

ABORTION - THE CHANGING FACE OF THE BATTLE FOR LIFE

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“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice” - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Part 1, Section 7

“No person shall....be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law” - United States Constitution, Amendment 5

Job 31:13-15 - **“If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me,[14] what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? [15] Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?”**

Most people link the abortion issue in modern times with what has become known as the U.S. Supreme Court’s now famous “Roe vs. Wade” decision, paving the way for an avalanche of abortions, since that tragic decision on **January 22nd, 1973**. Since that date it is a conservative estimate that about 52 million babies have been killed in the U.S. alone. Canada’s totals are estimated at around 3 million for the same time period, though Canadian records vary greatly. John Piper points out that staggeringly, in Asia, in the last three decades, over 163,000,000 baby girls have been killed in abortion. That’s more than the entire female population of the United States. This is what happens when **“choice”** is enthroned. Abortion is not only monstrously violent, it is also incredibly sexist.

Roe vs. Wade. More people talk **about** that decision than actually **know** what was decided. For that reason, I’d like to take just a minute to go over the **rulings** of the “Roe vs. Wade” decision. “Roe vs. Wade” ruled:

- a) ***That no state may make laws regulating abortion during the first three months of pregnancy except to provide that they be done by licensed physicians.***
- b) ***That laws regulating abortion between the third month and the time of viability (usually six months) are constitutional only insofar as they are aimed at safeguarding the health of mothers.***
- c) ***That laws relating to the time from viability (6 months) until the end of the pregnancy may not prevent abortion if it is “to preserve the life or health of the mother.”***
- d) ***That the “health of the mother” includes “all factors - physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age - relevant to the well-being of the patient.”***

Then, on July of 1976, the court extended its original decision to also affirm the following:

- e) ***That abortions may be performed on minor daughters without the knowledge or consent of their parents.***
- f) ***That women (whether married or unmarried) may obtain abortions without the knowledge or consent of the baby’s father.”***

Please think about the accumulative effects of all those rulings when taken together. These laws, when studied carefully, mean that abortion, for the majority of the North American population, is **legal any time before birth** if the mother can give reason that either the pregnancy or the baby will be an excessive burden or stress on her well-being. The staggering effect of these rulings is now the obvious evidence of history. Since that ruling there have been, on average, about 1.7 million pre-born children killed every year in North America.

Let that number register properly. That’s 4658 abortions every single day of the year. It’s 194 abortions every hour of every day. While you are in this church service 291 pre-born children are being killed. And that is happening every hour of every day you breath, even while you sleep.

The title of this message was chosen very carefully. I don’t know if you’ve noticed it, but the debate on abortion has taken a noticeable turn in the last little while. At least in **public** debate (I’m not now talking about what a young woman may hear in private counsel in an abortion clinic or hospital) there is not as much said about the fetus in the womb of the mother **not being a person**.

I don’t believe this is now the **main** point of argument coming from the pro-choice camp. It is not used in public as much anymore simply because there are too many compelling arguments calling that kind of obviously defective thinking to account. Everybody **knows** that the pre-born child is a human person. Or, at the very, very **least**, everyone knows that it is a **person** that is **being formed** in the womb of the mother, and there is no good point after conception to which we can clearly point and say that this is **not** a person.

There are simply too many obvious facts that scream out against the inconsistency of trying to maintain that the baby in the womb of the mother is not a person.

Quickly consider just some of the more obvious facts with me:

- 1) ***In Minnesota, and others states in the U.S., there are still Fetal Homicide Laws on the books that make a person guilty of manslaughter, or worse, if he kills a baby in the mother's womb.*** But there is an exception clause for abortion. What else can this possibly mean other than it is a crime to kill a baby in the womb ***without*** the mother's permission, but ***not*** a crime to kill the same baby ***with*** the mother's permission?

Clearly, the ***personhood*** of the baby is ***not*** the issue here at all. The issue is the right and power of the ***mother's choice*** plus nothing else at all. In other words, there is no other factor, nothing in the ***essence*** of the unborn, to determine its right to life or not. This is pure ***totalitarian rule***. The rights of the strong determine the rights of the weak and defenseless. We've been here before in various stages of history - slavery, the holocaust, etc.

- 2) ***In countless hospitals all over North America, with increasing benefit and effectiveness, legitimate, life-saving medical procedures are being performed on babies still in the womb, while babies of the same age and same size and development are being killed in the same hospital, just down the hall.***

This in itself shows that the difference lies ***not in the babies themselves*** but in the wish of the mother or doctor. There is virtually no debate in most of these cases about the ***comparative personhood*** of these two babies. They could be cousins.

