

The Sanctity of Human Life (and “Perfect Hatred”)

Psalm 139

The Psalms (no. 10 in the series)

June 16, 2019

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/the-sanctity-of-human-life-and-your-life/>

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This document was prepared by Michael Hanna using Peter’s notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Michael know. Thank you!

Prayer

And so Father, I thank you that Jesus who died will be satisfied, that your Word will accomplish that for which it was sent. And now Lord God I pray that you would send you word even as we preach. And through the power of your Spirit you would apply your Word to our hearts. Lord God, you know that I’m going to talk about stuff that stresses people out. And you know that I’m imperfect. (People are “amen-ing” that prayer…) But Lord God you are perfect, and I pray that you would perfectly apply your Word. And Lord for those that are here this morning that weren’t here last week that they would trust that you are Good. And that they would also know the things in last week’s message that we don’t have time to talk about today. God, I’m asking you to connect dots. And that when all the dots are connected we can see the face of Jesus. So it’s in your name Lord Jesus that we pray, and that we preach. Amen.

Message

Psalm 139

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 1 **O Lord, you have searched me and known me!**
- 1 **O Lord, you have searched me and known me!**
- 2 **You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.**
- 3 **You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.**
- 4 **Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.**
- 5 **You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.**
- 6 **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.**

I can’t take this knowledge like fruit from a tree.

I must receive this knowledge by Grace—like a treasure placed in a field or a seed planted in broken and fertile soil.

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?

Your *Ruach*, Your Breath.

Where shall I go from your Spirit, for in some amazing way that I cannot comprehend... I am your Spirit in a vessel of clay... a golem.

Last week we preached about this Psalm and the Sanctity of Human Life.

You can't comprehend it, but you know it...

As a young pastor I sat with a young woman named Stephanie as she died. I had never had a conversation with Stephanie, for she had been severely handicapped for as long as I remembered. And yet when she died, I had this remarkable sensation that someone had just left the room.

In our society we insulate people from death and birth, and that's a tragedy.

Last week I told you that when my son was born, and handed to me screaming, I spoke a word and immediately he fell silent—he knew my voice. He had come to know it in the womb.

The Sanctity of human life must be a spirit in the clay of humanity, that is capable of recognizing our Father's voice—and our Father is Love.

One day as a new father I was sitting on our couch feeding crackers to my one-year-old daughter Elizabeth, standing on my lap. If you've never done such a thing, let me tell you, it's really gross.

She was gnawing on a wet ball of wheat and boogers... when she looked at me, stopped, put her little fingers in her mouth, pulled out the ball of goo, put it in my mouth, and smiled.

All at once, I was just overwhelmed with gratitude and awe. On the world list of mutually agreed upon good deeds, it didn't rank very high, but for me it was the pinnacle. I suddenly realized that my lump of clay, recognized me—recognized that I was a person as she was a person. And as I had given my love to her, she now enjoyed giving my love, now her love, back to me... it was a communion.

The Sanctity of Human Life must be a spirit capable of loving and being loved.

Scripture teaches that God yearns jealously over the spirit he has made to dwell in us. Solomon, son of David, writes that we know not how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child... so we don't know exactly when it happens, but we know that it happens, and it happens in the womb.

This whole world is like a womb according to Scripture.

The Spirit comes to us in the beginning, just as it came to a ball of *Adamah* or clay that we call Adam. And the Spirit comes to us at baptism and communion. The Spirit comes to us as the Word spoken. And the Spirit falls on the church at Pentecost.

That's the Spirit of Jesus. St. Paul wrote that we become one Spirit with Him.ⁱ He himself said, "Whatever you do to the least of these you do to me."

- As if he himself is the treasure in your jar of clay.
- As if he himself inhabits the temple that is you.
- As if you are his body... whether you know it or not.

Jesus said, "I am... the Life." Human Life is sacred, but we don't have a "*right to life*." Life is a gift, just as Jesus is a gift. You can't take it like fruit from a tree; you must receive it like love from a bridegroom, or a ball of goo from your little girl.

Jesus is "the Life" and God has made Jesus our "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," according to Scripture.ⁱⁱ A Good Free Choice is sacred, but you don't have a right to choose. A Good Free Choice is Wisdom and Righteousness; it's Jesus in you. It's the gift of God in you—not that you'd be proud, but grateful.

He is "our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification..."

