

Life Is Worth Living

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The Catholic Church has a teaching that basically states that suicide is a sin that condemns a person who commits it to eternal hellfire because once committed, there can be no repentance. Now I do not believe that God's judgment of suicide is as simple as I just stated. And there is probably more to their doctrine than that, but that is what I heard, so I will pass it on to you—and I believe that at least is partly right.

Not long ago, Evelyn and I saw a somewhat older movie whose plot involved Jesus' statement in John chapter 15, that greater love has no one than that he should lay down his life for a friend. Laying down one's life might be done over a period of years as a sacrificial service. Now the flip side of that is that the life might be laid down in merely moments of time in a given circumstance.

The plot of this movie involved a man, portrayed by Denzel Washington, who was not a nice man as the movie began. He was severely depressed and drinking himself to death because that is what his life's choices had produced in him. And as the film began, he was hired to protect the daughter of a very wealthy couple. The girl was about 10 and had a caring and engaging personality. She was not your typical spoiled brat. The relationship was rough at first but she actually won his devoted loyalty. She gave him a reason to live by loving someone—her. He stopped drinking and he generally straightened out.

But in a plot shift, she was abducted, kidnapped, and held for ransom, and presumed dead. Well, in vicious anger, Denzel Washington began a life seeking revenge. And as the plot worked out, to his amazement, he discovered, after a while, the girl was still alive, but she was being held prisoner because the kidnapper was trying to work out another way to get money out of the family. Now, he managed to get in touch with the kidnapper, and he worked out a trade because this kidnapper did not like him

one bit either. The kidnapper was willing to trade Denzel for the girl but only if there was a safe return of the girl, of course. Well, it amounted to what was probably a suicide mission, and that is what happened. He lost his life, but the girl was returned to her mother. He laid down his life for his friend, and he knew when he went into it he probably would die, and he did.

Suicide may seem like a strange plot line for an offering sermonette, but it was triggered because I recently read in a book from a very reliable source, that suicide has increased so greatly in America in this past generation, it has reached staggering proportions.

Now automobiles are central to our culture's lifestyle, but even beyond the necessity of an automobile, there is another reality. We *love* automobiles. But despite that love, for over two generations automobile crashes have resulted in more deaths and injuries to Americans, tens of thousands in some years, than any other factor.

Well, no longer. Suicide, which is self-inflicted, has surpassed car crashes as the leading cause of injury death for Americans. And perhaps even more disturbing, the report continued, *Stars and Stripes*, the American military services newspaper, reports that more active duty soldiers have been dying by suicide than in combat in all the wars Americans are involved in!

Now the book that I was reading at the time stated that people generally commit suicide because of discouragement, combined with what is for them an overwhelming sense of hopelessness, that is, that the problem that is causing the depression will never be resolved. The root cause generating the hopelessness may in each case be somewhat different, but in each successful suicide, a point is reached in which the person believes that *nobody loves them*. Remember as I opened, the turning point was when this man found out he loved this girl. It gave him a reason for living. But suicides reach a point that they believe that nobody loves them and the problem causing their despair is unsolvable.

Well, here is something that I want you to consider. It is estimated that the world's population is somewhere around 6 to 7 billion people. That is a lot of people. And it has been going on since Adam and Eve. Now, nations representatives are voicing angry comments against one another and war

exists in dozens of nations. Now many of these people from any given nation are fighting against their fellow citizens from the same country, whose only difference from them is that they believe something different. It is something they carry in their mind. Now nowhere on earth is this more apparent than in the United States of America where suicide has become a real plague.

At any rate, there is not a good outlook for happy, healthy, and prosperous lives in many nations, and this is certainly true here in the United States. Life is becoming increasingly less fulfilling and increasingly more discouraging, especially for those who believe they must adhere to the Christian way of life. Look what is happening to these people. They simply believe something different and they get sued for tens of thousands of dollars at a clip because they refuse to make a cake!

Well, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is for many just a nice thought, but it no longer exists in reality to most. It has become increasingly easy to feel a sense of despair as the way it used to be is passing into oblivion. It is now pretty much a memory of older people like me. And that memory is being replaced by uncertainty and the depressing belief that America will never again be the land of the free and the home of the brave. Not only is the nation's wealth being stripped away, so also is the positive "we can do it" spirit that used to accomplish what we formerly achieved, and that spirit and its achieving incentives are deliberately being eroded away by purposely promoted propaganda that blunts achievement and is making everybody into yellow pencils, just like so many robots.