- 3) ***We now have an increasing number of cases where babies can live viably, on their own, outside the womb, at twenty-three or twenty-four weeks.*** Yet the Supreme Court's "Roe vs. Wade" decision says babies can be legally aborted at the same age, and even beyond this age, if the mother decides she will be distressed by the baby's live birth more than by its abortion.

Clearly, in all such cases, the decision is based, not on any ***definition of personhood***, but on the ***rights and desires of the mother***. For example, if the baby was actually ***born*** prematurely, and survived, would the mother be legally allowed to strangle the baby because it was now out of her womb? Most of us would say "***No***" to such an absurd question.

But consider the ***reason*** for our negative response. We would say it is "***against the law***" to kill that little ***person*** in that little hospital bed. Yet countless other babies, exactly the same age and the same size, and the same sex, and of the same stage of development are killed every year. In what meaningful sense can it be intelligently said that they too are not persons?

- 4) ***Those who argue that "viability" (the ability of the baby to live apart from the support and nourishment of the mother) determines the right to life of the baby know this isn't a valid definition of personhood that will stand up to examination.*** What are we to do with the scores of thousands of people on respirators and dialysis machines? Is personhood really to be defined by the source of nourishment and oxygen? Are these really ***not*** persons with meaning to their lives? Do they all have no right to be protected from having others take their lives away? Clearly the source of food and nourishment doesn't define persons in any thinking mind.

- 5) ***We know that the relative size of the embryo in the womb of the mother is not a valid definition of personhood.*** This used to be a very common argument. People would point out just how ***tiny*** these aborted fetuses usually were.

But we know this is a flimsy argument. We know this because the premature baby living ***outside*** the womb is so much smaller than a full-term baby, but no one says the pre-mature baby is not a person on this account. And look how much smaller a baby is than a football player? Are we saying ***all*** the babies fail to qualify for personhood just because they're so much smaller than "regular" people? Clearly, size doesn't define personhood. Period.

- 6) ***We know that the development of the baby in the womb of the mother clearly points to the traits of personhood being present.*** Consider this: by the time the tiny baby is only eight weeks old ***all the organs of the body are present***. The brain is functioning. The heart is pumping with a regular heartbeat. The liver is busy making blood cells. The kidneys are already cleaning fluids. Those tiny fingers already have their own permanent, distinctive fingerprints. ***Yet the vast majority of abortions are performed much later than eight weeks.***

I'm making all these points, not because I don't think you already know them, but because I want to go back to my first statement in this message. Abortionists are becoming increasingly silent in their arguments against the ***personhood*** of the baby in the womb. There is simply so little to stand on, and that is not the way they are presently advancing their cause.

The argument of choice for abortionists is increasingly that the rights of the mother over her own body must be protected. We will miss much of our opportunity to advance the cause of justice and life if we miss this important fact. ***Abortion is an issue of conflicting rights.*** In the whole pro-choice movement the whole argument is that the rights of the ***mother to choose*** take precedence over the rights of the ***baby to live***. The rights of the ***strong*** overrule the rights of the ***silent and weak***.

We simply ***must*** see this as the key issue. Here is the law of the land today: ***a baby in the womb has rights to life if the mother wills it to have those rights. And it does not have rights to life if the mother does not will it to.*** That's the bottom line on abortion.

And the difference is ***not*** found in the ***personhood of the baby***. The difference is in the ***desire of the mother***. And note the key premise here: This is the clearest example in the whole world of a person with ***power*** deciding to take the life of another person who is ***without power***. This is the very situation that civilization has continually resisted since government and laws came to be. Nations go to war to aid those who are

said to be defenseless against the will of those with power to hurt and abuse and destroy them. This is why we have laws against **rape, incest and child abuse**. We all know that **no one has the right to choose to do those things to those who just happen to be powerless to defend themselves**.

Every sane person knows that we must protect the powerless because those with the power frequently make **morally bad and selfish choices**. **We all know that a pro-choice position is moral insanity if the choice is a wicked choice or a violent choice**.

Now, I want to wrap this message up showing why this is so morally wicked and sinful from a Biblical perspective:

Look again at our opening text from Job:

Job 31:13-15 - "If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me, [14] what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? [15] Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?"

Until very recently I had never used this text in any teaching on abortion, and I don't know why. Job makes a great argument that goes far beyond even some of the classic texts usually used regarding God creating us in the womb.

