

Theme: In our rebellion against God, humanity has consistently demeaned, degraded, and attempted to destroy other humans because they are created in God's image.

## I. Intro - Sanctity of Life Sunday; MLK

- A. The Sunday before January 22 (Roe v. Wade)
- B. Martin Luther King, Jr born on January 15, 1929
- C. So the two observances often coincide
- D. This is good because the issues are related
- E. Why have racism and abortion been such a problem?
- F. What is the common root behind these sins?

## II. More Than Murder

### A. Cain murders Abel

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Genesis 4:8

- 1. The first murder in human history - fratricide!
- 2. How quick and how far the Fall took us!

### B. The roots of Cain's hatred and murder

The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. <sup>6</sup>Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Genesis 4:4-7

- 1. The Lord had favor on Abel and his offering but not Cain and his offering

- 2. Cain then became angry - with Abel
- 3. Rather than repenting and seeking the LORD, he found it easier to blame Abel and turn on him!
- 4. Cain is clearly ultimately at war with God, but he can't kill God so he kills God's image.
- 5. This refusal to repent and respond to God continues  
Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup> The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Genesis 4:9-10
  - a. God questions Cain to get him to admit his sin
  - b. Cain responds to God in a rebellious, hostile nature
  - c. But the blood of God's image-bearer can not be silenced and cries out to God
- 6. Cain's war was not ultimately with Abel but with the image of God, which he sought to destroy.

### C. Our long history of violence against God's image

#### 1. Lamech commits brazen murder and boasts

Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. **I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. <sup>24</sup>If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.**" Genesis 4:23-24

- a. He is proclaiming his war against God's image openly and brazenly
- b. The impulse of sin to strike out against God through His image bearer is intensifying

## 2. The days of Noah

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was **full of violence**.<sup>12</sup> God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.<sup>13</sup> So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for **the earth is filled with violence** because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. Genesis 6:11–13

- a. The earth was filled with violence
- b. The impulse of sin to strike out against God through His image bearer is spreading throughout humanity

3. This was repeated in the Egyptians treatment of the Hebrews, Israel's sins in the promised land, the sins of murder by other nations called out by the prophets, and Herod's slaughter of the children.

4. The ultimate example - killing Jesus, Who is God Himself.

You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.<sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. Acts 3:14–15

- a. The crowd preferred a murder over the Son of God
- b. God was now within reach - and we murdered Him!
- c. Thankfully God overruled and raised Jesus from the dead! Our war against God's image will not win!

D. In our rebellion against God, humanity has consistently demeaned, degraded, and attempted to destroy other humans because they are created in God's image.

## III. Our American War Against God's Image

A. This brief survey reveals humanity's long war with God's image

1. The effect of our rebellion against God has affected all cultures and nations
2. Any thought that our nation escapes this is unbiblical
3. In many ways, our nation has been a beacon on freedom, dignity, and human rights
4. But we have always had a dark streak where our rebellion has attacked the image of God.

B. Our primal sin of slavery, racism, and prejudice

1. Slavery is often spoken of as America's original sin
2. Slavery was horrible - lasting 250 years, enslaving, degrading, and killing millions of Africans.
3. But as with Cain, the reality is even worse.
4. To justify slavery we denied the humanity of Africans, declaring them to not just be a different ethnicity but a different and vastly inferior race.
5. Like Cain, to justify our own sin and rebellion, we refused to be our brother's keeper.
6. Like Cain, our rebellion led us to attack those who are the very image of God.
7. So deep was this sin that while virtually all other countries had outlawed slavery, a bloody war had to be fought to force the end of slavery here.

8. After the Civil War, the attack on the image of God simply evolved into Jim Crow, lynching, and our own version of apartheid.
9. This attack on the image of God in the descendants of slaves continued even while we fought the Nazi's to end their attack on God's image-bearers.
10. This lasted all the way until Dr. King was raised up to lead the fight for justice and equal treatment.
11. This brought a new level of equality in law, but the seeds of hundreds of years die slowly, and much remains to be done even today.

