



**Seven**  
**Part 3 – Walk in the Life**  
Pastor Ted Cunningham

We're in a series that we started a couple of weeks ago without you. It's called *Seven*. For seven weeks, we're walking through an outline found directly in the scripture: Proverbs 6. Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday. To be honest, it's been very heavy this week as we've prepared for it. Very heavy for me because if I'm being honest with you, over the last sixteen years, I can't think of a time where I gave an entire Sunday to speak up for and champion those who cannot speak up for themselves. I just wanted to tell you that's the tension I feel this morning is that I haven't spoken of this enough.

If you remember, the Sunday before the election in 2016, we talked about NOTA, *None Of The Above*. We weren't all that thrilled with our choices and we were having a difficult time going to the voting booth. Some of you are like, "I didn't," but a lot of us did. And we talked about this and it was one of the points of what we agree on as a church family. If I'm just telling you my struggle with teaching and preaching on it and why it hasn't been heard enough here, it is for one, it's uncomfortable for me – if you know me and my teaching style – and I also feel unqualified.

But, I know clearly from the Lord that is nothing compared to the urgency of this message and so, when we teach and preach up here, just so you know, our desire is to speak the truth of God's Word clearly. We never want you leaving, asking, "What was that all about?" We never want you guessing what we believe or where we stand on this. We never want you leaving, asking those questions. We want you to leave knowing clearly what we believe, but we also want you leaving thinking *as hard of a truth as that was to speak and as clearly as I received it...* That's what I hope. I hope that in all of that you hear compassion and love. Our desire is to speak truth in love.

So, today, as we speak truth in love, we hope for many this will be a morning of repentance. We hope for many this will be a morning of remembrance. You've already repented over the sin that we are going to speak of today and yet you've never really mourned. Our hearts this week have been to create an environment and experience today around this subject of God's Word, that you can leave here mourning with hope. That's our desire and that's how we choose to end.

We're taking Proverbs 6 as our outline. If you're new, just joining us in the series, we've covered the first two but it says, ***16 There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him...*** We studied this the first week. This is a rhetorical device used in Hebrew poetry. It embellishes the poetry to give us a memory aid to build to a climax. As you go through this list, it's not that there are six things the Lord hates, but this last one is the most detestable; no, this is all detestable to God.

We said, as a church family going into 2018, we want to take this list personally, first and foremost, and then corporately. We also are clear as we speak on this that if God hates it, we should hate it too. If God finds it detestable, we should find it detestable too. We do this and stand on this. We want to stand and have a standard of righteousness, without becoming bitter, resentful, whiney, complaining Christians who happen to be citizens of the United States of America. We want to watch that as well.

So, we covered **haughty eyes** the first week. It's that person who looks down you. We said it's hard to serve someone when you're looking down on them, so the position of Jesus was the servant and he was looking up. We talked about having humility in our lives.

Last week, Shay spoke on the lying tongue. I haven't even told Shay this yet, but Shay's message last week was our highest watched live stream of all times. So, Shay, I want you to record that, that's a pretty big deal. Attendance was down about 85%, but live stream was up like 850%, so we were really proud of him; we thought he did a fantastic job.

Today we are talking about **hands that shed innocent blood**. Then, in the weeks to come, we're going to continue in this list: **18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.**

Pastor John Piper from Minnesota says this: "Surely the blood of the unborn is as innocent as any blood that flows in the world."

To start us this morning, this we all believe... I don't think I've ever met a Christian that would disagree with me on this, but if they did, it wouldn't take long to spend some time in the scripture with them and have a healthy conversation. But, we, as a church family, believe God is the Creator and Sustainer of all human life. And all God's people said... Amen.

In Genesis 1, **27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them...** So, for those who come in here today finding themselves worthless, you feel you have no value or maybe you were told your entire life by Mom and Dad, "You're never going to amount to much." So, you've carried that message through your whole life. *I have nothing to offer, nothing to contribute. I have no value.* Understand you were created in the image of God. That gives you automatic, intrinsic value. When sin entered the picture in Genesis 3, it marred the image of God in man, but it did not remove the image of God in man.

**...male and female he created them.** If you're new to our church, you need to know we are teaching our children to embrace their biological sex and we're teaching them how to marry the opposite sex. And all God's people said... Amen. That's because we believe man is created in the image of God, male and female, he created them.