- 1) ***Job begins by making the point that he has not carelessly rejected any of the advice and complaints of his servants, even though, in that culture, he would have been totally justified in doing so.***

Servants were frequently treated merely as chattel - simply the property of their owners with no voice or rights of their own. We have seen this kind of treatment in many periods of history. It still exists in some parts of the world. But, with God's help, all sane people in our land have come to see the wickedness of such cruelty and exploitation.

But in Job's day, no one would have been considered wicked or immoral for totally ignoring the pleas of his slaves. It was the common practice of all in authority.

- 2) ***Job says he would be without excuse if he didn't treat his slaves as his equals.*** And all of us would praise Job for his open-mindedness. Both Christians and atheists **know instinctively** that Job is to be commended for his generous and loving heart. We all know in the depths of our being that this is the way the world **ought** (there's that tricky word again) to be. Here's what everyone knows. It's simply **wrong** to abuse the weak simply because we have the **power**, and perhaps even the **acceptance of the prevailing culture** to do so.
- 3) ***The foundation of Job's righteous treatment of his slaves is not based on the fact that he (Job) is a free man while his servants are not.*** Job says the issue of their **worth** of dignity and fairness goes **back before their birth** - **"Did not He who made me in the womb make him, and the same one fashion us in the womb?"**

When Job takes us back to the hand of God in forming both himself and his slaves in the womb, he is saying something that bears directly on the abortion issue today. Job is saying that **the personhood and worth of human beings isn't dependant on their physical mothers**. To Job it was totally irrelevant that his mother was probably a **free-woman**, and his slave's mother was probably a **bond-woman**. Why does this not matter to Job? **Because mothers and fathers are not the establishers of personhood**. **God** is the establisher of personhood. Mothers contribute an **impersonal egg** and fathers contribute an **impersonal sperm**. But God creates **persons**.

Finally, let me close with a note of hope for those who feel the battle for life and justice can't possibly be won in this fallen world:

- 4) ***It is possible to turn around horrible decisions from the past.***

I know we can't create heaven on earth. Only the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, will accomplish that. But there is strong historic evidence that bad decisions can be reversed with prayer and clear thinking and sacrificial work. I began this message citing some of the terms of the **"Roe vs. Wade"** decision in 1973. Particularly significant is the ruling that **"no state may make laws regulating abortion during the first three months of pregnancy except to provide that they be done by licensed physicians."**

Let me cite for you another horrible piece of legislation. It comes from the Supreme Court of the United States and is dated March 6th, 1857. In a piece of legislation called the **"Dred Scott vs. Stanford"** decision it was ruled that no act of Congress or territorial legislature could create any laws banning **slavery**.

And notice the reason. It's highly relevant to today's abortion discussion. The reason was given that **slaves are not free and equal persons** but the property of their masters. Notice. **The decision of the master determined the fate of the slave. The "rights" of the master to do what he wanted with his own property were counted as of higher value than the rights of the slave to all the freedom and dignity he or she held as a person.**

In other words, those with the voice and the power had greater rights and protection under the law than those who were weak and powerless and voiceless. But the moral vision of the nation was eventually totally turned around. People like Abraham Lincoln in America and William Wilberforce in England paid the high price to defend the powerless.

This is exactly where we are today. I long for a day I probably will never see, when people will look back on our abortion laws the way we

now look back in horror and disgust on the laws defending and promoting slavery in Britain and North America. But we must not close our eyes, and we must not give up the fight. Any church or pastor that is silent on the death of 1.7 million helpless babies in North America each year out of sheer political correctness, or fear of being not seeker sensitive is totally out of sync with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I close with some words from Proverbs. They are meant to be taken by all of us **first** as encouragement not to give up the cause. It's not easy to stay dedicated and prayerful and vigilant over the long haul. Out of sight can so easily become out of mind. And **second** they are meant to be taken as warning. We must not cease to be salt and light in a world that is hopelessly bound in sin and ignorance.

Here are the words: **Proverbs 24:11-12** - "Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. [12] If you say, 'Behold, we did not know this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?"

A pastor told me he was **personally pro-life** but knew it was no longer acceptable to proclaim those views from the platform. I can't tell you how much that breaks my heart. It bothers me greatly because **out of sight** so quickly turns into **out of mind**. Listen, this issue **must** be kept visible. Consider this: **Collier's Pregnancy Center** in Naples, Florida, says 95% of women who come in and see their **ultrasound** choose **not** to abort their babies. Guess why **Planned Parenthood** **doesn't want expectant mothers to see their ultrasound**.

William Wilberforce fought for **forty years** to turn over the laws of Britain regarding the slave trade. The laws were changed just days before he died. God help us all to be faithful to the cause of life for these precious pre-born persons. What God has "**knit together**" (**Psalm 139:13**) let no man tear asunder.