WORLDVIEW

Session Seven

Family of Christ Lutheran Worldview Study

THEME

Human life is valuable because God creates and sustains it, and because Christ has redeemed us. Christians therefore receive life as God's gift, protect and honor our neighbors, care for the vulnerable, and entrust life and death to the Lord.

Key Verses

Mark 4:26–34
Genesis 1:26–27
Psalm 139:13–16
Romans 13:1–4
James 1:27
1 Corinthians 6:19–20
John 11:25–26

Life Issues
Whose Life Is It?

1. Opening: Who Determines the Value of Life?

Our culture often measures human worth by ability, independence, productivity, health, intelligence, or whether a person is wanted. The biblical worldview begins elsewhere: God creates. God gives life. God sustains life. Christ redeems life.

Read Genesis 1:26–27 and Psalm 139:13–16.

Discuss:

- What do these passages teach about where human dignity comes from?
- How does this challenge the idea that human worth depends upon usefulness or independence?
- Who are people in our society who may be tempted to believe that their lives have less value?
- How might the church communicate that every person is God's creature and our neighbor?

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2. Law: Where Do We Fail to Honor Life?

God's Law exposes more than dramatic acts against human life. It also exposes our attitudes, priorities, indifference, fear, selfishness, and failure to love our neighbor. Jesus teaches us that the Fifth Commandment includes more than simply avoiding murder.

Discuss:

- Where might we value people according to what they can contribute to us?
- Are there ways we can become indifferent to the elderly, disabled, poor, unborn, imprisoned, or suffering?
- Why is it easier to identify serious sins in society than to examine our own hearts?
- How does the Fifth Commandment challenge both our actions and our attitudes toward human life?

Remember: The Law does not merely tell us what society should do. It shows our own need for repentance and mercy.

3. Life Issues: Applying God's Word
The Unborn
Read Psalm 139:13–16

Discuss:

- What does this passage suggest about God's knowledge and care for human life in the womb?
- How should Christians respond to an unexpected or difficult pregnancy?
- What would it look like for a congregation to support both mother and child?

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Disability and the Elderly

- How does God's creation of every person challenge the idea that dignity depends upon independence?
- What does faithful Christian care look like when someone requires lifelong assistance?
- How can people who are elderly or disabled be received as fellow members of Christ's body, rather than merely people we serve?

Prisoners and Those Who Have Done Wrong

Read Romans 13:1–4

Discuss:

- How do justice and human dignity fit together?
- Can someone deserve punishment and still possess God-given dignity?
- How does the Gospel shape the way Christians think about prisoners and those who have committed serious crimes?

Those Experiencing Despair

- Why must Christians approach suicide and severe despair with both truth and extraordinary compassion?
- What can a congregation do when someone is overwhelmed by suffering or hopelessness?
- How can we communicate, "Your life matters," without offering shallow answers to deep suffering?

4. A Christian Understanding of Death

Christianity does not deny the reality of death. Death is an enemy resulting from sin, yet Christ has entered death and conquered it.

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Read John 11:25–26

Discuss:

- What difference does Jesus' resurrection make in how Christians understand death?
- How does Christian hope differ from the idea that death is simply the end?
- Why is intentionally causing death different from allowing a dying person to die naturally when burdensome treatment is no longer beneficial?
- What does faithful Christian care for the dying look like?

Key distinction:
Christians need not preserve biological life at all costs, but neither do we intentionally make death the means or goal. We care for the person, relieve suffering, provide appropriate treatment and comfort, pray, and entrust life and death to God.

5. Gospel: Christ Is the Lord of Life
The Christian defense of life cannot stop with: "Life is valuable, so protect it."

The Gospel takes us further: Christ entered our human existence, died for sinners, rose from the dead, and promises resurrection and eternal life. Jesus did not remain distant from suffering. He took on human flesh, bore our sin, entered death, and conquered the grave.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price."

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Discuss:

- What does it mean that our bodies belong to God?
- How does Christ's death change the way we see another human being?
- How is the Gospel different from simply telling people to "do better"?
- What kinds of guilt might people carry concerning life issues?
- Why is it important to say clearly: serious sin is real, but Christ's forgiveness is greater than our sin?

6. The Means of Grace: Where Does Help for Sinners Actually Come From?

An understanding of life issues must remain centered on Christ's actual gifts to His Church. We do not ultimately transform people through political arguments, moral pressure, or shame. Christ works through His Word and Sacraments.

Discuss:

- How does God's Word expose sin while also proclaiming Christ's forgiveness?
- Why does a person carrying guilt need more than an argument about morality?
- How do Holy Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper give sinners Christ's forgiveness and assurance?
- How might the church become a place where people can confess serious failures and hear the Gospel rather than hide in shame?
- How does receiving Christ's mercy enable us to show mercy to others?

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Remember:
We defend life because God commands it, but we do not confuse the defense of life with the Gospel itself. The Gospel is Christ crucified and risen for sinners.

7. Vocation: What Does a Culture of Life Look Like?
God ordinarily cares for His creation through people serving one another in their vocations.

Discuss:

- Where has God placed you to protect, serve, or encourage vulnerable people?
- How can ordinary acts of care become expressions of Christian love?
- What could our congregation do to support families facing difficult pregnancies?
- How can we better welcome people with disabilities?
- How can we care for the elderly and those who live alone?
- How can we support people experiencing grief, addiction, despair, or family crisis?

8. From Political Position to Christian Vocation
Life issues inevitably involve politics and public policy. Christians may disagree about particular laws and policies while remaining united in the conviction that human life is God's gift.

Discuss:

- How can Christians participate in public life without making politics their ultimate hope?

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9. Closing Discussion: "Whose Life Is It?"

Consider these statements:

- The world asks: "Is this person wanted?"
    - God says: "I created this person."
- The world asks: "Is this person useful?"
    - God says: "This person bears My image."
- The world asks: "Can this person contribute?"
    - God says: "Love your neighbor."
- The world asks: "Is this life worth living?"
    - Christ says: "I am the resurrection and the life."

Final Questions

- What part of today's discussion most challenged your thinking?
- Where did God's Law expose something in your own heart?
- Where did you hear the comfort of the Gospel?
- What does Christ's resurrection change about our view of suffering and death?
- Who is a vulnerable person God has placed in your sphere of responsibility?
- What is one concrete way our congregation could become a culture of life and mercy?

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Closing

We do not protect life because we believe human beings can save themselves. We protect life because God gives it. We serve our neighbors because Christ first served us. We repent because God's Law tells the truth about our sin. We have hope because Christ died and rose for sinners.

And we continue in faith because Christ gives His gifts through His Word, Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. One Creator. One Lord. One Savior. One hope: Jesus Christ, the Lord of life.

