

Abortion on Trial 11-14-21

I was in high-school when the Roe vs. Wade decision was handed down by the Supreme Court of the United States. It is a court decision that has become more than that in our society. It has become a philosophy and a battlefield that has disrupted the peace of our nation for nearly half a century. Since the passing of Roe v Wade 62 million children have been legally killed in the womb by American doctors. That is close to five times the population of our state. And that does not count the conceived children whose advance toward birth was terminated by abortifacient pills. That number refers to medical abortions by procedures which you do not want me to describe with children in the room.

Before I proceed with the message for today, I want to make plain for you who are new with us that this pulpit and my ministry are dedicated to the consistent exposition and application of the Scriptures. I am not a trendy sensationalist, nor a political drum-beater. I am a teacher of God's word and I seek to faithfully present to you the whole counsel of that word. I believe what I am doing today to be consistent with that purpose, but I know some of you here may leave with an inaccurate perception of our church's ministry and emphasis, so I stop at the beginning to ask you not to judge us too hastily. I step out of my normal mode today because, within the next few weeks, the Supreme Court of our land will once again take up cases pertaining to abortion. Primarily I think of the case arising out of Mississippi which will be before the court on December 1 and could set up a context for the overturning of Roe vs Wade. If indeed, the high court does throw out the 1973 judgement it will not make abortion illegal, but it will allow individual states so inclined to establish laws restricting or prohibiting abortions, as was the case prior to 1973. It is a case about abortion, yes, but it is also a decision about the rights of states vs the powers of the federal government. However you see it, I hope you see the upcoming and long-anticipated debate before the Supreme Court to be a context which calls for much prayer from the people of God and some relevant reminders about what God has to say that is germane for this cultural, legal and theological moment concerning abortion.

You may know Exodus 20:13 *Thou shalt not murder*. Genesis 9 gives the principle behind it 6 *Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man*. There is no question about this. The Bible says that to intentionally take a human life, except thru the judicial authority of the state, or in defense of another human life is wrong because humans are made in

the image of God and so have great value. Which humans? All of them. All different colors, all different ages, all different levels of ability. Apart from any knowledge of the Bible 99% of the people you meet will agree that homicide is wrong. But is abortion homicide? Well, that all depends on whether the unborn child is a human being, right? If he or she is then, yes, of course abortion is homicide, also called *murder*. If no, then abortion is just surgery. But, this is the key question—is the baby in the womb human? Don't let anybody shift the focus of the abortion issue from this one main point. The whole debate finds its answer in this one critical question and, believe it or not, the Scriptures do speak to the issue. There are a few mildly significant statements that I would mention. God said of both Jeremiah and John the Baptist that He called them to be prophets while they were in the womb. In Luke 1 we read the story of John's birth which was announced to his daddy by an angel 13-15 *Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.* ¹⁴*You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.* ¹⁵*For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.* 15c *He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.* Now, I ask you to consider what it was that was filled with the eternal Spirit of the Living God. Was an inhuman mass of fetal tissue going to be filled with the Spirit? Is that what I am to believe? Look on down to 39-41 *Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah,* ⁴⁰*and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.* ⁴¹*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb.* Here is a baby in-utero, filled with God's Spirit so that when He comes into the presence of the Son of God, who is also in-utero he leaps for joy. Maybe you moms can explain how one can tell the motives for a baby's leap, but Elizabeth said 44 *when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.* The first witness to the Savior was an preborn infant—or was it just an embryonic mass that leapt in honor of Christ? That's the question you see. Is the inhabitant of the womb just fetal tissue or a human being? Well, the Bible, just like you and I would do, everywhere refers to the fetus as a child or a baby. It is a child *in the womb* differing from a child out of the womb only by age and position.

Apart from this passage in Luke there are two main passages which shed light on the status of the unborn. Psalm 139:13-16 *You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.* ¹⁴*I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.* ¹⁵*My*

*frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;*¹⁶*Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.* This is a beautiful description of the work of God in forming and shaping the preborn. It teaches, I think, the value in God's eyes of the preborn child. But, it does not answer clearly the question of when the baby is human. Psalm 51:5 does 5 *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.* Now, since David wrote this, I suppose I can argue that today's message is part of our series on the life of David who says he was sinful from conception. This doesn't mean that David's parents were sinning when David was conceived. He was not an illegitimate child. What David is confessing is that he was a sinful creature from the time of conception. The New International Version says 5 *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* Now tell me this. Can a non-human piece of fetal tissue be sinful? Can it have any moral status at all? No! We can be sinful from conception only because we are human from conception. Thus ends the Biblical case against abortion. The simple right-to-life argument affirms that pre-born babies are human beings, made in God's image; and that. to kill one made in God's image. is sin and is to be opposed morally and legally. God's word instructs the state, out of reverence for human life and fear of God, to punish those who commit homicide.

