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HCC
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Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: My high school US government teacher introduced me to Roe versus Wade.
2. Need: Although Dobbs versus Jackson Women's Health Organization overturned Roe versus Wade, abortions continue.
 - a. You cannot legislate morality.
 - b. State laws have legalized abortion.
 - c. The vision of the good life remains unchanged.
3. Subject: What does the Bible say about the unborn life within a mother's womb?
4. Text: Psalm 139:1-24
5. Preview: We'll look at two premises, an argument, and application.

BODY

- I. No one escapes God's examination because God is omniscient (139:1-6)
 - A. David realizes that God knows his thoughts (139:1).
 - B. God's ability to know God's thoughts (139:6).
 - C. David is not the only one to recognize God's omniscience.
- II. No one escapes God's presence because God is omnipresent (139:7-12)
 - A. David cannot escape God's presence by going to the highest peak or the depths of the earth (139:8).
 - B. David cannot escape God's presence by hiding in darkness (139:11).
 - C. Other biblical authors recognize that no one can escape God's presence.
- III. Unborn life is God's work because he is omniscient and omnipresent (139:13-18)
 - A. (God's omniscience and omnipresence causes David to meditate on God creating his unborn life with purpose (139:13-18))
 1. David acknowledges that God created his unborn life because God is omniscient and omnipresent (139:13)
 - a. Look at how David describes who is responsible for his creation (139:13).
 - b. David uses artistic language to describe his creation (139:13).
 2. David's meditation on God creating his unborn life causes him to praise God (139:14-16)
 - a. David realizes that he is made in such a way that produces awe.
 - b. All of David's life began in his unborn life.
 3. David feels valued because God created him with purpose (139:17-18)
 - B. Other parts of the Bible affirm that unborn life is God's work.
 1. The book of Genesis affirms that God closes and opens the womb (Gen 21:1; 30:2)
 - a. God opens the womb of Sarai (Gen 21:1)
 - b. God answers Isaac's prayer to open Rebekah's womb (Gen 25:21)
 - c. Jacob explains that only God can open Rachel's womb (Gen 30:2)
 2. Examples are not limited to Genesis.
 - a. Job acknowledges God's work of creating his unborn life (Job 10:8-13)
 - b. God creates Jeremiah to serve as his prophet (Jeremiah 1:5)
 - C. Since unborn life is God's work, then we should value it.

- IV. Think God's thoughts about unborn life while avoiding ungodly thoughts (139:19-24)
 - A. David wishes to distance himself from ungodly people (139:19)
 - B. David wishes to align his thoughts to God's thoughts when he asks God to examine him (139:23-24)
 - C. Think God's thoughts about unborn life.
 - 1. Every unborn life is made in the image of God.
 - 2. Every unborn life is born into sin (Psalm 51:5)
 - 3. Jesus Christ began his incarnation as unborn life to save us from sin (Luke 1:35)
 - D. Thinking God's thoughts about unborn life means advocating for unborn life.
 - 1. Pray for that all would see the preciousness of unborn life.
 - 2. Care for the children within the church.
 - 3. Care for the mothers of unwanted pregnancies.
 - 4. Learn more about God's view of unborn life and single parents.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Summary: Think God's thoughts about unborn life because unborn life is God's work.
- 2. Closing Image: Dr. Seuss writes in Horton Hears a Who: "Because, after all, a person is a person, no matter how small"

MANUSCRIPT

My high school US government teacher introduced me to the supreme court case *Roe versus Wade*. She simply taught us that the decision of *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion across the United States. Abortion means the elective termination of unborn life within a mother's womb.

The supreme court decided *Roe v. Wade* on January 22, 1973. I doubt that my US government teacher expected that it would be overturned by another supreme court decision. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. It's often known simply as the *Dobbs decision*. The supreme court ruled that the Federal government did not have the ability to determine if abortion is legal. Hence, each state must now determine the legal status of abortion.

Some might have thought that the Dobbs decisions would have stopped or slowed down abortions. But it did not. **Abortions continue to occur.** Why? There are a few reasons.

First, you cannot legislate morality. Laws do not make one moral. One might even say laws awaken the flesh to break the law. If you see a sign: "Do not walk on lawn", then you sense a desire to walk on that green manicured grass. A sign warns: "Do not press this button". You want to touch that button. Laws do not make one moral. It reveals our inclination towards disobedience.

