

Life Observance Sermon

Be Silent No More

Ezekiel 3:18-21

Today our service is focused on an anniversary that is different from most anniversaries people normally observe. This is not the type of anniversary which reflects on a married couple's years of blessings and an optimistic future. Nor is it an anniversary in which church members look back at their congregation's history as well as look forward to exciting opportunities.

This is not an anniversary which solemnly recalls past wars and fallen soldiers. It is also not the anniversary of a national or international disaster like the sinking of the Titanic or the September 11th attack on the World Trade Towers. The anniversary we observe acknowledges the "beginning and continuation" of a national tragedy that continues to break countless hearts, costs millions of lives, and shakes a self-righteous and defiant fist at God in the name of individual rights and freedom.

Thirty years ago on January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion in the United States and its territories for virtually any reason and throughout all nine months of a pregnancy. Since that fateful day, it is estimated that more than 40 million unborn children have lost their lives through legalized abortion. More than 40 million times a mother made the decision that she and the world are better off with her child dead than alive. More than 40 million times a doctor usurped the role of God and took the life of an unborn baby.

What is especially alarming is that in this country the vast majority of those who choose abortion profess to be Christian. That means they likely have access to God's Word, to Christian churches and Christian pastors, and to their Christian friends. And although abortion is called a "private decision" made between a woman and her doctor, most occur with the full knowledge of more than the woman and the physician.

Chances are you know or have known someone who sought to abort. Maybe it was a family member, neighbor, or close friend. Maybe you tried to talk them out of it. Maybe you felt too awkward to say anything. Worse yet, maybe you helped them decide for an abortion. In the end, you are touched by this event which became legal 30 years ago, and today we need to talk about it. And I'll tell you why:

Consider these words: (Ezekiel 3:18-21) *"When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself. Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, and you will have saved yourself."*

It is because of these words I must speak — and so must you. We must **BE SILENT NO MORE**.

The first question to pop into people's minds probably is this: "Is it wrong to have an abortion?" Of all the abortions performed each year, less than 1% are because a woman's life is endangered. I am not going to talk about those types of abortion today. Rather, let's look at those more than 99% of abortions that are performed because a mother does not like something about her baby, or the timing is not right.

God's Word teaches that human life is precious. The most dramatic demonstration of this was the sacrifice made by God for human life. God tells us beautifully in this one passage: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"** (John 3:16). What better testimony of the incredible value of human life than the sacrifice of Holy blood?

Before we even begin to discuss heartbeats, brain waves, and fetal pain, I cannot overstate the importance of understanding this story of Jesus Christ as it relates to protecting unborn human life. There is nothing more devastating, more damaging, and more disastrous than being found guilty of sin before the Perfect God. Consider what Jesus said about the announcement to people who stand sinful before God: **“Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’”** (Matthew 25:41).

Even more important than saving flesh and blood is saving the soul. Jesus once said, **“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”** (Mark 8:36). The brief time anyone has on earth is what we call a “time of grace.” It is a time to come to know God and His salvation through Jesus Christ. We are told, **“Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment”** (Hebrews 9:27). There is no second chance.

It is because of the importance of the soul and the way God uses a person’s lifetime, that He decreed protection for human life. We know the command: **“You shall not murder.”** Scripture talks elsewhere about human life. After Noah and his family exited the ark God gave man permission to take all plant and animal life. But then He said, **“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man”** (Genesis 9:6).

God reserves for Himself the right to initiate and terminate life. Without His expressed command life is not to be taken. It doesn’t matter whether the life is wanted, appreciated, or valued by us. Human life is to be protected.

So this begs the question, “Is abortion the taking of a human life?” The answer from God’s Word is unequivocally “Yes!” Consider this passage, **“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me”** (Psalm 51:5). God does not hold blobs of tissue accountable for sin. He does not hold a “part” of a woman’s body accountable for sin. He holds “people” accountable for sin. This accountability begins not only at birth but at conception.

Is that reasonable? Does it sound logical that an egg from the moment it is fertilized and begins cell division is a person? Not by the way many think today. You see, today, personhood with all of its protections seems to be bestowed only upon those with some level of intelligence and responsiveness. After all, have you tried to communicate with unborn life within a few days after conception? The unborn child doesn’t even look very human, nor does he or she seem to display intelligence.

So, based on such reasoning, the unborn die at a rate of well over one million each year. And, consistent with that reasoning, a number of newborn children are allowed to die from neglect because of some sort of handicap. And it doesn’t end there. The elderly, when the value of their life diminishes and perhaps when they lose their intellect, begin to be considered burdens, and effort is made to terminate their lives.

Do you see the problem? The standard of measure for “protecting” human life has been confused with the “existence” of human life. In other words, the argument is that because human life does not have the intellect and value we desire, it is expendable. If you don’t think this is the case, consider the words of feminist and abortion rights advocate, Naomi Wolf, who wrote in the October 1995 issue of *The National Review* that the abortion-rights movement needs to be more honest with women in acknowledging the death of a baby in every abortion. Wolf stated that the abortive mother can mourn the loss as a sad but “necessary” evil because of the circumstance.

Folks, taking a life because it is not wanted or because it lacks the intellect we desire, is still taking a human life. It is still wrong. It is still sinful and if we who know better do nothing to testify to the truth then the words of our text clearly speak to us: **“[If] you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood”** (Ezekiel 3:18).

We are not given the luxury of being silent. The issue of abortion is not simply a choice between a woman and her doctor. This is not an issue of private conscience. It is a gross violation of God’s law which commands us both not to murder and to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Today women feel they have no choice but to kill their child. Is there not something you can do to warn them against this sin? Today legislators argue that we live in a pluralistic society. That means people should be permitted to have abortions. Is there not something you can do to warn them against this sin? Is there not something?

What is it you can do? I can't say for sure. Each of us lives in different circumstances. The one thing I do know is that doing nothing is not an option — not according to God. Knowing this, because life and death without Christ results in eternal destruction, what better love can we show to others than to share the truth that protects human life?

I ask you to look intently upon the cross that adorns the front of this church and recall the sacrifice made to save each of us from our sins. Then I ask you to consider the plight of desperate women and unborn children and answer the question in your own heart, "Can I really remain silent any longer?" Amen.