

The Biblical View on Abortion, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-68

We continue tonight to where we left off this morning in our discussion of this matter of abortion. And as I did this morning, I want to begin with an introduction that sort of defines the problem as we face it. I approached it somewhat statistically this morning, and tonight I'd like to approach it somewhat from an ethical viewpoint. And let me just share with you some thoughts that may help to set this thing in your mind and then we'll go to the Word of God for specific answers.

For centuries, the western world has operated on what we could call a "sanctity of life ethic." That is to say, a person had a right to life simply because he was human and was considered human because he was alive. But there has been a shift in recent years toward a quality of life ethic rather than a sanctity of life ethic. This new ethic basically says a person doesn't have a right to live simply because he's human. A person only has a right to live if he meets certain criteria, certain qualities.

According to that new modern viewpoint, a person has no rights simply because he is alive. Even if he is physically alive, he must meet some additional criteria for being fully human. If he fails to meet the criteria, he doesn't have the rights of a human, including the right to live. The unborn must meet some kind of a vague standard of genetic worthiness, or they must have a life worth living, or they must be wanted by society, or they must meet the mother's personal criteria to be considered human.

This shift subtly allows for the nightmarish scenarios of utopias gone awry, as well as the kind of genetic purification programs that were pursued by Hitler and the Nazi doctors. The same kind of ethic allowed the Nazis to weed out unwanted genetic elements in the population. When one Nazi death camp guard was asked how he could exterminate thousands of people, his reply was that they were not regarded as human. And the parallel to our modern situation is uncomfortably close.

According to a number of researchers, Margaret Sanger - who by the way is the founder of Planned Parenthood, the world's largest supporter of abortion - according to the researchers who study her, she essentially agreed with Hitler's approach, and sought to weed from the human race blacks, southern Europeans, Hebrews, and other quote "feeble-minded." This, then, moves us from a sanctity of life to a quality of life right to live, and that quality of life is to be determined by the genetic engineers, or the philosophers, or whoever.

Although shocking, these eugenic proposals are not very different in principle from the present practice of aborting babies for any reason at all. A baby who has Down Syndrome, a baby who has

some other birth defect, or a baby who would be an inconvenience doesn't have a life worth living, therefore isn't human, therefore we can dispose of them readily.

Respected scholars have already proposed different criteria for this quality of life, and you can read endlessly on this. One illustration, Nobel laureate James Watson proposed that a person not be declared having the quality to live until three days after birth to be sure he's healthy. In other words, wait three days, and then if the child doesn't meet the criteria, take its life.

Other proposals would require that someone be several years old before he could be considered a human and thus qualify to live. And I heard recently that in some Scandinavian countries, they are now saying a person may not be truly considered to be human until they are seven years old.

Of course, if criteria can be imposed near the beginning of life, then it can be imposed at any time in life. Joseph Fletcher - you associate him with situation ethics - suggested that to be considered a person one must have a measurable IQ of at least 40. Infants would not qualify, nor would the aged who are senile, nor would others who had certain types of accidents. In such cases, argues Fletcher, abortion, infanticide and euthanasia are not taking personal life, but merely biological life.

Attempts to justify abortion by claiming it eliminates suffering not only forsakes the sanctity of life ethic, but also ignores the facts. Some people say to do this will eliminate suffering. That's not true. It's like the argument that the handicapped don't have a life worth living, that there's validity to the fact that unwanted children are going to be abused children, and therefore if they're unwanted, abort them so they aren't born, and being unwanted become abused.

By the way, studies show there is very little correlation between how much a child is wanted before birth and how much that child is wanted after birth. Furthermore, Dr. Lenoski, professor of pediatrics here at USC, showed that 91 percent of battered children were from planned pregnancies. Another study demonstrated more deviant behavior in wanted babies than in those who were unwanted. So any argument that an unwanted child becomes an abused child just doesn't stand up to any kind of test.