Second reason. Many states have legalized abortion. This means that if one has the means, then they can travel to a state that has legalized abortion to obtain one. The Dobbs decision didn't ban abortion. It merely said: "States, you decide." Some states have legalized abortion so that abortion continues.

Third reason, our vision of the good life has changed. Once the vision of a good life was a home, two kids, a dog. To make it in a life was to settle down and start a family. Now the vision of the good life is to pursue a good career, travel, became an Instagram sensation, and then possibly start a family. Children prevents us from pursuing our desires. They drain our money. They rob time from our interests. They burden our lives. These are a few reasons why abortions continue.

Now this Sunday's theme is sanctity of Life. Every year, we set aside a Sunday to think together about what the Bible says concerning unborn life. **What does the Bible think of the unborn life within a mother's womb?** How does God view the child growing within a mom? What should we think about unborn life according to the Bible?

To answer this question, we're going to a time before a supreme court exists. A time before ultrasounds, blood tests, or X-rays. A time before Excel sheets and Chat GPT. We're going to reflect on the meditations of a man who lived over 3,000 years ago. A king of Israel. His future son would be the wisest king who ever lived. He was man after God's own heart. A shepherd. His name. David.

David grounded his thinking about unborn life not on the law, medicine, or statistics. His thinking begins with theology. He started with God. Thoughts about God lead him to conclusions about unborn life. We'll see his reflections in the Psalm just read to us. Psalm 139. If you haven't turned there already, then I would invite you turn there with me. Psalm 139. We just had verses 13 through 18 read. But this morning's sermon will walk us through the entirety of the Psalm. We'll focus most of our attention on verses 13 through 18.

Before we get into the text, let me provide for you a road map of where we're going. A preview. A trailer. First, we'll look at two premises. Two assumptions. Next, we'll look at David's argument. His main idea. His take home truth. Lastly, we'll look at the implications of David's argument. An application. An action step. Again, there will be four moves to today's sermon. Four major sections. Two premises. An Argument. An implication.

Let's talk about the David's first premise. His first assumption. **No one escapes God's examination because God is omniscient.** God knows your thoughts. Your feelings. Your motives. He knows everything that goes in your inner being. Nothing escapes God's notice. Nothing escapes his attention. He knows everything we think. He's omniscient. **No one escapes God's examination because God is omniscient.**

David realizes that God knows his thoughts. God can read his mind. Look at verse 1. *O Lord, you have searched me and known me!* The word search is used to describe a miner searching for precious ore under the earth. Like the miner, God searches and finds David's thoughts. He knows our thoughts.

God's ability to know David's thoughts amazes him. Look at verse 6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.* God's ability to know David's thoughts is supernatural. No human can do this. It is unattainable. Only God fully knows what you say and why you said it.

David is not the only one to recognize God's omniscience. We see in the Bible others who acknowledge God's ability to know everything. A prophet in the Old Testament once told king Asa that nothing escapes his notice (2 Chron 16:9). God knew that Asa has formed an alliance with foreign countries rather than depend upon him. Jesus teaches a crowd in the

sermon on the mount that even before you ask God for something he knows what you need (Matt 6:8). David is not alone acknowledging God's omniscience.

First premise. No one escapes God's examination because God is omniscient. He knows everything that a person thinks, feels, or desires. Let's move onto the second premise. Second assumption.

No one can escape God's presence because God is omnipresent. There is no place you can run to hide from God. No bunker. No cave. No door bars him. God is present everywhere that you can possibly go. He is omnipresent. Even in death, you cannot escape God. **No one can escape God's presence because God is omnipresent.**

David recognizes this. He cannot escape God's presence by going to the highest peak or to the depths of the earth. Look at verse 8. *If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!* If David climbed the highest mountain of the earth to reach the heavens, God would be there. David uses a Hebrew term: Sheol. Sheol designates the lowest parts of the earth where the dead dwell. If David went to the depths of the earth where the dead reside, then God would be there too. Hence, if David went to the highest place on earth or the lowest place on earth, then God would be present.

