

Series: **Aliens 3.0**  
Today's Title: **"All Life Matters"**

April 7, 2024 – *Selected passages*

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**Objective:** To help people realize the sacred nature of human life and how this truth impacts daily life.

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*Opening prayer*

I want to begin today by sharing with you - what is my primary motivating factor / truth as a pastor.

I've had the honor and privilege of teaching God's Word for about 35 years.

I have a verse that I've referred to as a ministry goal.

A verse that I hope describes my ministry over the years.

**John 1:14**

"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."

I've tried to maintain my focus on the last phrase of the verse – where John tells us Jesus was / is "full of grace and truth."

He wasn't 50% grace and 50% truth.

He was 100% both.

Pastors / churches / Christians make a mistake when they overemphasize 1 of these.

Too heavy on the truth – and you become harsh and hurt people with the truth.

Too heavy on grace – and you become 'wishy-washy' – tolerant of sin.

**Jesus was 100% both – completely full of both.**

He was loved by people – by those who were marginally religious – and those who were not religious at all.

*This was due to His graciousness.*

But He spoke the truth when He was with them.

“Go and sin no more.” (John 8:11) He told the woman caught in adultery.

Jesus was very critical of the religious establishment – for many reasons – but one of the primary reasons was because they were cruel with the truth.

They used the truth to punish people – to hurt and demean people - ***and to elevate themselves.***

I share this because – as we walk through the various topics I’m covering in this series, I believe it’s really important that we work hard at copying / mimicking Jesus.

Make sure – as we encounter people who are caught up in these various beliefs and ideologies – people who are opposed to us and what we believe – that we live our life as Jesus lived – “full of grace and truth.”

It’s great to have the Hands of Hope CEO Joanie Hammond with us today. Their work is focused on the issue of abortion – and saving the lives of the unborn – and we pray for their success and partner with Hands of Hope in their work.

I will speak directly to the topic of **“Abortion”** on May 5 – the Sunday before Mother’s Day.

On Mother's Day my sermon focus will be: **"The Blessing of Children"**.

But today, I want to discuss the larger topic of the sacred nature of life – or the sanctity of human life.

My title today is **"All Life Matters"** – and I want us to consider 3 views that support the sacredness – or the sanctity of human life.

The first view is the Biblical teaching itself – let's start there.

### **1. The Biblical and theological view of the sanctity of human life.**

When we consider this Biblically, the foundation of this truth – that human life is sacred above all other life - is found in the Scripture's teaching that humanity is created in the image of God.

The primary question then is this:

*What does "the image of God" mean?*

Before we can begin to give infinite value to human life, we need to understand what the Bible is saying when it says that we were created in God's image.

**Genesis 1:27**

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Over the centuries theologians have given many answers to this question.

I will set forth 4 of the primary and agreed upon meanings of what the image of God is referring to.

**1. It sets human beings apart from the animal world.**

In **Genesis 1:26**, in the context of being made in the image of God, humanity is given authority and dominion over all the animals God created.

So, the first thing we can say about bearing God's image is that it has to do with the superior nature and 'ranking' of humans over the animal world.

**Psalm 8:4-8**

"...what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him?"

5 Yet You have made him (mankind / humanity) a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas."

Not even the angels have been created in the image of God!

We alone have been given charge over the creation – and the responsibility that goes with that charge.

But "image of God" is much more than this.

**2. Image mean's we're created to worship our Creator.**

Animals don't worship.

They don't know what worship is – and they have no capacity to worship.

They have no spiritual awareness.

They are unaware of God!

Some will argue animals have a soul, but if they do, it's a soul that is primitive compared to the human soul / spirit.

**Colossians 3:9-10**

“...seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

Somehow... the “image of God” is connected to our spiritual growth in Christ.

Since we have the image of God in us, we alone are designed for worship and for relationship with God. This is a distinct quality and capacity that humans have over the animal world.

God has placed in each of us a conscience – and our conscience, according to **Romans 1:19, 32**, is spiritually inclined and we have – almost ‘hard-wired’ within us - a base level of knowledge of the Divine.

### **3. Image speaks to us being moral creatures.**

This means we have the will to choose right from wrong.

We not only know of God, but we can choose to obey Him.

We don't operate on mere instinct.

We have the will to make moral choices.

We can operate from our base desires, or we can choose to operate from what we know is right, holy.

Paul tells us to "put on the new self" – in part because of our creation in "the likeness of God." (Gen. 1:26)

**Ephesians 4:22, 24**

"...put off your old self...and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

We have the ability to make moral choices – due to our creation in God's image and likeness.

Westminster Confession of Faith – IV.2

"After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, (Gen. 1:27) with reasonable and immortal souls, (Gen. 2:7, Ecc. 12:7, Luke 23:43, Matt. 10:28) endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image..."