On the contrary, there seems to be a correlation between abortion and child abuse. When abortion was legalized in the United States, there were 167,000 child abuse cases per year. It was legalized in 1973. By 1979, there were 711,000. In 1982 there were 1 million. Britain experienced a ten-fold increase in child abuse after liberalizing abortion laws.

Now you ask, "What's the correlation?" The correlation is you begin to educate the whole society that a child is a non-person, not worth living, and shouldn't be any kind of intrusion into your world, and you begin to treat them that way. Professor of psychiatry Philip Ney concluded in widely publicized study that the acceptance of violence against the unborn lowered the parents' resistance to violence

against the born. That should be obvious.

Abortion is often portrayed as benefiting women. Yet ironically, when decisions are made on the basis of sex, girls are aborted far more often than boys. Out of 8,000 amniocentesis - that is abortions - done in Bombay, 7,999, one was a boy. This is true in China. You're only allowed to have one child and if it's a girl, they kill it.

In one study in the United States, 29 out of 46 girls were aborted. Only 1 out of 53 boys were aborted. So the idea that abortion benefits women doesn't seem to fit the facts. It winds up in the slaughter of women around the world.

Some argue that abortion is necessary because of overpopulation. But that ignores principles of production and distribution. How in the world do abortions in the United States alleviate overpopulation in crowded parts of Africa? There's no correlation. Furthermore, the United States and Europe have a different population problem. The numbers being born are not replacing the aging and dying. I was told this morning by someone who works with the IRS that one of the formidable problems the IRS and Social Security is facing now is the fact that there are so many abortions, there's not going to be enough people born to pay your Social Security by the time you retire. So what they're doing now is in a very few years, they're going to raise the Social Security level to 67, and some years after that the plans are to raise it into the mid seventies. Why? Because there's no funding because there aren't going to be enough wage earners to support us when we get old.

Pro-abortionists argue that restricting abortions will return us to the era of back alley butchers. Dr. Bernard Nathanson, who was one of those abortionists and converted over to a non-abortion position, replies that not only were deaths in the pre-Roe versus Wade days grossly inflated, in fact he says they lied about how many deaths occurred in illegal abortions because they wanted abortion legalized for business reasons, so they fabricated all the figures to make people think that more people were dying than actually were in illegal abortions.

But he went on to say developments in medical technology and pharmacology will mean that even illegal abortions will be medically safe. Not that that's right, but they use that as an argument that if we ever stop legalizing abortion, non-legal abortions done in less than proper medical facilities and with less and proper medical means will result in many deaths, and he says that's not the case because of the technology we have.

The present toleration of abortion is deeply rooted in this new kind of individualism and personal rights movement. The pro-abortion people always argue that a woman has a right to control her own body, and therefore she has the right to abort any intrusion into that body. Yet society recognizes rights must be limited when they conflict with another person's rights. And certainly the person in the womb of the mother has rights.

A Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said, "Whether a woman's right over her body extends to abortion depends on whether the fetus is a human life." And we already saw this morning that the fetus is a human life, not a part of the mother's body, but with an identity all its own. It has its own unique set of genes, its own circulatory system, its own blood type, very often in its own brain. It can live or die separately from the mother, and the mother can live or die separately from it. It is a separate life.

But we are re-engineering our thinking and the philosophies that are dominant in our culture today are self-serving philosophies that intend to remove any kind of intrusion into people's freedoms and liberties.

Now what does the Bible say about this matter of abortion? And we go back to where we were this morning. The first point I gave you is this, and we'll cover the remaining ones with just a brief review of this one.

Conception is an act of God. We pointed out this morning that God creates personally every life. Now this morning I said to you that at the very moment of life God does a creative work. Theologians have debated this issue for centuries, I suppose. Those of you who are familiar with theology might remember something called traducianism. The idea, the debate basically is do we have as male and female in the procreative process somehow the element in our procreative power to produce a soul? And the difficulty with that question is can two dying humans produce an eternal soul? Well, the answer to that probably is no.