That should be entirely sufficient for the Jesus-follower. But, what if somebody doesn't care about Jesus and doesn't believe the Bible? Is there any way to persuade them? Well, there is a second brief argument it may help you to know. We can call it the natural law argument. Natural law is founded on the idea that some moral issues are clear to us naturally or by virtue of our being made with a conscience and in the image of God. This was a popular view among our nation's founding fathers. You'll remember how they wrote in the declaration about truths which were self-evident - that is, they are understood by all men on the basis of conscience. So, Bible-believer or not, your average guy is going to believe that murder is wrong, theft is wrong, lying is wrong. But how can natural law show that the fetus is human and therefore abortion is murder? By appealing to science. And what does science show? When is *it* human? Science can prove that a life begins at conception. Science can prove that prematurely-born infants can survive earlier and earlier. It can testify that even the very youngest within the womb show signs of feeling pain and they have a heartbeat. Science can say there is no evidence of a dramatic moment at which the child becomes all-of-a-sudden human. Except

maybe for one moment - conception. Conception is the only momentary event that makes a dramatic difference between what was and what is.

Some years ago I attended the graduation ceremony for senior medical students at the University of Florida. I was fascinated to learn that the oath which graduating medical students at the university took stated, "I pledge myself to the protection of human life from the moment of conception." This blew me away, to hear this in the shadow of a hospital where abortions were commonplace. The old Hippocratic oath which doctors have taken for centuries plainly promises, "I will not give to a woman a pessary or suppository to produce abortion." Hippocrates saw the moral evil of abortion before doctors could ever look into a womb to find a baby there. Doctors, and medical laymen have always known that the preborn are real children. But, if we grant that medical science cannot prove when a person becomes human, I am ready to ask, "What in the world are we doing ending their lives?" I mean, any fair person must admit that the fetus is, at least possibly, a human being. That admission is sufficient to make abortions morally and legally wrong. Think about it. If the fetus may even possibly be human the abortionist becomes like a deer hunter in the woods. He hears some rustling in the bushes and thinks, "It might be a deer." As he raises his rifle he thinks better of it because it might actually be a man in the bushes, but then he thinks to himself again, "Yeah, it might be a man, but it might just as well be a deer" so he aims his rifle into the bushes and fires, with full awareness that he might be killing a man. Now, what would you think of such a hunter? You would say he is a fool and a criminal. And you would be right, but here is my point. The burden of proof in this abortion issue is on the person claiming that the preborn is not actually a human being. It is with the pro-abortion side. We don't have to prove it to be a human. But, the pro-aborts are obligated to prove it isn't. And to do that is utterly impossible.

But, there is no shortage of abortion advocates who arbitrarily pick some point in a child's development when it suddenly becomes, in their eyes, human. We may as well say a child is human at its first birthday so you have a year to find out if you like the one you got. Or how about age 10? Why not? Or maybe we can set the date at 18? To pick any other date is no less arbitrary and not nearly so useful. The same illogic that supports abortion can support these proposals as well; and some are bold enough to assert them. Nobel laureate, James Watson said: *If a child is not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed the choice only a few are given under the present system. The doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so choose and save a lot of misery and*

suffering. I believe this view is the only rational, compassionate attitude to have. Likewise, another Nobel laureate, Francis Crick, remarked in 1978 that *no newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment and that if it fails these tests it forfeits the right to live.* By such standards the value of a person is reduced to his or her usefulness to society. And usefulness, utility, not fact, has controlled many minds on this subject. The usefulness of African slavery caused many to question if blacks persons were human. I pray that 160 years from now people will be shocked over the debates we are having now and that abortion, which has gone from a crime to a cherished American right in one generation will be a distant, shameful memory. But, for now, otherwise intelligent people cover their eyes to the facts and argue that it really is okay. Several years ago in congress a bill was introduced that would have required doctors to present to women contemplating abortion a set of facts about the unborn, complete with photographs of a developing fetus. The purpose was to ensure that women are making informed choices about what they are killing through abortion. The bill simply called for a presentation of the facts, but it was defeated because we are told such a procedure would be emotionally stressful on the woman. Folks, we all get that an unwanted pregnancy is a true crisis and a difficult time for women. We don't want to be indifferent to that. We want to be there to provide options and aid. But, surely you can see that abortion is more than emotionally stressful on the child who is cruelly slaughtered; and, more often than not, it presents a lasting stress on the grieving mother as well.

