

## Thank God for Life, and for Eternal Life

Christ is risen! *He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!* Indeed, he is! That means he's alive; he lives! And the very fact that you and I are able to exchange those joyful words means that you are alive, and I am alive – we have life! Do you ever take that for granted? This Easter season, this Mother's Day weekend, as you think of all the many blessings the Lord has given you, in your salvation and in your family, don't take for granted the fact that you have life. It's a blessing, I'm afraid, we seldom think about, unless we're in danger; a blessing so essential to our very being, so basic to our existence, that without it we are nothing. Do me a favor this morning; everyone, just take a deep breath. That was a gift from God – not just your breath, but your health, and your very life. Too often we take for granted the simple fact that we are alive. And the only reason we're alive is that God keeps us alive, as a gift of his grace. The Apostle Paul once said in the Book of Acts, **"In him we live and move and have our being" (18:35)**. That's something to be truly thankful for. So this Mother's Day weekend, this Easter season, thank God for life!

That's what King David does in Ps 139; he thanks God for life. The Scripture passage that we'll consider today is from Ps 139. **"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."** David says, "I praise you, Lord, and I thank you because you have made me and given me life." David didn't take that for granted; in fact, he knew exactly where his life began. **"You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."** "In that sacred chamber where my mother carried me, Lord, you knit me together." Some of you, perhaps some of you mothers, know how to knit. I don't know how to knit. But perhaps you've seen someone else knit. To knit, you start with something very simple, a regular ball of yarn. But when know what doing, careful hands move quickly to create something beautiful, something precious. And even before the knitwork is finished, you can see how beautiful and precious it is! Well, **"You knit me together in my mother's womb."** God knows what he's doing when he knits people together. His careful hands move quickly to take something so small, the very beginning of human life (which only God himself can create), and knits it together to make something beautiful and precious. And even before that knitwork is finished inside the womb, that work is beautiful and precious.

David wouldn't have known that, because they didn't have ultrasounds back then. He couldn't have seen what an unborn baby looks like. But David knew that God could. **"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place"** (that's in interesting phrase for a mother's womb), **"when I was woven together in the depths of the earth"** (another interesting phrase for a mother's womb). **"Your eyes saw my unformed body."** David's eyes couldn't see a baby's unformed body. But the point here is that God could! And not only does God see an unborn baby's body; he's also the one who carefully and meticulously knits together that precious human life. Interestingly enough, now, because of ultrasounds, we can catch a glimpse of a baby's unborn body and see what that knitting process looks like. With 4D ultrasounds, today we can facial features, fingers, yawns and smiles with photographic detail – it's incredible! We know more about fetal development today than anyone else in history of world – which simply reinforces for us what David says here: **"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."** God has given us life.

So thank God for life. Thank God for your life; thank God for the lives of those you love. Moms, thank God for the lives of your babies, no matter how old they are. You know all those pictures of prenatal babies that you see in anti-abortion ads, at the OB clinic, and in ultrasound photos? That was once you! You once looked like that! That fragile, helpless, vulnerable little baby – that was once you! God gave you life and knit you together in your mother's womb. And you're alive today only because of God's grace. That makes you appreciate life, and how fragile life is.

We know how fragile life is. Let me tell you how fragile life is. Some of you know this; some of you don't. But a few years ago my wife Sarah and I experienced a miscarriage. We went to the clinic for a routine visit; we were going to have an ultrasound to find out the gender of the baby. And as the ultrasound tech was moving her wand around the jelly belly, she was awfully quiet, not talkative at all. All she said was, "I'm having a hard time finding a heartbeat." Sarah probably knew what was going on. But as the dumb husband, I just thought, "Well,

