

Sanctity of Life Sunday: The Light of Life

No big idea.

Epheisans 5:8-17

INTRO

Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday, as instituted by Ronald Reagan in 1984 as a call to nationally recognize the intrinsic value of human life, namely the human life that is currently afforded the least amount of protection under the law, ***unborn human life***.

Today is a somber, sobering Sunday as one recognizes that, under the watch of Christians in America over the past 40+ years, 65 million innocent human lives have been legally eradicated, not only with the support of the majority of Americans but even with the support of some who name the name of Jesus.

Today is also a day of hope in that we are seeing Christians take some new ground on the abortion front; people rising up in their local communities, crisis pregnancy centers serving millions each year, and some states finally taking greater responsibility in protecting their unborn populations.

Today is a day to inform, provoke, pray and commit ourselves to action. However, the reality of abortion can't be consigned to one day a year. As children of God, followers of Jesus, and human beings who bear the divine image, the value of human life must become an ingrained element of our Christian culture.

EVILS

The belly of present-day evils holds no lack of fullness. The amount issues that Christians should care deeply about and be practically involved in are countless, and all hold variable weights of importance.

- Today, it's estimated that nearly 200,000 American children a year are at risk of being sold or trafficked around the world for the purpose of sexual exploitation and abuse. This matters deeply to Jesus, who says it would have been better for those perpetrating these horrific acts to have a millstone tied around their neck and tossed to the bottom of the sea.
- There are certainly injustices and corruption that have taken root within our systems of law and justice that deserve our attention and voice.
- Homelessness all across the United States, and even in our own city is steadily on the rise, prompting us as Christians to discuss and partake in creative, Christ-centered solutions to bring hope and help to those in need.
- It's estimated that nearly 10 million women a year (that's 20 people every minute) experience spousal abuse.
- Husbands and fathers are falling off the rails at an incredible pace.
- Drug addiction is killing people at an unprecedented rate.

And all of these things matter to God, which in turn means that they should all matter to us, as a collective group. But let me point out something this morning that may not seem obvious to all of us in the room:

- Sex trafficking is a horrendous practice that gets difficult because of its hidden nature, but they are not selling 7-year-old children in a storefront in Kansas City. If they were, I hope that someone would have the courage to do something about it.
- There aren't walk-in shelters around town for the homeless and drug addicts that poison them while they sleep with the intention of killing them and throwing their bodies into the ally dumpsters.
- I haven't seen abusive husbands wearing t-shirts that say, "I'm an expert at beating my wife. Call me if you need help beating yours."
- It's my hope that is something so horrendous was so obvious, there would not be such a passive approach by the church of Jesus.

Here's my point...

- We live in a society where within 1-2 hours of any given location, a woman can make an appointment to have their baby killed. Those who kill the babies can advertise it, promote it, profit from it, and even garner political support from the highest offices in our nation.
- Satan has **deceitfully and successfully numbed** the collective conscience of the world and has normalized death so effectively, that even those who name the name of Jesus have become complacent regarding such practices; far worse, have even become advocates for such practices.
- **Satan, the great deceiver, knows something from the Garden of Eden; if he can find creative and politically correct ways to make evil attractive and disguise it with appealing terms human beings will swallow it hook, line, and sinker.**

Abortion is a great evil of our time, and we are at a tipping point within the moral fabric of our nation regarding how we will ultimately respond to this evil. Will we once again excuse and write off this practice as a necessary evil that we can't do anything about, or will we speak for those who cannot speak, provide a way for those who are lost, and sacrifice ourselves for those who are defenseless and voiceless among us?

Today, I am not going to spend a lot of time building the case for why abortion is evil in the sight of God. I encourage you to listen to the message Seth Gruber gave when he was out. At its core, it comes down to the question, "What is the fetus?" Is it a clump of inanimate cells, or is it a human being that holds the title of personhood, and as such is deserving of the same rights and protections as every other innocent human life?

- If THE HUMAN LIFE IN THE WOMB IS truly is an autonomous person, then the arguments regarding the baby's environment, age, location, dependency, or viability are irrelevant, for all those arguments could easily be applied to living persons, and countless variations of murder would become acceptable under those terms.
 - We could justify killing Grandpa if he's not able to feed and bath himself. We could kill a two-year-old child because they are dependent on their parents to live, and are a drain of resources and time. We could kill the homeless because most of them live invisibly, virtually unseen, and unnoticed.
 - If you're sickened by the thought of those things, you should be... Praise God you have a conscience. However, all the arguments that people make as to why it's ok to abort the

person in the womb are the same arguments that would apply to each scenario listed above.