Genesis 2 - **7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.** This is why when you get to the Ten Commandments... To kind of clear this up a little bit, the value of life is clear in there, but we want to focus today on innocent blood. This passage has often been misinterpreted in Exodus 20: 13 – **"You**

***shall not murder.***” Some say this is actually interpreted as “thou shalt not kill,” but as you study the scripture, you know that killing is not forbidden in the scripture in terms of capital punishment by the government, in terms of self-defense, in terms of warfare, criminal resistance, that type of killing. Today, we’re talking about the one who sheds innocent blood and ***“You shall not murder.”***

We’re going to launch into this today with not only did God create and he created you and he sustains your life – the very breath you take right now comes from Almighty God – we believe that all life begins in the womb. And when you study this in the scripture, this is such a powerful study because so much is talked about how God’s plan for your life, his purpose for your life, the structure and the meaning of your life doesn’t begin when you hit a certain point in education. It doesn’t begin when you hit adulthood. It doesn’t begin when you’re born. His purpose and plan and the very meaning and structure of your life begins in the womb.

Our most familiar passage with this we find in Psalm 139, and then we are going to look at some you may have never studied before. This is David. ***13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.*** The idea here is that... And this is affirming God’s purpose and plan for David did not start at his birth, it did not start in his adulthood; it started in the womb.

It goes on to say: ***14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place...*** In this day and time, the development of the fetus was a mystery to the ancients. They didn’t know clearly how it worked. Today, maybe some of you have had this and maybe some of you are still getting the 2D black and white, but others are getting that 3D picture of their child. But, it was a mystery to the ancients. ***..when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body...*** And then here is where we get the idea of the meaning and the structure and the plan for a person’s life is found in the womb, starts in the womb, not after birth. ***...all the days ordained for me were written in your book (before birth) before one of them came to be.***

As you read through scripture... I love this one. Rebecca is carrying Jacob and Esau. The scripture says that the twins *jostled* within her. Do we have anybody carrying right now? Do we have any mothers-to-be in the room? They get the term jostling, you understand jostling. It’s not a term we see a bunch and it’s not a term we use a bunch, but when Jacob and Esau were jostling inside of her, she inquired of the Lord. And the Lord said this to her... Talk about purpose and plan of God. He said, ***“Two nations are in your womb.”*** – Genesis 25: 23.

When you go past the Ten Commandments, here’s part of the law and how it’s going to work in Exodus 21. ***22 “If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows.*** But, now watch this: ***23 But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.*** Life begins in the womb, you find purpose, plan, and meaning for life in the womb. That’s where it starts, not at birth.

Yet, as we are planning for the birth of a child, we make all sorts of plans. We get the room ready, especially if... If you're a firstborn in here, lots of plans went into your birth, lots of plans. If you're a lastborn, we didn't give it much thought. I've got to be honest with you, we were tired. And all God's people said... Amen.

Think about Samson's mom. Samson... Coming to a theater near you soon. Think about his mom's planning because Samson was supposed to be, and was going to be, and it was planned ahead of time to be a Nazarite. So, his mom.... And I love this text. His mom is told by angel: **"...the boy is to be a Nazarite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."** This is why the instruction before this is "Sorry, you can't have wine during your pregnancy because your son is going to be a Nazarite, set aside, dedicated to the Lord."

Jeremiah and Paul understood this meaning and structure in their life and the purpose and plan of God in their life, beginning in the womb. Jeremiah, the prophet, quoting the Lord, said this in Jeremiah 1: **5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I set you apart; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."** So, you see this theme. His days were laid out before one of them came to be.

In Galatians, Paul gives the same sentiment. It sounds almost just like the Prophet Jeremiah. **15 But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace...**

As we watched this week... I was kind of wanting to see more coverage of the Right to Life marches around the country, but that was overshadowed by other marches and that was sad for me because I think, deep down, we sometimes focus just on how life begins in the womb and we forget that God's purpose and plan and meaning for our life began in the womb.

Then, I get these mixed messages from our culture. Last month, Amy and I went to visit the 9/11 Memorial. It's my second time visiting there. If you haven't been there, I want to encourage you to go there. I don't have a voice there so I'm going to share it with you all in case you go to visit. I just feel like we haven't prepared our young people, our children, the next generation well on how to behave at a memorial, how to show respect and reverence and honor. It's just my opinion that big smiles on faces taking selfies at the 9/11 seems very awkward to me. It's a very sober place. If you were as glued to your television set as I was on September 11 and now you go there to where it took place and where it is being remembered...

