

Celebrating Life as the Handiwork of God

By Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Opening

Read **Psalm 8**.

Display an old handcrafted quilt or other item that's a bit worn. Discuss how the value comes not from its looks but because it is someone's handiwork.

Prayer

Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless our study of Your Word and guide our understanding of the truth that You give value to each human life. In Your Name. Amen.

Introduction

"I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in!" That's a positive view of life! Even more positive — "I'm in pretty good shape because God shaped me!" Knowing that the value of human life comes from God's handiwork and does not depend upon our capabilities or condition enables us to value our lives and the lives of others. We celebrate and share the message that human life is created, redeemed, and held by God's hands.

Created by God's Hands

The First Human Lives

Genesis 1:26-27 — What did God do that gave value to the first human beings?

Genesis 2:7, 22 — What picture does God give in the verbs *formed* and *made* (literally *built*)?

Genesis 9:6 — Discuss how this original high position gives human life value even after the fall into sin.

Subsequent Human Lives

Genesis 1:28; 2:24 — How will God continue His procreative work?

Job 10:8; Psalm 139:13-14; 119:73 — What picture does this give about His involvement?



If human beings came with tags like clothing, they would read, "Handmade by God"!

Discuss the implications for the following:

- Human life in the womb
- Grandma in the care center
- The frozen embryo in the fertility clinic

If the handmade item displayed were tattered or torn, would that decrease its value? How does this apply to human life? (See **Isaiah 45:9-11**.)

Celebrate the value God's creating hands give to life and sing!

Lord of Life*

[Sung to "Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us"]

Lord of life, whose hand has made us,
formed us each with tender care.
You had crowned men with Your image,
not intending such despair.
Yet through sin the glory faded,
death and doom came in its place.
But in spite of our condition,
we've been rescued by Your grace!

Redeemed by God's Hand

Ever lose something? Is there sometimes a price to get it back? (e.g., replacing a driver's license!)

Redeem means to buy back with a price. What is the price for lost sinners? (**Romans 6:23a; Revelation 21:8**)

"You were bought with a price" (**1 Corinthians 6:20 ESV**). You know the price. Fill in the blanks, "[N]ot with _____ or _____, but with His holy, precious _____ and innocent _____ and _____."

Were God's hands involved in this price? (**John 19:18; 20:20**)

For whom did Jesus pay this price? Lutherans? Christians? _____ (**John 3:16; Hebrews 7:27**)

Every life is a life for whom Jesus died and rose again! The unborn child is not a mistake or unwanted but someone "bought with a price." Immobile grandpa is not a burden or unproductive but someone "bought with a price."

* Edited for Lutherans For Life, Frank Mogan, 2000. © Text: Rev. Gerald Schepeler, 1985. Used by permission. Taken from *For Life: Pro-Life Songs for Classrooms, Choirs & Congregations* available from Lutherans For Life.

Being redeemed by the loving hands of God is a particularly powerful message for those who have made wrong choices about life. For example, women who have had an abortion — many of whom are Christian — often feel crushed by guilt and shame.

Read the following passages out loud. Silently pause after each. Allow God's Spirit to speak to all and especially to any burdened with the "secret" sin of abortion.

- 1 John 1:8-9
- Romans 8:1
- Isaiah 1:18

Stand and recite together:

Fellow sisters in Christ who have sinned against life, we stand together beneath the cross as sinners in thought, word, and deed. But in Christ, God forgives *all sin*. We value each other and everyone as individuals who have been "bought with a price." We pledge to each other our love and acceptance and prayers.

Celebrate the value God's redeeming hands give to life and sing:

God so loved the world, He gave us
Jesus Christ to bear our sin.
On the cross His life He offered,
that we might be His again.
And the Holy Spirit calls us
by the Gospel's joyful ring,
Making us His own dear children
us, eternal life to bring.

Held by God's Hand

After a fall on an icy walk, Katie said to her dad, "Maybe I should hold your hand." The feeble grip on a couple of Dad's fingers was not enough. The ice won again. This time Dad spoke, "Maybe I should hold *your* hand." Katie's little hand was surrounded! Oh, she still slipped, but she never fell.

Read **Isaiah 42:6a**. Describing His relationship to His Servant Messiah, God also gives a picture of His relationship to us. When are we "called in righteousness"? (**Romans 6:3-4**)

What comfort do we receive from the fact that God holds our hand and not the other way around? (**John 10:27-30**)

Discuss how this comfort might apply to a family in your congregation dealing with

- A crisis pregnancy
- Infertility
- A frightening diagnosis
- Placing a parent in a care center

Celebrate the value and comfort God's holding hand gives to life and sing:

Lord of Life, Who rose in triumph,
conquering death and giving hope,
You have called us and equipped us,
in a sinful world to cope;
Teaching us to love each other,
to befriend and help in strife;
To forgive and seek to comfort,
and preserve the gift of life.

Being God's Hands

Read **1 John 4:11**.

Rather than seeing the life issues as controversial issues to be avoided, we see them as opportunities to be God's hands of love and carry out the mission of the LWML!

God has given us the greatest, most positive and powerful *For Life* message in the universe! Human life has value and is worth celebrating because it is the handiwork of God!

In celebration of life as His handiwork, join hands and sing as a closing prayer:

Help us, Lord, to see as You do
life is precious in each stage.
From the unborn to the feeble,
life is precious in each age.
Help us, Lord to be Your witness
and to show the world we care.
So that people may not perish,
but instead Your life may share.

Dr. James I. Lamb currently serves as executive director of National Lutherans For Life. He and his wife, RoxAnne, live in State Center, Iowa.

Birth and Rebirth

By Jan Lutz

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| Through the waters of the womb The newborn child emerges Created by the Father Helpless and vulnerable Completely dependent. | Through the waters of Baptism A soul has been reborn Born again of the Spirit Dependent on Jesus alone For life eternal. |
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Pat Lutz, a retired educator, lives on a farm in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. She attends St. Paul Lutheran Church. She and her husband have five adult children and one grandson.