#### C. Our current war - abortion

1. Within 5 years of the assassination of Dr. King, America declared war on God's image-bearers in the womb.
2. Since 1973 approximately 50 million human beings have been slaughtered, reenacting Cain's murder of Abel, fulfilling our rebellious desire to attack the image of God.
3. The modern abortion movement is strongly linked with the eugenic movement of the early 20th century, which desired to reduce or wipe out the black population.
4. Thus it is not surprising that abortion clinics disproportionately market to African American's - and approximately 300,000 black babies are aborted each year. This dwarfs the numbers killed under all of slavery and Jim Crow.
5. Approximately 25% of US pregnancies end in abortion

6. The worldwide annual abortion count is an estimated 40- 50 million.
7. This is actually the most comprehensive, sustained, and systematic attack on the image of God in human history.
8. In many ways, this is the culmination of our long war against the image of God - slaughtering unborn children for merely existing.

#### IV. Applying the Word

##### A. Do I recognize this long war against God's image?

1. Humans have been attacking God's image since Cain killed Abel
2. This has occurred in every epoch and culture
3. Even though America has been used to increase human rights, we have also engaged in a war against God's image-bearers
4. Sadly, the Church has even been complicit in this war against God's image-bearers
  - a. Many evangelical Christians tried to biblically justify slavery and Jim Crow
  - b. Evangelicals in large part did not join in the civil rights struggle of the 1950-60s
  - c. Evangelicals were late to enter the fight against abortion
  - d. The idea "These weren't real Christian" is a LIE. They truly believed and preached the Gospel, did many wonderful things - and were blind to this sin!
5. Being a Christian does not mean I am automatically exempt from this heinous sin!

6. The temptation to follow the culture and our sin nature and to demean, degrade, or even destroy those who are different, powerless, or inconvenient will always be with us, and we must actively wage war against it in our own hearts.

#### B. Am I authentically pro-life?

1. NO ONE tries to demean, degrade, or destroy all of God's image-bearers! We are often selective - inauthentically pro-life
2. Some even champion protecting one group of image-bearers while destroying another<sup>1</sup>
  - a. All men are created equal - unless you are black
  - b. 'Black Lives Matter' - unless they are in the womb, then kill them!
3. Do I recognize, affirm, and uphold in action the life of the unborn?
  - a. Every human, from the moment of conception, is the image of God
  - b. If you have never recognized, affirmed, and embraced this truth, do so today!
  - c. Do I pray for the holocaust of abortion to end?
  - d. Am I willing to engage in uncomfortable conversations to proclaim the truth regarding abortion?
  - e. Do I hold politicians accountable that they MUST be pro-life? This is a non-negotiable!
4. Do I recognize, affirm, and uphold in action the life, dignity, and rights of every human being?
  - a. Much of the political and cultural rhetoric is abhorrent and anti-life. We can disagree with others without degrading them as God's image.

- b. We may NEVER refer to people as vermin, animals, or in any way reduce their dignity as an image-bearer of God
- c. Racism infected the DNA of American culture
- d. Have I asked God to expose any racism in my own heart, words, or actions?
- e. Am I regularly praying for racism and its effects to be exposed and rooted out of our nation?
- f. Am I proactively working to build relationships with people of different ethnic, socio-economic, or political groups?
- g. Do I hold politicians accountable that they must guard their words and never degrade other individuals or groups?

#### C. The Table of Cleansing

1. Perhaps you have been involved in an abortion
2. Perhaps God is revealing racism in your heart
3. We come to this Table for cleansing from the penalty and power of sin
4. Christ came as one of us to restore us to God and one another, and His sacrifice provides cleansing from sin
5. Come, confess, and receive full cleansing

### Our Long War Against God's Image

Genesis 4:8-10  
January 17, 2021  
Communion  
1 Corinthians 15:58

Teaching keywords: Abortion; racism; sin; image of God

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. May God fill your hearts with joy and peace as you labor for Him. 1 Corinthians 15:58

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup> Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” <sup>10</sup> The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” Genesis 4:8–10