But if we go through all of the scientific and theological frameworks in an intellectually honest way, we come to the conclusion that the baby in the womb, from conception, is a person that God knows, that God formed, that God is calling, and even has the ability to respond to God's presence (John the Baptist). Here is the ultimate biblical conclusion to the matter of unborn human life:

QUOTE

The unborn life is not less valuable because it is less visible or deemed to be less viable.

Pastor Josh,

QUOTE

Today, I am going to focus more on the response of the church to such realities. I speak today, not from a place of personal perfection, for I have fallen short of all that I should do. Regardless, I speak to you today from a place of truth and love, in the hopes that the truth will transform us and set us free.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor who is most famously known for his outspoken criticism of the Nazi party, and whose courage to stand for the Jews when the entire church was silent ultimately cost him his life, wrote the following words:

“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,

APPLICATION

Looking back, most of us probably say, “I would have spoken up against such evil.” The more piercing question we should be asking is, “Why did the majority of the Christian church in Germany turn a blind eye to the evils that were taking place around them?”

- Perhaps they had political alliances that they valued more than fellow human beings.
- Perhaps they bought into the godless secular nazi propaganda about the sub-human value of Jews.
- Perhaps they didn’t want to be inconvenienced with personal sacrifice, as long as life was “as usual” for them.
- Perhaps they remained ignorant or were uninformed by their pastors.
- Or, perhaps they were just too afraid of the cost of speaking against such a powerful entity.

Maybe, if we’re honest, we might realize that those same reasons exist today as reasons why more Christians don’t boldly stand against the evils of our time.

BIBLE VERSE

[Eph 5:8-16 NKJV] 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.” 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

BIBLE VERSE

John 8:12 (NKJV) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

1**Discern**

BIBLE VERSE

Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

APPLICATION

Part of walking in God's light is the activity of discerning God's truth, and God's will. Christianity is not a religion we are a part of, it's an invitation into a new life. As Christians, we adopt the mind of Christ. We repent, literally, change our minds. We go from being our own authority to being under the authority of Jesus.

- We seek out what pleases Him.
- We no longer pursue the things of the flesh but of the Spirit. This means that we diligently seek what is good, right, and true (vs 9).
- We are not led by the tyranny of our emotions, but by the unchanging lamp and light of His truth.
- We labor to discern what is good and what is evil based on how Jesus sees things.

We "FIND OUT" what is ACCEPTABLE to the Lord.

- dokimazō – To scrutinize and examine. A term that was used to describe discerning the authenticity and purity of a precious metal. You inspect it for any impurities that might cause it to be defiled.
- Acceptable – that which meets a certain standard to be pleasing and approved.

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 5:14 ESV] 14 But solid food (the depths of God's Word) is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Children of the light, who walk in the light, are to be those who are honing their skills of discernment. As you and I become more spiritually mature, the result is not an increasing apathy toward good and evil, rather a growing care for and conviction of what is right and wrong.

APPLICATION

When it comes to abortion, one's views and convictions must be honed by one thing, and one thing alone, God's Word. Jesus prayed, ***"Father sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth."***

- Sadly, many Christians use other plumb lines to develop their convictions.

Some people use empathy and emotion – by putting themselves in the shoes of a mother who is experiencing an unwanted pregnancy, they began to feel good things... compassion, and sympathy. *"It's changing her life, it will be hard, she never asked for this, there are financial implications, there are dreams that might go unrealized, etc."* As a result, they come to the conclusion that in order for that woman to experience a better life, she should have the right to choose whether or not to go through with the pregnancy.

PRINCIPLE: This is what Scottish Philosopher Adam Smith termed "Moral Imagination" in 1759.

Moral imagination is defined as the mental capacity to create or use ideas, images, and metaphors not derived from moral principles or immediate observation to discern moral truths or to develop moral responses.

