

Christianity and Abortion

Jeremiah 1:5

Introduction

- If you have a copy of Scripture, turn with me to the book of Jeremiah today...and we are going to look at a simple, yet foundational truth in the Christian life. The church stands for life because God forms life.
 - o God forms it, He is the author of it. Only God can create something as beautiful as a child...there is mystery, there is wonder, there is awe in the mighty work of God in the creation of life...
 - o And because of that, God's people have to recognize the cultural moment concerning life in the womb, and stand up and be counted...
- In other words, saying we are for life is not exactly the same thing as being for life...
 - o Really nothing in the Christian faith works that way. That's why James says faith without works is dead...for every belief there are corollary steps, actions, behaviors that are taken...
 - o Illustration: I think about this with the Christian concept of your body is a temple. There are parts of working out that I enjoy, walking, exercise, etc. There are other parts I don't enjoy as much...I am not sure there is anything on earth I like less than going to the dentist, can somebody shout, "Amen"?
 - Now I am not an antidentite...I love the fact that we have dentists, but when I close my eyes, and pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, part of that is no more dentist visits. That little hook? It's torture...
- But what's the point, really every belief in the Christian life has action steps...and believing that God is the author, He forms and shapes, He holds life in His hands...it leads us to all the actions informed by the Bible...
 - o Isaiah 1:17...seek justice, defend the cause of the fatherless
 - o James 1:27...pure religion is looking after the orphans and the widows
 - You could say it like, what God creates we value, and that value is shown in what we do...how we pray, things that we say, oportunities that we take like the one I am going to share today...
- Two caveats here...first, I know everybody isn't down with this. We have a lot of people, from a lot of different backgrounds...
 - o And maybe you think, of here we go...I know how this sermon is going to go. Well, maybe. Hey give us a shot here...we can advocate for life with compassion. There may be something in here that makes you think, and we would love to talk with you after the service, or set up a time to talk later...

- o Also, I want you to understand that I know that this is not an issue that is out there somewhere, this isn't an argument on a college campus or political debate stage...not first.
 - First and foremost it is an issue that, statistically speaking, has touched the lives of hundreds of people in our church. Post abortive men and women, families who have been affected...and all I want you to hear is this: There is hope in the gospel. Abortion is not an unpardonable sin, and this is a church that understands the sin of pride, anger, racism. They put Jesus on the cross just like abortion...and that calms any judgmental attitude.
 - And we are going to get into all of that, let's dive in...

Scripture

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

- I'm going to make an argument today that the world has this wrong, that it leads us to some strange and sad places...the world's definition of life and the formation of life is totally impersonal and it's a counterfeit...
 - o It's a false story...but I think the way you see that is by seeing the beauty of the truth. Illustration: you know federal agents learn to spot counterfeit currency¹, not by studying the fakes...they do it by spending endless hours looking at the real thing.
- So it is here, in this one little verse we have 3 components of the authentic origin and purpose for life in this earth. God forms us, knows us, and has plans for us.
 - o Life is not random, and it's not aimless. And cutting people off from their creator really leaves us floating and grasping for purpose. It leaves us wondering, “How should we live? Why are we even here?”
 - o “If you break the link between God, as an infinite personal creator, and man, as the created one, than all sorts of havoc will flow from that breaking” – Francis Shaffer
 - If God didn't create all different races of people then why would we just assume that we are equally valuable?
 - Peggy Orenstein in her article “The Miseducation of the American Boy,” brings out a ton of secular observations, many of them we would agree with...that post industrial revolution, and in the absence of traditional paths to manhood like work and early marriage, many parents struggle to understand what type of masculinity to encourage in their sons...the result is that is that in the locker room, misogyny is funny, vulnerability is feminine.

