

HEALING FOR A SICK SOCIETY

“Abortion: Our National Tragedy”

Deuteronomy 30:19

Proverbs 24:11-12

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Deuteronomy 30:19

Proverb 24:11-12

Amen! Thank you, musicians... choir, orchestra, that was way over the fence and in the high weeds! Knocked it right over the fence! Thank you so very, very much! Our choir, orchestra, cast, crew, technicians... we're all getting ready for the Dallas Christmas Festival and in just a few more weeks... can't believe it's true, but we're nearing the Christmas season and, of course, the highlight of the Christmas season beyond our own families is the family of God our church, and the opportunity we have to extend our witness through the musical presentation of the Dallas Christmas Festival. I hope you're already planning on attending and bringing others with you to make this a strong testimony for Christ.

As we are dealing with RATED RX: HEALING FOR A SICK SOCIETY, of course, we could not deal with the moral issues of our times... the moral and the immoral issues of our times without dealing with the very traumatic and tragic subject of abortion. Today I picked up the newspaper and the front page and discovered a fantastic... terrific article on an individual that I admire perhaps as much as anyone that I've ever met and that is Coach Tom Landry.

This has been a great day in Dallas... It's been a great day really across America as Coach Landry was honored with the Ring of Honor at Texas Stadium. And of course, along with his prowess as a fantastic football coach and leader of men, he is a dedicated Christian. His family has responded in like manner to the faith of their father and I read with keen interest the story that a number of us are aware of regarding Coach Landry and Alicia Landry's daughter Lisa.

You may know that Lisa and Gary Childress are the parents of a 26 month old daughter. And the article states that Christina which is the granddaughter of Tom Landry is the baby that the Childresses were so excited about having. When they learned early in the pregnancy that Mrs. Childress, that is Lisa... Coach Landry's and Alisha Landry's daughter... had a malignant tumor on her liver. She decided against an abortion which would have allowed her to receive chemotherapy treatments immediately. A strong faith guided the Landry's through some shaky months, they said, and the Childress's child was delivered by cesarean section six weeks early on August 24, 1991, and Mrs. Childress underwent a successful liver transplant at Baylor University Medical Center on August 31.

Then quote from Lisa Landry-Childress, "This baby was a blessing...a gift to me," she said, shortly before Christmas that year when she had completed her rehabilitation and was ready to take Christina to their home in Lakeway near Austin. "If it wasn't meant to be, God would take care of it. It wasn't my right to deny this gift." Each time the Childresses and their families look at Christina happy and healthy, they rejoice that Mrs. Childress... Lisa had such faith and determination.

There are tough choices that women and their families are making all across America today. And of the greater choices in life, certainly the issue of choosing life over death... choosing the sanctity of life rather than abortion is of the most personal and the most important kind of decision.

I refer you now to Deuteronomy chapter 30... two scriptures tonight... and after you've found Deuteronomy chapter 30, you would... let me ask you also to turn to Proverbs chapter 24.

Today and every day in America 4000 babies will die in their mother's womb. That baby will have no chance for a trial, there will be no judge, no lawyer to defend his or her case, but rather what we might call cruel and inhumane treatment. Every 21 seconds in this country a baby is aborted.

Some babies are removed from their mother's womb by suction, others are removed by a searing salt solution, others by the scraping of the womb or the uterus, others by cesarean section in later third trimester type abortions. But in verse 19 God says:

19 *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, (this is Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 19) that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*

20 *“that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”*

And now if you will look with me at Proverbs chapter 24 and verse 11 along with verse 12:

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?*

Abortion... it's been called our national holocaust, our national tragedy. In 1973 by a vote of 7 to 2 the Supreme Court of the United States in the famous Roe versus Wade trial determined that abortion on demand was now legal. It was by a vote of 7 to 2. They decreed that a fetus or child... and by the way, the Latin word for fetus is child... may be destroyed “for any reason or no reason”. There were only three requirements mentioned in the law. One, that the baby still lives inside the mother's womb; two, the mother wants the baby aborted, and three, that there is a doctor present willing to perform the abortion and to do the killing.