On the other hand, the question is if we don't do that, if that is an independent life being passed on, how is it that it is born with Adam's sin? You say, "What is the answer?" I have no idea. I find myself hard-pressed to land on either side because I know that God will not produce a sinful soul. I also know that two dying humans cannot produce an eternal soul. And so I would simply say to leave it as simple as my mind can allow, at some point in the incredible pro-creative process God injects the eternity into that soul.

We stain it with our fallenness. But every conception is nonetheless an act of God, as we saw Scripture indicates. You made me. You formed me. You breathed into me the breath of life. You ordained that I would live. You opened the womb. You made me to be the one You wanted me to be. This is the testimony of Scripture.

Now let's go to a second point. The person created is created in the image of God. The person created is created in the image of God. In James 3:9 we read, "With it we bless - " speaking about our tongues " - with it we bless our Lord, and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God."

The person created, and we know now that creation occurs at the moment of - what? - conception, and at the moment of conception, God puts the reality of life, and I don't know is it at the exact split second? Is it a few milliseconds after that? At some point, I don't know where, at some point God infuses personhood, and that eternal soul that will never die is created by God, that real being that is not just the collection of genetics, but is something eternal. Exactly at what split second in the process that happens no one can know. But nonetheless, whenever God does it that creation is made in the likeness of God, or in the image of God.

What we're saying here, then, is what is created and what is conceived is not an animal. It is not just a biological sequence. It is not just a collection of cells. It is not fetal matter. It is not just human tissue. It is created by God in His image. And everything that is there for acting, and thinking, and feeling, and knowing, and trusting, and hoping, everything that is rational and moral and emotional is there.

Go back with me to Genesis chapter 1, if you need a reminder. It says in verse 25, "God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, the cattle after their kind, everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, He created them."

We are not mere mortals. We are not merely flesh. We are immortal. The shell of skin, and bones, and muscle is only a vessel, it's only a repository in which something of the very image of God resides. In Genesis 9:6, a familiar verse, says, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply." If you kill somebody, you die. Not because of an affront against that human flesh, but because of such an affront against the image of God.

There is a dominion. There is a personhood in men that does not exist in animals. There is a transcendence that rises above the rest of the created order. Turn with me to Psalm 139. There's so much to say and I'm kind of editing as I go, but this is one of the more important texts to be reckoned with. In Psalm 139, you have this great passage which teaches that the unborn child is the special work of God created in His image.

Verse 13, "For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book

they were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”

Verse 13, look at it. “Thou didst form my inward parts.” Literally, “It is You who made my kidneys,” is what he says. “You made me in the deepest part of my being. And You did weave me in my mother’s womb.” That is an absolutely beautiful picture, the weaving together of all that is part of humanity, the weaving of chromosomes in the DNA, the weaving together of all the components in the incredible human body, woven together with the soul and the spirit.

In verse 14, “And I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Fearfully means “awesomely,” *noraath*, used of God’s great power, calling for surpassing reverential awe since we are made in His image. He says we are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” full of majesty as the work of God.

In verse 15 he says, “My frame was not hidden from Thee.” The King James says, “My substance,” literally, “my strength, my bones and my sinews and my muscles.” It was not hidden from You “when I was made in secret.” The secret place is the womb. And then in verse 15 that interesting phrase, “And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth.” Literally “skillfully wrought” in the Hebrew could be translated “when I was interwoven of various colored threads,” when I was interwoven of various colored threads. To put it another way, when You embroidered me, You made the very fabric, You pulled together every tiny little piece and You wove it all to make me.

It’s a beautiful picture of the complicated, elaborate texture of the human being. And You did it “in the depths of the earth,” a reference to the womb. Verse 16, “Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance;” my unshaped embryonic substance. Literally again in the Hebrew, “something rolled together.” When I was just a little ball of life, when I was just a little ball of chromosomes. “And in Your book they were all written,” all my days, all my years, all the events of my life, my eternal destiny, everything. And then verse 17 he says, “How precious also are my thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” It’s so incredible to think about You thinking about me before I was ever made. The whole thing behind this is this sense that this creation is so wonderful and so awesome because it is a creation in the very image of God.

That image has been marred. In Psalm 51, we read something of that marring of the image. Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” Now he doesn’t mean he was illegitimately conceived, because he wasn’t - David speaking. He simply means that from my conception there was something else going on in me, too, and it’s sin.

Did God create that sin? No, I believe that we pass on the sin. God only creates the eternality, the eternal soul and spirit. Only a person, by the way, can be a sinner. That little tiny life, that little tiny baby, that little tiny rolled up ball of genetics, that little fetus is already designated as a sinner in the womb from conception, and only a person is a sinner.

So we are created in the image of God, which image is stained by the sin of Adam, passed on from generation to generation. And so we can say that that eternal soul is the creation of God, but its sinful propensity is the legacy of man. No human being, then, is ever conceived outside God's will, or ever conceived apart from God's image. Life is a gift from God, created in His own image.

Thirdly, in considering points to understand the issue, the helpless creation is the special object of God's loving care. That helpless creation which He has conceived in the womb of a woman is the special object of His loving care. First of all, I want to deal with that on a general level, if I might.

We have now seen that that little life is considered a person, albeit a person created by God in His own image, and yet a sinner. That person, then, becomes the special object of God's care. The Lord identifies with sinners. The Lord identifies with the needy. The Lord identifies with the poor. The Lord identifies with the widow. The Lord identifies with the orphan. The Lord identifies with the defenseless.

In Psalm 82, we find a general reference to that which can be a basis for our understanding. In Psalm 82:3, "Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy." It is true that God has a special concern for the helpless. Is anyone more helpless, is anyone weaker, is anyone more defenseless than that unborn child? And so they, as all others who are weak and defenseless, become the special care of God.

I don't have time to go over all of the medical phenomenon that protects the baby in the womb, but it is absolutely incredible how wonderfully God has insulated that little life for warmth, and health, and safety, how He has designed the womb of the mother to be a protector. I'll never forget when Patricia was pregnant with one of our little ones - and I'm trying to remember which, I think it was Mark - yes, it was Mark. I have to associate kids with certain houses. And I remember which house this happened in. And one day I came home from wherever I was, and I came into the house, and she was lying in bed, and she was not feeling well. And I said, "What happened?" And she said, "Well, I fell off the television." I said, "You what?" She said, "I fell off the television."

Now, that is a strange place to be in the first place, on the television. We had a little portable television sitting on a little metal rack, and she climbed it to fix the drapes, and she fell. We had a concrete floor covered with just a sheet of linoleum tile in this little room, and she said, "The worst of it is I landed right on the baby." And she had a huge bruise right in the center of her stomach. And she said, "I know, don't give me any speeches about you're not supposed to be climbing on top of the television when you're nine months pregnant." And she was, Mark was born soon after.

Now the reason I hesitated to name the child is because you may be looking at Mark oddly in the future, imagining that something might have happened, but it didn't. And we were thrilled because

from then on until Mark was born, we wondered if, indeed, there would be some result. And we were, after he was born, thrilled to see with all of her weight falling full on concrete on that little life how perfectly protected that little one was. God has such compassion on the helpless.

I remember reading some years back about a lady that I got to know, a lady that some of you remember. Her name was Ethel Waters, and when she was a real instrument for the Lord, giving her testimony, she shared a wonderful little story. She said, "A pretty black girl was attacked and raped by a white man in Pennsylvania. She was barely past her 13th birthday and soon was found pregnant." And Ethel Waters said, "No abortion? No. Instead, a healthy baby girl who came to love Christ and sing for His glory and make millions happy, a girl whose theme song was 'His eye is on the sparrow,' and that girl was me."

The love shown to a helpless little baby without a father born because a mother wouldn't have an abortion gave the world a wonderful gift. That story can be repeated millions of times.

