

Introduction

In January of 1973, the United State Supreme Court issued its infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. Approximately 60 million babies have been aborted since then. That staggering number demands that we think and act straight about abortion, which leads me to a question. What are you when it comes to abortion - pro-life or pro-choice? I'm both and that's what I'm going to preach about today.

Christians Are Pro-Life

I start with this. From its inception, Christianity has considered abortion evil and perverse. Listen to these statements from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, 19:5, stated, **"You shall not slay a child by abortion. You shall not kill that which has already been generated."** *The Didache*, a 2nd century catechism for young converts, declared, **"Do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant."** Athenagoras argued: **"Women who induce abortions are murderers. The fetus in the womb is a living being and therefore the object of God's care."** And finally, Tertullian insisted: **"It does not matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. In both instances, the destruction is murder."** New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger sums it up this way: **"It is really remarkable how uniform and how pronounced was the early Christian opposition to abortion."** That opposition to abortion has continued unabated to the present day.

It has because of what Christians are, pro-life. They value, protect, and promote life for the pre-born. Theologian Karl Barth expressed their pro-life view this way: **"The unborn child is from the very first a child. It is a man and not a thing, not a mere part of the mother's body. Those who live by mercy will always be disposed to practice mercy, especially to a human being which is so dependent on the mercy of others as the unborn child."** So, Christians are what pro-

abortionists say we are, anti-abortion. But we're anti-abortion only because we're first of all pro-life.

Now, there's a reason we are. It's because of what we know. What we know is when human life begins – at conception. That is a watershed issue in the abortion debate today. When does human life begin? Many pro-abortionists agree. They'd oppose abortion if they knew that pre-born babies were human life. But they aren't human life, they say. That then becomes a defining issue. When does human life begin? Is it at conception, when pre-born babies are viable, or when they're actually outside the womb? The answer is "at conception."

The Reasons

I firmly believe that for two reasons.

One reason is biological – because of what happens at conception. Former United States Surgeon General E. Everett Koop explains what that is. 23 chromosomes from the sperm and 23 chromosomes from the egg unite into one cell at conception. That one cell thus contains 46 chromosomes, which is the entire genetic code for a full human being, for a "you" or "me." That one cell then starts the entire process of life and growth. Life and growth are all there from the beginning. That's why world-renowned geneticist Jerome Lejeune says what he does. The fertilized egg is **"a beginning of the new marvel that we call a human."** Consequently, at the moment of conception, Lejeune says, **"a man is a man."** A human being is a human being.

Koop makes a telling observation in that regard. Secular biologists don't contest that life begins at conception when they're talking about doves, chimpanzees, horses, or any other animal. They only do so when they're talking about the highest form of life – human beings. Koop concludes that their philosophy supercedes biological fact when it comes to human beings. They make the facts fit their beliefs in other words.

That then is one reason I believe human life begins at conception. It's a biological reason. The one-celled ovum contains the entire genetic

code for a full human being, which makes it a human being, a person.

A second and more important reason is Biblical. Several people have asked me, **“Why didn’t God specifically prohibit abortion in the Bible?”** There is no abortion legislation in the Bible. Why is that? Brilliant Old Testament scholar Meredith Kline tells us: **“The most significant thing about abortion legislation in Biblical law is that there is none. It was so unthinkable that an Israelite woman should desire an abortion that there was no need to mention this offense in the criminal code.”** He’s right. The Israelites knew that the pre-born were children and viewed their killing by abortion as murder. They took it for granted, therefore, that the Sixth of the Ten Commandments prohibited it. So, they didn’t need abortion legislation.

God’s and Israel’s perceptions of the pre-born are found in the text we read, Exodus 21:22-25. This is legislation, part of the criminal code that God gave Israel. In it, men are fighting and one strikes the pregnant wife of the other. The wife, as a result of the blow, then gives premature birth to her child. According to verse 22, the wife’s husband can prosecute the man who struck her. If the judge finds that he struck her but there was no injury, he levies a monetary fine against him. But if there was injury or death, verses 23-25 prescribe that the punishment go beyond the fine to the law of judicial retribution, which mandated either public whipping or capital punishment.

There’s a vital interpretive issue in this text. To whom does the word **“injury”** in verse 22 apply – just the mother or the pre-born child as well? Pro-abortionists claim that it applies only to the mother, in which case the legislation considers the pre-born child not a human being. But that isn’t so! Take note of two facts.

First, in verse 22, the NASB translates what’s in the mother’s womb as a **“child.”** The Hebrew word translated that denotes and only denotes a child, a fully developed human being. The legislation, therefore, considers the pre-born to be children just as the born are.

