

“LIFE – It’s Not A Game”

by Bill Whitt, Jan. 16, 2011

I. INTRO FROM CURRENT EVENTS – NEWS CLIPS OF RECENT SHOOTINGS

- i. Point-blank shots fired at school board members.
- ii. Point-blank shots fired at a member of Congress.
 1. 6 dead, 14 injured
- iii. Lots of death in the news.
 1. Even strange animal deaths.
- b. Life and death in the news.
 - i. And what’s most interesting to me is how people react to it.
 - ii. We’ve watched people try to explain it.
 - iii. We’ve heard conspiracy theories.
 - iv. We’ve seen anger.
 - v. We’ve heard about new legislation.
 - vi. But more than anything else, we’ve seen this... mourning.
- c. Because, as morally corrupt as our nation has become, we still know that life is not a game.
 - i. We still know death is no joking matter.
- d. When life and death are in the news, the country stops... and stares... and, with jaws open, our attention then turns from the victims to the perpetrator.
 - i. We look into his eyes and wonder how anyone can be that deranged.
 1. How can anyone have that much disregard for life?
 - a. Because life is special.
 - b. Life is, well, sacred.
 - c. We know it comes from God.
 2. And so we stand in disbelief.

II. TOPIC SEGUE

- a. And into this strange blend of emotions, we come upon a week in “church world” called the Sanctity of Human Life Week.
 - i. It’s a week that reminds us that life *does* come from God...
 1. Do you get that?
 2. The human body is made up of this (graphic of the composition of the human body).
 3. This is the recipe for a human, but if I had all this and mixed it together on stage today, all I’d get is mud.
 4. It’s God who *breathed LIFE* into the mud.
 - a. (Genesis 2:7 says that Adam was made from the dust of the earth.)
 5. Even if I could weave these elements into organs and bones and create a human form, it would never take a breath, never have a heartbeat, never fight for its survival, never love its family.
 6. Life comes from God.
 7. And it’s sacred.
 8. It’s not ours to take.
- b. At our core, we know this, as evidenced by our reaction to the weekly shootings.
 - i. But, what if I told you that there were other victims to be mourned...
 1. Victims who don’t make the evening news.
 2. 6 deaths in West Virginia last Monday.
 3. 6 deaths yesterday.
 4. 6 deaths today.

5. 6 deaths everyday.
- c. What I'm talking about is unborn children, killed by the parents' choice.
 - i. A national tragedy, day after day after day.
 - ii. How we should mourn for them too.
 - iii. How they deserve our tears...
 1. Our anger...
 2. Our disbelief.
- d. I hope I'm preaching to the choir today about the evil of abortion.
 - i. But it occurred to me that in the five-year history of Wade, we really haven't ever devoted a week to discussing abortion that I can remember.
 - ii. No matter where you stand on the issue, let this morning's message be a reminder to you that life is not a game.
 - iii. Life comes from God, and it is sacred.

III. STATS

- a. Before we get into what the Bible has to say about abortion, I'd like to first warn you that this will be a very different kind of sermon.
 - i. This is a note taking sermon, for those of you who do that.
 - ii. We're going to go over medical, legal, logical and biblical arguments.
 - iii. We're going to throw a lot of numbers at you, and I hope they stick.
- b. Starting with this one...
 - i. 49,551,703 – the number of young lives that have been ended through abortion in the U.S. since Roe v. Wade made it legal in 1973.
- c. That's, on average, one baby aborted every 26 seconds, 151 every hour, 3,629 every day.
 - i. In the time it took me to say those stats, one more child's life ended.
- d. How about this one?
 - i. The U.S. average is that 24% of births end in abortion.
 - ii. In New York City, though, 40% of births end in abortion, according to new stats from New York's health department.
 - iii. Among black women, almost 60% of births end in abortion in New York City. Latino populations are also higher than average.
 - iv. World-wide, Romania is reported to have the highest abortion rate (3 out of 4 pregnancies). Unbelievable.
 - v. Almost 10% of pregnancies end in abortion in West Virginia. Much better than Romania. But that's still unthinkable to me.
- e. NY Rabbi David Zwiebel said, "We can all debate whether abortion is justified in certain circumstances, and precisely what those circumstances might be... But despite our different perspectives, we can all agree that there is something terribly wrong when abortion becomes just another method of birth control."
 - i. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about 43% of all American women will have at least one abortion by the age 45. It's a coin toss!
- f. So, what we possibly have on our hands here is a massive genocide... that is, IF abortion is killing a person.

IV. LEGAL EVIDENCE

- a. Let's look first at that question legally.
 - i. Is killing a fetus killing a person?
 - ii. How can we know if it is a human being, worthy of protection?
 1. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution says that states cannot deprive PERSONS of life without due process of law.
 - iii. So is the unborn a person?