- This is a dangerous place to develop a conviction from.
 - First, who are you or I to authoritatively declare what will make for a better or worse life for another person. That baby and that responsibility very well could be their redemption.
- But when we build our convictions on the truth, we don't look at a woman and say, ***"I feel so bad for you, so why don't you go have your baby killed."*** Rather we say, ***"I acknowledge the shock, pain, difficulty, and aftereffects that this pregnancy is causing you. I have compassion for you which is why I want to encourage you that God is going to redeem this difficulty for your good. He has a plan to take the challenges that are ahead of you and make you better through them. Not only that, but I am going to be an extension of His love to you and walk alongside you. I'll lift you in prayer, I'll help you with the financial burden. I'll be a mentor and a consistent voice of encouragement."***

Some people use the voices of the secular culture – It's frequently easier to repeat the voices that are shouting the loudest and sound the most convincing rather than digging your own wells deep into God's Word.

- We must be careful not to be swept away by charismatic jargon. What we feel is irrelevant if it doesn't align with what we know about God.
- The voices that are leading the way in our secular culture, for the most part, are not congruent with the voice of Jesus. The world does not discern the things of the Spirit.
- That doesn't mean that every voice in the world is wrong, it just means it must not be immediately received as truth. It must be measured and tested by God's Word.

APPLICATION

Being ignorant of what is right and wrong in God's sight in our culture is unacceptable. We don't have to know everything... we are only finite, but we must be growing in our knowledge, understanding, and pursuit of truth and righteousness.

BIBLE VERSE

[Rom 12:9 NKJV] 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Love is hypocritical if it involves ignoring evil or neglecting good.

2

Separate

BIBLE VERSE

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

FELLOWSHIP

To share in the company of or partake together with.

Paul says that when unfruitful works of darkness exist, the one who is discerning what is acceptable to the Lord can't take part in contributing to or propagating that evil, nor should they associate with those that do.

- Abortion is an unfruitful work of darkness with which the church is to have no contribution toward, partnership with, or association with.

- Planned Parenthood, the number one provider of abortion services, is an organization that is not interested in women's health and wellbeing, but in profiting from the business of death. It has demonic roots.

BIBLE VERSE

[Mat 10:34-36 NKJV] 34 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 “For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; 36 “and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his [own] household.’

QUOTE

“The minister’s work is also important and also he should be trained, perhaps by the Federation as to our ideals and the goal we hope to reach. We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.”

Margaret Sanger, A Letter December 10, 1939

APPLICATION

She called this “the Negro Project.” Among the most insidious, racist initiative in the history of our nation. Planned Parenthood was founded as a Eugenics organization with doctrines of demons at its core.

SHOW VIDEO

What I’m about to share with you comes from. heart of humility, not arrogance. I am not here to demean anyone, mock anyone, or suggest that I am anyone’s eternal judge.

Since 1967 the greatest advocate and supporter of Planned Parenthood at a national level has been the Democrat Party of America. In the last two presidential elections, 98% of all Planned

Parenthood's campaign donations went to Democrat Candidates.

APPLICATION

It has sadly become apparent that the Democrat party of today has made its aim to support, propagate and profit from things that are evil in God's sight.

Now, I'm not suggesting that every Democrat or everyone who votes democrat has an evil plan, but the party itself does. Unfortunately, 89% of the time, an elevated Democrat will vote with their party line and platform. That percentage increases when it comes to issues of abortion.

- They let NONE of the very few pro-life candidates in their party speak at sanctioned events. They demand that their presidential candidates unequivocally support abortion. They are already working, both on the local and national level, on legislation that will ensure abortion rights if the Supreme court ruling upends the precedent of Roe v. Wade.
- The Democrat-controlled Congress has already passed the Women's Protection act. Though it's unlikely to pass the Senate (because of Republican numbers), it ensures a woman's right to abortion and seeks to prohibit states from infringing.
- **NEW JERSEY** – A Democrat-controlled state has already passed the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act to preemptively codify its laws in preparation for the supreme court decision.
- **CALIFORNIA** – has budgeted insane amounts of money to repay the student loan debts of healthcare workers that stay committed to offering abortion services. They have also established an official California Future of Abortion Council to seek to become an official abortion sanctuary state.
- **Florida, Mississippi, and Texas** have all introduced legislation banning abortions after 15 weeks, and South Dakota is currently planning legislation to make it 6 weeks.

Friends, I am not twisting facts because I have some republican agenda. Frankly, I'm sickened by the general weakness and lack of spine within the republican party. I wish the church would hold them to greater accountability. But the fact is, they are our best hope right now to stand against this injustice and unrighteousness in our nation.