So, one and a half million babies a year since 1973 have died. They went on to expand the law or to explain the law rather by saying a state is forbidden to prescribe or forbid abortion anytime before birth if in the opinion of one licensed physician an abortion is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother. Now the key phrase in this particular law is that phrase “the health of the mother.” And that phrase has been interpreted to mean almost anything, to the degree that it is practically meaningless. For example, the health of the mother has been described as the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors: physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age relevant to the well-being of the parent... the patient. All of these factors may relate to health.

So, if having a baby brings distress or emotional difficulty or trauma or psychological pain or stress... if the unwanted child creates a disturbance in the life of the mother in some way, whether physically or mentally or emotionally or even financially... if there is the stigma of an unwanted pregnancy, of unwed motherhood, and so forth, the mother may choose in the presence of a doctor to have an abortion. And so, that is the Supreme court decision.

Jumping right in the middle of that Supreme court decision, of course, were the governmental, social family planners. Planned Parenthood and others who have now come on the scene. At times these are seen as humanitarian organizations. They are NOT humanitarian organizations, they are humanistic organizations! And there's a difference between humanism and humanitarianism.

Humanitarianism expresses itself in compassion and love and mercy to fellow human beings. Humanism is the idea that man in his own right, and by his own power is able to be his own god. And so in humanistic, new age philosophy and society, we have all of these intellectuals who apparently have little or no respect for human life.

We also have a number of physicians who see abortion as a rewarding and lucrative business. For example, one unnamed doctor shared on a radio show that after he performed his first abortion, he became so violently ill, that he thought he would die. He went through weeks of depression and thought of suicide. He said, and I quote, “The first time I felt like a murderer, but I did it again and again and again and again. And now 20 years later I am facing what happened to me as a doctor and as a human being. Sure, I got hard. Sure, the money was important. And, oh, it was an easy thing once I had taken this step to see these women as animals and these babies as just tissue.”

There's a Hippocratic oath that doctors take and that Hippocratic oath promises never to use any solution to promote death. But that Hippocratic oath, I'm afraid, has turned into a hypocritical oath, as many doctors have chosen to break that vow and that promise. I'm grateful for the doctors... some within our

congregation, who have chosen life and have committed themselves to keeping the Hippocratic oath as they promised society.

Well, who else is to blame? Owners of abortion clinics who greedily gain from other's hurts. Abortion clinics are big, big business. Just ask Carol Everett, former abortion clinic owner and operator here in Dallas; later came to Christ. If you've heard her testimony, you know her powerful witness coming out of the abortion business and of the money that was made and is to be made through these bloody abortion mills.

And then, of course, there are willing mothers whose chief desire is to avoid the consequences of conception, or who have been deceived... many of them, deceived to believe that abortion is simply a minor, surgical procedure. And many who see that abortion is an easy method of birth control, and a quick-fix to a very nasty problem. And then I might add to the willing mothers, cruel and selfish fathers who have participated in bringing about the formation of life in the womb... the creation of life, and yet, who refuse to take responsibility for their actions.

There are many of us who are to blame... and I might add the church, the preachers, the church leaders who stood by in silence, who watched while it happened. While some have some have wrung their hands, many have done... most have done very, very little. I feel like the prophet of old at times who cried out, "Where are the prophets? Where are the prophets pouring out under the porch and under the altar their prayers before God?"

So, we all must accept our responsibility. Now the key issue... when all the arguments are made and we've seen... and we've read... if you're familiar with this issue at all, you know many of the arguments, but primarily...regardless of all the other arguments, the focus is on the question: When does life begin? When does life begin? Who's going to settle that issue? Who's going to settle that question?