And then Amy pointed this out to me and it just jumped out at me. This is a picture from Flight 77 and this is the south tower memorial, but you see right down here it says, "Renee May and her unborn child." I had a brief worship service sitting there. It's funny because you hear New York and your first thought is... Whatever your first thoughts are. I have my first thoughts, but... I love our people from New York. But, it was a crazy weekend for me because every single store and every single restaurant... It wasn't a weekend; it was a Monday and a Tuesday. Every store we went into and every restaurant we went into, I heard praise and worship to my Savior. It was the Christmas season and the sacred songs of Christmas were playing everywhere.

I wanted to go up to some of them and say, “Do you hear this says *O Come all ye faithful*? Are you hearing that? Do you know that’s playing here at your store? Do you know it’s saying, *Joy to the world*? It’s not talking about shopping; it’s talking about the birth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” So, I’m already telling Amy, “Isn’t it crazy how well Christmas is celebrated in this town where, to me, the nations of the world meet?” The nations of the world meet and all of them are listening to the sounds of our Savior.

And then I go to the Wall, I go to the Memorial and I see that New York City is recognizing that the unborn doesn’t mean you are not a child. I’m like “New York, thank you that you are able to put *unborn* and *child* in the same statement, that you are able to say this is true – a baby perished that day as well.” In Flight 77, I believe there were two unborn children that were on that flight.

And then the mixed messages that we get. If you’ve studied this any... And you can get these numbers. I want to share with you some numbers of our nation. This is from Planned Parenthood’s own report, so I don’t get this from some kooky website. This comes straight from them. Planned Parenthood... The report is from the years 2016 and 2017. Tax payers funded Planned Parenthood \$543,700,000.00. That number translated into them performing 321,384 abortions. In the 45 years since Roe v. Wade has passed, we’re told over 60 million unborn children have been murdered. I use that term very clearly. I want you to know that we believe that abortion is murder. It’s the shedding of innocent blood. And the shedding of innocent blood God hates, he detests.

This number is the one that gets me because the breakdown in our culture with life and the fact that we’ve removed value from human life is we allowed... and you’ve heard me say this before: He who frames the question wins the debate. So, the question now and the debate has been framed around women’s health. I’m not here today to talk to you about women’s health, I’m here to talk to you about unborn children’s health. I’m here to talk to you about the children who are unable to speak for themselves.

Planned Parenthood talks about women’s health and they say they give options. I don’t think options are quite what they give when you see the ratio. For every 83 abortions, there was one adoption referral. I could spend the morning building this out, but I feel the scripture stands on its own with the purpose and meaning of life being in the womb, not after birth.

I had the opportunity over the last couple of years to travel with an organization and this has kind of helped reignite it in me because, again, I’m uncomfortable and unqualified or for whatever reason, we don’t talk about it enough, but with the Date Night Comedy Tour, we invited this ministry to travel along with us. It’s called Save the Storks. They are kind of reframing the Pro-Life conversation for the millennial generation and instead of just standing outside of Planned Parenthood buildings and marching and getting arrested or whatever the case to really fight for the rights of the unborn. I know that was the way of previous generations. Save the Storks is coming in saying, “We can have the same core beliefs, we can still fight for the unborn, but we can do it in different ways.”

Today, as we move into “What do we do with this?” “How do we respond as people of faith in Christ Jesus?” “What do we do?” My friends at Save the Storks have really helped me process this to give the

church more than just picketing or standing outside or marching, but the practical side of pastoral and ministerial care for those who have already made the decision to abort, for those who are considering abortion. Here's where I want to start with that conversation because I think sometimes when we talk about abortion, we think only of the woman and that's not where we want to start as we talk about how we practically and pastorally and ministerially handle this.

Here's the quote that Save the Storks give, "Sixty-four percent of women who chose abortion say they felt pressured by others to abort." Boyfriends, fiancés, husbands, moms, dads, and in many cases today because 15 million homes have grandparents raising grandchildren, it's grandparents that are encouraging it as well.

