

In love He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.

Years ago in a city not far from here, a young woman discovered that she was pregnant. She was in school studying to be a nurse. The father of the child also was young and in school preparing for his own career. What was she to do? Give birth and raise the child? That could be very difficult, more than she was ready to handle. It was nine years before abortion was legal throughout the country, but it was available. She could have found a “doctor” who would have ended her pregnancy by killing that baby. But if she would have done that, this congregation would have a different pastor, my wife would have a different husband, and my children would not be. I was that unexpected and inconvenient baby.

I like to think that it was because of her Lutheran background that my birth mother decided to give me life. Then she let others raise me. While I was unexpected and unplanned, I certainly was not unwanted. There was a childless couple waiting and wanting to raise me. I expect that it was a difficult choice for her to give me birth and then entrust me into care of strangers. She made that choice in faith and love. One thing that I have from my birth mother is this little white suit she passed on for me. At two months old I was adopted into an earthly family. Eleven days later I was adopted into God’s family of faith wearing that little white suit my birth mother had given me for that purpose.

This adoption into God’s family is one we share by virtue of our holy baptism. According to the purpose of God’s will, He adopted us to be His children through His Son, Jesus Christ.

I. Abortion as an Attack Against Life

How ironic is it that attacks against life in our land come from those who already have their own life. They care little about the lives of others. It has been 35 years since the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion on demand. Since then over 45 million babies have been aborted. The latest news about abortion in America is that the number of them has “decreased” to 1.2 million in the United States last year. That is 3,287 abortions per day, similar to the number of deaths our nation experienced in the September 11th terrorist attacks and also to all of our United States military casualties in Iraq over the last five years.

Our sinful nature says those people would have been a drain on precious resources already strained by our current population. But what amount of human potential have we wasted? What artists and musicians have we missed out on? Would one of those children have developed a new source for energy or discovered a cure for cancer? If we think this topic doesn’t apply to or affect us, just realize that those 45 million lives include workers whose efforts would have supported an aging population receiving a soon to be precarious Social Security income.

Ninety-seven percent of those abortions have been as a means of birth control for those who celebrated their sexual liberty but then avoided its parental responsibility. “Reproductive

freedom” is euphemistic catch phrase. “Choice” is the tempting battle cry in a land where people are all for choices. Just walk in the cereal aisle of a grocery store. There you see the many choices we have to make. But the killing of an innocent unborn baby cannot be considered a choice for a civilized society and an enlightened people.

It is assumed that those who are having abortions are doing so by their own choice, but this is not necessarily so. Often these young women are pressured into doing so by unsupportive parents or angry boyfriends when their own choice would have been to give their babies life. Our nation’s Declaration of Independence speaks of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” but if we think that we must reject life in favor of our liberty and happiness, then soon we will have no life, liberty or happiness at all.

Thanks to modern scientific technology we can see clearly that an unborn baby is a living human being. I remember our first ultrasound sixteen years ago when we were expecting Mary. The doctor doing the test said, “This baby has long legs.” Then she looked up at me and said, “Oh, that explains it.” Today 3-D ultrasound pictures and sonograms show us the features, movements and characteristics of the unborn child. Show one of those pictures to a young child and he or she will point to it and say “baby.” But those who work in abortion clinics try to persuade their clients to think otherwise. They speak of the unborn child as being a “blob of tissue” and “just like a head of cabbage.” Cindy has been pregnant five times and never once has given birth to cole slaw. It always has been a baby, created by God.

II. Adoption as God’s Loving Option

It may indeed be that a young woman is in the situation where she is not able or willing to raise the child she is carrying. But this does not mean that abortion is all she could do or should do. There are others wanting to raise that child. While in seminary I did a research paper on adoption. I discovered that the number of couples wanting to adopt but are not able to do so because of the lack of children is almost identical to the number of abortions performed in our country every year. What this shows is that there are no unwanted children, just people who do not want to be parents.

For some reason adoption has a strange stigma about it, as if adopted children should think that our parents didn’t want us. My parents did want me. They went out of their way to get me. Their time, trouble, and expense were more than a pregnancy. I was adopted through Lutheran Children’s Services in St. Louis, even though my dad at age 45 was too old to adopt according to their regulations. Thankfully, the director had been around long enough to know when to bend the rules. A year later they went back hoping to adopt a baby girl. By then there was a new director who, by the book, would not allow them to adopt again, and so I was raised as an only child.

People ask me if I have ever tried to find my birth parents. No, at this point I have not felt the need or desire to do so. But it certainly could be that at some point I will run into my

birth mother. If ever I have that chance, I simply would tell her thanks, thanks for giving me life, and thanks for giving my parents a chance to raise me.

III. God's Creation of Life

David writes in Psalm 139 "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb." Our lives are precious and valuable because we have been given life by the almighty, holy, and loving God. God created us and from the time of our conception God is forming us. Our heart that starts beating at 18 days is in the hands of God. Our brain waves that start at 40 days are known by God. The miracle of birth that medical science never can fully explain is an act and gift of God. Even before we were conceived our God was choosing us to be His own people. That choice is what makes us valuable. Both our physical bodies and our spiritual lives are precious in God's sight.

IV. God's Adoption of Us as His People

God's desire for all people to be His people was corrupted by human sin, selfishness and rebellion. The choice humanity made was to go off on our own, away from the God of life, to be and do all that is contrary to God. In doing so we have lost life as God created it to be, lived in a personal relationship with Him forever. God could have let us go, but He didn't. This God who created us loves us and wants us to be His own. To make us His children again God the Father sent His Son into our life. In our place Jesus Christ lived our life but did so without our sharing our sin. For us Jesus then died on the cross covered with our sin to pay the price of its punishment in our place. Because of Jesus sin no longer separates us from the God of life. Jesus rose from the dead to give us real life that is victorious over sin, death and the devil.

God the Holy Spirit then comes into our lives through God's Word and Sacraments to give us that resurrected life by leading us to faith in Jesus as our Savior. In holy baptism our Triune God has adopted us spiritually orphaned children and made us His family in Jesus' name. That we are God's children by adoption emphasizes His grace and love for us. God went out of His way to claim us for Himself. This adoption means the forgiveness of our sins. That includes all sins. It also covers the sins of those who deny, or even abort, God's gift of life. Our God who gave us life wants us to live with Him. He has chosen us to be His own. He loves us as His adopted children. Knowing of God's goodness to us in Jesus is the new and eternal life that no one can take away from us.

As a child, as an adopted child, as a Christian adopted child, I have three birthdays. April 13th is when I was born into this world. June 10th is when I was adopted into a family. June 21st is when I was baptized into the Christian family of faith. While only five million Americans have the experience of being adopted into an earthly family, all Christians have been adopted by God our heavenly Father through holy baptism into His spiritual and eternal family of faith. We share our adopted Christian lives with others. We thank and praise God for His gift of life in His Son, Jesus Christ. AMEN