green saw the same thing and came to the conclusion that it's time to walk over to the other side of this cultural divide and begin to **listen to and love those** who oppose us. She spent a lot of time doing just that, calling together groups around the country of women who have had abortions so that she could **listen and love...** She asked them some important questions which went something like this...

**Q.** What situation caused you to make this decision for abortion?

**A.** It was not financial difficulties or circumstantial stress that were

my primary motivators, but it was because someone close, someone I loved, a parent, or a boyfriend told me that I must have this abortion.

**Q.** What could anyone have done to help you complete your pregnancy?

**A.** I would have had that baby if only I had one person to stand by me.

Over and over women repeated that last comment to her. Most women would have completed their pregnancies if only one person had stood by them!

The **needed answer** to the cry of many women with “unplanned” pregnancies **dwells in the heart of God** – the God who created those kids and loves those kids and loves those moms no matter how difficult the circumstances of conception or how desperate the challenge of life. **That is the love we know and the love we give.**

**I salute...**

- Those of you who have taken the time to roll up your sleeves and open your hearts and homes to women with crisis pregnancies and to kids with no home to grow up in...
- Those of you who welcome foster kids and adopt children into your own family, who reach out to disadvantaged kids.
- Those of you who have children and raise them for the Lord, and welcome those grandchildren! Who welcome them and celebrate them!

**That kind of love is good news. We are people of life.**

There is **another kind of good news** that is close to the heart of God, that is the healing, forgiving, restoring, redeeming love of God. If we are **a people of Life, we are also people of New Life.**

What do you say about Dana’s experience? She walked away from the Lord, and her family and her church and her life. Before it was over she

was pregnant, terrified, afraid to come home, afraid to disappoint, afraid to be honest. *"That procedure that took the life of a baby also took a piece of life out of me."* It was *"confusion, pain, distrust, degradation, and SHAME."* Alone, weeping, empty.

This is what the bible means by "lost". People get lost. I did, too. People who grow up in good homes, godly homes can get lost. People who grow up in good churches, gospel churches can get lost.

Jesus came for lost people. That is why we are here. I want to finish today with a look at some words written by King David. David, who rose to the heights of God's kingdom work, got lost. Really lost. And God went after him and brought him back. And David wrote these words...

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,*

Psalm 103:2-4 (RSV)

(Trace the verbs)... A thousand years before Christ, David saw the cross of Jesus. To that cross he came. Under tht cross he lived. 2000 years after the cross, to that cross Dana and I came. Under that cross we live.

That is his plan for people...

Why does he do this? Because...

*The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

Psalm 103:8 (RSV)

*For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

Psalm 103:11-12 (RSV)

One of my friends who had an abortion described what Jesus did for her like this...

*"The lovely person of Jesus patiently, tenderly sits with me and unwinds the knot of shame and sin and hurt."*

He will do that for you if you will come to him for help...

We are **people of Life and of New Life.**