



WESTLAKE HILLS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sermon Series: Year of the Child:
"Fearfully and Wonderfully Made"

Psalm 139:1-4, 13-18
Rev. Dr. Peter Barnes
Sunday, January 22, 2012

Introduction.

There was once a family which made a regular practice of having devotions together. One particular night the father shared with his children the story in Genesis 2 about the creation of Adam and Eve, and he told them how Adam was created from the dust of the earth and God breathed into Adam's nostrils and he became a living person.

One of the kids asked, "Did Adam really come from the dust of the earth?" The father replied, "Yes he did, honey. The Bible also says from dust we came, and to dust we shall return when we die."

One of the other children thought about that for a while. Then he said, "Well, if that's true, I don't know if he's coming or going, but there's someone under my bed!"

Psalm 139 says that every person on the planet, and every child in the world, is fearfully and wonderfully made by God. We are not a cosmic accident. God created every person, and each child, for a purpose, and it is only when we come to realize this marvelous truth that our lives can take on the true meaning for which they were intended.

I. Every Child Is a Masterpiece of God.

*For You created my inmost being;
You knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

*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, Your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (139:13-16).*

Do you think of yourself as a masterpiece? Most people don't, and most kids don't either. Everyone, even super models, have things about them they don't like. *I wish I was taller. I wish I was shorter. My nose is too big. I wish I had more hair. I wish I was smarter, or more athletic, or funnier.* There are things we don't like about ourselves.

Recently, I read where Cindy Crawford said, "Even I don't wake up looking like Cindy Crawford. I have fat days, ugly days, blimp days, and days that I just feel terrible about myself. I don't want to have to be beautiful all the time." And Brooke Shields told *People* magazine that earlier in her career, "I didn't want to [look in the mirror]. What if I didn't like what I saw? What if I didn't look like I did in the magazines?" These days she's having trouble with aging. "People say, 'I love my wrinkles.' I don't love my wrinkles - come on!"

Most of us have something we don't like about ourselves, but the Bible still says we are masterpieces made by God. The word "masterpiece" has an interesting origin. In medieval times, a regular craftsman would work for months on a special piece that displayed his finest artistic skill. Finally, when the work was

finished, he would present it to the craftsmen's guild in hopes of achieving the rank of master. In this way, the work was called his masterpiece.

Scripture says you and I, and every child in this world, are the crowning act of God's creation; we are His masterpiece. Among all the creatures of the world, only humans are made in the image of God, and because of this we are forever linked in our essence to the Lord. We are His masterpiece. With the womb as God's studio, the Master Craftsman creates His work of art as He fashions each human being.

When I read this psalm, I get a sense of the significance of every child's life, and I am blown away at the interest God has in each person down to the last detail of our fingerprints and the delicate curve of our eyelashes. If you ever wonder about your significance in this big universe we live in, if you ever feel like you're just a number and you don't matter, read this psalm and remember this truth – you and I and every child in the world are fearfully and wonderfully made by God!

II. Every Child Is a Gift From God.

I went to the hospital to see the newest member of the WHPC family – little Dylan Grace Charbonneau, who was born to Mark and Jen two Sundays ago. And last night I got to meet for the first time Alan Grayson Howry, who was born 5 weeks early. What a picture of beauty these two babies are! When I saw these children, I couldn't help but think back to the birth of my own three children and the miracle each one was to Lorie and me. I also thought of their prenatal development and the pictures I'd seen of little ones as they develop in the womb.

- on the 10th day after fertilization, the embryo stops the mother's menstrual cycle.
- on the 24th day the heart begins to beat through a closed circulatory system.
- at 4 weeks arm buds appear, and the embryo is distinctly curled. Eyes begin to form.
- at 6 weeks it is less than ½ inch long, but brain waves can be recorded. There are the first movements, and the spine is clearly visible.
- at 7 weeks they have clearly defined fingers, they move their hands. The unborn female has 600,000 germ ova in her developing body.
- at 8 weeks the unborn child becomes a fetus (which is Latin for "young one"). This is when the baby has an unmistakably human appearance. They are very animated, sometimes doing flips in the womb. All systems are laid down: skeletal, digestive, circulatory and respiratory.
- at 9 weeks the fetus has fingerprints that will remain the same until their death. She sucks her thumb and can swallow.
- at 12 weeks she turns her head, frowns, makes a fist, curls her toes. Fingernails begin to appear. She has waking and sleeping periods, and she can hear.
- at 14 weeks she just gets bigger, fatter and cuter until the time she is born.ⁱ

Children are fearfully and wonderfully made, but in many ways kids aren't valued in our society as much as I think they should be. Too many children are the victims of violence, neglect, and abuse. Over 1 million unborn children will be aborted in this country this year, and whether you are pro-life or pro-choice that's just way too many. As many as 450,000 kids will be involved in child-trafficking this year.ⁱⁱ Each year more than 1 million children are exploited in the sex trade globally.ⁱⁱⁱ And millions of other kids around the world are at risk because of a lack of access to water, education, and medical care. Each of these kids is fearfully and wonderfully made, but our world doesn't see them that way.