Well, God settled it a long time ago. In Jeremiah chapter one and verse five God said,

5 *"Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before you came out of the womb, I sanctified you.*

He was speaking, of course, to the prophet Jeremiah, but what was true of Jeremiah ... his life even before conception, and certainly at conception, is true of you and is true of me. There was a prophet in his mother's womb. Jesus was carried in Mary's womb. She was young, she was unmarried, she was impoverished, she was a member of a minority race; and besides that, she was known to have reported visions and strange dreams. She would have been a prime candidate for an abortion today. But she was carrying in her womb the precious life of the Son of God.

In Luke chapter one, verse 41 we meet for the first time John the Baptist. Not as the prophet of God, but He was in the womb of His mother Elizabeth. And in Luke 1:41 it says:

41 *And it came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, (Mary praising God and rejoicing in the goodness and the grace of God to her) the Babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.*

Interesting. In the vocabulary of God there are two words in the Greek New Testament for child. One is *tekna*. It's the most used Greek word for child or babe. The second word is *brethos*... *brethos*. It's used rarely in the Scripture... about four or five times. For example, the word *brethos* referring to child when those little children came and sat in the lap of Jesus and the disciples tried to shoo them away. Do you remember that story? The Scripture uses *brethos* for those children... obviously older children who came and sat in our Lord's lap. On three or four other occasions the word *brethos* is used to mean older children. But here in Luke 1:41... same word is used for Babe. *Brethos*... child.

Isn't it interesting when a baby is his mother's womb... her mother's womb, so often today the child is called a fetus, which I've already mentioned really means child in Latin. But somehow it softens the blow to call the babe a fetus. Or more commonly now... tissue or the p.c.... product of conception. But as soon as that product of conception is born, it changes from the product of conception ...pc... to my

baby... my baby. Now, are you going to tell me that the *brethos*... the babe in Elizabeth's womb was not human life? That it was okay or would have been okay to have aborted that pregnancy?

You say, "Well, how do you know... how do you know that the life within the womb is human life? Is that life human life or what kind of life would it be? Vegetable life?"

If you're a hunter you know that you have the responsibility when you're hunting before you pull the trigger... before you shoot the gun, when you're aiming at a target, when something rustles in the leaves and rustles in the bushes... before you pull that trigger, you'd better make sure that you're shooting at an animal rather than at a human being. And if you pull the trigger and kill a human being rustling around in the bushes you can be brought up on charges for manslaughter. You're careful, of course, if you're a hunter to make sure and you make absolutely sure.

Now, wouldn't we want to choose life and side on being careful... very, very careful before we ever pulled the trigger on abortion? No question in my mind. If you believe the Bible... if you believe the Bible is the Word of God, it settles the abortion issue right there! No question.

But the tragedy is many times Christians today and Baptists today are pro-life until it's their daughter who gets pregnant and then all the questions start rising. And all the issues of compromise etc. we have to deal with.

Now, why is abortion wrong? It is the taking of innocent life. The Bible warns against hands that shed innocent blood... the taking of life. We often hear appeals made for the right of the mother... the freedom to choose and everyone believes in choice. It is America to believe in choice! That is our democratic right to choose. But I want to ask you what about the choice of the unborn child? Who's speaking for the unborn child? What choice does the aborted child have? It's the taking of innocent life.

And by the way, when anyone says I want my right to choose, there were many choices made previous to the choice of abortion that brought the person to the condition and the conception of the child. The choice should be made far earlier, than when it's time to decide whether or not you're going to get an abortion or not.. The choice of purity, the choice of maintaining dedication and commitment to God and to family and to life.

Abortion, of course, transgresses the Golden Rule which says, "Whatever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them." Don't you think the Golden Rule of Jesus applies to this issue? You know, abortion is totally against the God given instinct of a woman. God so made a woman to have a natural and normal instinct to bringing children into the world. But Paul predicted in the last times that people would become so vile that they would become without natural affection. (Romans 1:31) and the natural affections and the normal inclinations and natural instincts of motherhood are often suppressed by the evils of our times. And I have many statistics that I won't get into tonight... I don't have time to get into them tonight, but the fact is that most abortions are performed upon women 76 percent of whom are unmarried, 53 percent have no other children, and most are over the age of 20. And over one third of those getting abortions today are going back for the second and even third time.