¹ <https://www.challies.com/articles/counterfeit-detection-part-1/>

- It leads Peggy to the conclusion that we need a better story of masculinity for boys, but I would argue, apart from connecting them their Creator, there is no better story.
 - You are going to say to a boy, “Don’t view girls like that.” Why? Because it’s wrong. Why? Uh...don’t view like girls like that!
- And today, without God as the author of life, we are left with a culture who views a baby in the womb as less than a human person...because if God isn’t the author, then we can just decide when life happens, so I guess it’s at birth...
 - Havoc. So many people walk through abortion, men and women, and they feel in their bones what a tragedy this is...but without God as creator, they have no language to connect to what they know and feel.
- God has not abandoned us to float without knowing. Jeremiah 1:5, in God’s Word persevered for his people over thousands of years tells us right here...this is what I have done, this is my intention in doing it, says the Lord

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you

- The first part of this is the formation of people by God in the womb...God makes babies, and that doesn’t happen after they are born...
 - o It’s not up for debate, there is no ambiguity here...Bryan Loritts says it like this, “Every believer who believes that the Bible is true should fight for the unborn.”
 - o Why? Because the Bible is not ambiguous here...they were formed by God.
 - And the only difference between a baby in the womb and you and me is size, level of development, environment, and dependency...But then again, a toddler is different from you and me in all these areas...
- The fundamental issue isn’t how big, cognitive ability, location...It’s simply this, God formed babies in the womb, he fashioned them...
 - o Psalm 139 says he knits them together. I want you to think about the infinite value of God fashioning a child...Here is the point, God is forming at every stage. An egg is fertilized and within three weeks the heart is beating and gender is determined. By six weeks, there are brainwaves and hands are moving. At seven weeks the the child can move its head back and forth, and interlock fingers. By eight weeks a baby is either right-handed or left. At nine weeks the baby is sucking its thumb. At 10 weeks, the baby yawns when it gets tired! And on and on we could go...God is forming at every stage, not after were born...that’s not what the book says, the book says in the womb...

- o And the value in the God of the universe intricately weaving together this new little life, the value is unparalleled...Illustration: Did you know it takes 15 men, six months, to create a Samurai katana...or think about the Sagrada Familia, Roman Catholic Church building in Spain...construction began in 1882, and it's set to be completed in 2026...that's how detailed and grand it is.
 - The spires height, 560 feet...
 - And yet when you think about the forming of a child and what God is fashioning together, the value of these things is no comparison. Why? Because we aren't God...He forms the beating heart...
 - He didn't start forming you after you were born, but from the first nano second of your existence...
- And what God creates we should value...
 - o Two things...
 - First, we intuitively know this...
 - Second, I know some of you think, "Well I don't see Christians value creation very well, I don't see you value incarcerated people very well..."
 - So why the hang up on abortion? Well, truthfully I hear that, and it's a powerful critic. But with respect, that's an argument for Christians to care about all of creation more, not babies less...
 - That argument gets thrown out, but really it should be framed like this. Not stop harping on the abortion issue, but start harping on other issues like you do the abortion issue
 - o God creates, we value

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you

- In the womb he intimately knew you²
 - o He loves you, He wants you...you could say it like this, "Your first thought about God wasn't His first thought about you."
 - o This concept of knowing is an intimate knowledge. As a human being, you are the crown jewel of his creation. Genesis 1:27-28, every boy and girl is born with God's image. You were meant to be His child...
- And if I can, His knowing you in the womb is not where it stops, but where it started. He wants a relationship with you right now through the gospel...
 - o Yes, we are born as His created children, but only in the gospel do we come back into his family as His spiritual children
 - o Because in life every single one of us sin, and run away from God. At some point, even though He wants to know us, we don't want to know

² NICOT, Thompson

- Him...and it manifests in our life in pride, and greed, and hurtful things that we say and do to one another, sexual sin, idolatry...the whole deal.
- o And yet He sent Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sin. And through faith we can be reborn into the most intimate knowledge of God...you could say it like this, “Jesus Christ died on the cross so that we could know the God that knows us.”
 - He didn’t just form you in an impersonal way. He didn’t wind the clock up in your life and let it roll...He knows you. He knows the hair on your head, the secret thoughts and plans of your heart, and He knows your sin...and He loves you anyway. He knows you, he wants you to know Him.
 - I think someone in our church right now is thinking, “Yeah, but you don’t know what I did.”...The shame and the guilt that comes from abortion
 - o The secular world wants to act like it’s not real, but it is real. It’s a pain that people never get over, women talk about hearing their baby cry in their dreams.
 - o And somebody might be carrying that...and you are thinking, “If God knows me and my sin, it’s not a good thing. He would never want me...”
 - o Listen please, every Christian knows what its like to have their sin result in the shedding of innocent blood.
 - Do you know how I know there is grace for you, even post abortion? Because all the sin, of all the world, resulted in Jesus Christ dying...the child being given over.
 - You’re not alone. You say, “I shed innocent blood.” Listen...we all did. And God’s grace is deeper still
 - He knows you, your sin doesn’t scare Him. It’s not bigger than the cross...He wants you to know Him.

