



Start a Conversation about...

A Life for a Life

The Fifth Commandment

The Supreme Court just passed a law that says it is not required to view an ultrasound before an abortion. Planned Parenthood was featured in a controversial YouTube video. The New York Times just published an article about a law that could ban abortions if Down Syndrome was the reason. Plastered all over the media are stories related to life issues. How are we to respond as Christians? The issue of Pro-Life versus Pro-Choice carries many questions: When does life begin? Who has the right to make decisions on life issues? In order for Christians to know how to respond to these questions, we must first look at what the Creator of Life has to say about it.

Foundational Scriptural Truth

One of the time-honored Bible Lessons taught in Sunday School and religion classes is the story of how God created man. It is time to take a look at God's Word again.

"Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature... So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:7, 21, 22, ESV)

Not only did God take the time to create the first man and woman, but He created them unique in all of creation.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, ESV)

Human beings are the crown of God's creation. We are created in His image, created to be loved, and created to be in relationships. God created the first man and woman with special care. He continues to create all people with this same attention to detail.

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." (Psalm 139: 13-16, ESV)

How amazing to know that God has created each person and each life. Even in the womb, each person has value in God's eyes. God has given everyone life, and through His Son, Jesus Christ, God gives us eternal life as well.

"And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:30-33, ESV)

"But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21, ESV)

The value of children and the abuse of infants is not new to this day and age. The Old Testament is filled with horrible stories of parents who did not value the gift of life that God gave to them. Here are a few examples:

"You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord." (Leviticus 18:21, ESV)

"They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." (Jeremiah 32:25, ESV)

Molech was the national god of the Ammonites and was associated with the sacrificial burning of children. The Ammonites found their beginnings from Lot and his youngest daughter (Genesis 19:30-38). Through the years, the Ammonites waged war against the Israelites and were a bad influence on God's people (Judges 10:6-9).

God's people are still fighting a war against the bad influence of unbelieving neighbors. While we may not have a man-made statue where parents can take their children to be sacrificed, people have created a god within their hearts where they can sacrifice their unborn children in the name of selfishness, pride and shame. The battle rages on and God sends out a cry for mercy.

"And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.' And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them." (Mark 10:13-16, ESV)

Doctrinal Quotations

One of the trademark sayings within Lutheranism was coined by Martin Luther, "What does this mean?" With God's help, Martin Luther was able to frame the Fifth Commandment in a way that brings deeper meaning to the issue of abortion. He says, "We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need" (Luther's Small Catechism).

God has created all things, visible and invisible, in the Universe. As God is the giver of life, our Biblical understanding is that life begins at conception. That means that every fetus is considered to be our neighbor. It is our job to protect them from harm and support them in life.

While we recognize these concepts to be true, it is more difficult to put them into practice as we see someone we care about struggle. Know that our Savior has been in our shoes. He too has difficulty when He sees one of His precious children suffer. Jesus stands by our side in the fight for life and gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit to strengthen our resolve.

We have advocates who march boldly before us, exemplifying Christ as they work to defend those whom God has given life, but cannot protect themselves. Lutherans for Life is one such organization. The Executive Director shares his thoughts, "You and I will one day die. But the truths of Scripture we uphold when it comes to the sacredness of life will never die. That is why it is so important to not only protect and defend God's gift of life, but also to protect and defend His truth about what gives value to life. If we lose the latter, the former will quickly erode. Thank you for being people who are 'holding fast the word of Life' (Philippians 2:16)!" Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life – A "Life Quote" from Lutherans For Life • www.lutheransforlife.org

Application

The circle of people we know who are dealing with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy seems to get closer and closer. Just like God creates every person to be unique, every circumstance that involves pregnancy is unique as well. The moms involved in these challenging situations need to be handled with as much tender care as the precious babies that they are carrying.

Despite the individuality that comes with every pregnancy situation, God still has one opinion on the life that He gave: it is to be protected. God would not allow a person to be conceived if he or she did not have value. This is the message that we want to communicate.

God calls us to be salt. We are called to preserve the truth of God's value on all human life. We are also called to flavor the lives of the people around us by giving them a taste of the Gospel. With God's help, I pray that you can reach out and begin a conversation with someone you may know who is struggling with the issues of life in regards to a pregnancy. Allow her to share her story. Ask questions to get to the heart of the issue. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit gives you the words to share that God created the life that lives within this precious woman and He loves them both.