Jesus is literally the "sanctity" of human life... He is "our wisdom Righteousness Sanctification and Redemption" He is what you're worth, what God pays for you. God wants you, just as he wants Jesus, and just as he want's himself. God is the infinite treasure buried behind the curtain in the depths of the sanctuary of your soul... and your neighbor's soul. When you come to the cross the curtain rips and his Spirit floods the temple that is you... He is your sanctity and you are His Sanctuary.

The Sanctity of Human Life is that which you could never ever pay for. In other words, it can only be "forgiven."

Richard Rohr writes "'Fore-given' means given to beforehand – before you earned it, were worthy of it, or maybe even asked for it."ⁱⁱⁱ You were fore-given from the foundation of the world, yet it was revealed to you upon a tree in a garden on Mt. Calvary.

Listen closely: "You... are fore-given... you."^{iv}

Last week I told you of an absolutely wonderful woman who was forced to have an abortion at 23 weeks when she was just fifteen... and she saw her baby girl. She told my wife, "I can't go to church and I cannot be forgiven."

As I explained last week: "I know that Jesus has her baby; I'm not in the least bit worried about the baby. Jesus has her baby, but does Jesus have her heart, for she thinks she can't be forgiven?"

She thinks she is unwanted by her mother—the people of God—and by her father who is God. She thinks she must be aborted for she cannot justify herself... And she has tried. I've known her story for a long time and I've known it well, and I never understood why she chose her own pain, over and over and over again, but I do now. She is trying to pay. And she can't pay.

Maybe you're a soldier and you shot a man between the eyes. They said it was OK, but he looked at you, and you knew he was holy. And now you think you can't be forgiven and you're trying to pay. Hell is thinking you must pay... and you can't pay.

Maybe you're like David: he raped Bathsheba and murdered Uriah. And then he sees it. Like we read in Psalm 51, he cries out, "Against you, and you alone have I sinned, Oh Lord."

It wasn't Uriah's life that he took, it was that of another, in Uriah. David couldn't pay... but the Son of David did pay...

But... David couldn't pay.

I strongly suspect that most all of our sin is trying to pay, because we don't believe that all is fore-given; we don't have faith in Grace. That's why Eve and that first Adam took the fruit from the tree in the garden at the edge of time and eternity. The Accuser tempted them to take knowledge of the Good to make themselves in the image of God. He tempted them to justify themselves.

So, they took knowledge of the Good and Jesus is the Good. And they took the Life and Jesus is the Life.

It didn't make them Good or Alive... for the knowledge and the Life can't be taken but only given... Actually, it's always been "fore-given." Sin is trying to pay for that which cannot be bought and is always given.

We abort babies and kill our enemies because we can't justify their existence. And then we realize we can't justify our own existence—blind to the fact that we have been justified, and never ever could pay for the immeasurable weight of Glory that is ourselves.

You can't justify yourself... but not because you're worthless, but because you're worth God—He is your immeasurable weight of Glory.

To justify means to make right; we each try to make ourselves right by consuming the good like a beast or a harlot. And when we see that we've become beasts and harlots, we try to save ourselves like an imitation Christ, an anti-Christ. We can't bear the weight of our own Glory... if we think we must pay for that Glory.

Like I said last week, I think the greatest holocaust isn't committed by moms and dads against unborn babies. I suspect it is committed by religious folks against sinners, who suggest that most of humanity will be aborted—but not only be aborted but endlessly tortured, for God their Father no longer wants them. He no longer wants them for they cannot justify themselves... they can't pay.

If you believe that you must pay, you will find a way to punish yourself, in an effort to pay. You will choose your pain and you will sink deeper and deeper into Sheol, where men weep and gnash their teeth. But God will not abandon you, he will not leave you nor forsake you. Even there his right hand will hold you. You are his priceless treasure buried in the womb of this earth. You can't pay for him. He is payment for you. Jesus is your justification, sanctification, and immeasurable weight of Glory.^v

God is our Father and Jesus is His Word.

- ⁷ **Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?** [*panayim*: "your face"]
- ⁸ **If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol ["Hell" KJV, NKJV], you are there!**

- 9 **If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.**
- 13 **For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance [golem];
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.**

God numbers everyone's days, including those of an unborn baby. It turns out that you can abort a baby, but you can't abort God's plan for a baby. You can murder a man, but you can't destroy God's plan for a person.

So maybe the problem isn't that people die. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies," said Jesus. "It remains alone."^{vi} Maybe the problem isn't that people die, but that people *want* to remain alone...