“and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

- Consecrated, there is a specific plan you are set apart for³. The idea is that God had plans for Jeremiah that didn’t develop in his youth...
 - o Those plans were present in the womb! Illustration: You know a lot of young people’s opinions are changing on abortion, for this reason...they are the ultrasound generation.
 - o They saw their brothers and sisters in the womb...and I want you to hear what the book says, that is the place where God’s plans are present...
 - Abortion isn’t just snuffing out a life, but a call, a purpose, and a destiny⁴

³ NICOT, Thompson

⁴ Loritts

- As humbly as I can say this, I know there are some people who believe...that some kids who are born into poverty, born without a dad around, that abortion is better for them...
 - o Maybe that's a personal thing for someone here this weekend...like this is mercy, you don't know how bad life is going to be for this child...
 - o I understand that, and I can see how we come to that thought...but humbly let me just say, "Hey, you ain't God."
 - And you don't know the plans that He has for that child...Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet, bull. He was the persevering prophet. Tough as nails, determined, visionary leader...and his life was hard.
 - But God plans to use him for His kingdom, and those plans aren't up to us to snuff out...

Stand and be counted for the cause of life

- The body is a temple, so we go on a walk a couple times a week...we go to the dentist, may have to get the whole community to fast and pray, but we do
 - o In Christianity, what we believe is inextricably linked to how we live, things we do...
- And for that reason, I want to call our church to the front lines when it comes to standing for life...And I think that happens primarily in two ways, prophetically and priestly.
 - o Biblically it's a good paradigm, an illustration. The prophet cries out, calls for repentance. The priest ministers grace.
- First, the church should speak prophetically to the culture. I am not saying in telling the future, but calling out the tragedy and ironies of abortion for what they are...
- This is the part where we stand and speak God's Word...
 - o Seek justice, look after the orphan. Psalm 82, defend the cause of the weak and the fatherless. Jeremiah 22:3, shed no innocent blood...
- This is the part where Christians have to be sharp, bring out logical inconsistencies that flow, are repeated, and are rampant in a culture cut off from the Creator...
 - o Abortion is all about women's healthcare...really? Then why do you screen the baby for Down syndrome? If it's about women's healthcare, why are ultrasounds illegal in many places around the world because the gender of the baby being a boy is what determines whether the family will let it live...
 - o Church, it's our role to bring out the irony in the fact that that a drunk driver can be charged with manslaughter because they crash and cause a would-be mom to abort, but that same man could be an abortionist with no legal consequences at all...makes no sense in any universe.

- o Can we not see the devastating effect on the family structure as men abdicate their role as fathers? Proponents of abortion say we should have abortion as an option because so many fathers abandon their role...or, so many fathers in our culture abandon their role because of abortion.
 - You teach people their whole life, it's not a baby until its born, and whether or not it gets born is 100% the decision of the mom.
 - Now, wait a minute, 100%? Not 99%. As a father, I have not 1% of the decision as to whether this thing comes into the world, and only after it comes into the world...a decision that was 100% you say out of my hands, it becomes a baby...
 - Then after it's born, why do you come back to me? Don't you see how devastating it is to the very concept fatherhood?
- I could go all day...Someone says, "Well, we don't know when life begins." Well, OK...If that's your position, how can you justify abortion? I mean, I've shot a lot of guns...not knowing if someone is behind the target is a reason not to shoot.
 - o And on and on...there is a role for the church as prophet, speak the Word, call to repentance, dismantle arguments....
- But here is the problem, church...More times than not, what people actually need, is a priest and we come at them as a prophet.
 - o Yes, the arena of ideas. Yes to the person who wants to feel no remorse and convinces themselves that this is not a baby. Yes even in the political discourse...
 - o There are those who like people who sacrificed children in the OT, they lay that child on the alter because their God...which is career, or success, or saving face, or the college experience is telling them to.
 - And for them, they need the prophet's voice to ring out...to say to them, "Abortion says your life for mine, but the gospel says Jesus' life for your's."
- But so many in our community, they don't need a prophet, they need a priest...the church should minister grace with the touch of a priest.
- But for so many people in our community, do you know why the prophetic arguments aren't where the change is going to come from? Because they already know and feel its wrong. They are just in a desperate enough situation that they don't now what else to do.
 - o That's where the priest comes in. Being priestly in the NT is pointing to the Savior, it's a personal touch, its ministering grace...
 - o These people aren't thinking about some philosophical or theological argument. They are trying to figure out how they are going to make it. They are thinking, my foster care experience wasn't great...I am not doing that to them. I can barley take care of myself, how will I take care of them...I have seen hard things in this life, and they don't want that for them.

