

INTRODUCTION

People of God, today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. But I am not going to preach a sermon about abortion. What I want to do today is present to you a *vision* for life. We believe that since we are created in the Image of God, human life is sacred. But the question that I think needs to be addressed today is, how does human life flourish in the world?

What does it mean to live in this world as those who bear the life of God with in us? For life is more than mere existence. Life consists of living according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Angel said to Peter and John in Acts 5:20, “*Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.*” When we believe in this Life, Jesus Christ, we bring life to the world.

THREE ZONES

The Bible gives us a vision of this Life, by presenting the world to us as consisting of three habitable zones. Garden, Land, and World. Or, for ease of understanding, we could say, Church, Home, and World. Now imagine with me what the plan of God was to be, had not man fallen into sin.

The first and central zone is the Garden of Eden, which is the Sanctuary. Church. Man would come to the Garden at the appointed time, on the Sabbath Day, and worship the Lord there. He would hear God speak to him, and he communed with God at the Tree of Life. Here man takes the Heavenly pattern and vision of life and carries it out with him to the other Zones and areas of life, bringing all things into greater and greater harmony with heaven. Thus, the primary relationship in the Garden Sanctuary was between God and Man.

The second zone is the Land of Eden. This was the zone of domestic life, where man lived, and raised his family and educated his children. The

primary relationship here is familial – between husband and wife and brother and brother. Here too the Heavenly pattern for human relationships was established as well.

The third zone is the world. These are the outlying lands beyond the zone of Garden and Land. Men would proceed from Garden and Home in the North and travel downstream to the lands of the South. They would be motivated to do so by the fact that they were told to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And because there were good minerals in the southern lands. We are told in Genesis 2:12 that the Pishon River flowed from out of Eden and down into the land of Havilah where there was gold, bdellium, and onyx. Thus the outlying land of Havilah and Cush, etc., would be the place of man's dominion activity.

THE RIVER OF LIFE

Genesis tells us that there was a river in Eden. And when it came to the Garden it broke into four head waters and became four rivers. As the rivers flowed from the garden sanctuary out into the world, so too men would have followed the four rivers out to the four corners of the earth seeking to be fruitful and multiplying and exercising dominion over all things for the glory of God and for the benefit of neighbor.

Symbolically this looks like the Life of the Garden Sanctuary, the Life that comes from God in the Tree of Life flowing out into the whole world bringing life and beauty and blessing as Man travelled wherever the river of life took him, exercising dominion over the earth.

And as man took hold of the earth and its natural materials, he would transform it and glorify it, taking that which God made good, and make it better. Man's task was to go be fruitful and multiply and fill all the world and bring the glory and life of God to everything and every place. And so as families grew into tribes and eventually to cities, and cities to nations and nations to civilizations, all of life would have been built it up and

expanded for the glory of God. Even the bells of the horses would have written on them Holy to the Lord.

And every week, man would come back to the Garden Sanctuary again and again in order to get new instructions from God for the expansion of the pattern of Heaven over the Earth, and to commune with the Life of God at His Table, the Tree of Life. He would have also brought with him a tithe of his treasures that he acquired from out in the world in order to contribute to the beautification and expansion of the Garden.

Now with that vision of life established, consider therefore the significance of the transformation of the Garden of Eden in Genesis into the Garden City of the New Jerusalem in Revelation.

In Rev. 21 the gold is no longer downstream, but the streets of the city are made of gold. The bdellium and onyx stones and other gems are no longer hidden in the earth. Instead the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of precious jewel, and the gates were made of pearl. How did this happen? Rev. 21:24 says that the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. Vs 26 says that “They will bring into it the glory and honor of the nations.” And Peter tells us that we are the true stones, living stones who are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a Holy Priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. So the stones themselves, represent the real treasure, which is you, the True Temple of God.

All this has major implications for why we do what we do here at Christ the Redeemer Church, and the vision of what we are trying to accomplish. And it all starts with worship.

The Garden Sanctuary was at the theological top and center of the world. The Garden of God was on the Mountain of God (Ezek. 28:14). And as I said, God made a river to flow out of the land of Eden to water the Garden. And in the Garden of Eden the river split into four head waters,

signifying that the blessings and Life of God in the Garden Sanctuary will flow to the rest of the world to give it life. What happens in the Garden Sanctuary? Worship. Worship is the central and most important aspect of human life. It is out of worship that life flows to the rest of the world.

Thus, man, symbolically carries the Edenic glory and life of God to the four corners of the Earth, as we travel back to our homes and out into the world to do our work. We are symbolically following the four rivers and carry with them the pattern and teaching of Heaven, extending it over the whole earth and bringing the world from primordial to eschatological glory.

We see this same imagery again with Ezekiel's Temple in Ezek. 47:9 where the River of Life flows from the Temple: And the text says: "so everything will live wherever the river goes." And "on the banks, will grow all kinds of trees for food...they will bear fresh fruit every month because the water for them flows **from the sanctuary**. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.

And in Rev. 22 the River of Life likewise flows from the throne of God and of the lamb through the middle of the street of the city; and also on either side of the river, the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Now this is all symbolism. What is the River of Life? Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of Living Water." Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive." The river of Life is the Holy Spirit working the life of Christ within you by faith, so that you can carry that life out to a thirsty world parched dry from the curse of sin.

What is the Fruit of the Tree of Life, and its leaves that bring healing to the nations?

Proverbs 11:30 says, *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.*

The Spirit wrought good works of the people of God in obedience to God is the fruit of the Tree of Life that brings healing to the nations. So, as we go forth from Worship in the Sanctuary, we travel downstream into our homes and into the outlying lands, and into every area of life bringing the life of God by the River of Life which flows from the Sanctuary, and from our Hearts, doing righteousness, which is for the healing of the Nations.

But notice also that in Revelation, the New Jerusalem is a Garden, a City, and a world all in one. What this shows us is that in the end, there will be absolutely no division whatsoever between culture and cult, between culture and worship. History is fundamentally heading toward the union of all things in heaven and Earth into one in Jesus Christ.

But until that day comes, we live in this world where there is still a time to go to the sanctuary, and a time to work in the world, a time to relax in the home. The three zones or environments of Garden, Land, and World will continue to be distinct throughout history, and it is the calling of Redeemed Humanity to heavenize each zone in a way peculiar to its nature, until all is one in the City of God, the New and Heavenly Jerusalem.

Building the City of God was man's calling. But what happened? We sinned? And instead of expanding the kingdom of life and light of the Lord, we expanded the kingdom of death and darkness and the Devil. And in what zone did sin originate? In the Garden Sanctuary. The first and primary relationship between God and Man was corrupted when the first Prophet, Priest, and King did not guard the Garden and His wife

from the lies of the Serpent. Instead, he forfeited his authority to his wife, allowed her to be the first woman preacher, who was deceived by the serpent, and she took of the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, and then, as the first woman priest she gave to her husband Adam to eat, who was with her. And so sin and death and corruption began its reign in the Garden Sanctuary, because Adam failed in His duty to lead His wife as Prophet, Priest, and King.

From there we see the corruption of sin travel downstream into the home land, as brother-brother relationship became corrupted. Cain kills Abel, and then Lamech, who is the seventh generation from Cain, further corrupts the family, he has two wives, and he extends the curse of murder, and establishes vengeance instead of justice in the land.

And then we see the third fall of man in the world, as the Sons of God and the Daughters of men begin to intermarry. And here in Gen. 6 we see the pattern of the first fall happen again as the Sons of God saw that the daughters of men were attractive and they took as their wives any they chose. This is a recapitulation of Eve who saw that the fruit was good, or attractive, and she took and ate.

Now wherever we stand on the Sons of God issue here, what is clear is that a corruption of the godly line takes place because of unlawful intermarriage. And this becomes a major problem throughout the rest of the Bible as the Israelites are constantly getting into trouble because they marry foreign women who turn their hearts away from the one true God.

Now this principle doesn't have to be exclusively referring to intermarriage, but rather it is expansive, and it refers to, what is rightly called, worldliness. God's people have always been eager to be accepted by the unbelievers. We constantly exchange the truth of God for lies, we are quick to unequally yoke ourselves to unbelievers, we always want to be found among the cool kids, and we pollute and corrupt the family and

church of God with worldliness. Friendship with the world is hatred towards God. You cannot be a friend of the world and embrace all the world offers and still be a friend of God. By doing so you become God's enemy.