Sometimes Jesus spoke as if we were already in *Sheol*.

- Sheol is to be alone—even in the presence of Love.
- Sheol is hatred for the Sanctity that constitutes human life.
- Sheol is a sulking older brother that refuses to join the party thrown by his father for sheer joy that his brother was lost but now is found.
 - The older brother thinks he's paid for the party.
 - The younger brother is the party for which the Father has paid.

David continues:

- 17 **How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.**

The word translated awake is one of a couple translated awake, but this one is curious for it's often used of waking from the dead. In Psalm 17 David writes "When I awake [same word], I shall be satisfied in your likeness."^{vii}

He writes as if we were each asleep in the illusion of our own control, and not fully created until we rise from the dead. He writes as if we each imagine that the Word of God is just dead print on a page, when in fact it's the presence of God that surrounds us and sustains us, like a baby in a womb is surrounded and sustained by its mother and the presence of the Father.

In Proverbs 6 Solomon writes, "When you awake [same word], [the commandment of your Father] will talk with you."^{viii} ...just Wow. A talking word.

None of us comprehends how close God is and how utterly precious each of us are to him...
NEXT VERSE

- 19 **Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!**
O, men of blood, depart from me!
20 **They speak against you with malicious intent;**
your enemies take your name in vain.
21 **Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?**
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
22 **I hate them with complete [taklyth: perfect, accomplished] hatred;**
I count them my enemies.

I can't tell you the number of times I've heard Psalm 139 quoted particularly in reference to the Sanctity of Human Life. And yet every time we all stop at verse 18, embarrassed by verse 19.

We can't explain the hatred...And yet, there is no other way to explain the hatred.

It seems you can only hate because you love; because human life is Sacred. Satan does not love, but I can't think of any verse in which he is said to hate. So maybe hate is not the opposite of love, but a function of love. There are many verses in which it is clearly said that God hates...And "God is Love" ... so Love hates... perfectly.

You hate because someone didn't respect the Sanctity of your Life...
Or you hate because someone didn't respect the Sanctity of an unborn life...
Or you hate because someone didn't respect the Sanctity of a woman's life,
or a soldier's life, or a poor person's life, or a Republican's life, or a Democrat's life...

You hate because someone didn't love someone that you did love.
You hate the absence of love, for love is the Good and the absence of love is evil.
You hate because you love. If you never hate... I doubt you've ever loved.

I learned this as a new father. I could tell a thousand stories, but it became most clear to me the day I took my daughter Elizabeth to the park—I think she was about three. I've told you before: She had learned to slide down the slide.

She'd stand at the top and say "*See me. See me. See me.*"
She was enjoying the fact that I was enjoying the fact of her mere existence—an immeasurable weight of Glory, a priceless treasure in an earthen vessel.

And then another child joined her, and another parent began enjoying the immeasurable weight of Glory, the priceless treasure in her earthen vessel, her little girl... but she didn't enjoy my little girl. She wouldn't even look at her.

Elizabeth stood on top of the slide and finally started screaming at the lady *"See me. See me. See me."* And she wouldn't even look.... But I looked... and I hated that woman.

I literally fantasized about picking up a board and smacking that lady in the head while screaming, *"Look at my little girl, she is fearfully and wonderfully made and can slide down the slide better than you or your daughter—Don't you get it? Out of her own mouth, she once took a glob of chewed up cracker and put it in my own! Don't you get it? She's the temple of God—you, stupid turd."*

I was about to make my move, when I heard the Father's voice; like a Word whispered in the depths of my soul from behind a curtain.

Peter ... She's my little girl... just as Elizabeth is your little girl.
She also says, *"see me. See me. See me."* And you don't.
There are children living in piles of garbage just south of the border, they say, *"see me. See me. See me."* You say you do, but you don't.
Peter there are billions crying, *"see me. See me. See me."* And you don't...

I hate that... and now that you see that, you hate yourself... Shall I hate you, my little boy?
What will we do with all this confused and imperfect hatred?

David cries, "depart from me men of blood," and yet we know David is a man of blood. Should David abort himself?

He cries, "Do I not hate them with perfect hatred?"
I think the answer is, No David... you don't hate them with perfect hatred. You do not love them with perfect love, so you do not hate them with perfect hatred.

What is perfect hatred? Is it endless torment in a place called "Hell?"