Another reason that this is wrong is that it misses the whole point of what the Bible teaches about the sanctity and the precious quality and value of a life. Now how are we going to answer the world, when the world throws all of its arguments against us? For example, the world says, "The baby is not a human being until the baby breathes." There are even some who've tried to say that the Bible teaches that, taking the creation passage of Genesis 1 when God breathed on Adam and Eve and they received the breath of life. But, of course, that's a totally theological mixture there. That cannot be, because birth and the direct creation of God when He created Adam and Eve are totally different processes of giving life. And the fact is, the baby does breathe in the mother's womb through the umbilical cord. The baby breathes.

The question is raised, "Isn't it necessary at times to take life in order to save the mother's life?" And certainly we would affirm that the mother's life is valuable and precious and should be protected at all cost. But Dr. Jerome LaJune, a geneticist said, "I would never attack and kill an unborn child. The purpose would be to save the mother. We are talking about those who attack and kill babies." We're not talking about attacking and killing the life of the mother, but attacking and killing the life of a baby.

Some have said, "Well, after all, what about those babies that are going to be deformed? Or those babies that are going to have physical problems? Shouldn't we abort those? Should these "defective" children live?"

We've just heard a testimony tonight from David Dikehusen. Their family was warned about bringing a baby into the world that might have problems, or when their baby was born that there would be problems. Would you say that a precious child like Kirk Dikehusen just because the child's had problems and had many medical surgeries and so forth... Would you suggest that that child was somehow unwanted or unworthy of life? Because the child wasn't perfect? Of course not!

And let me say this also... and I don't have time to deal with the issue of euthanasia but euthanasia... mercy-killing and abortion are Siamese twins and it won't be long... it's already started, when the same people that's talked about choice when it comes to "unwanted" babies, will be talking about the "unwanted" elderly as well. And euthanasia... the killing of older adults to "get them out of the way" or "get them out of society" or mercy-killing to help them, the battle will be on.

Others say, "Well, the mother's body is her own body. She has the right to choose what she wants to choose." Well, it's true, but we have laws to protect ourselves sometimes from ourselves. For example, there are laws that when you ride a motorcycle, you have to wear a motorcycle helmet, because if you don't have sense enough to wear a motorcycle helmet when you ride a motorcycle, the government is going to see to it that you do! I mean, my hand belongs to me. But if I were to lay my hand here and take an ax and about to chop my hand off, wouldn't you try to stop me? Even though it's my body? And I have the right to do with my body what I want to do with my body? Of course, you would try to stop me if you cared about me. And besides that, the life within the mother's body is a life of it's own. It's own body there... the baby is not your body! I don't have the right to kill an unwanted guest in my house. And no one has the right to take the life of an unwanted baby.

We say, "Well, what about all these abused children?" Have you heard that argument? "What about all these abused children in these homes? Wouldn't these children be better off if they were never born?" Well, number one, that's playing God and nobody has the right to play God. But you might be interested to know that statistics show that 90 percent of abused children are planned pregnancies. And children who live in families by choice.

No wonder Proverbs 24:11 says, "Deliver those who are drawn towards death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter." We can't be neutral! If we really believe they're killing babies out there, we can't stand by and do nothing. We can't say, "It's not my problem." It is our problem! So what should we do?

Number one, get informed... get informed. I've tried to do that just a little bit for you tonight, but know the issues. As a Christian, know the Scriptures, know the answers, know the objections. Get informed!

Number two, work and pray... work and pray... pray and work for a Constitutional amendment that will prohibit abortion. You say, "Well, it may be too late; the government has changed hands." It's never too late! Let's keep working! Let's keep praying!

Number three, we need to teach morality in the home and in the church. Teach our children well the sacredness of life, and the sacredness of sexuality... of morality and of purity.

