

CHAPEL ON THE HILL
 Shrewsbury, Massachusetts
www.cothma.org

Date:	Feb-10-2008	Pastor:	Jeff Gauvin
Message Title:	The Stain of Abortion and the Grace of God		

Week's Message

Message	Bible Reference Passage
<p>I was born in Riverside California, January 11, 1973. Eleven days later a Supreme Court decision was passed called Roe vs. Wade. This decision stripped away the ability for individual states to make abortions illegal. 35 years later and 50 million lives later we are feeling the impact. Not long ago the ethical position was that people have the right to do what they want to with their bodies. "People cannot be forced to do something against their will. And a woman should not be forced to carry a baby to term if she didn't want to; after all, it is her body."</p> <p>I can spend a lot of time making arguments against abortion. I don't think I have to do that. People do not have the right to do whatever they want, whenever they want, and people do not have a right to do whatever they want to their own bodies. For example a woman doesn't have the right to run around the neighborhood in her birthday suit. Her behavior is indecent and illegal. Nobody argues against those laws. But when it comes to a woman killing her unborn child there is a law to protect that action. The ethics behind it have been dreadfully inconsistent and illogical. But we are living in a time when the ethics to support abortion, now, have become frightfully consistent.</p> <p>Justice Blackmun (section 9), majority opinion, argued that "the fetus is a person within the language and meaning of the 14th amendment. In support of this they outline at length and in detail, the well known facts of fetal development. If this suggestion of personhood is established, the appellant's case, of course, collapses. For the fetus's right to life can be guaranteed by the [14th] amendment." Well we know, of course, much more today, and yet, why hasn't the appellant's case collapsed? Because now it doesn't matter if a baby in the womb is a person.</p> <p>Abortion defenders today will simply concede that the child is a real person. We can make all the arguments that life begins in the womb, we can show it in the scriptures, we can show it on an ultrasound, and you can see the beating heart. However, it doesn't matter. The rights of the women trump the rights of the unborn (ref. Peter Singer, Princeton). The rights of one person are seen as superior than another. So the innocent who cannot hire a lawyer, who has no defender, no representation, is simply terminated. This is another step in the direction of Nazi elitism. And since that dark day on Jan. 22 1973, 50 million babies have been murdered.</p> <p>And considering what we are seeing politically it seems the pro-</p>	

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<p>life movement has no party to back them up and fight for the rights of the unborn. Well that should be no surprise; the church shouldn't have placed so much hope in laws and political movements to turn the tide. Because it isn't laws that need to be overturned and implemented, so much as human hearts.</p> <p>What I am saying is that even if Roe v. Wade is reversed, which I certainly hope it is in my lifetime, the problem will not be fixed. If the problem is sin, and the taking of another human life is, then the problem lies in the human heart, which only the gospel can fix.</p> <p>So given all this what can I give you from God's Word? I think one of the best things the church of Jesus Christ can do today is have the long view, and consider strategies for reaching out not only to those considering abortion, but especially to those who have had an abortion. I believe there is a whole nation of broken people who have had abortions and have no idea how to stop the pain, the guilt, and the nightmares. The church screams so loud at the sin of abortion, it is often hard to hear the tender words of mercy from our Savior. So I want to speak tenderly today. I believe the tide will turn because of the grace of God. If all these broken people are put back together by being grasped by the forgiveness and grace of God, we will have some of the strongest voices against abortion: those who have had one.</p>	
<p>So what can we offer to those who have stepped into this nightmare?</p> <p>1. Call it sin - It does no good to call it a mistake, or downplay the seriousness of it. (ref. John 16:8). If the Holy Spirit is dealing with them, it is best not to go against God's Spirit. Call it sin; agree with the heinousness of it. Don't try to make them feel better by saying, "everyone sins, you know". If they have a great sense of guilt, worthlessness, etc. they are close to understanding the depth of what sin is, and the wrath of God which it deserves. Don't go against all that by saying it was a mistake and it will be okay eventually; that's like giving a band-aid to someone who has had their arm chopped off. If it is relief of their body, by all means give them food or medicine, a tissue, or clothing, but if it is relief for their troubled conscience give them nothing but the gospel. Don't give them a false peace that makes them feel better but gives them no salvation where they need it most. Call it sin, and bring them to the Savior of our sins.</p>	<p><i>John 16:8; 2 Cor. 7:9-10</i></p>
<p>2. Understand the power of God's forgiveness - Is. 43:25</p> <p>Tell me, can you forget certain things about your life? Yes. But there are some things you will never forget. They may pass out of our memory for a time, but sooner or later a song, or smell, or place or person will trigger a memory. It may be pleasant, it may not. Now, the longer I dwell on something, the larger it gets.</p> <p>Forgiveness is an ongoing process, it isn't a once and done thing. Whether you are trying to forgive someone or are trying to believe God's forgiveness to you, it is a fight not to dwell on the sin, but to dwell on</p>	<p>Is. 43:25; (Job 37:16; 1 John 3:20; Isa. 46:9-10; 42:8-9; Mat. 6:8; Mat. 10:30).</p>