Second, the Hebrew sentence structure itself suggests that the word

“injury” applies to both the mother and her pre-born child. The best scholarly Old Testament commentary, *Keil and Delitzsch*, explains it this way: **“The omission of *lah*, also, apparently renders it impracticable to refer the words to injury done to the woman alone.”**

The bottom line is this. God and the Israelites considered the pre-born to be children. This legislation reflects that by prescribing the same penalty for injuring or killing them as for injuring or killing mothers.

Wrong and Dangerous

All of which means abortion is morally wrong. It’s murder in fact! Pro-abortionists are always accusing pro-lifers of using inflammatory language like “murder.” But the only reason we use it is because that’s what it is. Since human life begins at conception, abortion is the purposeful and premeditated killing of a human being. Thus, it violates the Sixth of the Ten Commandments, **“You shall not murder.”**

But abortion isn’t just wrong. It’s dangerous as well. The United States Constitution guarantees life only for “persons.” So, the Supreme Court legalized abortion by arbitrarily separating aliveness from personhood. The pre-born are alive but aren’t persons. And since they aren’t persons, they don’t have the Constitutional right to life.

But as Francis Schaeffer explained, that position opens the door. If the court says that about the pre-born, what prevents it from eventually saying the same thing about the seriously ill, the elderly, the physically or mentally handicapped, and so on. Yes, they’re alive but because of their condition, they aren’t persons who have a Constitutional right to life. Separating aliveness from personhood opens the door. It leads logically from killing the pre-born to eventually killing anyone that society deems a burden. There are respected thinkers in fact, like bioethicist Peter Singer, who argue just that.

Mother Teresa said it as poignantly as it can be said, **“In cultures where mothers destroy their own children, no one is safe.”** That isn’t an exaggeration. Abortion isn’t just wrong. It’s dangerous as well.

Be Pro-life

So, be pro-life not pro-death. That means work against abortion and for the pre-born. Value, protect, and promote life for them.

That's our call and we answer it by doing these things. First, understand the mind and heart of God when it comes to the pre-born. Do that by studying passages like Psalm 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:15, Luke 1:39-45, and Galatians 1:15. Second, understand the biological, social, and moral issues that make up the abortion debate. The Internet contains volumes of information about that. Third, proclaim what we believe clearly and lovingly. Persuade others one by one to be pro-life. Fourth, act to protect and promote life for the pre-born. Vote intelligently, support pro-life groups, attend rallies, write elected officials, adopt children, and more. And fifth, pray persistently about abortion issues and the people involved. Political decision makers, pro-abortion leaders, and pregnant women we know of who are considering aborting their babies need insight into reality. So, we ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and convict their minds and hearts. We also pray for pro-life leaders. They need empowerment. So, we ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen and encourage them and to enhance what they do.

We must be pro-life. We must do all of those things until America once again values, protects, and promotes life for the pre-born.

Be Pro-choice

But we must be pro-choice as well.

I believe the primary aim of most pro-abortionists isn't to protect the woman's right to choose as they say it. It's to promote sexual freedom. They won't admit it, but it is. Men can practice unrestrained sex without physical and social consequence. Because of pregnancy, women can't. But abortion levels the playing field. Women can practice unrestrained sex and if the physical and social consequence, which is the pregnancy, occurs, it can be eliminated by abortion on demand. For most

pro-abortionists, the woman's right to choose is secondary. Sexual freedom, unrestrained sex without consequence, is primary.

Consider these statistic that the National Abstention Education, a pro-abortion group, compiled. There are 1.3 million abortions in America every year. Only 1% of those are to spare trauma from rape or incest and only .2% to save the life of the mother. All the rest, 98%, are to eliminate inconvenient babies. Also consider that 83% of the women to whom these statistics apply are unmarried. The NAF concludes, as a result, **"Married women are significantly less likely than unmarried women to resolve unwanted pregnancies through abortion."**

That's a critical insight. It means that the immediate cause of 83% of abortions is the desiring and seeking of sexual freedom. It's a man and woman making and carrying out the decision to have illicit sex.

Which reveals what the first issue is. In the abortion debate, almost everyone focuses on the pregnancy itself. But the first issue is the sex act that produces the pregnancy. Focusing on that, I'm pro-choice. Pro-choice is the best solution to the abortion problem. The right choice, not having illicit sex, at the right time, before the pregnancy begins, would almost eliminate abortion as a major issue in America today.

Unmarried young people and adults. You may not be able to eliminate abortion as an issue in our culture. But are able to eliminate it as an issue in your life. How? Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, **"Abstain from sexual immorality"** and **"know how to possess your own vessel (body) in sanctification and honor."** Do what Paul says. Abortion will never be an issue *for you* if you do.

Conclusion

I close, fittingly, by quoting Mother Teresa again, **"It a is poverty that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."** That's a powerful statement. It articulates the abortion issue in a nutshell and by doing so, makes our calling clear. When it comes to the pre-born, be pro-life. When it comes to sex, be pro-choice.