

**Text: Jeremiah 22:1-5 (Pew Bible, pg.771)**

**Title: “Disposable Life”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Open your Bibles to Jeremiah 22. As you're turning I trust you're continuing to pray for the people in your circle of relationships who need a personal relationship with Christ. Prayer softens the hearts of non-believers and strengthens the witness of believers. Now here in Jeremiah 22 God has given the prophet a message for people in high places when the nation was in a time of great moral and spiritual decay. Read vv.1-5.

It is a tragedy when a nation, or any group of people, comes to the place to where they view life as being disposable.

**ILLUSTRATION** – In preparing this message I ran across a blog on the internet entitled “There is no point to our existence, and all life is disposable.” Listen to what the writer says:

“I have a harsh realistic philosophy. I enjoy it too. I am an atheist, and do not believe in any ‘super natural power’ such as a ‘God.’ I know that science has its laws and that we were created by some chemical process. Humans contribute nothing, nor is there anything to contribute too. The universe shouldn't even be here, it does not make any sense. But besides that impossible debate, humans and life itself of all kinds are pointless. We study life and everything, for what? We are born then we die, it is a continuous cycle. So whatever you do in life, it does not matter. Sure it may benefit other humans, but they are going to die too. Who says murder is wrong? There is nothing wrong with it, though society and the human survival technique of fear has led to morals against it. We are simply organisms, just more complex than that roach you killed.”

Now I realize this guy's sentiment is radical. But it just goes to show you where one's worldview will take them. In this series of messages I'm trying to help us recognize some of the hazmat ... hazardous materials ... dangerous ideas that are out there in our culture, that drive much of what we see in government, education, the media, and yes, even in churches.

This person's worldview is that there is no Creator of life, and if there is no Creator of life, then life is random ... there is no purpose and meaning for a person's life. And if there is no purpose or dignity to human life, then really life *is* disposable. That's hazardous material ... a lethal idea, poisonous thinking, a toxic philosophy. And ideas have consequences. This philosophy is at the root of a hideous evil in our nation that has resulted in over 50 million unborn babies dying at the hands of abortionists since 1973 when abortion was legalized. Last year, in our own city, the lives of 6000 infants were taken by abortion.

And all through the Bible God holds up the value and the sanctity of human life from where life begins in the womb of a mother to where life ends at the tomb. We see that right here in our text where it says...

**Jeremiah 22:3 - This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.**

And we are as accountable to these truths today as the kings of Judah were in OT times. Now there are civil and ceremonial laws that are given to God's covenant people in OT times that do not apply all nations. But what God says here in Jeremiah 22:3 about shedding innocent blood *does* apply to every nation of every age. It is a timeless and changeless law because it reflects the character and the values of the Lord God who is timeless and changeless.

What was this shedding of innocent blood? It was the taking of a human life for reasons other than those prescribed in the Bible ... just war and capital punishment. It means callously ignoring the value of human life to the degree that an innocent one is killed. God was so serious about this that in He said in Genesis 9 it says...

**Genesis 9:6 - Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.**

So there's sanctity to human life because humans are made in the image of God. This is what distinguishes human life from plant life or animal life. We are each created in the image of God. And that includes unborn babies.

**Psalms 139:13 - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.**

**Psalms 139:14 - I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.**

**Psalms 139:15 - 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,**

**Psalms 139:16 - your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.**

I'm here today to remind us that we as a nation have been guilty of the shedding of innocent blood through legalized abortion ... the killing of more than 50 million little boys and girls since 1973.

Now the atrocity of abortion grows out of particular worldview that man is at the center of everything, so he gets to make up the rules of what is right and wrong based on convenience, comfort and the freedom of choice.

**ILLUSTRATION** – This clash of worldviews happens in the world of newspaper editorials and internet blogs, and ultimately in public debate like the one that happened a few weeks ago during the Vice Presidential Debate. The moderator of the debate asked the candidates about the role their Roman Catholic faith was reflected in their thinking on issues, particularly the issue of abortion ... of terminating the life of a child while it is still in the womb. Paul Ryan said, "I don't see how a person

can separate their public life from their private life or from their faith. Our faith informs us in everything we do.”

And that is absolutely true. Your worldview is your understanding of what holds everything together in life. And I’ve been saying in this series that there are really only two options.

- Worldview #1 – The universe is man-centered. There is no ultimate authority except the reasoning of human beings. And in the end everyone does what is right in their own eyes.
- Worldview #2 – I’ve represented this by the “chain of truth.” There is the existence of the One True God whose thoughts on any matter are the truth. God has revealed His thoughts (truth) in a written way through Scripture, and in a personal way through His Son Jesus Christ. When we live a life of obedience to the truth we are linked to the purposes and plans of a good and loving God.

And so our faith, or worldview, informs all we do. And if our faith takes seriously the truth of God, and we order our lives around that truth, then we cannot view life as disposable. The sixth of the Ten Commandments says:

**Exodus 20:13 - “You shall not murder.**

To take God’s Law seriously means that we oppose abortion on demand ... any health care system where treatment is determined by the age of a person and their usefulness to society ... and senseless violence that snuffs out the lives of human beings.