- Am I saying it's OK? Of course not...I am saying we have to be sharp enough to speak like prophets to those who need the love and care of a priest...
- That person needs the track record of churches to get better when it comes to adoption and foster care...
- They need to see our partnership with the care center maybe more than our protests...that the care center walks with women before and after, classes before and after...mentoring programs for men and women who find themselves facing unplanned pregnancy.
 - o They need to see the church open its arms to post abortive parents and show the Word, this is not an unforgivable sin...you don't have to it. It's tragic, but God has plans for you...that this tragedy can be a powerful testimony used by God to do great things.
- They need to see a people who are willing to be counted in prayer, not yelling, not arguing...praying
 - o This is what will move the needle....

Conclusion

- Let me specifically address a few people as we close...first, there are hundreds of people that are affected personally by abortion. I want to point you toward an abortion recovery ministry run by the one of our ministry partners, the Greensboro Pregnancy Care Center.
 - o This class is offered for both women and men.
- Secondly, there is someone here thinking about having an abortion...I plead with you —Don't! There is a church that stands ready, I promise you this...if you get in a group, and lean all the way into this church and its ministries we will move heaven and earth to help you parent.
 - o Physical needs, hospital bills, mentoring relationship...you may not know us, but we are here. Please, come and talk with a pastor who will get your info, and we will follow up with you...
- If your worldview is clashing, get in a group, work this out with other believers.
- And for the whole church, every single believer...I want to call you to action.
 - o Mobilize the church to pray for the end of abortion in our generation...
 - o First, let's fast and pray as a church this Wednesday. That's part of what our church is committing to...it can be one meal, it can be all day...you fast and pray.
 - Hey, you know what God has done? Sine the church has been mobilized to pray on Wednesdays, the abortion clinic which for 30 years ran seven days a week...they had stopped doing abortions on Wedensdays!
- We're going to rally and pray at the clinic.

- o Listen, it's a big boy step...I know that. We're not going to argue, or protest. We're going to pray that God would move in our generation...and I want every single one of you to be there...
- Why? because the church was made for moments like this...¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 - o Jesus didn't die to create spectators, He died to create servants. Workers, not watchers. And then He gives us moments like this, to lean into the calling...He calls us to run toward need, not comfort.
 - o It's moments like this where we know that it matters that our church is here. We are built to make an impact.
- Illustration: Kids read about history. What would you have done about the slave trade? What would you have done about manifest destiny?
 - o Maybe I don't know because I wasn't there. I know what I would like to tell you I hope I would have done, but I wasn't there...
 - o But you know what? We are here, right now.
 - o Proverbs 24:11: "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?"
 - We cannot say we didn't know...so what will we do? Will we pray? Will we be counted?...I hope that some of you are making the decision right now.
 - Not, I am going to think about it, not well we will check the schedule...but right now, I will be counted...Jeremisha 5:28, the mark of a people far from God is when they no longer plead the case of the fatherless
 - Church, if not us, then who? And if not now, then when?
 - Prayer...God galvanize this church. You create us for moments and then you bring us to moments...and this is a moment. Let us rise to the challenge, provoke each other to good deeds...and step out in a way that most of us have never done before...God, I pray for the one that thinks they can't, put courage in them to take a risk.

Sermon by Andrew Hopper, lead pastor of Mercy Hill Church in Greensboro, N.C. Permission has been granted for you to use these teaching materials for sermon preparation, small group Bible studies, personal study, etc.