keep looking; it's got to be in there somewhere." The tech left the room for a few minutes, and when she returned, she said, "We have fetal demise." That was the phase she used – fetal demise. And Sarah was along by 18 weeks; and when you're that far along, of course, you have to deliver the remains. So Sarah was taken to the hospital, and her labor was induced. And that evening Sarah delivered our dead son. And in my hand I held my lifeless, precious, 6 inch, 2 ounce dead son. His head rested between my two middle fingers, and his feet dangled over my wrist. And I looked into his face: his eyes, his ears, his nose and mouth. I lifted his tiny fingers with my finger and touched his tiny toes. And when you do that, when you hold your dead baby in your hands, it makes you think: what would his life have been like; what would he have grown up to be; whom would he have married; what would he have named my grandchildren? It makes you think about all those things. But most of all, it makes you appreciate life and how fragile life is! And you don't have to go through an experience like this to appreciate that. Any parent, any mom or dad – if you've ever held your newborn baby in your arms, you know that baby is helpless and vulnerable and precious; it needs you. You don't even have to be a parent. Anyone who believes in the sanctity of life that begins at conception, anyone who believes that life is a sacred creation of God Almighty can thank God for life and appreciate how fragile life is.

But it does make you wonder: why does it have to be that way? Why is life in this world so fragile? All it takes is one car accident, one slip and fall, one bullet, one disease, one slight imbalance of chemicals and chromosomes to endanger life. With everything we know about human physiology, we can certainly appreciate the intricate, divine design of the body and the amazing way God keeps our bodies alive. But that doesn't change the fact that the human body is fragile. Why? Why do we live in a world so filled with death, where our spouses die and our parents die and our friends die and our classmates die and our soldiers die and our children die and our babies die? Why?

Because human life is under a curse. Because thousands of years ago, in the Garden of Eden, where God created life, where life was perfect and there was no death, just a perfect relationship with God and one simple rule – **"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die" (Gen 2:16-17)** – there Adam and Eve ate the fruit; they deliberately disobeyed God. And in a million ways since then, you and I have been eating the fruit and deliberately disobeying God. So a curse covers all life. It's called the curse of sin, and because of it, **"You will certainly die."** Think about it: Adam and Eve died; their oldest son murdered their younger son; the great flood claimed innumerable lives; wars of every century have drenched the ground with blood; we have diseases, miscarriages, murders, suicides. And if these things don't take you, then old age certainly will. Yes, human life is fragile. And because of the curse of sin, death devours us all.

But you have to understand that this breaks God's heart. He never intended death to go hand-in-hand with life. Human life is the crown of God's creation; it was his very first idea. In fact, everything else that God created in this universe (even the angels) serve a supportive and secondary role to human life. Human life is precious to God; he hates death; it breaks his heart.

So what did God do? He reversed curse and restored life. And here's how: God himself became human life; he made himself one with the crown of his creation. Jesus left heaven and became a human life – a fragile, helpless, vulnerable, tiny human baby – just like us; that was once Jesus! Jesus was held by his mother, loved by his father, loved by his heavenly Father. Then Jesus died; Son of God died! If you've ever buried a child, then you know that sickening pain. God knows that same pain; he's buried a child, too.

But when Jesus rose from the dead, he restored life. So now, because of Jesus, when we die (and yes, we still have to die), will not go to hell but instead will live with Christ in heaven forever. Everyone who believes in Christ will live, in heaven. In heaven, life is restored. In heaven, there is no death, there are no miscarriages; your children don't die, your parents don't, your friends don't die. In heaven, cancer can't touch you; car accidents can't take you; old age can't claim you. In heaven, life is restored, eternal life, the way God always intended it to be, because Christ became life, then laid down his life, then took his life back up again, and now gives us eternal life.

So this Easter season, this Mother's Day weekend, thank God for life, and for eternal life. Praise God with King David: **Ps 139:13-16**. Thank God for your life, which he carefully knit together in the sacred chamber of your mother's womb. Thank God for the life around you. Kiss your spouse, visit your parents, call your friends. Moms, hug your babies! Dads, too. Life is precious; in a moment it's gone. But not forever, because Christ restored life, and in him we have eternal life. So thank God for life, and for eternal life.