1. That is the question.
 2. Ironically, in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court said, "We don't know."
- b. On Jan. 22 1973, Justice Harry Blackmun said, "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to an answer."
- i. John Piper says, "That is not a *suspension* of judgment. That is a *decisive* judgment: namely, in the womb there is nothing worth protecting by law."
 - ii. Were they persons? The Court admitted they didn't know.
- c. It's ironic because if you look at other laws, the precedent is pretty clear.
- i. Criminals have been successfully prosecuted for damaging an unborn baby. 34 states have a fetal homicide law, including West Virginia.
 - ii. West Virginia law recognizes an unborn child at any stage of gestation as a potential victim of homicide.
 1. The state also criminalizes *nonfatal* assaults on the unborn.
 2. And, WV allows wrongful death (civil) actions when an unborn child at any stage of development is killed through a negligent or criminal act.
 - iii. How about Virginia?
 1. There, the killing of an unborn child at any stage of gestation is defined as a form of homicide.
 - iv. In WV and VA, these laws make it murder to kill an embryo or fetus intentionally... *unless* it's the mother killing the child through abortion.
- d. The law should protect unborn children from the murder of abortion because it already protects them from other forms of homicide.
- i. There's even a fetal homicide law in the Old Testament legal code, specifically Exodus 21:22-25:
 - ii. "22 If people are fighting and a pregnant woman is hit and gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. 23 But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."
- e. Under Old Testament law, killing an unborn baby would carry the same penalty as killing a born baby. A baby inside the womb has the same legal status as a baby outside the womb.
- f. The Old Testament law protected unborn babies.
- i. WV law protects unborn babies.
 - ii. VA law protects unborn babies.
- g. Even our pagan legal system knows that life is not a game.
- i. Life is sacred.
 1. But somehow abortion is still legal.

V. MEDICAL EVIDENCE

- a. So, is the unborn a person?
- i. Legally, the answer is, yes.
 - ii. And medical evidence also shows that the unborn is a person who deserves protection as well.
- b. Thanks to the miracles of ultrasound, we can now see clearly what we're talking about.
- i. At two months of age, the age when most abortions happen, the baby would fit in a nutshell, but everything is there: hands, feet, head, organs, brain.
 1. He has his own EKG, his own brainwaves, his own fingerprints, his own blood type, his own DNA.
 2. Don't miss the importance of that!

- ii. The embryo or fetus is genetically distinct from the mother.
 - 1. How do you know it's not a part of the mother like her appendix that she has the right to have removed?
 - a. Because its DNA is not hers.
 - b. The baby can live while she dies.
 - c. The baby can die while it lives.
 - d. It's a new creation.
- iii. The Bible gives us a peak behind the scenes at the miracle taking place.
 - 1. Psalm 139:13: "You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."
 - a. This baby has "Designer Genes."
 - 2. Job 31:15: "Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?"
- c. Clearly, from God's point of view, this is a PERSON in the womb.
 - i. In Luke 1:41, Elizabeth's baby leapt for joy on hearing of Jesus.
 - ii. The Greek word used for her unborn baby is the same used for the baby Jesus in the manger of Luke 2.
- d. The Bible doesn't make a distinction for when the unborn baby magically becomes a person.
 - i. Neither does medicine.
 - ii. Professor John Harris, a member of the British Medical Association's ethics committee, said: "I don't think it is plausible to think that there is any moral change that occurs during the journey down the birth canal. . . . People who think there is a difference between infanticide and late abortion have to ask the question: What has happened to the fetus in the time it takes to pass down the birth canal and into the world which changes its moral status? I don't think anything has happened in that time."
- e. Still, some want a timeline for when the baby is worthy of being called a person.
 - i. Well, let's use some common medical definitions to answer the question.
 - 1. Death used to be defined by the heart stopping. If the cessation of heartbeat could define death, could the onset of a heartbeat define life?
 - 2. The heart is formed by the 18th day in the womb. If heartbeat was used to define life, then nearly all abortions would be outlawed.
 - ii. Physicians now use a more rigorous criterion for death: brain wave activity. A flat EEG is one of the most important criteria used to determine death.
 - 1. If the cessation of brain wave activity can define death, could the onset of brain wave activity define life?
 - 2. Individual brain waves are detected in the fetus in about 40-43 days.
 - 3. Using brain wave activity to define life would outlaw at least a majority of abortions.
 - iii. Also, consider pain, another common indicator of death used in medicine.
 - 1. When one stops responding to pain, life is over. So does life begin when pain is felt?
 - 2. If you stick an 8-week-old human fetus in the palm of his hand, He opens his mouth and pulls his hand away. His heart rate increases in stress.
 - iv. Medicine has shown what we're dealing with. And it's not just a few fetal cells. It's a human being with a beating heart, a working brain, fingers that grasp and reach. Babies who suck their thumbs and respond to pain...
 - 1. And they carry the complete genetic code of a human.
 - 2. And these little people are having their lives brutally ended by barbaric dismemberment everyday.
- f. Medical evidence leads to a pro-life perspective. It's so clear that you don't even have to be a Christian to be pro-life.

