

Minister's Message – April 2012

Euthanasia

The word 'euthanasia' comes from Greek meaning a good or easy death. Death is the result of sin so is not 'good'. After death comes divine judgement: heaven for those who are 'in Christ' and hell for those not 'in Christ'. 'It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement' (Hebrews 9:27). It is during this life only that people can repent and believe in Jesus. There is no purgatory. Some have repented and believed on their deathbed.

Life is the gift of God (Genesis 2:7). Human life is precious to God because he is the giver of life. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. When Job was destitute and scratching painful boils that covered his body, his wife told him to curse God and die, but Job would not take his own life – unlike Saul and his armour bearer (1 Samuel 31:3-5).

One of God's commands is 'do not murder' (Exodus 20:13, Romans 13:9). Anyone breaking this command is guilty before God. In Genesis 9:6 we read 'Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.' This is God's holy law and it is also the law of our land. No man has the right take his own life (suicide) or the life of another human being (murder).

Euthanasia might be called 'dying with dignity' but it is in truth assisted suicide or murder. It is promoted because of the unbearable pain experienced by some with incurable diseases or medical conditions. Yet palliative care is available to most in our society. There are those who want euthanasia for anyone whose life is seen as useless in our society, such as those with severe mental or physical abnormality. But who will be the judge of a useful or a useless life?

Peter Singer? In 1983 this 'ethics' wrote 'if we compare a severely defective human infant with a non-human animal, a dog or a pig for example, we will often find the non-human to have superior capacities. In 1993 he shocked Americans by suggesting no newborn should be considered a person until 30 days after birth and that the attending physician should kill some disabled babies on the spot. This has led to the idea of 'after birth abortions.' The ethics of Singer and others do not stop at disabled babies. They consign disabled adults to the status of lesser human beings with no right to live.

The Lord is able to heal the sick if he so chooses. He can also use pain and suffering for his glory. Pain and suffering are reminders of this world's guilt before God. To think that death might be an escape from intolerable suffering for those who will not acknowledge their Creator is extreme folly.

No man has the right to take the life of another. This is murder. The Biblical ethic of the sanctity of life is common to Christian and non-Christian alike in our society because God has placed it at the heart of his creation from the beginning (Romans 1). The good news of the gospel is that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered the extreme pain of death and then overcame death by rising from it so that he might give eternal life to those who believe in him.

Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon