



DO JUSTICE  
LOVE MERCY

THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE  
GEN. 1:26-27 | PS. 139:13-16 | ROM. 8:1

**Personal issue:** I speak as someone who is grateful that they weren't aborted—and yet living in a world where it's everywhere. It is a modern-day Holocaust. It's for that reason that we are taking time to talk about it today and we close out our series on Justice and Mercy. **Political issue:** My goal is not to be political—not trying to endorse a party. Largely pro-life audience. Just want to have a good conversation. It's a **Sensitive issue:** Have men and women in my family who have sponsored and had abortions. No nasty pictures. **Massive issue:** 42 million people worldwide aborted every year—that's 7 times more than the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust. Over 850,000 abortions in the United States every year—that's every person in the city of Roanoke x 8 killed every year. And each one of those people, designed for God by God, in God's image—and extinguished. If you destroy a bald eagle's egg it you can be fined thousands of dollars and go to jail. If a woman has an abortion, it's celebrated by many as a reproductive right. This is a personal issue, biblical issue, political issue, a massive issue and that's why we're talking about it as we close out our series on Mercy and Justice. Speak to 4 groups (1) Everyone (2) People who would identify Pro-Choice (3) Believers who have sponsored and participated in abortion (4) Unbelievers. **Pray!**

### A Word To Everyone...

It's accepted as an uncontested fact in our country that humans have rights. If you care about human rights, then it makes sense to care about why people have them. You can't get there from evolution. It's borrowed capital from the Judeo-Christian worldview. Founding Fathers knew this when they that people have been endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. *imago Dei!* Gen 1:26-27, "26 Then God said, 'Let us make man[a] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:26-27) It is a gift and a job. We are uniquely designed reflect God's glory and extend God's reign. It is a gift and a job. And theologically, this is what it means to be human. Biologically it means we have a certain arrangement of chromosomes and a certain DNA but theologically, being human means being someone who God has made in his image. And being made in God's image come with 2 very important implications.

- (1) Every person has unique value—above animals. Peter argues for the equality of animal and human suffering. "...humans and animals are equal in the sense that the fact that a being is human does not mean that we should give the interests of that being preference over the similar interests of other beings. That would be speciesism, and wrong for the same reasons that racism and sexism are wrong. Pain is equally bad, if it is felt by a human being or a mouse. We should treat beings as individuals, rather than as members of a species." Peter Singer God has made us distinct from animals and while we should never be cruel to animals, we are silly to suggest that a mouse and a person are not even close in value and dignity. So, because people are made in the image of God every person has a unique value...
- (2) Every person has intrinsic value. That is, we have a value that we don't earn, it's a status that's bestowed up on us regardless of our effort or behavior—good or bad—and to violate that inherent

dignity is a severe offense in God's eyes. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image." (Gen. 9:6). Makes no reference to what kind of person this is, just that they were made in God's image. And the implication here is that is wrong to shed the blood, that is murder, any one who is made in God's image. So, then we need to ask the question, when does image bearing begin? Answer: The moment God begins forming image bearers in the womb.

Jer. 1:5 "before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I consecrated you" Ps. 22:10, "From my mother's womb you have been my God." Ps. 139:13-16, "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."

God carefully meticulously assembles image bearers in the womb. Children are not just "developing" they aren't growing like vegetables. God is actively knitting them together stitching together little hands and tiny toes and a little heart. He has plans for this child. And this is important because when you start having conversations about this stuff with people, it gets easier and easier for them to accept abortion the younger and less developed a person is. But while I think you can make a biological case, the believers argument is fundamentally theological; that for all we can say about the biological development, it's the fact each person is being made for God by God in God's image. It's not valuable because how developed it is, but because of Who's developing it. And if from conception, this child bears God's image and is being personally fashioned by the God of the universe then this unborn person deserving of protection, and respect. Would it be cool to knock over my lego tower simply because I just started building it? No! Again Peter Singer:

"Newborn human babies have no sense of their own existence over time. So killing a newborn baby is never equivalent to killing a person, that is, a being who wants to go on living. That doesn't mean that it is not almost always a terrible thing to do. It is, but that is because most infants are loved and cherished by their parents, and to kill an infant is usually to do a great wrong to her or his parents." Peter Singer

No! Babies aren't valuable because they are wanted by their parents. They are valuable because they are wanted by God! Your children is are not valuable because you love them. If you were to stop loving them, they would still be valuable. They are valuable because they are loved by God and they've designed by him and for him from the moment of conception.

