



## "Why a Womb?"

*a sermon by Matthew Christians*

*adapted from a "Lutherans For Life" sermon  
and*

*based on Isaiah 49:1-6*

*Sanctity of Human Life Sunday*

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<sup>1</sup> Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. <sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." <sup>4</sup> But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God."

<sup>5</sup> And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him— for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength— <sup>6</sup> he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."  
Isaiah 49:1-6

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Why a womb? If you were God and wanted to restore your people... if you were God and wanted to bring salvation to the "*end of the earth*" (v.6)... if you were God and wanted to defeat sin and death and Satan... if you were God and wanted to be glorified in all of this (v.3)... If you wanted to do all this, why in the world would you enter the world through a womb? Why not arrive riding on a cloud or... (I don't know,

in some dramatic way)... maybe by riding down to earth on a giant asteroid or appear out of nowhere on a flying horse... why not arrive in the company of an army of angels and fire and thunder? Why a womb? The Word of God before us today provides answers to this question. God will teach us that the Messiah would be called from the womb to identify with and bring salvation for all humanity.

So, let's get to it. Why a womb? First, think about what God was trying to accomplish. He wasn't trying to wow the world. He wasn't coming to take the world by storm, He was coming to bring salvation. He was coming to live for us and suffer for us and yes— even to die for us. Think about it... if our Lord and God was to be "*wounded for our transgressions*" (Isaiah 53:5), then He would need a back to feel the scourge... He would need hands and feet to receive the nails... He would need a side to be pierced by the spear. If God Himself was to pour out "*his soul to death*" (53:12), He would need lungs to stop breathing... a heart to stop beating... a brain to stop functioning. If the Word of God was to be "*an offering for sin*" (53:10), then He would need blood to shed. He would need to be more than the Word of God, He would need to be the "Word made flesh" (John 1:14), the Word Incarnate. Being formed in a womb made these things possible.

In other words, He needed to be born. For the task of our salvation, Jesus needed to be as human as you and me. It would take a womb to properly equip the Messiah for the task of bringing salvation to the "*end of the earth.*" And that, in fact, is exactly what Jesus says in our text this morning, through the words of the prophet Isaiah. "My Father," Jesus said... "God the Father Himself", Jesus says... "*[It was He who] formed me from the womb to be his servant*" (v 5). Because the servant's task was your salvation, because the servant's task was His suffering and death for your sins, the servant's task required a human body.

And so, after His miraculous conception by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus grew and developed in Mary's womb just like every human being. His heart began beating at around twenty-four days. Blood flowed in His veins at thirty days. He produced brain waves at forty-three days. By seven weeks He had little feet and little hands complete with finger prints. By eight weeks He, like all of us, was a small-scale baby one and an eighth inches long and weighing one thirtieth of an ounce!

The truth from Isaiah is that: in order to be a "*light for the nations*" and bring salvation to the "*end of the earth*" (v 6), the servant Jesus became one of us. The writer to the Hebrews put it this way, "*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery*" (Heb 2:14-15). It took a womb to do that. It took a womb to be the necessary beginning point for the task of bringing salvation to a fallen world. "*The LORD called me,*" Jesus says... "*The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name*" (v 1).

There's no way around it. If the Great "I Am," the God of the Old Testament, the God of Adam and Even and Abraham and Isaac, if God Himself was to keep His promise of salvation to us poor sinful beings, it would have to begin in a womb. He who would be the "*light for the nations*" had to begin His life in the darkness of His mother's body. The womb was an absolutely necessary place to begin.

The womb was absolutely necessary, and here's why. Psalm 51: "*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*" (v.5). God Himself tells us that our humanity begins at the moment of conception. He also tells us that our sinfulness begins at the moment of conception. Because our sinfulness begins at the moment of conception, our Savior from sin had to begin His sinless life from the moment of conception. To be our Savior, Jesus took our place, not only on a cross and in a tomb, but also in a womb. As strange as it may seem, God Himself makes it clear that it was absolutely necessary for our salvation that the servant Jesus be called "*from the womb.*"

It does seem strange though doesn't it? Instead of coming to save us with legions of angels and blazing chariots, our God came hiding in a womb! Instead of announcing His arrival with the voice of thunder, Jesus comes hiding. We see this "*hiding*" language in our text. Jesus would have a mouth "like a sharp sword" but—"in the shadow of his hand he hid me" (v 2a). Jesus would be like a "*polished arrow*" but—"in his quiver he hid me away" (v 2b).