Disregard for children destroys lives and breeds fear, and kids are the ones who pay the biggest price. In many ways I believe we are mortgaging the future of our children and our grandchildren in this country with the national debt, our pollution of the planet, and our pursuit of the good life – all at the expense of our kids. They seem to be the ones who get the short end of the stick all too often.

The first car I ever bought was a silver Toyota Celica. It was such a cool car back in its day. I remember how proud I was when I bought that car. I paid cash and drove it off the lot, and I loved that car because it was fearfully and wonderfully made. When I first bought Yoda (that was the nickname I gave it!), I was meticulous in how I cared for that car. I washed and waxed it often, I changed the oil myself, I read the owner's manual from cover to cover, and I took it to the dealer for regular maintenance. When Lorie and I started dating, I was horrified when I discovered she liked to eat food while driving in the car. Chips and dip all over my beautiful car! Oh no! Do you know how hard it is to clean out French fries between the seat and the console?! That was something we had to negotiate in our relationship!

Gradually, however, as the car got older I didn't take care of it quite as well. I began to take it for granted, and I wasn't as careful as I was when I first bought the car. It got some dents and scratches. I didn't wash it quite as often. And so what if there were a few French fries between the seats. Eventually, I sold Yoda when she was 10 years old, and I no longer thought of her as fearfully and wonderfully made.

I know kids aren't cars, but I wonder how we do the same thing with children. When they're first born, we ooooo and ahhhhh and spend all our time doting over them. But along the way we lose some of our wonder, as well as our patience, and we begin to take them for granted. How do I know this? Just look at the incidence of child neglect and abuse in this country. Or, to bring it closer to home, just look at my own heart and my own life. How often do you and I communicate to a child they aren't very valuable, they aren't as important as God says they are?

Conclusion/Application.

Psalm 139 reminds us that every child is fearfully and wonderfully made. God created us, and He knit us together in our mother's wombs. He was there from the beginning, and He has a special plan for every person. From the moment of our conception to the day when we draw our last breath, all the days of our lives have been ordained by God. We belong to Him, and we are precious in His sight. That's what the psalmist says.

Once a young boy built a small sailboat. He spent many weeks carving the hull, tying the rigging, sewing the sails, and the painting the body. When it was complete, this sailboat was the best sailboat the little boy had ever seen. It was beautiful, and it was his. Every day after school, he would take the sailboat down to the lake near his house and sail it until the sun went down. One day, however, the wind was much stronger than usual, and it blew the boy's boat to the other side of the lake, and it was lost.

Every day after school, the boy walked down to the lake hoping to find his lost sailboat, but to no avail. After a few weeks, when the boy had almost given up on his dream, he went to the lake and saw his sailboat in the water. It was scratched and the sail was a little torn, but he knew it was his sailboat because it has all his familiar markings. He was so happy that he found his lost sailboat at last.

Just as he was about to reach for the boat, another boy appeared and shouted "Hey, get away from that boat. It's mine!"

"But it isn't yours," the boy said. "I made it. It belongs to me!"

"I found it, so it's mine!" said the second boy.

"Let me buy it back, then?" pleaded the maker of the little boat.

"How much do you have?" the boy asked.

And the little boy said, "Promise to come back here tomorrow, and I'll show you."

With that the young boy ran home as fast as he could. He gathered all of his toys, his comic books and marbles, his soccer ball, even his most prized video game, and he bundled them all together into a backpack.

The next afternoon, the boy took his backpack of treasures and ran to the lake. There waiting was the other boy with the sailboat in his hand. The young boy put his backpack on the ground and opened it, allowing the other boy to see everything inside. The other boy's eyes lit up for a moment, but then a very

serious look came over his face.

"How much of that can I have for the sailboat?" he asked.

"I'll give you everything," was the young boy's reply.

And the deal was done. The boy took his little boat and headed for home. And he was heard to say as he held the boat tightly in his arms, "Little boat, I love you even more now than ever before. You are twice mine - once because I made you, and now because I have bought you!"

The same could be said of us and God. We are twice His. Once because He made us, and now because He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, but we have also been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. As we come to the table of our Lord this day, let's remember how much the Father loves us and the fact that we are, in truth, twice His. Amen.

ⁱ Fetal development information taken from: *Nova* film series; Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, *Abortion: Questions and Answers*; Lennart Nilsson, *A Child Is Born*; *Life Magazine* article, "Life Before Birth"; and Bernard Nathanson, *Aborting America*.

ⁱⁱ <http://biusvspa.blogspot.com/2011/03/statistics-on-human-trafficking.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*