And so after humanity falls in these three zones, God destroys the earth with a flood. And then after the flood subsides, we see how God is going to recreate the world again. What is the first act that Noah does to bring rest to the world? He built an altar, and offered sacrifices on it to God. He reestablished worship at the center of the world, and as a result of Noah's worship, God promised to never curse the ground again.

The restoration of worship therefore is where the renewal of creation begins. The Life of God must flow forth from the sanctuary again, from the church, into the homes and into the world. That is why we worship the way we do here, for we establish it according to pattern of Covenant Renewal Worship found in the Bible. But when our worship is corrupted, and we stray from the word of God, and our worship deviates from the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, so too are our families and our societies will reflect the watered down forms of worship we offer.

Thus we see that after Noah builds an altar to the Lord, God reinstituted the dominion mandate. Genesis 9 says, *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.* And after telling them to exercise dominion over the creature, God gives Noah a law of capital punishment for governing society. Murderers are to be executed. Lamech's system of vengeance is overturned for true justice.

So what this teaches us, People of God, is that worship trains us in the proper mode of dominion. With proper biblical worship in the Garden Sanctuary training us to live according to the heavenly pattern, we can go to our homes and be fruitful and multiply and raise up godly families, and we can go out into world to fashion it according to the word of God.

But if we get worship wrong, then our families suffer and we go out into the world and work after the fashion of Cain, and build a wicked city filled with sexual immorality and murder. Or like Nimrod, and we take ourselves and our families and society down the course of degradation, and tyranny, and idolatry, and not re-creation, and freedom, and true worship.

In worship, we are being repatterned to a true approach to the world where we carry forth the Life of God out to all the world, as a response of thanksgiving for all that God has done for us. Being blessed by God at His table of thanksgiving, we go back to our homes filled with thanksgiving and we live out the pattern of God's love and care for us in our homes and in the world. What does that look like?

HOME LIFE

Husbands Loving their Wives, and Wives Submitting to and Respecting their Husbands. Children obeying their parents. And Father's bringing up their children in the Fear and Admonition of the Lord.

Let us explore this briefly.

Just as the Church submits to Christ in everything, **wives**, learn to submit to your husbands in everything, in joy. Yet many times, wives do not want to submit, they want to rule their husbands. But the more wives give into that temptation, the more miserable you will be. It is not possible for you to experience the blessings and peace of God in your marriage when you are not obeying God. It is that simple. God tells you to submit to your husbands as to the Lord, which means you submit to your husbands in everything. Thus the word of God says, *"For the husband is the head of his wife just as Christ is the head of the church, his body and is himself its savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands."* Now wives, before you try to ask a hundred questions as to when it is appropriate for you to not submit to your husbands, how about

you try to obey the Scriptures first, and obey your husbands in everything, before you can figure out when not to. Wisdom comes from obedience.

And so does joy. If you don't want to have a miserable marriage, and if you want your marriages and homes to be a haven of peace, rest, joy, and love, then wives, start submitting to your husbands and showing him respect, and stop treating him like a child. He is your lord, you know, just as Christ is the lord of the church.

Likewise, Husbands, you are the Head of your wife, just as Christ is the head of the Church. Therefore be a good head and learn how to lead your wife. You serve her best by leading her and providing a positive vision of life for your home, and making sure that in that vision, your wife flourishes, and blossoms. If your leading or lack thereof, is causing your wife to be miserable, you are doing it wrong and you need to change some things.

Also, husbands, you need to be taught by Christ's love for the church, to love your own wives. You are to sacrifice your body and time and energy for her. You are to wash your wife with the water of the word, instructing her with patience and love. You are to nourish your wife as you would your own body, just as Christ does the Church, which is His body. And you are to be full of forgiveness and mercy and grace.

Also, do not neglect your wives. Which means you must spend time with your wives. Even if you think it is not productive time, because you are a worker, and you need to do stuff, what you need to do is live with your wives in a understanding way. Which means you need to understand that your wife is more relational than you, and needs you to be there with her in the same room with her and talking to her. It does not count being with your wife when you do chores and errands together. It does not count as being with your wife when you are in the other room playing video games or messing around online, or working in the garage.

Whatever other calling you think you may have from God to build His kingdom, you cannot neglect the calling you have to be a godly husband to your wife. Christ does not neglect to teach you and be present with you, so neither should you neglect to be with your wives and speak with them.