Now it's true that sometimes God accomplishes His will visibly and powerfully— we think of how He parted the Red Sea or how He smashed apart the fortifications at Jericho so that "the walls of Jericho [could come a-]tumbling down. Sometimes He DOES act powerfully and publicly, but more often God accomplishes His will by hiding. Like the way in which He accomplished our salvation. He came not on the clouds, but hiding in a womb. Jesus came not as a king but hiding as a servant.

The great truth of our salvation is that Jesus did not come leading an army, but that He instead came to defeat sin and death and old Satan himself by hiding on a cross. Why a womb? To save you. So that the Christ would have a body, so that your Messiah would have a human with which to suffer and rise again for the salvation of the world. It took a womb as a necessary starting point to bring salvation to the world.

It took a womb for the Messiah to bring salvation for all humanity. This is a message that not only highlights the evil of abortion... this is a message that only shows that killing an unborn child is exactly that— murder, this is also a message that teaches us about whom God loves and whom God came to save. The last verse of our reading, verse 6. God the Father to Jesus His Son: "*I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*" Did you hear it? It's the message of Epiphany. Jesus was conceived in a womb for all nations, for all countries, for all people. The truth of the womb is also the truth that Jesus came —not just for a certain ethnic group or for people with a certain skin color or for people with a certain mental capacity— no! Jesus came to be light for ALL "*the nations.*" He came to bring

salvation to the "*end of the earth.*" Or as John points out in the Gospel reading, for the whole world. "*Behold,*" He says. "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" (Jn 1:29).

There's no room for discrimination or racial bias or bigotry in the life of a Christian because Jesus—your Lord Jesus came as an embryo in a womb to identify with all humanity and to bring salvation for all humanity, to "*take away the sin of the world.*" That's the message of Epiphany, that Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb to live and to die for everyone— for everyone from the oldest great-grandparent to the littlest tiniest little unborn child. That's the message of Christ's Church all year long. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that the littlest unborn children are not really people.

We may live in a country that says people not yet born are really not people. We may live in a country that says unborn people have no rights, not even the right to life. But know this: even though—after thirty-five years of abortions since *Roe v. Wade*— even though many even in the Church have forgotten the humanity of the unborn, Jesus has never forgotten. Jesus came for everyone. Just as Jesus entered a womb so He could bring salvation to every one of you... just so, every little embryo in a womb is part of the humanity for whom Jesus suffered and died and rose again.

I'm talking God-talk when I say this—and not talking politics— because this is what God Himself tells us in the sacred words of Holy Scripture. Every embryo in a womb not only has the right to life, but is someone for whom Jesus paid to have eternal life. God formed Jesus in the womb and God called Jesus from the womb so He could bring salvation to all humanity. All humanity—red or brown, black or white, young or old, fit or feeble, born or unborn—is precious in His sight.

That is the Good News! A Good News which gives value to those not yet born and about to enter this life. A Good News which gives value to those who are frail and about to leave this life. A Good News which says that Jesus entered a womb, lived, suffered, died, and rose again for you. To make things right with God for you. God, in Jesus, forgives you all your sins regardless of number or magnitude. In Jesus, you have hope and peace.

Why a womb? God formed Jesus in the womb and called Him from the womb so He could identify with and bring salvation to all people who began life in their mother's womb. Praise God, the Psalm reads, for we are "*fearfully and wonderfully made*" (Psalm 139:14). We are "*wonderfully made*" and we are even more—all the more wonderfully" saved by the precious blood and in the precious name of Christ Jesus our Savior. To Him be all glory, honor, and worship. Amen.

May the peace of God –which surpasses understanding–  
guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

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