This is the first group we want to share with today as we move into a time of repenting and a time of mourning for you to begin to process your part. If you were part of this decision-making process, I want you, right now, to allow the Holy Spirit to call you by name. I want you to... whatever you're resisting... The problem with this subject today is we feel if we stuff it, if we stop thinking about it, if we don't talk about it, my sin from 20 years ago, my sin from 30 years ago, my sin from 45 years ago will just go away. For many in here, you've been living with the guilt and the shame of that decision and today we want you to leave here freed and under no condemnation in the name of Jesus Christ.

Grandma, Grandpa, Mom, Dad, whatever conversation you had that led to the taking of a life to the shedding of innocent blood, that you would own that today, that you would take responsibility for that today.

Save the Storks has a van. I believe this van, fully equipped, costs \$150,000.00. They drive it all over the country. I don't know how many they have right now. They've been adding them because every time they share it and every time someone sees one, some donor steps up and says, "I want to buy one for our city." I love it because four out of five women who step into that van choose life for their baby. Save the Storks is raising funds in a lot of areas.

We have Options Pregnancy here in our community. I called Travis Brawner this week who oversees all of our missions and all of our local missions and ministries and all of that. I said, "Can we make a gift to Options Pregnancy on behalf of the church?" even though offering have been dismal the first two weeks. Again, I don't keep track of money, but I'm like, "Are we okay? Can we give money to Options Pregnancy?"

He responded back with, "How much?"

Well, I'm the guy who doesn't know the numbers; you don't ask me how much. I have no idea. I said, "You make that decision."

Travis and the elders will get together this week and make a gift on behalf of Woodland Hills Family Church to Options Pregnancy so more women will choose life for their baby, so that more women will choose the life of a child over convenience, understanding that 3-5% of abortions are done in severe cases of the mother's health or with rape or incest, etc. Over 95% of abortions are done out of

convenience and not wanting to affect a lifestyle. We, as a church, want to call out those who are the voices into the life of those who get pregnant that you would be a healthy voice into that life and help those who are considering ending the life... Be a healthy voice.

I'm looking right now at the students. The first time I had to get involved in this conversation, I was 16 years old. I remember sitting at an IHOP with two friends a year older than me, 17 years old, asking me what they should do. They didn't plan on the pregnancy. I'm sitting there at 16 years old. I am a voice.

I'm looking down here... You guys are 14 and 15 years old. You're there. People are going to ask you your thoughts and opinions on this. "What do we do? I don't know how we ended up in this situation?" Speak up for life. Let them know we can help. Your church can help. The benevolence funds that we have available... Do you know how many grandmas who are in this room that are wanting to babysit and wanting to bring you diapers and wanting to care for your kids. This is a community of voices that wants to stand up with you and help you be the voice.

Here's the sad truth... Again, this comes from Save the Storks. Currently, 94% of American Evangelical Churches lack a Pro-Life expression, yet one out of three women will go through the heartache of abortion in her lifetime. So, churches are lacking the Pro-Life expression and I'll tell you why. We're caught up in the relevant church growth movement. We don't want to marginalize people. We don't want people to be sending us letters. Do you have any idea how many letters and emails we'll get this week? Not just from y'all, but people around the country that watch this. We'll hear about it. Instead of "They don't want to hear about it, so we won't say it," we say, "We're saying it; bring it on. We'll do everything we can."

I don't know how you can claim to be a relevant church in today's culture without helping, ministering to, caring for, providing funds for the one out of three women who are going through this heartache, who are in here right now. Hear that as our heart today, as some of the statement may have hit. I pray because I know sometimes I may lack the tone or lack the approach, but I hope you hear past that to hear the heart of love from this congregation for you.

Going through this himself, Lecrae wrote a song about it. He says, "Sometimes we try to bury our sins, but the healing process begins when we let them come to light."

That's what we want to do today. We've never done this before... I'm praying right now, asking the Lord to give me guidance and wisdom through the process. But, we want to end our service today with a time of repentance and remembrance.

If you've had an abortion, if you've begged someone to have an abortion, if you got physical with someone because they didn't want to have an abortion, but you finally overpowered them and drove them there yourself... Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, you were like, "It would make more sense, it would be easier" and there may have been a heavy pressure, but your voice was a voice in their life that led to the abortion. We want to invite you today to bring that to the light and repent to that. We want you to allow the Holy Spirit to call you by name.

We can't move onto remembrance until the repentance begins. But the reason we are calling it repentance and remembrance is because I have many friends in here right now that found out about the loss of their child or their grandchild years later.