And Children, you are called to obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Do not be disrespectful. Do not rebel against the rules of your parents who are trying to help you succeed in life and grow in godliness. Do not be foolish and go your own way. Life and blessings are found in obedience to your parents.

Now, one of the biggest problems we have as a society and even as the church is that so many parents give their children over to an ungodly and antichristian government **education system**. You cannot train your children in an environment that is explicitly antichristian, and think they are going to come out loving Christ.

The responsibility to educate the children falls at the father's feet. You are to see to it that your children are brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. These words are almost too strange for us to know what they mean. Admonition is referring to warning. So a child is to receive negative instruction as to what not to do. Parents are to warn their children about the dangers of unbelief and foolishness and immorality.

But parents are also to provide positive instruction, which is actually what the word fear is describing. The actual word for Fear is the word Paideia, which means enculturation. And it refers to more than just worldview thinking or even a child receiving a "Christian" education. Paideia is an ancient Greek Concept which has to do with the total life of the child that forms them into a mature citizen of a Greek City State.

Everything that goes into a child's growth and maturation and education is paideia. From the songs they sing, to the history they learn, to the

worship they offer, to the art they see, to the architecture they inhabit, to the statues they look upon, to the habits and customs and traditions they learn to practice, the music they listen to, to the culture of the home life, all this is meant for the education of the child. They are to be brought up, not in the paideia of Greece, or Rome, or of the world, or of secularism. Our children are to be brought up in the paideia of the Lord Christ.

What marks out the children of God from the children of Cain, and of Nimrod is that we understand ourselves to be primarily worshipers of God. And when we worship God and call upon the name of the Lord, we are free. But when the worship of self takes over, and we try to make a name for ourselves, we become enslaved.

So we train our children in worship to God, for only in Christ is there true freedom. We include our children in the worship of God and in the life of the Church from their first days of their lives, by baptizing them, and putting the name of Christ upon them. When they are old enough to eat solid foods, we include our children in the Lord's supper as well.

Why? Because we are training our children in worship, which must first and foremost be in giving of thanks. We train our children to sing, and pray, and read and love the Word of God. And it is all to be done in such a manner as unto the Lord. Because we desire God's covenantal blessings to be upon us and our children, and our children's children to the thousandth generation. Our lives continue long after we are dead. We are building for the future.

But the world is enculturating its children into wokeness and transgenderism and homosexuality and feminism, and training them in sexual immorality and encouraging them to have abortions. They are killing off their future, but we are enculturating our children into the ways of life for the future. The Future belongs to the children of God.

And so, we are all about training ourselves into the single-minded way that everything we do, it is to be for the glory of God and building of God's kingdom and for the greater influence and propagation of the Gospel in society and into the future. We train ourselves and our children to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in every aspect of their lives, and in this way we secure for our great great great grandchildren the blessings of God in the world. Because the righteous lay up an inheritance for their children.

And that means then, when our sons and daughters are grown, and they begin their own families, the pattern continues. Sons become men, and must of course man go out into the world and take dominion for Christ. So as we go out into the world, to interact with it, and do business, we first of all need to remember that this world is God's world. It is the world of our Father and of His Christ, and we are God's children in Christ, and Christ is the inheritor of all things. And that means that this world is our world, just as much as it belongs to Christ.

Christ promises that the meek shall inherit the earth, and the wicked will be cast out. This world does not belong to the unbeliever. It belongs to believers in Jesus Christ. And that means secularism is a lie and you have no business believing lies or following after lies of secularism. There is no such thing as neutrality. Christ is Lord of all.

When the unbeliever in your workplace, or in the city council, or at the economic alliance, or at the coffee shop, or online tells you to keep your faith separate from politics and from society and from law, tossing out that ridiculous notion of separation of Church and state, which they have zero understanding of, you have no business listening to their foolishness. Don't even bother arguing with them. Just keep your hand to the plow and keep working for the kingdom of God.

Remember, Jesus Christ said that all authority in heaven and Earth has been given to Him, so that we could make disciples of all nations baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded us. That is all inclusive language. All of reality, in every single nation and people group, and language and culture is to be discipled into believing and obeying Jesus Christ.

This is why the Lord told us to pray that God's kingdom would come, and His will would be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Is there any place in heaven where the will of God is not obeyed? Is there any place in all of Heaven where the kingdom of God is not a present reality? Then neither can you on earth act as though the Kingdom of God is not to be a reality here on earth, in every single aspect of it.

You cannot obey Jesus and Secularism which tells you that the public square is supposed to be neutral free of any religion. But Secularism is a religion, which is simply trying to ban all other religions from influencing the public realm other than secularism. And Christians have bought into it.

But our God has told us that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.

And so, we believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. And He is not just one Lord among many lords. He is the Lord of lords. Jesus Christ is Lord of all. And if he is not Lord of all, then he is not Lord at all. And since that is not true, we are to live in the world in such a way as to assume in all our dealings, in all our business transactions, in all our personal interactions, in all our work, in all our dominion activities, in all our homely life, and especially of course in worship, that Jesus Christ is Lord of it all. Because Jesus Christ is Lord of it all. And so, because we are the Temple of God, we are to take the living water which comes from the sanctuary of our

Hearts and bring the life of God to every part of the world that we interact with, for the healing of the nations.

You know the old saying, this world isn't my home, I'm just passing through it. That is wrong. This is our Father's world, and that means this world is our home, and the unbelievers are just passing through it. We are here to stay, for eternity. For we believe that in the resurrection on the last day, that even this earth will be resurrected and glorified and we too with new bodies will dwell on the New earth forever and ever. This is not the unbeliever's world. This is not the devil's world. This world and all that is in it, even the cattle on a thousand hills, and laptops and i-pads on a thousand tables all belong to God. *There is not one square inch of all human existence in which Christ who is Lord over all, does not declare, Mine!*

So we live in the world believing that to be true, because it is. And so, we will not retreat. We will always advance. We will always assume the center. In other words, we don't give an inch to unbelieving thought, we don't cower and back down when unbelievers try to weaponize their hurt feelings and psychosis to make us feel bad for living for the glory of God and the expansion of the Kingdom of Christ.

We do not listen to the cries of the god haters as they see us rebelling against tyrants and preaching the Law of God with force, and singing psalms with gusto. We do not care what the unbelieving world has to say about us. *"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against your falsely on Christ's account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

We will always face opposition. We will always face criticism. Just as Nehemiah did in his day when he was rebuilding Jerusalem. Well, we are trying to rebuild our own Jerusalem here in Pella. We are working to make Pella Christian again. And we got the high praises of God in our throats, the trowel in one hand, and a sword in the other. And this town

here, this is our part of the wall. This is our little segment of the temple we are rebuilding throughout the whole world. And all the Sanballat's and Tobiah's, and Geshum's in the world can't stop us.

We pray that God would set a guard of protection around us night and day. And so we are not afraid of them, for we remember the Lord, who is great and awesome. And we continue to fight for our brothers, our sons, our daughters our wives and our homes. We fight for the glory of God, and for the kingdom of Christ. For it is all of Christ, for all of Life, for all of Pella. This is our calling. We will not retreat.

And as we come back to the Garden Sanctuary at the appointed time, at 9:30 on Sunday Mornings, we come back to Church where we bring to God a tithe of all our labors in the world, a tithe of our spoils in battle, and we build up the church of Jesus Christ, worshiping Him, and giving Him thanks for His great mercy in forgiving us of our sins.

And we sing praises to our King, we listen to Him instructing us with his word, and we pass the peace of Christ to one another and fill this place with joy and laughter, for our king of prepares a table for us in the midst of our enemies, and we thank Him as He feeds us at His table conquers our enemies. For Christ is with us. And we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

And we do it all over again, from home to church to home to world, and back to home again; to church, to home, to world to home and back to church again. And though we spend the least amount of time in the church, that does not mean it is the least significant. For the river of life flow out of the sanctuary and breaks into four rivers bringing life to the whole world.

And on either side of the river, people of God, is the tree of life which is for the healing of the nations. And we are those trees of life, for our good

and righteous deeds wrought by the Holy Spirit which we do unto the Lord is what God uses to bring healing to the nations.

This is how the life of God in man flourishes in the world. May we be found faithful on that day, working heartily as unto the Lord in Church, in home, and in the world, expanding God's kingdom on Earth, to make it like Heaven. Amen.