Innocent, defenseless people have a special protector in God, who wants to bring them to birth no matter what the circumstances might be that brought about their conception, or what difficulty there might be in the life to come. God has His purposes. And I must say on the other side that even sinners who will spend an eternity in hell will serve the purpose of God. What if God, willing to make vessels who are fitted unto wrath to bring Himself glory, chooses to allow that, that's His own purpose. I am convinced that the fury of God will someday fall on the murderers of His creatures who have not sought His forgiveness. God is the protector of the innocent.

Now to illustrate this biblically, go back to Exodus chapter 21. This is one of the really important passages about abortion. Exodus 21:22, and here in this section of Scripture, following the ten commandments, God gives a number of laws that regard life and all of its myriad of circumstances. And in Exodus 21, we have a very interesting account. It says to us in verse 22, "If men struggle with each other - " now you follow carefully " - and strike a woman with child - " I don't know what your version says, some say "so that she has a miscarriage," some say, "so that she has an untimely birth," " - yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there's any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."

Now what is this saying? One of the unfortunate translations in the New American Standard is the translation "miscarriage." I don't know why they translated the Hebrew term here "miscarriage." There is no reason, at least in my mind, to believe that verse 22 refers to a miscarriage. And there's a contextual support for that, as well as linguistic.

The literal Hebrew reading is simply this, “And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child - ” here’s the Hebrew, “ - so that her children come out - ” That’s what it says. In other words, it causes the child to come out, “ - yet there’s no further injury, then he shall surely be fined as the husband, or the woman’s husband may demand of him, and be paid as whatever the judges or the courts allow.”

Yeled, this is the common Hebrew word for “child,” the only irregularity here in that word is that it is plural, and it is unlikely that it means a developing fetus that has been miscarried. The verb yatsa often refers to ordinary childbirth. And so it says the struggle happens, two men are fighting, one gets involved in this fight, and probably a woman steps in, you know, the wife to try to stop the fight, and she gets struck so that her children come out - just looking at it on a plural sense - that is an ordinary childbirth takes place.

By the way, that term yatsa referring to ordinary childbirth is used in Genesis 15:4 and Isaiah 39:7 of a childbirth generated from the loins of the father and also in Genesis 25 and 26, and Jeremiah 1 about a birth that it comes out of the womb of the mother.

So from the father’s side and the mother’s side the term is used to express a child that is born. In no case does that term, yatsa, refer to a miscarriage. Numbers 12:12 uses it, but it refers to a stillbirth, not a miscarriage. The Hebrew word for miscarriage, shakol, used in Exodus 23:26, Hosea 9:14, is not used in this verse. So what you have here is a premature birth.

Now follow the thought. Two men are fighting. The woman probably steps in, she gets hit in the process, and consequently the trauma causes a premature birth. If all that happens is that the child comes out and there’s no further injury, then there should be a fine for the discomfort, for the problems that might come to take care of the child, and to take care of the woman because of whatever trauma she suffered. And if there’s any debate about it, then the judges can discern what that should be.

“But if there’s any further injury - ” now, what would “any further injury” mean? Well, it would have to mean something more severe, including the loss of life. “Then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life.” What’s the point? The point is if you are responsible for killing an unborn child, you pay with your life. That’s the point. That is the point. It is constituted as murder.

“No further injury,” then, in verse 22 has been incorrectly taken to mean there has been some kind of a miscarriage. The equivalent of “further” doesn’t appear in the Hebrew text. It simply says, you’ll notice probably that further is - is it in italics? Yes. It just says, “if there’s no injury,” if the child is born and there’s no injury, fine. Settle whatever would be the medical costs, if there are any. But if there is more than that, if there is injury to the child, if there is injury to the mother, then lex talionis, that is, tit for tat takes place. If the child suffered in one area, the penalty is the same. And if the child dies, then

the penalty is life, life.