The Biblical teaching that we are created in the image of God answers our most pressing question:  
*"Who am I?"*

The Bible answers that question:

- We are moral creatures...
- We were created to live and love in community...
- We were charged to have dominion over the creation...

- We have a spiritual nature...
- We have a base knowledge of God...
- We have been enabled to be holy and righteous.
- We are designed to love God and be loved by Him.

#### **4. Image speaks to our sex binary, equal dignity and inherent worth.**

“...male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27b

The human race was created with unity and diversity, as seen in our biological sex.

Both men and women are image bearers of the Almighty.

Our biological sex does not increase or decrease the image of God in us.

Even though Adam was created first and therefore God assigned him (and by extension all men) with certain responsibilities, men are not better, more capable, or more valued than women.

Both sexes have been created in God’s image and likeness and both have equal standing and worth before God.

**Why does this matter?**

Who cares if I believe we are created in the image of God – or if I believe in the sanctity of life – the sacred nature of life in all its stages.

***This is why it matters...***

This understanding / truth – has everything to do with not only how we treat each other – even those who are opposed to us (enemies), but it also gives us the reason **WHY** we must treat each other with dignity, respect, and love.

These underlying truths of our human existence and the nature of our being – has everything to do with views, beliefs, and convictions regarding:

- Abortion
- Medical Care standards
- Criminal Justice – imprisonment & death penalty
- Medical care for those with disabilities
- Elderly Care
- Euthanasia / Medical Assistance in Dying (Canada)

This understanding also effects:

- Our Christian motivation for sharing the gospel!!
- Cultural attitudes toward the disabled
- How we treat our political opponents

Understanding what the “image of God” means – and then how it effects daily life – is vital for us as Christians – if we aspire to emulate Jesus as He was “full of grace and truth.”



That is some of the Biblical view of the sanctity of human life.

## 2. The sanctity of life from the view of Natural Law and Science.

**From Sociology** – scientists / sociologists study societies all around the world – and in all eras of history – and from this study they are able to come up with a consensus of nations – a consensus of cultures – on a particular topic.

When they study the topic of life – human life – it is clear from the international scope that we see virtually all nations and cultures will develop laws *protecting* human life.

Certainly, there have been some societies that don't live up to this standard and have promoted abortion and infanticide, etc.

But the general consensus among nations is that murder is wrong, and it is right and good to promote and protect human life.

This is what the philosopher Immanuel Kant spoke about with what he called the '*Categorical Imperative*' – meaning there were certain imperatives / truths that were categorically true in human civilizations.

He referred to this as our human ‘*sense of oughtness*’ which binds the human conscience – this is not traced to a religious belief, but a human belief or conviction.

**Natural Law:** Has its roots all the way back to Aristotle...  
“...a system of right or justice common to all humankind and derived from nature rather than from the rules of society...”

(<https://www.britannica.com/summary/natural-law>)

Natural Law is something we can observe in virtually all human societies – that murder is detested – a crime. In nature, we see **the principle of self-preservation**. This is the universal struggle for life and struggle against death in the biological world.

One example of this self-preservation drive in nature – for life – is human reproduction.

In the fertilization process, a woman produces 1 egg. When a man and a woman unite in sexual union the man produces 30-60 million sperm.

*It only takes 1 sperm to fertilize the egg!*

Why has God / nature – produced 1 target... and 30-60 million bullets?

*The late R.C. Sproul once said this biological fact might seem like a monumental waste of bullets!!!*  
But... just think how many times fertilization doesn’t take place – where none of the bullets hit the mark!!

Even if 1 sperm does fertilize that egg – there are a % of fertilized eggs that never implant into the wall of the woman’s uterus.

Of the fertilized eggs that do implant into the wall of the uterus, there is a % that suffer a natural miscarriage – usually due to some problem with the development of the baby.

It seems clear that God has created the reproductive process in humans to ensure that reproduction – the advancement of human life – will happen!

In nature there is clear and convincing evidence of God stacking the deck in favor of self-preservation – the advancement of life.

### **3. The legal and governmental view of the sanctity of life.**

In the Declaration of Independence – one of our founding documents, are written these words.

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness...”

Life, liberty, and happiness.

Hierarchical order of importance.

Without life, we have no liberty.

Without liberty, happiness will be difficult to obtain.

We – and every other country in the world – have laws not only against murder, but against all sorts of violence against another person – along with other laws which make it illegal to use dishonest means in business and other day-to-day interactions in society.

We value the person so highly that we not only have laws which protect their physical existence, but also their property, possessions, and even their reputation from being slandered.

**The most fundamental right we have in our nation is the right to life.**

But, the fundamental right to life is being threatened by laws that are being passed – not only in regard to abortion, but also in regard to Physician Assisted Suicide.