Romans 1 tells us that fallen humans suppress the truth in unrighteousness. In few areas of life can we see this more clearly than in the debates over abortion. Facts are often just ignored. Twisted arguments are offered up as smokescreens. Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?* John Owen, writing in the 17th century looked for an illustration of just how desperately sick the heart of man is. He appealed to the practice of abortion. I quote: *There is nothing that is more deeply inlaid in the principles of the natures of all living creatures, and so of man himself than a love unto and a care for the preservation and nourishing of their young. Many brute creatures will die for them; some feed them with their own flesh and blood; all deprive themselves of that food which nature directs them to as their best, to impart it to them, and act in their behalf to the utmost of their power. Now, such is the efficacy, power, and force of indwelling sin in man – an infection that the nature of other creatures knows nothing of – that in many it prevails to stop this fountain, to beat back the*

stream of natural affections, to root up the principles of the law of nature, and to drive them unto a neglect, a destruction of the fruit of their own loins. Paul tells us of the old Gentiles that they were “without natural affection.” That which he aims at is that barbarous custom among the Romans, who oftentimes, to spare the trouble in the education of their children, and to be at liberty to satisfy their lusts, destroyed their own children from the womb; so far did the strength of sin prevail to obliterate the law of nature, and to repel the force and power of it.

Now, of course, those who preach pro-abortion or pre-choice ethics have their own arguments. But truly, all of them are rendered useless if the humanity of the preborn is granted. All of them. Pro-choice people say vehement things, but vehement things that are illogical and immoral if the preborn is a human being with all the same dignities and rights as other humans. All of their arguments fall for the same reason. Nevertheless, I will quickly review their case, looking at seven arguments for the abortion choice.

Their first argument is this: “Isn’t it worse than abortion to bring children into a world where they aren’t wanted?” Somehow we are supposed to bite on this and conclude that if a mother didn’t plan for or doesn’t want her child she can end its life. But we never excuse this for a one-month old baby. And what really is the difference? Let’s face it. If a mother’s feelings toward the child during the early stages of pregnancy, or adolescence for that matter, determined the child’s fate a high percentage of us wouldn’t be here. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are no unwanted babies. The supply of adoptive parents far exceeds the supply of newborns needing parents.

Pro-abortion argument #2 is that such undesired children are more likely to be victims of child abuse. However, studies have shown no connection between family planning and child abuse. This argument is bogus. It is more than bogus, it is phenomenal that people opposed to child abuse could advocate prenatal dismemberment or chemical burning instead. It’s wrong to beat your child, but okay to kill? We have to wonder what is going on that that someone could seriously argue abortion as a cure for child abuse? Have you noticed, since we have killed 60 million children since Roe vs. Wade, has child abuse diminished in our nation? Instead, child abuse cases have skyrocketed and may I suggest that the problem lies with the whole pro-abortion and secular mindset which has devalued children and encouraged parents in their selfishness.

Pro-abort argument #3 is the problem of overpopulation. We need abortion to keep the population down and save the planet from our exploitive species. I

have heard the scares about overpopulation now for 50 years, seriously and they have always been a hoax. Yes, there are pockets of population hyper-density, but, except for Disneyworld, none of those are in our country, and the answer certainly isn't to kill living human beings. World food surpluses are higher than ever, and where there is starvation it is due to distribution problems not production failures. I am told that the entire population of the world could lie down in the city limits of Jacksonville, Florida without anyone touching another. I don't believe we have that kind of self-control but it is mathematically possible.

Fourth pro-abortion argument is that if you prohibit abortions you will increase unsafe, illegal abortions. This is the old coat-hanger argument and it is a good argument for legalizing all murders. Make killing someone safer. Legalizing thefts would prevent a lot of hardship for thieves as well. It's rather hard to take this seriously. Again, if the child in the womb is a human being all these arguments become impossible to take seriously.

Argument five says, "What about the mother's physical or emotional health?" Where you have a probability of the mother dying if she carries the child I think we face a complex moral question, but outside of those very rare cases there can be no argument. The vast majority of abortions are performed for the mother's convenience, career, and reputation. Sure, there are mothers who are emotionally devastated by a pregnancy, but if emotional turmoil is a ground for child-killing then our entire youth group is in serious danger.

Argument six says, "the child really can't be considered human until it can live apart from the mother, until it is capable of independent existence." This is the viability argument, and I respond by asking, "Who says?" Who says you have to be capable of independent living to be truly human? What does this say about most 90-year-olds? Or one year olds? Viability is a conditional concept. You may not be viable in the middle of a desert. Another problem with the viability argument is that medical science continually moves back that time when a child can survive outside the mother. No such time of viability can be pinpointed unless it is conception.