It's just the idea of appropriate punishment, but what it points out is if the child comes out and his eye is injured, you lose your eye. If he comes out and his hand is injured, you lose your hand, if his foot, his foot; and so forth, and so forth, wound for wound, that's justice. But if the child dies, you pay with your life, lex talionis, the law of retaliation.

So Scripture teaches us, then, very, very clearly that conception is an act of God, that every person conceived is conceived in the image of God, and that each person is the special care of God. Nothing illustrates that more than if you injure a child that is untimely born and you have inflicted that injury, you pay a just punishment, including if you kill that child, you pay with your life. God has special care for those who are helpless.

There's a fourth point in our little outline, and it kind of ties in with these others. Compassion is to be applied to all of God's creation in His image. Compassion is to be applied to all of God's creation made in His image. If this is how the Lord feels toward them, then this is how we should feel.

But going back to that Jewish principle this morning that thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, as we have it reiterated in Matthew 22:39, Romans tells us in chapter 13 love fulfills the whole law, the unborn child is your neighbor, it is a person in need of care and protection, and we are to treat unborn children with the same kind of compassion that we would apply to all of God's creation in His image.

One of the things I hesitate to say, but I must digress a moment to do so is the fact that today what you have coming out of the abortion movement is also the animal rights movement. And they're inextricably linked because the animal rights movement basically says that animals are the same as people. And you remember some months ago I reiterated to you one of the animal rights slogans which is "a rock is a rat is a dog is a boy."

In other words, everything that is created is of equal value. And that's apparent to anybody who watches that bizarre and evolutionary distortion that we call "the animal rights movement." There is not a proper understanding that man is created in the image of God and is to be treated with special care, and special consideration, and special Christlike compassion is to be applied to all made in the image of God.

I cannot even conceive how a mother could think of a baby as an enemy. Whether that baby was a product of rape, or whether that baby was in some way malformed, how that woman could think that child in her was an enemy when she has been given the God-given privilege of protecting that little life with all of its weaknesses. Certainly that's not natural instinct to a mother. She would have to be sold that by a culture that had become decadent.

Well there's much more to say about that. Let me take you to a fifth principle. We've said that conception is the act of God, creation is in the image of God, care is the concern of God, and compassion should be required by the people of God. Let me take you to a fifth one, and this is perhaps the most startling, condemnation of murderers is the will of God. Condemnation of murderers is the will of God.

We already read in Exodus chapter 21 that if a person strikes a woman so that the baby comes out and dies, it is life for life. We shouldn't be surprised by that since we know that's a viable life and a person created by God, but in our day we might be because we have been told it isn't. And in Exodus 20:13 God said, "Thou shalt not murder." And I read you Genesis 9:6, which says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man."

In other words, clearly the Scripture indicates that if you take a life, you're going to lose your life. Some people say, "Well, that's Old Testament teaching. Certainly Jesus changed all that." No, He didn't. Jesus was the leading New Testament advocate of capital punishment.

In Matthew 26:51 it says, "And, behold, one of those who were with Jesus - " that's Peter, we remember " - reached, and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear - " and you know he was trying to cut off his head, not his ear, and the guy ducked and just lost his ear. And then Jesus said to him, to Peter, "Put your sword back into its place: for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword." He is not giving him a prophecy, He is reiterating a divine law. If you take a life, you give a life. Jesus was articulating the law of God. You take up a sword and take that man's life, and you will give your life.

In Acts 25:11, "Paul said - " in verse 10, " - I'm standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried: I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. If, then, if I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die." Paul knew capital punishment was God's way. He said, "If I've done something worthy of death, then I do not refuse to die." And there you have the apostle Paul reiterating his own belief that God had established the law of capital punishment.

In Romans 13:4 he said that the police, the soldiers, whoever in the government bear arms to protect the innocent and punish the evil, he says, "Do not bear the sword for nothing. They are ministers of God and they are avengers who bring wrath." They are armed in order to take life. They don't have swords to spank you with. They have swords to take your life. Clearly, the Scripture in the Old Testament designed a capital punishment penalty for those who took life, and even the life of an unborn child fell under that. Jesus reiterated capital punishment is suitable for certain crimes, and so did the apostle Paul.