David cannot escape God's presence by hiding in darkness. Look at verse 11. *If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.* The best time for stealth is at night. I've been reading books recently a series called the Terminal List. It follows the adventures of a former Navy SEAL, James Reece. All of his missions occur at night because darkness conceals him from his enemies. Darkness can hide your presence from others. But

darkness cannot conceal your presence from God. Wherever you are in the darkness, God is there.

David is not the only one to recognize God's omnipresence. **Other biblical authors also recognize that no one can escape from God's presence.** The king Solomon in his prayer to dedicate the temple explains that God cannot be contained in the heavens or the earth. It cannot be contained within a temple. His presence is too vast. God is everywhere. The prophet Jeremiah warns the people of Israel that no one can hide from God (Jeremiah 23:23-24). Whenever an Israelite sins, God is present. The Bible affirms that God is omnipresent.

David gives his two premises. Two assumptions. Two data points. God is omniscient. God is omnipresent. God knows all things. God is present everywhere. If God is omniscient and omnipresent, then what is David's argument? What is his proposition? His thesis?

Unborn life is God's work. **Unborn life is God's work because he is omniscient and omnipresent.** Because God knows all things and is present in all places, God creates unborn life. He creates the unborn human being within a mother's womb. It is not just the work of a man and a woman. It is God's work. **Unborn life is God's work because he is omniscient and omnipresent.**

We see this in David's Psalm. Each of the major sections of the Psalm 139 is divided into three sections. First, David states an idea. Second, David develops this idea. Third, he makes a conclusion. Verses 13 to 18 mark a major section within Psalm 139. So it is also split into three divisions. Verse 13. Verse 14 to 16. Verse 17 to 18.

In the first section, David states an idea. **David acknowledges that God created his unborn life.** Why? **God is omniscient and omnipresent.** Look at verse 13. *For you formed my*

inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. Note the word for. This conjunction connects the idea of verse 13 to the premises. Since God is omniscient and omnipresent, God created unborn David in his mother's womb.

Look at how David describes who is responsible for his creation. God is the one who creates unborn life. *You formed. You knitted.* God causes conception. The creation of life within a womb is God's doing. While a father and mother contribute to the conception of a child, David attributes the work of conception to God.

David uses artistic language to describe unborn life. He uses the word *knitted*. People in the Ancient Near East would use the Hebrew word for knitted in the context of creating a tapestry. It's not a carpet or a rug. It is a form of textile art. Tapestries often depict a scene or image. I think it's a fitting word because who do human beings represents? Who do they image? They image God. When God weaves together a person in a mother's womb, he creates a representation of himself. David's artistic language reveals the beauty of that unborn life.

David then develops this idea of God creating unborn life through meditation. As David meditates on God creating his life. As he thinks about it. It leads him to praise God.

Let's look at David's meditations. **David realizes that he is made in such a way that produces awe.** Look at verse 14. *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* When we hear the word: fear of verse 14, we think of being afraid. But the word fear in Hebrew can also have the nuance of reverence. Awe. As David thinks about how God made him, it causes him to feel awe. Why?

It's because all of God's works are wonderful. David writes in the second half of verse 14. *Wonderful are your works.* God's works are good. We marvel at the beauty of a vista of

Rock Mountains. The depth and breadth of the Grand Canyon fill us with awe. We feel our hair stand up when we see a chunk of a glacier plunge into the sea. God's works are good.

Think of this logic. God's works are good. I am God's work. Therefore. I must be good. Some of us might think, we were good at a certain life stage. I was cute, chubby, and cuddly from age zero to three. But afterward, I don't see myself as wonderful or amazing. I mean don't you remember the teen years? Braces. Acne. Voice changes. But the Bible says that you are God's good work no matter the life stage. From the moment of conception to the present. No matter the stage of life. Unborn. Newborn. Infant. Toddler. Child. Teen. Young Adult. Adult. Senior.

All of David's life began in his unborn self. Look at verse 15 again. *My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.* Now the term: depths of the earth is another way of describing a mother's womb. David is saying all of adult me was made in my mother's womb when I was unborn. This means that unborn life and adult human life have equal value. Equally good. Equally wonderful. Equally amazing!