A couple of months ago, I put on Facebook that we were planning a service similar to this and this isn't really the service we had in mind; we think we are going to do this again in the fall to focus on infant loss as well. But as I put it out there and I mentioned something to the effect of "I'm praying for those who have lost children to abortion," the lack of compassion from so many Christians that came on and said, "You didn't lose a child to abortion; you took a child's life."

You want to talk about praying. I don't know if you know, but I have a tongue can just take you out. The Lord had to restrain me because you're not thinking clearly. You haven't thought through it from all sides. There are people in here that lost a child, there are people in here who lost a grandchild to abortion and it was not a decision they made. It was not a decision they were complicit in. It was a decision they found out about years later and that's when the mourning began for them. For those who hold the deep conviction that God's plan, purpose, and meaning for life begins in the womb, that was taken.

One lady shared with me this week. "I have multiple grandchildren who are with the Lord."

So, we want this to be a time of repentance... AND remembrance for some. If you have shed innocent blood, leave here today free of condemnation. Leave here today forgiven in the Lord. Don't feed your regrets one more day. Ask Jesus to redeem your remaining days. That's what we're asking you to do. As you do that, we want to help you do that, we want to help you remember. We want to give you a time where you can actually mourn with hope the loss of your child.

A display has been set up out here right behind the sound booth and it's on this side of the auditorium and it's over in the Chapel as well. If you feel like you've never mourned the loss of your child well, we want to invite you as a family. The team came up with what I thought was a great idea. It's everything you need to grow your own cherry blossom tree from seed. I looked at it today and I thought... it says the cherry blossoms of Washington, D.C. I said, "Lord, I just know that somehow that is very fitting." It's a flowering tree and there's everything you need to grow it from seed. This can just be an activity for your family to begin growing this tree inside and to take it outside and to plant this tree and to have your own service, a service of remembrance, a service to remember the loss of your child.

We've written a prayer that you can pray over this special time because many may not have the words, may not know what to say or how to lead their family in such a thing. Some of you are going to be sharing with your children the loss of their brothers or sisters. Maybe you'll be sharing for the first time with grandparents who didn't know that they have grandchildren who are with the Lord. Some of you may be sharing with a spouse that they have a child who is with the Lord right now and they never knew. Where this lacks words, let the heart go with it and add to it and make it your own, but we just wanted to give you a place to start as you remember the loss of your child.

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

Here's the prayer over your child that was lost to abortion. I even want to encourage you, if you lost a child to miscarriage, that display is open to you as well. If you've never been taught or you never thought about remembering and mourning with hope, we want to invite you to pick this up as well and to have a special time with your family to remember your son or your daughter.

Father, you created our child in your image. Our child has a family. We mourn with hope because our child's home is eternal. We can't wait to meet our child one day. Lord, you tell us that you draw near to the brokenhearted. Bless and comfort our family now as we mourn. We mourn and rejoice as we anticipate meeting our child one day soon. We know of the day and long for the day when you ***4 ...will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for those things will have passed away.*** – Rev 21 ***55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*** – 1 Cor 15

We ask for your peace which transcends our understanding and guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Thank you for receiving our child to live for all of eternity with you.

In the authority of the name of Jesus we pray, and all God's people said... Amen.

One day, you will meet your child. One day, you will embrace your child. One day, you will walk with your child and you will get to spend all eternity and what a day that will be.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for life and we are grateful that you, the Creator and Sustainer of all human life, gave meaning to our lives in the womb. You had plan and structure and value because we were created in your image in the womb. We have great meaning and great purpose.

I pray now for the men and women all throughout this congregation who have been living with the regret and the shame that comes with the shedding of innocent blood. I pray today that they confess that sin before you, claiming the name of Jesus Christ and the power of his blood over that sin that today they leave here freed, able to speak up, able to mourn the loss of their child, able to have prayers of thanksgiving to you and to have joy in their heart as they one day look forward to meeting their child, their grandchild. For this we are grateful.

Father, give us wisdom on how we can do more as a church to be a voice for the unborn. Give us wisdom how we can say more and do more and give more. If this church needs to provide tools and resources that four out of five women will step off of a bus or out of a building, choosing life over death and the shedding of innocent blood, give us wisdom, discernment, and the resources to provide for that as well.

We pray all this in the power and the authority of the name of Jesus.