- Again, it's my intention to offend or upset, but if the Republican official platform states that they support the rights of law enforcement officers to use unrestricted lethal force to kill

unarmed black people, I would be up here calling it out as sick, demented, and evil... probably to a standing ovation.

- Yet the Democrats have made it openly known that they will stop at nothing to protect the practice of abortion.

QUOTE

Democrats are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice. We believe unequivocally, like the majority of Americans, that every woman should be able to access high-quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion. We will repeal the Title X domestic gag rule and restore federal funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides vital preventive and reproductive health care for millions of people, especially low-income people, and people of color, and LGBTQ+ people, including in underserved areas.

Democrats oppose and will fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to reproductive health and rights.

2020 Democrat National Platform,

APPLICATION

Some might suggest, “Well, I’m with the democrats because I believe some of their other policies are good for society.” What it ultimately comes down to is minimizing the reality of what abortion truly is and inflating democratic policies to more than they really are.

To once again quote Bonhoeffer,

QUOTE

“If you board the wrong train, it is no use running along the corridor in the other direction.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,

APPLICATION

At this point in time, to say, “I’m a pro-life democrat” is a futile effort given the track the party has chosen to run on. It’s time to get on another train!

“Josh, are you trying to build an army of conservative republicans at this church?” NOPE, I’m trying to build an army of people who are willing to cast aside the idols of their political preferences to fulfill a Christ-centered mission.

CALL TO REPENTANCE

Not that anyone of consequence is probably listening, but regardless, I call the Democrat Party to repentance for supporting policies and ideals that are unrighteous and deadly to our culture and society. I call upon them to renounce their abortion agenda, renounce their support to change the definitions of human sexuality, and affirm their support for the sovereignty of Israel to inhabit their promised land. Until they do, I exhort the church to disassociate with them, for these principles are contrary to and incompatible with the gospel and biblical truth. To knowingly and actively support such policies is a direct violation of God’s command to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

The government of these United States will not silence the voice of the church, the pillar, and ground of the truth, from shining the light of truth into their darkness; neither by intimidation or persecution. And they will eventually try both... it’s already happened in much of the world, and it’s happening in wester, modern societies such as Canada even now.

3

Expose

BIBLE VERSE

12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

QUOTE

If a light doesn't expose and reveal what's in the darkness, the light is not on.

Pastor Josh,

EXPOSE

Elegcho – To bring to light by way of conviction and instruction. To convict with truth.

[Tit 1:9 NKJV] 9 (*an elder*) holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict (*the truth*).

[Jhn 3:20 NKJV] 20 “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”

APPLICATION

Again, we discuss abortion today because of its prevalence, acceptance, and promotion in our current culture, but the light exposes all darkness.

- If a politician is a womanizer, that same light, as did John the Baptist, must call that out and call them to repentance.
- Where there are hidden works of darkness, lewdness, perversion, lying, greed, or pride, the Christian witness does not sweep them under the rug but reveals them for what they are.
- We don't expose the works of darkness to condemn the world, but, as Jesus, that the world might be saved through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus.

We don't expose people in order to self-righteously shame them, but so that the darkness that is keeping them enslaved can be expelled by the power of Christ.

APPLICATION

Perhaps today, you are in a scary situation. You're pregnant as a result of a bad sexual decision, or God forbid a forced sexual decision. Perhaps you feel that if you stepped into the light and are honest about what happened, you'll be skinned alive, rejected, and judged. Your fear tells you that abortion is the easy way of escape. That's a lie.

- Today, if that's you, I need to tell you something about Grace. Grace will be a place of grace and healing for you. You can come here from a failure or abuse and we will walk with you through the challenging season ahead. You will find mercy, forgiveness, and help here. Jesus wouldn't leave you alone, and neither will we.

Perhaps you feel exposed today because you've had an abortion, and you carry the shame and guilt of that decision to this day. You need to know now that us exposing the practice of abortion for what it is is not a pronouncement of judgment on you. It's true, you have sinned, but we have all sinned. You can walk in the light of His life today by fully embracing and accepting the forgiveness of Christ and using your experience to help others who find themselves at a point of decision.

APPLICATION

The light of truth in Christians is to expose, but not in order to throw someone out in their nakedness in order to mock and shame them. The light exposes in order to clothe the nakedness, restore the fallen, and bring forth goodness from the rubble of sin.