In Proverbs 6:16, let me give you further insight into God's attitude toward those who take life. "There are six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood." God hates people who shed innocent blood. Is there anything more innocent than an infant? Is there anything more innocent than a protected infant hidden safely in the womb of its own mother?

In Proverbs 24:11, "Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, O hold them back. If you say, 'See, we did not know this.' Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? Does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to every man according to his work?" "If you're allowing people who are innocent to be killed, don't say, "Well I didn't know what was going on." God knows your heart. He knows whether you know. And if you're guilty, He'll render you according to His work.

There are many other Scriptures that speak about God's attitude. In Deuteronomy 27:25 is worthy of a moment. "Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person." God says if you are paid to kill someone, curse you. And there are some other specifics. Leviticus chapter 18, 2 Kings chapter 24, Amos chapter 1.

I want to take it a step further. God forbids any taking of innocent life, that we understand. But I want to take it a step further and say this, that where you have bloodshed, you have a very interesting result take place. Look at Psalm 106, Psalm 106, and I'm going to show you several passages as we wrap this up. Psalm 106:38, here is an indictment against sinful people who, verse 37, sacrifice their sons and their daughters to the demons and shed innocent blood. They actually kill their own children to make them sacrifices to false gods.

"They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;" Now notice this line, you might want to underline it. "And the land was polluted with the blood." The land was polluted with the blood. It left itself, as it were, in the soil, it stained the land.

Now go back to Genesis chapter 4 - Genesis 4:10. God had said to Cain, "Where's your brother, Abel?" He said, "I don't know." He did know. He killed him. Verse 10, "And God said to him, 'What have you done?' " Then listen to this. "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."

Now follow the thought. God says, "You shed innocent blood, and that blood pollutes the land." It's as if blood is everywhere staining the land. The blood of 2 million aborted babies in our land and somewhere between 60 and 75 million across the earth every year stains the soil. And then in Genesis 4 God says, "That blood cries out." He personifies that blood as if it's alive. And what is it crying for? It is unrequited. It is crying for retaliation. It is crying for justice. It is crying for the execution

of its murderer.

Genesis 42:22, "And Reuben answered them saying, 'Did I not tell you, "Do not sin against the boy," and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood.' " And he was talking about how they had treated Joseph. There will be a reckoning for the blood that cries out to God because it has been shed innocently.

Several times Scripture says, "And the blood of a certain person shall be on your head," remember that? In other words, you're responsible.

And so, God requires the death penalty when blood shed from innocent life cries out to Him. And I believe that's the plight of America. I believe that the land is stained and soiled with the blood of the innocents who have been and are continuing to be even now as I speak massacred. Nothing shows more clearly the total moral and spiritual decadence of our society, its disregard for God, its disregard for His creative work, for that which is made in His image, its disregard for His compassion and the compassion of Christ.

Nothing shows this more than the mass murder of millions of babies. This disdain for the sanctity of human life, and the substitution of what we call the quality of life, which causes us to be murderers of children, causes the very soil of our land to cry out to God for retribution. And I believe that we are now under the judgment of God, a nation of murderers, the ground is crying out. God has His ways. God has His ways.

Some of these women who murder their babies may suffer the judgment of God in one way, and some in another. Some may suffer the judgment of God only in an eternal hell. Some may suffer the judgment of God in an eternal hell, and also in a hell in this life of drugs, venereal disease, and who knows what. Some may suffer in the brokenness of life, and shattered dreams. Some may suffer with physical disease. Who knows what God metes out in individual retribution to those who kill the innocents.