Argument seven says, "Doesn't a woman have the right to do what she wants with her own body?" This is the argument you hear most isn't it? My body my choice. Abortion is a woman's right. And even though more little girls die through abortion than little boys, it is represented to us as a women's issue. This argument for woman's choice is flawed in two fundamental ways. #1 - neither God nor the government recognizes any right to sovereignty over your own body. The government will not allow me to take certain drugs, or to kill myself, or to even

drive without a seatbelt. We have experienced the government demanding we stay home, don't visit our grandmas, wear masks. None of us is sovereign over our own bodies. Secondly, and most importantly, abortion affects someone else besides the mother. A conceived infant is not a part of the mother's body. The child has a completely different genetic code. The child is a separate growing human being - a fact that is recognized by everyone except when advocating abortion.

Now, because the baby in a woman is an individual human being it is no more a mother's right to kill the child before birth than it is a right after birth. Once a woman conceives her rights are replaced by responsibilities. Charley Reese wrote this: *The humanity of life in the womb cannot be denied. Women do not seek abortions because they don't want a zygote or a fetus in their bodies. They seek abortions because they do not wish to give birth to a child. Thus so seek an abortion is to admit the humanity of the life in the womb. Abortion does not terminate a pregnancy; it kills the baby. That's why the argument that a woman has the right to her own body is a red herring. Of course, she does. But it is not her body and her life the abortionist kills and then disposes of. It is the life and body of a separate human being....The moral question for society is quite simple. Society extends protection to the life of innocent human beings beginning at birth. No mother is allowed to kill her newborn without suffering society's penalties. The moral question then is whether society will extend that protection to this new human being before its natural birth. Logically, it should. Only one right – the right to defend life – justifies taking another life.*

Alright, let's see if we can make some applications of all this. Application #1 is: don't you or yours get an abortion. And don't think this is not relevant to you. Many women who would have said, "Not me" end up at abortion clinics because of extreme social, economic, or personal pressures upon them. Abortion may one day be a very real option for you, or your 16-year-old, especially if you can do it in the privacy of your own home. One abortion can save you a whole lot of problems. The pressures, I'm sure, are real. Determine now never to give in to such a temptation. Better yet, commit yourself to avoid the temptation by treating sex as the sacred thing it is, to be pursued only in marriage. It is important to remember that abortion is such a revered surgery because it helps provide us with a certain freedom to sin without obvious consequences. Treating sex lightly and violating God's laws about it, that is at the root of the abortion holocaust. This grisly act is

part and parcel of the sexual revolution which we must stand against with all our might.

Application #2 is to stand against abortion. In some way, become a soldier for life. God calls us to promote justice in our land. God calls us to defend the helpless. There are many ways available to us to do that. First, there is the front of education. In opposing abortion we fight partly against ignorance. We do it through Women's Choice Network. We do it by having a presence at the killing centers of our land, encouraging women to consider what they are doing.

The second major front in the abortion conflict is the legislative one. Texas and Mississippi have seen great success of late. If Roe is overturned, the legislative debates will come to each state and it is possible that as many as twenty states could prohibit or greatly restrict abortions as Texas and Mississippi already have done.

The third major front in the abortion conflict is the one I call the options front. Here I think of the provision of help to women with crisis pregnancies. Women who find themselves pregnant, with no money and no husband are easily persuaded to take the abortion option. We can show them another way to go and help them down that way. Crisis pregnancy centers all over the nation are doing exactly that. Consider volunteering or making financial contributions to Women's Choice Network and other like agencies doing critical ministry.

The fourth front in the abortion conflict is the spiritual front. Ultimately, we do war not with flesh and blood but with spiritual forces in the heavenly places. Abortion is such an easy way out for so many that it will not go away without a move of God that touches hearts. The root problem, as always, is in the heart. Would you pray for a move of God's Spirit that would change hearts? When that happens we won't see our young ladies showing up pregnant outside of marriage. When revival comes we won't see children as a nuisance but as a gift of God. When revival comes we won't choose the easy way, but the right way. For this we must pray.

Joan Andrews Bell is a slight, soft-spoken Roman Catholic grandmother who has done time in prison for trying to stop abortions. Joan's conscience would not let her pass by on the other side while unborn babies were being killed. Chuck Colson wrote: *When Joan was 12, her cousin was carried away by a river current while swimming. Joan, a poor swimmer, was paralyzed with fear. "I thought if I tried to save her, we would both drown," she says today. "But then a greater fear grabbed me, the fear of doing nothing."* Brethren, there is something you can do to

make a difference. What pro-lifers have been doing the last 30 years has been effective, in measure. Abortion continues, yes, but millions have been awakened. Abortions are at their lowest point since 1976. We should be encouraged and motivated, especially now as the legal context of the struggle may change dramatically very soon. You find your way to make a difference for children at risk, on the education front, the legislative front, the options front, the spiritual front - somewhere. Proverbs 24:11-12 *Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, Oh hold them back.* ¹²*If you say, "See, we did not know this," does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?* May we not be numbered among the sleeping or the neutral or the lazy. May God motivate us all by love, by zeal, by hope, or if nothing else will do—by the fear of doing nothing.