And what I want you to understand today is that the well-being of any nation hinges upon their valuing life as God values it. We here in Jeremiah 22 we are challenged in three ways:

### **1. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIFE (vv.1-2)**

Now notice where this message is delivered:

**Jeremiah 22:1 - This is what the LORD says: “Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and proclaim this message there:**

The message was directed at the seat of power ... the palace of the king who, at this time, happens to be a man named Zedekiah. Sitting on the throne of Israel the king was guilty of exploiting the poor, the needy and the helpless ones.

So the message was proclaimed to the nation’s leaders, but it also applied to the nation’s people.

**Jeremiah 22:2 - ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on David’s throne—you, your officials and your people who come through these gates.**

Now in Israel’s government, God chose the leader, spoke directly to the leader, and the people followed. In a democracy the people choose the leaders. But the Bible tells us that even at that God puts in place every ruling authority. And the leadership of a nation must take responsibility of the protection of life, including the life of the unborn.

Tragically it is still legal to kill unborn human beings in our nation. If we take the truth of God seriously our nation's leaders must stop this atrocity. The Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade legalized this form of murder and has presided over the deaths of more than 50 million innocent human babies since 1973. The only way for the unborn to be protected in law is for Roe v. Wade to be overturned. It will take a five-person majority on the Supreme Court to overturn that ruling. The president of the United States will appoint these justices. Your presidential vote matters.

We cannot shirk this responsibility. We cannot say, "Well that abortion thing is terrible, but there are more important things like the reproductive rights of women, the freedom of choice for a woman or the convenience of the father and mother." There is no such thing as disposable life.

The next challenge is this:

## **2. GUARD THE SANCTITY OF LIFE (v.3)**

Notice the issues that God is concerned about. These reflect His character and His values.

**Jeremiah 22:3 - This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.**

By the way, there is much more here than just about the shedding of innocent blood. And sometimes we as evangelicals forget that God wants us to love justice for all people.

Now paganistic religions or atheistic philosophies have no value for human life. Why? Because what gives value to human life is the understanding that every human is created in the image of God.

**ILLUSTRATION** – When the Israelites came into the Promised Land they found the Canaanites worshipped a god named Molech or Moloch. The worship of Molech was unbelievably atrocious, including sexual immorality and human sacrifices, particularly the sacrifice of innocent children. Historians tell us that Molech was represented as a huge bronze statue with the head of a bull, oftentimes with his hands outstretched. In pagan sacrifices children were placed on the scalding hot hands of the statue while the worshippers screamed and danced around wildly.

Is America today sacrificing her children on the altar of convenience, comfort and the freedom of choice? A worldview that takes seriously the truth of God will guard the sanctity of human life.

**Proverbs 31:8-9 - "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."**

God puts an extra burden on each society to guard the lives of the disadvantaged (the alien, the fatherless and the widow). There is no human more disadvantaged and vulnerable than a child, including an unborn child.

And this issue stands at the top of a slippery slope. Today it's the freedom of parents to say, "We don't want this child. It's inconvenient ... another mouth to feed ... an embarrassment that I was promiscuous ... or whatever." But do you realize that a growing number of abortions are based upon the gender of the baby. And farther down that slippery slope of disposable life we could easily come to the day where the beginning of life is not the only thing at stake. What about the ending of life? Are we that far away from rationing out medical treatment to people based upon their usefulness in society? So when you get to a certain age, or in a certain condition, lifesaving procedures may not be available to you because you are already weak. That's disposable life.

So there is the challenge to take responsibility for life, and to guard the sanctity of life, but we must also...

### **3. REMEMBER OUR ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD (vv.4-5)**

**Jeremiah 22:4 - For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people.**

**Jeremiah 22:5 - But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.' "**

Our accountability to God means that there are consequences to our actions. But there is a window of opportunity. If the king and the nation would repent and be careful to observe God's commands they could expect continued blessing. But if they disobeyed those commands, God vowed that the royal palace would become a ruin.

No nation will survive so long as it ignores and rejects the truth of God. And what a tragedy...

**Jeremiah 22:8 - "People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?'"**

Visitors to the area would inquire as to why the Lord had allowed such a total destruction of this city that was to honor His name. What a warning! If God would act in this way toward His covenant people for their disrespect of human life, will He not also deal severely with nations that are not His covenant people?

## **CONCLUSION**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Erwin Lutzer, in his book *When a Nation Forgets God*, shared an eyewitness account of how some church members in Germany reacted to the Nazism before WWII:

“I lived in Germany during the Nazi Holocaust. I considered myself a Christian. We heard stories of what was happening to Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it because what could we do to stop it. A railroad track ran behind our small church and each Sunday morning we could hear the whistle in the distance, and then the wheels coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard the cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars. Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sound of those wheels because we knew that we would hear the cries of the Jews in route to a death camp. Their screams tormented us. We knew the time the train was coming, and when we heard the whistle blow, we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church, we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.” And then the eyewitness shared with Pastor Lutzer, “Although years have passed, I still hear the train whistle in my sleep. God forgive me, forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians and yet did nothing to intervene.”

**Proverbs 24:11-12 - Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?**

Let me put this another way. The fact that God creates every child that is conceived means He created you with an amazing purpose in mind. He loves you. Have you discovered that purpose?

Perhaps your life is filled with regrets because you had an abortion or you counseled someone to have an abortion. The amazing thing is that God’s grace is greater than our sin. Discover His grace through Jesus Christ.