I think of all the medical doctors engaged in this. I think of all of the advocates of abortion, women's liberationists and politicians included, who aid and abet the crime. God alone knows what He has designed for them. Fearfully, I think about the religious coalition for abortion rights. You know who's in it? American Baptist churches, the Church of the Brethren, Christian churches, Episcopalian Church Women's Caucus, the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the United Presbyterian Church, the YWCA, et cetera. And the judgment of God awaits these people. It awaits these people. And this is the sadness of it, that God will judge because the ground cries out.

There's a final word and that is this, that condescending, redeeming grace comes from God to the participants in this tragedy. And, first of all, I will say it is my conviction that God redeems murdered infants, that His grace reaches out and takes those little ones to be with Himself because the Bible is so very clear, and I won't get into this in detail - we've taught it in other occasions. But the Bible is so very clear that people perish in hell because they refused to believe, that hell is for those who rejected God, and who rejected Christ, something an unborn infant could never do.

And so God not having a just basis either internally or externally by virtue of the attitude or the action of an unborn child would have no basis on which to sentence them to hell, except for the depravity they inherited in Adam, which is never a cause for damnation apart from its evidence in behavior or attitude. God must then embrace them into His own kingdom.

And secondly, and I say this in conclusion, God is also graciously forgiving those who have been the murderers of infants. I know there are some people here who have had abortions, because in a congregation this size it's inevitable. I want you to know that the Lord Jesus Christ offers you forgiveness for that sin. There may be some of you who have been engaged in medical practice as a doctor, or a nurse, or attendant in that, and you have been involved in an abortion. There may be some of you who have at one time or another assisted a friend in getting to an abortion, or perhaps worked in a place where that was done. The Lord forgives that if we come to Him. And, of course, when you come to Christ all your sin is forgiven, including that sin, for He offers, as we know so well, grace that is greater than our sin.

I received a letter that I want to share with you. "Dear John, I have always been a Christian as long as I can remember. And at the age of 17, I had an abortion. I can't even begin to explain the despair and anger which I felt then. My relationship with my parents was not good. At that time, I moved out of our home to keep my parents from knowing. I worked full time and completed high school. It was hell. There was no one to help me, no one to confide in. I was so frightened. I went to Planned Parenthood and told them I wanted my baby. They thought I was crazy.

"In no way did they offer me another alternative, such as adoption or help. The only advice they offered me was that of an abortion and how to go to Medi-Cal and tell them I didn't know who the father was. That way, Medi-Cal would pay for it. The ordeal was a horrendous nightmare I'll never forget. I remember especially the doctor singing opera while the procedure was being done. I cried for months thereafter. The only thing that pulled me through was the fact that Jesus forgave me, and with His blessing I now have three beautiful little girls, and I keep reassuring myself that in heaven I also have a child I haven't yet met."

God is gracious. As horrible, as horrendous, as unthinkable as this whole thing is, God in His mercy is willing to forgive the penitent sinner, both the one who is the mother, and the one who is the medical practitioner.

There's so much more to say, and I have just raced through and left much out. But I think you understand, don't you, what the Scripture has to say about this? This is a time in our country to take a stand on this issue. This is a time to share individually with people who are confused, because the issue is very clear cut.

Now, Father, we thank You that we've been able to share together tonight in what is such a sad and disappointing subject, but we are thankful because it's so essential for us to understand it. Lord, we know that You hate those who shed innocent blood. And we know that the ground cries out for that blood to be requited, for retaliation, and we know that You will judge, as You will judge all sinners, unless they come to Christ, unless they repent and are forgiven.

And I pray that if there are any here who have shed innocent blood that they would come to the foot of the cross and receive Jesus Christ as Savior. And if there is even a Christian who had an abortion, that that person would come to You, and confess, and repent, and ask for that cleansing which You offer.

Father, we pray for our nation. We know we stand on the brink of divine judgment because of this horror that exists. We ask that You would cause this nation to be drawn to Christ. Lord, we can't even imagine how such a movement of God could happen, but we would boldly and we would hopefully even ask that somehow something might happen to stop this slaughter and to cause people to turn to You for forgiveness. To this end we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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