<p>God's provision at the cross.</p> <p>I say this because this is what our God does when He forgives. I don't think it is good theology to say God forgets our sins.</p> <p>God does better than just forget our sins. He chooses not to remember them. We need the whole counsel of God, so Isa. 43:25 does not contradict (Job 37:16; 1 John 3:20; Isa. 46:9-10; 42:8-9; Mat. 6:8; Mat. 10:30). God never has the problem of recall, because nothing really ever passes out of His mind. He knows all things specifically and intimately. He never has to say "Let me think, oh yes you had eggs with .03 grams of salt on July 20th 1954." Not only does God know what you and millions of others had for breakfast, He doesn't have to try to recall it. It is just there. He is 'perfect in knowledge'. This is the same thing with our sins. And rather than say, "Sin? When did you ever sin?" He chooses of His own free will not to deal with us according to our sins, because His Son has dealt with our sins in full. He sees all our sin, and chooses not to remember it. He chooses not to handle us in light of our sins. What a Savior!</p> <p>Therefore in order for forgiveness to be real, and in order to experience forgiveness, you don't need to forget your sins. Rather what needs to happen is the sweet sugars of Jesus mercy, the blood of His cross, and the atoning sacrifice of His love must be mixed well with the sour and bitter sins of your past. <i>Keep mixing</i> in your mind His cross along with your sins and you will have a wonderful drink indeed. <i>In fact the more bitter the sin, the greater the taste of refreshing forgiveness, and a greater sense of His great love.</i> In one sense we really shouldn't forget our sins. But remember them in the light of His grace. Those who are forgiven much love much.</p> <p>Do you see the tragedy of forgetting your sins and the pain of them? Diamonds show up best against a black backdrop, so the sparkling glory of God's love and glory displayed in Christ are best seen against the blackness of our sins.</p>	
<p>3. Forgiving is not forgiving yourself; but accepting the forgiveness of the King of the universe - What does the Bible say about forgiving yourself? Nothing! This is a strange secular idea, brought on by psychology and grafted into the Christian talk. It does say we are to forgive one another, and God does forgive us. But it is only harmful to speak about forgiveness in reference to ourselves. From what I can see, the idea involves an intense self-focus, feeling driven, which ends up being very prideful, blasphemous, and does much more harm than good.</p> <p>There is one judge, and it is not you (1 Cor. 4:3-5; James 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). Do we dare try to place our evaluation of ourselves above the blood of God's only Son? Can we keep bound what He has loosened? Self-forgiveness is not necessary for someone who has been forgiven by God. Because forgiveness is not dealing with feeling and emotion, but with the release of a debt owed.</p>	<p>(1 Cor. 4:3-5; James 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18)</p>

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<p>However, someone can accept the forgiveness of God, and be truly forgiven, and yet spiral into a habit of thought where those feelings are remembered and brooded over. If you choose to dwell on your past sins, even though you've been forgiven, of course it will stir up horrible feelings. And with these horrible feelings in hand, they say, "I must need to forgive myself. I keep punishing myself," when the real answer is, "No, you just need to believe the forgiveness of the highest authority. The One you've sinned against has taken care of it."</p> <p>In other words 'Forgiveness' is a super ball. As soon as you let it go, it will not be long before it comes back to the place you let go of it. Forgiveness is fighting to rest in His grace – It is a fight of faith we are all engaged in. It is a fight to forgive others; it is a fight to believe God's forgiveness.</p>	
<p>4. Forgiveness and the Fear of the Lord – Ps. 130:1-4 - I truly believe that if someone has been forgiven of the eternal debt of God's wrath, if someone has understood how awesome God's mercy is, they will not be talking about their rights; they will be concerned about other people's rights. When we understand forgiveness, it causes us to tremble before God, and walk carefully in this world.</p> <p>There is also remorse over what you did, so that you want to try to make it right. If you stole money, you want to give it back and ask forgiveness from the one you've wronged. If you hurt someone, you want to try to love them in such a way as to return fourfold what you did. But how do you do this with abortion? There is nothing you have to try and make it right. And so you must cling to the cross even tighter. Such a person is not concerned with their rights, they don't care so much about their comforts, because they have received a forgiveness to match their sin, and they have little pride left in them to demand anything from anybody. They are the beautifully broken, the humble and meek, the poor in spirit, and they will inherit the earth; they will see the face of God.</p>	<p>Ps. 130:1-4</p>
<p>Can you picture 50 million men and women on their faces before Jesus, weeping over and kissing His feet? Overcome with love for Him because they have been forgiven of so much. That is the kind of army we need, Christians who understand grace and can administer it. Those are the ones who will turn the tide more than any reversal of any law will ever do.</p>	

Thank you and have a blessed week.
Join us every Sunday morning at 10:15am | Have a prayer request? Send it to us online.