So then, all humans have distinct and unearned value and worth because they are made in God's image, and that value and distinctiveness exists the moment God begins crafting an image bearer in the womb—that is, at conception. Thus, to intentionally end the life of an image bearer in the womb, is to destroy and kill a person. And it is for this reason, that believers are right to stand against abortion...

### **A Word To Pro-Choice People**

Now as you know, there are some people who do not feel this way; that is there are many folks who do not think there is anything wrong with abortion and that restricting women from having an abortion in wrong and violates her reproductive rights. And so if that's you in the room, I want to speak to you for a few minutes and offer some pushback against some of the common arguments made by those in the pro-choice camp.

Now when you talk to the pro-choice folks they seems to take one of two routes to defend their position, and they usually make these arguments in certain order. Stephanie Gray is helpful here—this is her sequence! First, they'll, try to say something about the nature of the unborn. You'll hear things like, "It's not a human". So if that's you I'd simply ask, "What are its parents?" What's its mom? Dad? DNA? Then it follows that its human. You may say well it's not alive, to which I would ask, "If it's not alive, then why do you have to have an abortion? Is it growing?" Well yes, because it's alive! And if its an alive human, then it qualifies for human rights.

You may say ok well it's an alive human but it doesn't qualify as a person because it lacks certain things necessary for personhood. But there are only 4 differences between you now and you as an embryo and none of them amount to a morally sufficient reason to kill you in your embryonic state. What are those four differences?

**Size:** Do we say that someone isn't a person if they're small. Women are smaller than men should they have less human rights? A person is a person no matter how small. **Level of development:** Do we say that a child who isn't as intellectually or socially developed as his parents possesses any less right to life? Even someone who is losing their memory, even someone who may be unconscious loses their status as a person? **Environment:** you were in your mother's womb but now you're not. But surely *where* someone is doesn't determine *what* someone is! Location doesn't affect personhood. A 6-inch journey down a birth canal doesn't turn someone into a person. **Degree of Dependence:** It is completely dependent on its mother—but that's the case after it's born. And since when is weakness a requirement to be a person? Do we say that the strong have more of a right to life than the weak? No, to the contrary, we say that it's right and virtuous for the strong to champion the lives of the weak.

And the last effort to defend this position is simply appeal to the idea that the fetus is part of the woman's body just an appendage like her hand, head, feet etc. Thus, an abortion is no morally different than a women clipping her finger nails or getting a haircut. A fetus is just part of her body than she can remove if she wants. And I'd just like to ask a pregnant woman who would say this, "Do you have twenty fingers? Do you have 4 lungs? 4 eyes? Do you have 2 separate sets of DNA? Two simultaneously operating centers of consciousness? Both male and female genitals?" Then who do they belong to? Your son. Even the law recognizes this. If someone killed you they would be charged with double homicide in recognition that the "thing" inside of you is a person not appendage. People don't want to control your body. They want to preserve someone else's.

So none of these arguments make the case that the unborn isn't an alive human person and that's why the most honest pro-choice advocates don't even bother trying. Article, "So What If Abortion Ends Life?" Mary Williams, "Yet I know that throughout my own pregnancies, I never wavered for a moment in the belief that I was carrying a human life inside of me. I believe that's what a fetus is: a human life. And that doesn't make me one iota less solidly pro-choice. You ask well why not? Because there is a second reason that I alluded to earlier that is really driving everything behind the pro-choice position. It has nothing to do with whether the unborn is a human person. Williams continues, "Here's the complicated reality in which we live: All life is not equal. That's a difficult thing for liberals like me to talk about, lest we wind up looking like death-panel-loving, kill-your-grandma-and-your-precious-baby storm troopers. Yet a fetus can be a human life without having the same rights as the woman in whose body it resides. She's the boss. Her life and what is right for her circumstances and her health should automatically trump the rights of the non-autonomous entity inside of her. Always."