Number four, we need to provide alternatives... such as the Prestonwood Pregnancy center and to support such alternatives. To serve as a volunteer in compassion... in love, to save those from death, to hold back those who are stumbling into the slaughter. We must as Christians get in the battle! And it's not enough just to stand up and pontificate against the evils of abortion if we are not willing to get involved in the battle and to provide meaningful choice. Choose the loving option which is adoption over abortion. Or to encourage mothers to keep those babies and by the grace of God to commit themselves to Godly motherhood.

And number five, we need to pray for the mercy of God upon ourselves, our children, and our nation. I believe the judgment of God is upon America because of this sin! We need to cry out for mercy.

Now, for someone here tonight who needs personal mercy and forgiveness from God, I can tell you that there are members of our church who have participated in abortion and yet have found the grace of God... God's amazing grace and forgiveness through it all. And no matter what you've experienced in your life, it's never too late. You can turn back to the Lord. Listen to what this fantastic verse says, written by Karen Sullivan Ables. Here's how she put it:

In a far away place and a different time
I killed my first child, a heinous crime.
The state didn't come and I didn't stand trial.
Judge Blackman was calm when he said with a smile,
"Killing is legal, say we, the high court,
But don't call it murder, just call it abort.
The judge in my heart would not let the case rest.
I had no defense when once put to the test.
Found guilty I was by my heart's supreme court.
"You murdered your baby", they screamed in retort.
With tears on my cheek it was too late I knew
To bring back the life of the child I once slew.
The gavel slammed down and it rang in my head,
"You're guilty as charged, and deserve to be dead.
We now give you torment to pay for your sin!"
Was the sentence passed down from my court within.
"You'll never escape! You're branded! Don't hide!
Your just due is death. You should try suicide."
I was beaten in prison by daily attack.
I was paying a debt so I never fought back.
No hope of escaping and this I knew well.
I cried out to God from my own self-made hell.
And then that day I met Jesus. He smiled in my face.
He said, "I forgive you. Come walk in My grace."
"Lord, I believe You forgive me, and yet,
Blameless You are. Can you pay for my debt?
And, Lord, please don't touch me for I am unclean.
I'm filthy with murder. A most wretched being!"
I poured out my story. He showed no surprise.
I gazed up with awe at the love in His eyes.
He said, "I paid for your crime, yes, was nailed to a tree.
There's no condemnation if you'll trust in Me.
I took on your blame and your curse on My soul,
So that you may be free without judgment, and whole."
I sputtered, "Dear Lord, where's the justice in this?
I kill my first son, and You offer me bliss?"
Tears blurred my vision, yet there in His face
Were eyes of compassion! Blue oceans of grace!
I thought to myself, "Now the past has been buried.
I'm free of the guilt that for years I have carried."
He said to accept. It is a gift that is free.
This is atonement, not justice for me.
My judge was dismissed, my accusers and jury,
And the truth in His love made them leave in a fury.
He smiled, "Walk with Me and come learn My way."
And grasping His hand I began a new day.

If you will take the hand of Jesus Christ by faith, it will be a brand new day and a brand new life. And the One who came to live and die that we might be forgiven and cleansed and saved is here tonight to offer His grace... those blue oceans of grace to all who will come to Him.

Would you stand with me quietly and reverently in prayer? Would you bow with me, please? I trust in the hard hitting nature of this kind of issue that we have spoken truth mixed with grace. You know, the Bible says Jesus came full of grace and truth. That's the way we Christians should come to our society. Full of grace and truth. Paul said, "Speak the truth in love." And I trust that you sense the love of Christ tonight. And if you don't know Him as your Lord and Savior, that tonight you will give your heart, your life, your all to Him. The One who died for you... the One who rose again, that you might have eternal life.

The ministers of our church are going to be standing here at the front, and if tonight wherever you are, whatever your need, whatever your sin, whatever your suffering, He is the friend of the wounded heart.