- i. Check out godlessprolifers.org – “A nontheistic and nonreligious opposition to the life-denying horror of abortion.”
- g. Even the “godless,” as they call themselves, know that life is not a game.

VI. LOGICAL EVIDENCE

- a. Is the unborn a person?
 - i. Legally, yes.
 - ii. Medically, yes.
 - iii. How about logically?
 - iv. What logical criteria do you use to answer this question?
- b. Perhaps, “Can it live on its own?”
 - i. Well, a one-month-old cannot live without nursing at its mother’s breast and her protection.
 - ii. So how is a born baby different than an unborn baby?
 - iii. And, by the way, if that’s the criteria, anyone who needs to be placed on a respirator or a dialysis machine would not be considered a person.
- c. How about size?
 - i. No, even though a one-month-old is smaller than a five-year-old, we don’t say the one-month-old is any less human.
 - ii. Size is not a good logical criterion.
- d. How about reasoning ability?
 - i. No, even though a one-month-old cannot reason or remember things, we do not put its life in jeopardy. Abortion methods are primitive and brutal. They involve destroying the anatomy of a human being – ripping and tearing.
 - ii. Reasoning ability isn’t a good logical criterion to use either.
- e. The best logical conclusion to reach is that these unborn babies are human beings, worthy of protection.
 - i. In Jeremiah 1:5, God tells the prophet, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.”
 - ii. God is forming humans in the womb.
 - 1. Life.
 - iii. And life is not a game.
 - iv. Life is sacred.

VII. APPLICATION

- a. Ephesians 5:11 says that we should, “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”
 - i. What I’ve just done today is expose a lot of darkness.
 - ii. The light of legal evidence.
 - iii. The light of medical evidence.
 - iv. The light of logic.
 - v. And, ultimately the light of the Bible!
- b. God is calling us today to engage the culture and be a light in a very dark world.
 - i. We have to be the conscience of our culture... that, I believe, will look back one day on these years in disbelief that we ever let this happen.
- c. So how can you help?
 - i. Get educated.
 - 1. Watch the hard reality (abortionno.org).
 - ii. Share the truth.
 - 1. Do so in love and using reason instead of rocks.
 - iii. Give to the Abel Center.

1. Special offering next week.
- iv. Pray for abortion-vulnerable women.
 1. Cards available next week.

VIII. ENDING

- a. Let me end where we began.
 - i. Remember the thousands of dead fish and birds?
 1. Remember how people were searching for answers?
 - a. Fireworks.
 - b. Cold weather.
 - c. Something!
 2. What if we, Americans, saw the thousands of dead human beings and said, "Give me an answer! How can it be that 2/3 of African American babies are dying in New York!"
 3. We don't see those babies on the news, but may be stand in *disbelief* anyway!
 - ii. And remember these mourners?
 1. What if we as a country felt the sadness of not just six lives lost but over 3,000 a day?
 2. Remember how you felt when you heard about a school shooting?
 3. Remember how you felt when you heard about the Tucson rampage?
 4. Remember the righteous anger?
 5. Remember the sadness?
 6. Though these babies aren't on the news, that's what we should feel everyday until something is done.
 - iii. Let's remember to mourn.
 1. Because life is not a game.
 2. Life comes from God, and it's sacred.

IX. PRAYER

- a. Father, we are saddened. May we be horrified. May we mourn the loss of each life. Forgive us for our sin, Father. Forgive us for shedding blood. Give us clear convictions on the issue. Help us speak with compassion and love.
- b. Thank you for giving your own Son to cover our sins, even the sin of murder.
- c. Bring healing to those who have been part of abortion. Bring restoration to broken families.
- d. In these quiet moments, speak to our hearts, God.

X. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. In the height of irony, we in America have made it illegal to crush the egg of a bald eagle.
 - i. But it's perfectly legal to crush the offspring of a human... a much more precious creation of God.
- b. John Piper says, "[God's] majesty is manifest in the glory of God's supreme creation, human beings made in his image. And the truth that I draw out of this vision of God and man is this: You cannot worship and glorify the majesty of God while treating his supreme creation with contempt."

Thanks to Kerby Anderson, president of Probe Ministries International, and John Piper, of Desiring God, for many of the facts quoted in this sermon.