When I was studying in preparation for one of my earlier sermons on Ecclesiastes, I came across this quote from an English professor at one of the major eastern Ivy League schools. He said, "There is no reason to suppose that a man's life has any more meaning than the life of the humblest insect that crawls from one annihilation to another." What are they teaching our young people?! No hope, no reason for living. This is in a place like Harvard or Yale. You would think they would know better. No, they do not.

Now he must have been comparing men to something like ants, that seem to exist by the millions in any given nesting place. They seem to be endlessly scurrying from one place to another, going about whatever their business happens to be. But how quickly a whole slew of them can be stepped on by a

human foot, lose their life in a flash of time. Is that our outlook? They can be swept away from the waters gushing forth from a hose or from a rain or they can lose their life as a result of being sprayed by an insecticide or perhaps an anteater might come out of the jungle and wipe the whole community out in one meal. That is what he thinks of humanity. It is no wonder people commit suicide.

Virtually every ant looks pretty much the same and though there might be millions of them in a single nesting area, each of them has exactly the same lifestyle. Not a single one of them has a history. Annihilation comes pretty easy in that sort of circumstance. You can write about the life of an ant because every ant's life is pretty much the same.

But you cannot do that with a human because humans have histories, and they have histories because each human is unique. Hang on to that. Every human being is unique; we are not just another bug. And no two histories are exactly the same. Look around you. Go ahead, look around you. Every person you look at is different from every other person. That is not the way it is with bugs.

Do you realize that this is a sign from our Creator that somebody loves you? What is it a sign of? It is an assurance from God that *you*, regardless of whom you are, each and every one of you is a unique creation of His, given life and uniqueness to fulfill a responsibility. Because we look different, God is telling us, *you matter*. That is the first sign from Him. You are different from everybody else and *you matter to Him*. So who is going to commit suicide, saying nobody loves him. Because you look different, it is a sign from Him of your importance, and if we are not important, then life truly has no meaning and if life has no meaning then living is unimportant.

Ask yourself. Have you been persuaded by the God-defying evolutionists that you are nothing more than an accident, and that most if not all that happens throughout your entire life is nothing more than additional accidents added to the accident of your birth? Now turn with me to Psalm 139 and I want you to read with me verses 13 through 16. Listen carefully to what David says here.

Psalm 139:13-16 For You formed [as though God was stooping down and doing it right before him] my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works [we are His work], and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret [that means inside the womb when nobody else could look in there], and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth [he uses the earth as a figure of the womb]. Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

In other words, he had not been born yet but God was fashioning his life already.

Now listen to this. I am going to read this to you from out of the Amplified Bible.

Psalm 139:16 (AMPC) Your eyes saw my unformed substance [But all he was there was a blob of a sperm and an egg.]; and in Your book [listen to this] the days of my life were written before they ever took shape, when as yet there were none of them.

Wow.

Let us go to Psalm 90, verses 16 and 17. Now those things it said in verse 16 of Psalm 139, does God do that only for Abraham's, Isaac's, and Jacob's and Moses' and David's and Jeremiah's and Paul's? No. The clear indication is that He fashions and forms *all*, including you. You are *not* an accident, you are *not* unloved. But for what purpose? Well, right to start things off, each and every one of us is an expression of God's grace.

Last Sabbath, I gave a sermon that touches on a solution. Brethren, everything God does is done in love with the completion of His purposes in mind. And His creation gives us a powerful and obvious clue. Listen to this. I want you to think about this: every living thing that God has created works.

At the end of my sermon last week, I just gave you a broad brief overview of all the things that God has created from ants and bugs and whatever it is. Everything that God creates works and that includes that He created *us* to work like He works. Do you want to be a creator? We are not finished yet. We are just starting. There is reason to live despite how bad it might look here.

In Psalm 90, verses 16 and 17, Moses says this. He asked God,

Psalm 90:16-17 Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory [God is glorified by what He makes and puts to use], and Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us [God, finish us, is what Moses is saying, the beauty of God's creation.], and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.

Moses understood that God created us to work. He understood that in order for life to be fulfilling and therefore meaningful, we must be in harmony with whatever it is God created us for. And so that is why Moses asked, "Let Your work appear to Your servants." Why? So we can get in alignment with it! And that will bring us the kind of right feelings that we need. And then he adds, "Your glory," God's glory, is seen in what He does. And He works producing beautiful things.

Now why did Moses ask these things? In order that we might live our lives in harmony, joining with God in what He is accomplishing, because we are His work. And this harmony is what creates a meaningful, fulfilling life in which a person never, ever wants to commit suicide and end it all.