Jeremiah 1:4-10          “Before I formed you in the womb…”           Grace               2/3/2019

JEREMIAH 1:4 writes, “Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.’”

Those are powerful words which the Lord God almighty spoke to Jeremiah!  This text was the basis for my first sermon ever which I preached in my second semester of seminary.  This text is a very clear indication that God had a very specific calling for Jeremiah which God preordained before Jeremiah was even born.  Such a pre-birth God ordained specific calling is certainly true for some people and may be true for all of us.

Who will Arienne become in her life as she grows in God?  What will she do for God and to what has God called her?  We do not yet know.  Perhaps of those of us present today, only her parents and Godparents will live long enough and remain connected enough to see.  But God knows.

Many years back a child was born against great odds.  It was a boy and though his mother was not supposed to have any more children she became pregnant.  There was a problem though.  The egg imbedded in the fallopian tube instead of moving to the uterus.  It’s what’s called an ectopic pregnancy.  The doctor told the mom that the egg would probably just be re-absorbed into her body but if not, a procedure would need to be done lest the situation become life threatening to her.

After leaving the doctor’s office she told God, “I want this baby.”  And that became her prayer.  Medically speaking this was impossible.  Let me share with you 3 quotes I found.  1) “An ectopic pregnancy cannot be saved. Treatment options depend on the size and age of the pregnancy.”   2) “There are only three treatment options for ectopic pregnancies, and none of them involve transferring or attempting to save the embryo.”  3) “The odds of bringing an ectopic pregnancy to term are roughly one in three million.”

However, against all odds this little egg did move into the uterus, a medical impossibility, and the boy was born.  Amazingly, at birth, the umbilical cord was wrapped around that baby boy’s neck, three times and tied in a natural knot.  Another week in utero and the little guy would have been still born.  Fortunately, he was not.  Although having the cord wrapped around a baby’s neck is common, about 1 in every 3 births, three times and tied off in a knot is extremely uncommon occurring about 1 in every 10,000 births.  Thus, the odds against this little boy being born and surviving is about 30 billion to one.  Billion with a B for Bravo.  This mother’s prayer was definitely answered.

Bet a penny on those odds and you would win $300,000.  Bet a dollar and it becomes 30 million!

Why do I tell you this story?  To tell you that God has a plan in people’s lives that are not seen usually until the person becomes an adult.  God’s had a plan for that lil guy who grew up to become a preacher.  That’s why my first sermon was on this passage in Jeremiah.  That little boy is me.

I also tell you this story to tell you how utterly appalled, astounded, angry and sick I am in hearing what the Governor of Virginia said last Thursday on WTOP in support of a new bill introduced to the floor of the State House last month.  It is HOUSE BILL NO. 2491 Offered January 9, 2019 – commonly called “The Repeal Act”.  I am pleased to be able to say that the bill did not make it through the committee vote and thus will go no further, at least in 2019.

This bill provided for the abortion of a child even at the point of birth.  What Governor Northam, a board-certified pediatrician, said about it is even worse.

“If a mother’s in labor, I can tell you exactly what would happen. The infant would be delivered, the infant would be kept comfortable, the infant would be resuscitated if that’s what the mother and the family desired. And then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother.”  Ralph Northam, Gov of VA on WTOP radio 1/31/2019

Allow me to direct you to the word Governor Northam uses 3 times in only 3 sentences.  Infant.  Not fetus, not tissue, not any of the euphemisms used to de-personify a human being who was or is about to be aborted.  He uses infant.  A baby.  Clearly a human life by all definitions.

Why resuscitate an infant that is probably going to later be euthanized?  Just let it be.  You can call this whatever you want to call it, like abortion or euthanasia.  I call it infanticide which simply put is murder.  Yes, murder.  Number 6 of the Big 10 and I don’t mean college football.  It’s not thou shalt not kill, as is commonly said.  It’s “Thou shalt do no murder.”

It takes a lot to get me riled up enough to preach a truly political sermon.  This is probably my third in 38 years of preaching so you know I’m hot.

When I was born, I was not expected to live to be a year old due to a variety of real or supposed complications evident just after my birth.  Where would I be if this law existed and had been carried out?  Where would Grace Church be now?

What if Mary had decided, literally at the last minute, not to have her baby?  Where would the world be now?  We’ll never know thank God…  and Mary.

I saw something on FB recently.  It was a question asked of God.

Person: “God, why have you not brought a person into the world to find the cure for cancer?”

God: “I have.  You aborted them.”

Provocative thoughts?  Absolutely.  Ridiculous?  Probably not.

I absolutely hate that this is the sermon I am giving on such an otherwise celebratory day.  But it is the sermon I am giving.  I really didn’t want to but God never let up on me about saying this thus I do so with no apology.  But I would like to end on a better note so I want to ask something again.

Jeremiah wrote, “Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.’”

Who will Arienne become in her life as she grows in God?  What will she do for God and to what has God called her?  Will she do something truly stupendous like be the one to cure cancer?  Will she be President of these United States or Ambassador to the UN?  Maybe she will simply be a stay at home mom who loves and cares for her child or children and raises them in God’s ways.  And maybe one of them will find the cure for cancer, which makes her life an absolute necessity in the scheme of things.

We’ve heard in the news that Black lives matter.  We’ve heard in the news that Blue lives matter.  I don’t ever remember hearing that Unborn lives matter, but they certainly do.  Who might we see in heaven that no one ever saw on earth?  We’ll see because truly, ALL lives matter!!!   Amen