4

Awake

BIBLE VERSE

14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

A. AWAKE BY PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO OUR NEIGHBOR

[Rom 1:16 NKJV] 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The fact is that more laws exist because of the sinful, hardened hearts of mankind. When we share the life-changing, heart-transforming good news of Jesus with people, we give them the opportunity to receive a new heart and have a clean slate before God. When this happens, ignorance toward God's law is replaced with the conviction of the Holy Spirit to pursue what is good, pure, holy, and true. When someone gives their life to Christ, they begin down a path of repentance, restoration, and hope.

B. AWAKE THROUGH PERSONAL REPENTANCE AND PURSUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

It's pointless to demand that others be held accountable if I'm not holding myself accountable. I will be lulled to sleeplessness, apathy, and ineffectiveness if I allow the very sin I condemn in others to take root in my own life.

BIBLE VERSE

[Rom 13:11-14 NKJV] 11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

APPLICATION

When we become awake, we take a wartime mentality to the battle of flesh and spirit.

- We are prepared for God's best for us when we renounce the hidden things of shame, allow no opportunity for the flesh to fulfill its godless lusts, cast off the works of darkness, and clothe ourselves with His spiritual armor: Truth, righteousness, the proclamation of the gospel, faith, salvation, and the sword, God's Word.

C. AWAKE BY TAKING ACTION

[Pro 24:11-12 NKJV] 11 Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. 12 If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?

We live in a time when we can't honestly claim ignorance anymore. The people group this passage applies to the most today is the unborn.

Physical Action

- Supporting local PRC
- Praying at the clinic in Kansas City
- Making your life and resources available to those in need.
- Voting for pro-life political candidates and parties.

Taking spiritual action

- Renewed commitment to prayer.
- Offering oneself to God.

ILLUSTRATION

We can awake by engaging the conversation with those who are opposed with humility, gentleness, and truth. I received an email from a gentleman yesterday that blessed me. It was in response to a Facebook devotion I did on the topic of abortion.

In late 1984, while working at Rockwell Defense Systems in Anaheim, I became embroiled in one of those office “discussions,” in which everyone within earshot gathers to listen in and give a few opinions. The issue was abortion, and within minutes, it was me against a roomful (at least a dozen), who were castigating me in harsh terms. One person, a young man named Leonard, was leaning over an office divider, not saying a word, but grinning at me throughout the whole ordeal. I came away from the situation feeling thoroughly “beaten up” and discouraged. Shortly thereafter, I quit the job, married my wife, and moved to Colorado. Several months later I came home from work one day, and she asked me if I remember a man named “Leonard” from Rockwell. When I told her I recalled him, she mentioned that day in the office, when I had attempted to stand up to all those people, only to be attacked and denigrated. I had assumed

Leonard was enjoying watching them tear me apart. But he explained to her that at that same time, he got his girlfriend pregnant, and everyone was “counseling” them to get an abortion. After hearing my comments to the group, he realized that it would be wrong and he could not do it. It was on the birth of his daughter that he felt compelled to call and say “Thank you.” He also explained to my wife that they had determined to get right with God, and had gotten married so he could be a proper father to his daughter.

BIBLE VERSE

[Jas 4:17 NKJV] 17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

CONCLUSION

We live in a world of darkness. Spiritual darkness, moral darkness, and intellectual darkness. Jesus is the light of the world; He brings spiritual clarity, moral clarity, and intellectual honesty. As children of the light, we too are to follow in His steps.

- We are to **DISCERN** what is pleasing and acceptable to God.
- We are to **SEPARATE** ourselves from contributing to or partaking in works of darkness.
- We are to **EXPOSE** what’s in the darkness, as shameful as those things are, by shining the light of God’s truth.
- We are to **AWAKE** out of slumber and apathy to active involvement in God’s Kingdom work here and now.

Norma McCorvey, you might know her better as Jane Roe (of Roe Verses Wade) was befriended by a pastor after writing her book “I Am Roe.” She came to Christ in 1995 and shortly after said the following:

QUOTE

“All those years I was wrong. Signing that affidavit, I was wrong. Working in an abortion clinic, I was wrong. No more of this first trimester, second trimester, third-trimester stuff. Abortion — at any point — was wrong.”

APPLICATION

This battle is worth our time and efforts, as is adoption, and pregnancy care. But victories are only possible with a church that fears God more than they fear man, that loves their neighbor more than they love themselves, and are bold as lions because they walk in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.