Well, there it is. A woman not wanting her child give her morally sufficient grounds to kill it. Anyone who disagrees is oppressing her reproductive rights. Now it's usually wrapped in the language of women's right and empowerment. One presidential candidate when asked just recently about a woman's right to an abortion said, "I think the dialogue has gotten so caught up on when you draw the line that we've gotten away from the fundamental question of who gets to draw the line," Buttigieg said. "And I trust women to draw the line." (Pete Buttigieg) We trust women to make that decision. Now notice the deceptive rhetoric here, it's a way to make it sound like if you're pro-life you don't trust women. And it's a way to distract you from the main issue at hand—the life of unborn. Don't forget, the ONLY reason we are pro-life is because abortion is murder. Abortion is killing an image bearer.

So, when you say I trust women to make the right decision when it comes to abortion, what you're saying is you're saying you trust them to decide which children to kill. I don't. This is what the "choice" is pro-choice means. No one has the right to choose to kill someone. We're not pro-choice about robbing banks, we're not pro-choice about abuse, why would we be pro-choice when it comes to stopping the heart of an unborn child? Some people say well I personally believe it's wrong, but I don't feel like I can enforce that on anyone else. Really, you believe abortion is murder but that we shouldn't tell other people that they can't murder their kids? Well if you outlaw abortion, women will get abortions in back alleys and get sick. Again, if people are going abduct children, should we make laws to make that easier? No, why would we make it easier to kill them? Remember it's the killing an image bearer that's the problem here.

Even in the cases of rape and incest—which constitutes less than 1 percent of abortions—if we're talking about killing a human person it should be clear that being assaulted is not a basis on which to kill an innocent person—how someone comes to be a person or whether they're wanted has nothing to do with their status as a person. If you wouldn't kill a 2yo child born from rape, what would make it right to kill him if he was younger smaller? Greg Koukl says, "If the fetus is a person no argument for abortion is adequate, if the fetus is not a person no argument is necessary." And so I hope that if you're here and you support abortion as a woman's right that you would reconsider because every child is made in God's image and every child deserves a birthday. So, I've offered a word for everyone, pro-choice folks, and now I want to offer a word to believing and unbelieving men and women who have participated in abortion.

### **A Word For Believers Who Have Participated in Abortion...**

One of the things the church has done well is teach that we can be forgiven of our sins, but we haven't shown people how the Gospel frees us from the shame and feelings of guilt that come with them—and so when it comes to some of the issues—especially the issue of abortion—there are a lot of women who know that God forgives them, but say that they just really struggle to forgive themselves and if they could do that then they could really find healing. In preparation for this sermon I talked to a friend of mine who's had an abortion and I asked her, what was one of things that really helped you work through the pain—understanding that healing isn't found in forgiving yourself and that forgiving yourself shouldn't even be a part of the picture. She said it cheapens God's forgiveness to think that your forgiveness is the one that will really bring healing. And she's right! You don't have the authority to forgive yourself. You don't have the authority to remove your sin—and the good news is you don't have to.

Ps. 103:11-12 "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him, as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

God has removed your sin as far away from you as in could possibly be. You are not a believer with an asterisk next to your name! You are not damaged goods. You are righteous in Christ!

Rolls Royce's Never Break Down Illustration.

1 Cor. 1:7-8, "So that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice it doesn't say forgiven—it says not guilty! You have stood before God and he has said, "I have no record of that."

1 Cor. 4:3-4, "3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me."

### **A Word For Unbelievers...**

People do 3 things with guilt...

Deny—I'm not really guilty. That's a religious moral mumbo jumbo. I can do what I want.

Atone—Try to make up for it.

Believe on Christ.