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LIFE IS PRECIOUS!

By Rev. Steve Bond, Summit Christian Church

Introduction

The challenge I face with this morning's message is overwhelming. On the one hand, we face a gruesome national crisis. Listen friends! In the past twenty-five years our nation has experienced a holocaust greater than what occurred under Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Historians estimate that six million Jews were exterminated by Nazi Germany and twenty million people died under Stalin's tyranny in the Soviet Union. However, in the past twenty-five years in the United States of America, over 35 million lives have been lost through abortion.

Several years ago a video was produced called "*The Silent Scream.*" The video recorded an abortion actually taking place and as the tiny baby was being killed, you could clearly see it trying to scream out in pain. Yet there was no sound. No scream. The as yet unborn vocal chords were silenced by the mother's womb, which rather than being a safe haven to grow and develop, had instead become a tomb, a place of death. And the silent scream continues as over 4,000 voices of unborn children perish daily in this country through abortion.

And the unspeakable tragedy of these silent dying voices is infinitely compounded by the deafening silence of the majority of the Christians who live in this nation. By in large, the believing church in America has been silent, quietly allowing the holocaust to continue while we close our eyes and plug our ears, ignoring the nightmare, hoping it will disappear.

Years ago, Pam and I were in Germany and we visited Dachau, one of the most infamous Nazi death camps. Now a museum, I remember weeping as I walked through the displays showing the emaciated prisoners. Along with the other visitors that day, we whispered as we spoke. It was as if we were somehow linked to the souls of the hundreds of thousands that had died at Dachau. When we arrived at the showers where the Jews were gassed to death and the ovens where their remains were incinerated, we were left speechless. There are no words in the human language to describe the unspeakable horrors that happened in that place.

In a similar way, by in large, the church in America has sat by and done nothing about abortion. Meanwhile, 35 million deaths have taken place. The Bible speaks about sins of commission (things we shouldn't do) and sins of omission (things we ought to do but don't). James 4:17 tells us "*Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*" For many of us, and I include myself, our silence on abortion falls into the category of a sin of omission. We've known we should have done something, but we've stayed silent. And the silence of the majority of American Christians has contributed to the holocaust continuing unabated for twenty-five years. So my first challenge today is to wake us up to the blight of abortion so that we can begin making a difference.

But I have a second challenge. Studies have shown that about 20% of the women who have abortions call themselves "*committed believers.*" In other words, one out of five women who walk into an abortion clinic on Monday morning, were probably in church the Sunday before. If that's true, then I realize that I'm probably speaking to a number of people this morning who've been affected directly by abortion.

If you're woman, you may have had an abortion in the past. Or if you're a man, you may have encouraged someone to have one. Maybe even paid for it. In either case, you may be sitting there now feeling guilty for it and the last thing I want to do is heap more guilt on you. I want to be very clear this morning: the blood of Christ covers all our sin. The Bible declares if we repent and ask forgiveness, God forgives our sin. All sin. Including abortion. No ifs, ands or buts. 100% guaranteed.

So, on the one hand, my first challenge is to wake us up to the huge sin that abortion represents in our land. But on other hand, I don't want to stir up false guilt in anyone for past sins that have already been forgiven. But there's one more challenge and this is where I'm most affected. It's the challenge of doing something about it. After all, if we're honest, most of us would admit that

abortion is just too big of an issue, too huge of a problem, so we opt not to do anything at all because we don't think our efforts will make any difference. That's a lie, but we've believed it.

And one by one, Satan has convinced us to sit on the sidelines with our hands folded in our laps while 4,000 silent screams happen every day. This can't continue without God's judgment eventually coming on our nation. With that in mind, my goal today is that every one of us would take one additional step forward in upholding the value of human life. At the conclusion of this message, I'm going to give several practical steps that we can take which will help make a difference.

Now, let's review what the Bible says about the issue of life:

1. God creates life and he's intimately involved in our development.

Genesis declares that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them....The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being." No life exists apart from God. He's the Creator. We can't take one breath, nor will our heart beat even one beat apart from God's intervening grace that gives life.