What if I took that woman who didn't see my daughter and locked her in a dark room, saying to her, "Because you didn't see my daughter, now you can never ever see the immeasurable weight of Glory that is my daughter. And even if you want to see my daughter you can't, for I want to endlessly hate you for your hate. Your punishment for refusing to love as I love, is that you never can love, and I will never ever love you... but endlessly stew in my loathing of you."

Well... that's absurd. But more than absurd; it's satanic.

Through his prophets God says, "love good and hate evil."^{ix}
So, what is the Good? The Good is God and God is Love.
And what is the evil? Evil is any absence of Love.
To hate evil is NOT to endlessly preserve evil in a place called hell.

The doctrine of endless conscious torment in hell means that:

- Satan gets his way and God is endlessly frustrated... or even worse
- God gets his way, but his way is satanic—for he wills that his children would never be made in His image, but remain forever alone and unwanted

That is, God wills to not be Salvation... he wills to not be Jesus. Jesus means "God is Salvation."

Understand?

It's not OK to not believe in Jesus. It's satanic.

"Perfect hatred" is also translated "complete hatred" or "completed hatred." That word *taklyth* comes from a root word that means "to accomplish." If, on the cross, Jesus spoke Hebrew, he may have used this word: "It is finished, it is perfected, it is completed, it is accomplished."

Do you understand? Hatred has a purpose... it comes to an end. Perfect Love has no end for perfect love is the end of all things. Perfect hatred is the perfection of Love. Its purpose is the annihilation of all that would keep us from loving and being loved. Perfect hatred is self-annihilating. It's the end of Hell.

God hates hatred. He hates *Sheol*.

- He is the eternal consuming fire in which it is destroyed in Revelation 20:14
- He is the death of death; He is the end of darkness, lies, and separation.
- He is even the voice whispering to you in the darkness: "*This is not your home.*"

What is it that I hate in my children?

I hate everything that would separate them from me, which is also everything that would separate them one from another, which is everything that keeps each of us from enjoying the party that is the kingdom of God our Father.

John 12 Jesus says, "... unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and it dies, it remains alone... Whoever loves his life [*psyche*] loses it, but whoever hates his [*psyche*] in this world will keep it for eternal life."* Did you get that?

You are to hate your *psyche* in this world. *Psyche* (Greek) is *nephesh* in Hebrew, translated "life," "self" or "soul" in English. When God breathed his Spirit into Adam, he became a living soul.

Your *psyche* in this world is your unfinished substance; it's the golem that hasn't surrendered to the Spirit of God; it's the self that thinks it creates itself.^{xi}

Your *psyche* in this world is the self that believes it must pay:

- It's your self-righteous self that keeps you from the Love that is God.
- It's your false-self, in which your true-self is imprisoned.
- It's your ego, that keeps you from loving and being loved.
- It's the womb, from which you are to be born into the party eternal.

Perfect hatred is the revelation of Perfect Love.^{xii} It is the moment in which the Will of God hanging on the tree in the Garden, lifts his head and cries "Father forgive them they know not what they do," and then, "It is finished, it is perfected, it is accomplished."

He is the firstborn of all creation and you are born in him. Perfect Hatred is the Forgiveness of God, which is the revelation of Relentless Love.

At the cross the Son of David, hates our hatred and bears it to destruction. And at the cross the Son of David, gives us his Life, which is the Good, which is Love, which is the eternal will of our Father.

A Good Father bears his children's failures and gives them his life. Jesus is the presence of the Father; Jesus is the Judgment of the Father; Jesus is his face.

Well David cries "men of blood depart from me" and David is a man of blood. Then, "I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies." David is his own enemy. Can he depart from himself?

Can my friend who's had an abortion, abort herself, and yet love herself as the eternal weight of glory that she is? Can a sinner die, and yet live... for every sinner is a child of God?

What should David do? What should we do about the sanctity of Human life? Should we pass laws? Laws are important, but they can't make anyone love Love... Laws can't make anyone see the Glory of God hidden in a temple of clay...

And how do we enforce laws? We make people pay... Yet, no one can pay for the Glory of God hidden in a temple of clay. You can't pay, except perhaps with the knowledge that you can't pay... You can't pay. And that knowledge annihilates the human ego.

You can't pay for life, except perhaps with the knowledge that the Life has paid for you—Jesus has paid for you. He is the Sanctity of your life. That knowledge of the eternal Judgement of God separates a sinner from his sin.