In recent years we've seen Canada advancing and promoting Physician Assisted Suicide.

**Canada's MAID – Medical Assistance in Dying**

In an article from Christianity Today – written in October 2022 by a Christian Doctor receiving requests for physician-assisted dying.

He writes that he and other doctors who refuse to participate in assisted death are now regarded as physicians of questionable ethics.

*“In the name of moral progress, the profession was taking on a new role and assuming a new power unto itself: the power not only to save life but also to take it.”*

At first (2016), the MAID law in Canada stipulated that assisted suicide was restricted to those with *“grievous and irremediable suffering”* for who *“death was reasonable and foreseeable.”*

However, in just a few years, those restrictions have been removed and in 2021 the *“reasonably foreseeable death”* requirement was removed, and otherwise healthy people with physical disabilities – or even those facing homelessness are becoming eligible for assisted suicide.

In the past 5 years – physician assisted deaths in Canada have increased tenfold – from 1,000 in 2016 to more than 10,000 in 2021.

Instead of a *‘desperate option of last resort’*, medical assistance in dying is now seen as one *“therapeutic option”* among many.

There have even been reports of patients receiving physician assisted death based on medical misdiagnosis – which was discovered at autopsy.

None of this has caused the MAID advocates to slow down or pause for introspection.

Canada is now pushing for mental illness to be a valid reason for MAID.

What about **The Hippocratic Oath** – you may ask?

The following commitment is part of the famous oath that all doctors take a vow to keep:

*“I will not give a lethal drug to anyone if I am asked, nor will I advise such a plan.”*

From the NIH’s website – the National Library of Medicine page... (Official United States Government agency and website)

“The Hippocratic oath clearly states: “I will not give a lethal drug to anyone if I am asked, nor will I advise such a plan.” And yet, this happens all the time.

According to the Attorney General of the High Council of the Netherlands, while 1.8% and 0.3% of all deaths in that country in 1990 were the result of euthanasia and assisted suicide, 17.5% of deaths were directly attributable to “alleviation of pain.”

Similarly, a study in Australia found almost 31% of all deaths in that country in 1997 were hastened by opioids given to relieve pain.

The question is then asked about an ethical distinction between giving an injection “...with the express intention of causing a patient’s death, and doing so in order to relieve pain and suffering, even if that also leads to respiratory suppression and death?”

The answer given: “Yes, one could argue, but the doctors who gave the terminal sedation did not

intend for their patients to die; that was simply a (predictable) consequence of their attempts at pain control.”

(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3519151/>)

In 2022, a law was passed in CA (SB 380). One of the provisions of that law forced physicians to participate in assisted suicide, *even when the doctor has conscientious objections*.

Thankfully, ADF (Alliance Defending Freedom) – a conservative legal advocacy group – took up this case and won – so doctors who object to doing this on ethical grounds are not forced to participate.

(<https://adfmmedia.org/case/christian-medical-dental-associations-v-bonta>)

Dr. Leslee Cochrane, a full-time hospice physician in CA. who treats terminally ill patients on a daily basis. Dr. Cochrane is a Christian.

In discussing his treatment options for patients, he says, *“It never includes any form of physician-assisted suicide because it is never medically necessary to kill a patient in order to manage their pain and symptoms.”*

(See him discussing this topic in a YouTube video [6:37 in length] – in partnership with ADF - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ghw6UOEHUc&rco=1>)

In the AMA’s code of medical ethics (American Medical Association), it states in Opinion 5.7, under the heading ‘Physician-Assisted Suicide’, *“Physician-assisted suicide is*

*fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks."*

(<https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/index.php/ethics-opinions/physician-assisted-suicide>)

We have **clear Biblical teaching** that men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, and this truth has broad implications in how we live – how we treat one another – and **WHY** we do so.

**Science and Natural Law** are also clear in the priority of protecting human life – and prospering human life.

Even in our nation's **Declaration of Independence** it is clearly stated the *'unalienable right... of which first and foremost is the right to life.'*

The Law of God does not change.

The truth of creation does not change.

The evidence of science and sociology on the value and sacred nature of human life has not changed.

But our laws are being changed – and it's clear that many do not hold to the sacred nature of life.

### **Apply it...**

1. Affirm that human life is sacred – and must be protected, not harmed.
2. Value all people – even enemies / opponents.



*Every person is an image bearer of God!*

3. Know how the image of God requires us to work to abolish abortion and euthanasia (*Physician Assisted Suicide*).
4. Promote Palliative care for those who are suffering or dying. (<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/palliative-care/about/pac-20384637>)
5. Support laws that allow for freedom of conscience for doctors.
6. Share Christ generously – because every single person is an image bearer and loved by God.

*Close in prayer*