David writes in Psalm 139, "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." With his infinite skill as the consummate Master Craftsman, the Lord fashioned our bodies, cell by meticulous cell, and formed us in our mother's womb.

The miracle of a developing child is astounding. A baby's heart begins to beat 18 to 25 days after conception. Brain waves can be recorded at 40 days. At 11 to 12 weeks, a baby squints, swallows, makes a fist, has fingerprints, kicks and sucks its thumb. Not long ago, a couple from our church had a child born several months premature. It weighed only 1 lb, 7 oz, but it survived and is doing well. God gives life. And life begins at conception long before a baby takes its first breath. Abortion is wrong because it snuffs out a life. Abortion stops a beating heart.

2. All life is precious to God.

Our society today places particular value on people who can contribute. People are valued if they make money and spend it. People are valued if they have no special limitations to slow them or others down. Anyone that falls outside the bounds of what our society defines as “normal” is often looked upon, not as a blessing, but a liability. Because of that, an increasing number of Down Syndrome and other special needs babies are being aborted. Birth defects often lead to additional medical care which can be costly. And our society is increasingly allowing the bottom line to dictate morality. Instead of caring for special needs children, they’re being killed by abortion. It’s easier. It’s more cost effective.

But God’s word declares that all life is precious. Not just those who we call “normal” but all life. Exodus 4:11 declares, “*Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?*” Our God is sovereign. He’s the one who creates all life and all life is precious to him. God knows what he’s doing, even if we can’t completely understand. His plans are always perfect and none of us should ever dare to presume that we know more than God by taking the life of an unborn child.

Consider the following. There’s a preacher and wife who are very poor. They already have fourteen children. Now she finds out she’s pregnant with the fifteenth. They’re living in tremendous poverty. Considering the economic implications of another child, would you recommend the woman get an abortion? If you would, you would have killed John Wesley, one of the greatest evangelists in the history of the church.

Or consider this. The father is sickly, the mother has tuberculosis. They’ve had four children. The first is blind, the second is dead, the third is deaf and the fourth has TB, like his mother. The woman finds out she’s pregnant again. Given the extreme situation, would you consider recommending an abortion? If you would, you would have killed Ludwig von Beethoven, one of the greatest composers of all time. Or consider this. A white man raped a thirteen-year-old black girl and she got pregnant. If you were her parents, would you consider recommending an abortion? If you would, you would have killed Ethel Waters, the black gospel singer who ministered to millions of people around the globe with Billy Graham. All life is precious to God.

Over twenty-six years ago, Jeanne and Greg Krebs from Canton, Ohio sat in a doctor’s office. The doctor told the them, “*You’ve had many problems thus far in the pregnancy and there’s a strong likelihood your child will have severe disabilities. As a result, I recommend an abortion.*” The couple looked at each other and then Greg responded, “*That’s not an option for us, doctor. We’re*

Christians and believe that God has created all life with a purpose. We're committed to having this baby."

Their son Chris was born with cerebral palsy and mental limitations. Greg says, *"It hasn't always been easy. But there's a mixture of joy and heartbreak in raising any child; joy with the accomplishments, heartbreak with the setbacks....But we believe that God is doing the right thing all the time, even though the timing and circumstances don't always make sense to us. God has used our son to teach us so much about his Son, Jesus Christ, and his love and faithfulness in our lives."*

Greg described one of many blessing their son Christ has brought into their lives. This experience happened when Chris was seven years old. Greg was picking up his wife from her work at a hospital. She was late getting off so Greg and Chris waited for her in one of the family rooms. Another man in his 60's was waiting for an appointment. He was very scruffy-looking and smelly. Greg went to the nurse's station to check how much longer his wife might be and when he returned, Chris was sitting by the older gentleman. The man was sobbing and Greg wondered what Chris had done to offend him. Greg went over to apologize.

He said, *"I'm sorry if my son said something unkind to upset you or made you uncomfortable. He really doesn't mean to be inappropriate."* The man replied, *"Unkind? Unkind? Your son is the only person who has hugged me in the last twenty years!"* Greg realized that at that moment Chris had a more Christ-like love for that man than he did!