**22 I hate them with complete hatred;
I count them my enemies.**

Cries David. Then...

**23 Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts [seraph: "anxious thoughts"]!**
**24 And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting [everlasting way]!^{xiii}**

What does David do about blatant disregard for the Sanctity of human life? He exposes himself to the Judgment of God.^{xiv}

Do you remember what he did when Nathan revealed that he was the man of blood who murdered Uriah? David confessed, and then Nathan said your sin has been put away. Forgiven. David threw himself on the ground before the Lord... and the Presence of the Father bore David's sin to destruction and gave David his own life. The father hates sin *because* he loves sinners.

The Son of David literally died bearing David's ego to destruction. And the Son of David was born, who is David's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.^{xv} (In 2 Samuel 12, he is named Solomon. He is a picture of Jesus and your sanctification). David saw that He could not pay for himself. And David wrote songs revealing that God has paid for us all.

David came to believe in the Sanctity of His own Life... Which caused him to believe in the Sanctity of his neighbor's life. David submitted to the Judgment of his Father. Then David sang and preached the Judgment of his Father: Relentless Love.

So, what do we do about the blatant disregard for the Sanctity of Human Life in our world today?

You know why I believe in the Sanctity of Human life, which is to say, why I believe in Jesus, which is to say why I believe in God? I think it's because of the way my Father looked at me. I was an unpopular, uncoordinated and cowardly preacher's kid, who got picked on all the time at school... but my Dad looked at me as if I contained all the treasure in his world.

You may have had a terrible Dad... But that's the way your heavenly Father looks at you. He looks at you as if you contain all the treasure in His world... because you do.

He looks at you like this:

It's Father's Day so I thought maybe I could end with this. God the Father looks at you like Solomon looks at Dia in the movie *Blood Diamond*. You may remember that Dia was kidnapped, lied to, and made to do bad things, in order that he would think he was bad, and then do bad in the service of the evil warlord ruling over a diamond mine in Sierra Leon. Solomon, Dia's Father, descends into that Hell to find Dia. He has a partner who's looking for buried treasure. But Solomon is looking for Dia, buried in a world of lies, fear, and shame. His partner finds the treasure and Solomon finds Dia and sets him free.

Video Clip from *Blood Diamond*
Warner Brothers (2006)

Dia holds Solomon and his partner at gunpoint. Solomon begins to speak to his son.

Solomon: Dia, what are you doing?
You are Dia Vandy,
of the proud Mende tribe.
You are a good boy who loves soccer and school.
Your mother loves you so much.
She waits by the fire making plantains
and red palm oil stew
with your sister N'Yanda
and the new baby.
The cows wait for you.
And Babu, the wild dog
who minds no one but you.
I know they made you do bad things
but you are not a bad boy.
I am your father
who loves you.
And you will come home with me
and be my son again.

Your value does not depend on what you've done. But what you do depends on knowing your unconditional and eternal value: The Sanctity of your life.

Dia didn't pull the trigger... and yet every time we sin... every time we discount that sanctity of our life, or our neighbor's life, we do pull the trigger.

We pull the trigger... and then, hanging on the tree in the garden, Jesus cries "Father forgive them they know not what they do." And, "It is finished; it is accomplished; it is perfected." When we know that we cannot justify ourselves, we see that we are and always have been Justified by the eternal word of God our Father.

Jesus, who is also named Solomon, is the face of your father. And when you look at your neighbor you can look with His eyes... and that will change the world.

Communion

This is the sanctity of your life...

He said, "This is my body broken for you."
"This cup is the covenant in my blood."

He's looking at you. And from you, he's fixin' to look at everyone you meet.

Benediction

And now, before you go, because of the topic, you may be saying, "Peter, what am I supposed to do about the blatant disregard for the Sanctity of Human Life in our society today?" Well, you could vote. I think that's good. You could study the issues and vote accordingly. About abortion, about the military, about borders. About love. You could adopt babies. You could support a crisis pregnancy center. You could minister to immigrants, you could minister to soldiers with PTSD. You could go to Hong Kong and minister to women who are trapped in shame and fear that they are unwanted and no one ever could forgive them. You could speak the truth in love and prepare to be crucified, because that happens sometimes. But none of it matters if you don't do this:

...this whole message, I was reminded about this quote by Kierkegaard. He said, "God has no cause, in the human sense of the word." God isn't up there worried about the next election. He says "God has no cause. If you want to serve God's cause, it goes like this: to face examination." What did he mean by that?