Why does David believe this? Look at these words and phrases. *Hidden. In secret. Depths of the Earth.* These are place that human beings cannot go. I cannot go into a mother's womb. But who is present everywhere? God. No one can escape God's presence. Not even the unborn. David believes that unborn life is God's wonderful creation because He is present in the womb when conception occurs.

David understands that if God created his unborn life, then God also knows all that David will do for the days of his life. Look at verse 16. *Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in*

your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. David uses an image: a book to describe God's omniscience. God can record everything that we will do because he knows our thoughts and actions even before we do them.

We covered two parts of the Psalm. David's idea. His development of this idea. Let's look at the last part. His conclusion. After this reflection about his unborn life, David feels valued. Cherished. Treasured. **David feels valued because God created him with purpose.** Look at verse 17. *How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I could count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.*

The word thoughts could also be rendered intent. If you replace thoughts with intents, then verse 17 would read *How precious to me are your intents, O God! How vast is the sum of them!* God has purposes for David's life. A plan. A blueprint. This causes him to feel valued because he describes those intents as precious.

David wakes up from his meditation. Look at the last half of verse 18. *I awake, and I am still with you.* These thoughts of God creating David's unborn life do not fade when he concludes his reflection. They don't disappear. They remain with him. He continues to think about them. Ruminates about them. Unborn life is God's work.

Now David is not alone in his thinking. **There are other parts of the Bible that affirm that unborn life is God's work.** Let me give you some examples. **The book of Genesis affirms that God opens and closes the womb.** Remember the story of Abraham's wife, Sarah. Her womb remains closed for many years. But at the age of ninety, God opens her womb to conceive a son (Gen 21:1). Rebekah, Isaac's wife, has experienced infertility. Isaac prays to God

to open her womb. God answers and Rebekah conceives of twins (Gen 25:21). Rachel, Jacob's wife, complains to him about her inability to conceive a child. Jacob snaps at her: only God can open her womb. (Gen 30:2). The book of Genesis affirms that unborn life is God's work.

The examples are not limited to Genesis. Job when he suffers acknowledges that God created his unborn life (Job 10:8-13). God called Jeremiah to serve as a prophet even before he was born (Jer 1:5). Other parts of the Bible affirms that unborn life is god's work.

Since unborn life is God's work, then we should value it. We should value unborn life because it is God's work. To oppose the work of God is to oppose God. Isn't that the original sin? God tells humanity to obey him by exercising dominion over the earth and be fruitful and multiply God's image on the earth. Adam and Eve tell him: "No!" by eating from the tree that he commanded them not to eat from. This resulted in curse upon the entire earth and humanity. To not acknowledge God's work is saying to him in essence: "God. Sit down. I, a human being, will determine what is your work and what is not." We elevate ourselves above God. But who are we, created human beings, to tell our creator: "I think you made a mistake." We need to affirm and value God's work.

This leads us to our final point. The implication. The application. **Think God's thoughts about unborn life while avoiding ungodly thoughts.** Align your thinking to God's thinking. Sync up your values with God's values. At same time stay away from thoughts that oppose God's thoughts. Distance yourself from philosophies that do not align with God's truth. **Think God's thoughts about unborn life while avoiding ungodly thoughts.**

Ungodly thoughts come ungodly people. Hence, **David wishes to distance himself from ungodly people.** Look at verse 19. *Oh that you would slay the wicked, O god! O men of blood, depart from me!*

But **he wants to align his thoughts to God thoughts.** He wants to sync up convictions with God's convictions. This causes David to ask God to examine him. Look at verse 23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there is any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

David asks God to examine his thoughts to root out those that would lead him astray. Look at all these imperatives that are synonyms for this idea of examination. Search, know, try, know, and see. The word: examine is used in context where a black smith would put a precious metal in crucible to heat in a fire so that he can find the impurities and remove them. Same idea. He wants to God to analyze his thoughts and to remove any ungodly thinking.

He then concludes with a final request. *Lead me in the way everlasting.* The phrase: "way everlasting" refers to a manner of life that will last. The only life that lasts is one that lives in accord to God's will. Align my life to what it means to be a godly person. Sync up my thoughts with your thoughts.

Since God has thoughts about unborn life, then we need to align our thoughts to his. We need to **think God's thoughts about unborn life.**

What do we need to believe and think about unborn life? **Every unborn life is made in the image of God.** To be made in the image of God means that every single person regardless of size, age, gender, and cognitive ability has value. They are significant because God made them to represent Him. Hence, we have a responsibility to protect and preserve this life.