The Bible assures all life is precious to God. No one created in the image of God is less valued by God than anyone else. Every person, special needs or not, is precious in God's sight. Just because society places a higher value on people without special needs doesn't mean that God has the same perspective. When God creates a person, he creates that person to accomplish his divine purposes. Keep in mind that God's purposes may not be the same as our purposes. All life is precious to God.

3. By God's grace, we can make a difference.

As I mentioned earlier, I believe one of the great lies that we've bought into is that the problem of abortion is somehow so large that our efforts won't make any difference. But that's just not true. All through history we find individuals, one by one, making a difference.

Think, for example, about Jonah in the Old Testament. He was only one man. Jonah was full of nationalistic pride and, at first he was openly disobedient to the Lord. When God called him to go to Nineveh, he went the opposite direction toward Tarshish. But when he finally got to Nineveh and preached his message, God used Jonah to provoke one of the greatest revivals recorded in Scripture. Overnight, over 120,000 people repented from their sin to such a degree that God stayed his hand of judgment. Jonah was only one man, but his obedience was the tool that God used to bring mercy to 120,000 people!

By God's grace, we can make a difference. Working with people one by one, each of us playing our part, we can make a difference. Let me share with you a story of the remarkable impact one person can have. It's the story of Norma McCorvey, who was the infamous Jane Roe in the Roe vs. Wade court case which legalized abortion in our country. Norma was quite a woman. She could outcuss the crassest men; she could out drink most tavern regulars; and she was known for her hot temper. When pro-lifers called her a murderer, she called them worse and spit on them.

Norma worked for an abortion clinic in North Dallas, Texas when the pro-life group Operation Rescue moved into the office right next door. The clinic and Operation Rescue shared a common wall in their offices. At first there was open conflict. The police were called almost hourly. But, over time, because the two groups were so close to each other, Norma began developing a relationship with some of the people from Operation Rescue, especially the daughter of one of the pro-lifers. Seven-year-old Emily was constantly giving Norma hugs and affection.

The little girl was winsome and disarming. One time Norma explained to Emily, "*I like kids and wouldn't let anyone hurt little kids,*" to which Emily responded, "*Then why do you let them kill babies at the clinic?*" Emily's child-like innocence cut Norma's heart. Eventually, Norma began to see that abortion wasn't about extracting blobs of flesh, it was about snuffing out young lives of children like Emily.

One day, Emily said, "*Miss Norma, it would be sooo cool if you would come to church with us.*" At first Norma said no, but Emily persisted for several weeks until she finally agreed to attend. One sermon was all Norma needed. Pastor Morris Sheats of Hillcrest Bible Church ended his sermon with an evangelistic call. Norma responded on her first day in church by going forward to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Today Norma McCorvey is not the same woman who twenty-five years ago was Jane Roe in Roe vs Wade. Today, Norma speaks around the country supporting pro-life concerns. Today she says,

“I’m 100% sold out to Jesus and 100% pro-life. No exceptions. No compromise.”

Do you see my point? One person can make a difference. You can make difference. Just ask Emily.

Now let me suggest several things we can do:

1. We can register to vote and then vote for candidates who support life-affirming positions on public policy.
2. We can offer professional services, such as plumbing, carpentry, computers and accounting to pro-life ministries. We have three ministries in the foyer today that I want to underscore:
 - The Crisis Pregnancy Center needs Christians with vision, leadership and practical skills that can help take the center to the next level of effectiveness.
 - Bethany Christian Services specializes in finding authentically Christian homes for adoptive children. They have a variety of opportunities for service, including needing more homes to place new children.
 - Xxx xxx is also in the foyer. xxxx is from our church and she represents the “*Just Wait Project*.” “*Just Wait*” is an abstinence awareness program that’s having great impact.
3. In addition, we have people from our church who minister weekly down at the abortion clinics. If you’re interested in ministering with them, let us know.
4. Finally, we can pray for God’s hand to awaken the church to stand for life amidst a society that increasingly chooses death.