I think it meant Psalm 139. It meant sit in the presence of your Father and receive his Judgment. And his Judgment is Jesus. "This is how much I love you. This is what you're worth. This is who you are to me. This is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

You see what this means, if you've had an abortion, or been part of an abortion, the most important thing—the only thing: you must believe you are forgiven. And when you believe that, you will change the world. So in Jesus name, believe the Gospel.

Endnotes

ⁱ 1 Corinthians 6:17

ⁱⁱ "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.'" - 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 RSV

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs*, p. 131

iv "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." -Ephesians 2:8-10

v Romans 4:25; 5:16,18

vi John 12:24

vii Psalms 17:15

viii Proverbs 6:20-22

ix Amos 5:15, Psalm 45:7, Romans 12:9

x John 12:24-25

xi "In Jewish legend, the Golem is a reference to a story about a rabbi who made a clay figure of a man and brought him to life using the ineffable Name of God. It's the basis for the story of Frankenstein's monster, the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" section of the Disney movie *Fantasia* and the Golem character in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* [Gollum]. . . . The Golem was brought to life by using the unspeakable Name of God and used as a tool to save the Jewish community from its enemies and to help in various ways. But eventually, the stories show that it became uncontrollable and a danger to its maker. The Golem of Prague, for instance, turned out to be a literalist. When he was ordered to bring water from the well into Rabbi Leib's house, he kept on carrying pails of water until the house was flooded. . . .

The Golem had no real soul. He was unfinished, primordial. The Talmud says "A vessel that is not complete is called a golem." Maimonides, the 12th century Jewish commentator, says that "golem" refers to a human that has not realized his potential in God's eyes; "a person who has some intellectual and moral virtues. They, however, are not perfected."
- *The Door Magazine*, March/April 2000, "The Last Word: Pokemon and the Golem" by Ole Anthony with Skippy R.

"He [Gollum] was altogether wretched. He hated the dark, and he hated light more: he hated everything, and the Ring most of all."

"What do you mean?" said Frodo. "Surely the Ring was his precious and the only thing he cared for? But if he hated it, why didn't he get rid of it, or go away and leave it?"

"You ought to begin to understand, Frodo, after all you have heard," said Gandalf. "He hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter."

- J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, p. 64

It seems there was a creature named Gollum (from the Hebrew "Golem," meaning unmade, half-made, not fully made). Gollum had come to possess a ring of power which he called his Precious. It gave him power over others, for it rendered him invisible. But being invisible, he was entirely alone. He lived in the dark, insane and divided. He loved the power, but he no longer had power to love or to be loved.

In the words of Gandalf, "He was altogether wretched. He hated the dark and he hated light more. He hated everything, and the ring most of all." I said, "Gandalf, why didn't he get rid of it? Is that not reasonable?" Gandalf replied, "Randy, he hated it and loved it, as he hated himself and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter."

You see, he had a ring of power yet was entirely enslaved, enslaved to being Golem: alone, unmade, not fully made . . . and stuck there. He could not truly die, yet he was not truly alive. He was the walking dead.

-Randolph the Olive Green, *A Christmas Testimony* (Peter's Christmas Ever Sermon, 2002)

xii "Nothing will ever close that wound," he answered, with a sigh. "It must eat into her heart! Annihilation itself is no death to evil. Only good where evil was, is evil dead. An evil thing must live with its evil until it chooses to be good. That alone is the slaying of evil."

- George MacDonald, *Lilith*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1895), p. 153

xiii Jesus is "the way," the everlasting way.

xiv There are those who talk about God's cause, and about wanting to serve that cause. This is all very fine, but how, exactly, is this to be interpreted? The common view thinks that God has a cause in the human sense of the word, that he is some kind of advocate, interested in having his cause win and therefore eager to help the person who would serve his cause, and so forth. If we follow this line of thinking God becomes a minor character who arrives at the embarrassing dilemma of needing human beings.

No, no! God has no cause, is no advocate in this sense. For God everything is infinitely nothing. Any second he wills it, everything, including all opposition to his cause, becomes nothing. Wanting to serve God's cause can never mean the same thing as come to his aid. No, to serve God's cause is to face examination.

- Soren Kierkegaard, *Provocations* (Farmington, PA: The Plough Publishing House, 1999), p. 43

xv 2nd Samuel 12, Psalm 51