But every unborn life is born into sin. David describes in another Psalm his sinful state even when he was in his mother's womb (Psalm 51:5). This means that there is no person in the womb or outside of the womb who is not affected by sin. Sin means that we are born in a state of rebellion against God. Instead of confessing our sin and repenting, we find ourselves trying to cover them up by doing good works. Or we just say: "why live a good life? I'll just live according to my impulses." We need help.

God knows we need help. He sends it. He sends it in the form of unborn life. **Jesus begins his incarnation as unborn life to save us from sin** (Luke 1:35). Jesus, in every sense, was like us. If God wove together Jesus in his mother's womb with the intent to save us from our sins, then God does so to a lesser extent with every conception. Jesus would eventually be born, grow up, and give his life on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin and rise from the dead. This gives every person born of a woman an opportunity to believe and have a relationship with God.

It also means that all our sins have been forgiven in Christ. For some of you, this morning's message has made you feel uncomfortable because maybe you have considered abortion or have had an abortion. You might feel shame. Guilt. Sadness. You often look at the dining table and think that missing daughter. She would be twelve years old this year. You wonder. What kind of sports would you be playing? Would she prefer piano or violin? Would she have your eyes? What food would she like? I just want to say: God forgives you. He knows your pain. He knows your grief. He loves you. His grace is sufficient for you.

And I confess that the church has not always done a good job caring for those who have had an abortion. For that, we apologize. May the Lord help us to be a safe place where people

where those struggling with an unwanted pregnancy might feel safe to share and that we might come alongside them.

To just think God's thoughts about unborn life is not enough. **Thinking God's thoughts about unborn life means advocating for unborn life.** How do we do that? Let me give you four ways.

First, **we can pray that all people would see the preciousness of unborn life.** We can use reason and arguments to make a case for unborn life. But ultimately, only God can change the hearts and minds of people. May the Lord enable us to pray that more people would see unborn life as God's work that should be protected.

Second, **care for children within the church.** Now I know what you may be thinking. You're thinking I thought we were talking about unborn life. It's easy for us, sometimes to advocate for the life within a womb. The life that we do not see. But once a child exits a mother's womb, our concern tapers. If we believe that unborn life is a human being, then we should also see the infant and toddler even teenager also as made in the image of God. For some of us that means consider volunteering for nursery duty. Sign up to help with children's ministry. Serve with our youth.

Third example. **Care for the mothers of unwanted pregnancies and single moms.** If we truly believe that unborn life is God's work that should be preserved and protected, then we also need to care for the mom that carried the child to term. Many of you know that it is difficult to raise children with two parents.

Imagine being a single parent. You never get a break. You're always on alert. You're always scanning to account for your kids. You try to eat when they eat. You want to sleep but

you can't because there's another load of clothes to wash. Toys to pick up. Food to prep. No spouse to help.

How can you help? Serve in Children's ministry. As you teach Sunday school, maybe you find out one of our students doesn't have a dad. Take him to the park to throw a baseball around. Drop off a birthday gift to celebrate his birthday. You could also take a child who doesn't have a mom under your care. You invite her out when you take your own child to the park. You show up to her piano recital. There are children in our church growing up without mother or a father. Will you be willing to step into that gap?

Lastly, **you can learn more about God's view of unborn life.** Desiringgod.com has articles about the topic. You can review previous sermons that our church has preached. You might even consider picking up a book like Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf who serves as a president of a ministry called Life Training Institute. You can find the book at our book stall.

Let's return to original question I posed at the beginning of the message. What does God think unborn life? He views unborn life as his work, and we should think the same. If unborn life is God's work, then we should protect it and preserve it.

Dr. Seuss wrote a book titled Horton Hears a Who that follows the adventure of an elephant named Horton who works hard to protect a people called: "Whos" that live on a speck of dust. These "whos" live a city called "who-ville". Since they are so small, the other animals in the jungle can't see them or hear them. Horton defends these small people from Kangaroos, Monkeys, and an eagle. Why? "Because, after all, a person's a person, no matter how small." May the Lord help to think the same.