



Sanctity of Life

Care and Bridging Pastor Dan Slagle

1. The God of creation, who created us in His image, provides us with several insights into His perspective about the incalculable worth of human life. Read Psalm 139:13-18.
 - a. What do we learn from these passages about each human being and how we are created?
 - b. What might change in our thoughts or actions if we began viewing people as the Bible describes them, as special creations of God and bearers of His image?
 - c. Many people attempt to justify abortion on the basis of disability or hardship, and in some cases, even gender. What does this argument indicate about our culture's (or our own) valuation system when it comes to life, including the elderly, incapacitated, disabled, and marginalized?
 - d. How does our belief in God's sovereignty and wisdom speak to the beauty that can come from imperfect health, disabilities, and challenges?

2. Read through the verses about God's relationship with the unborn—Job 31:15; Exodus 21:22-25; Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 22:9-10; Isaiah 49:1; and Luke 1:15.
 - a. Which words stand out to you and enhance your understanding of God?
 - b. Have you had any experiences related to an abortion that you feel comfortable sharing? How did those experiences shape your view of God and humanity?

3. Read Proverbs 24:10-12 and Philippians. 2:12-16a. God has given His people a vital role in His life-giving purpose. He empowers us to share the gospel of Christ with people who desperately need eternal life. He also commissions us to be advocates and defenders of the sanctity of human life in our day.
 - a. In what ways can believers avoid or ignore injustice and crimes against human life?
 - b. What are some of the reasons for this?
 - c. How well do guilt and fear motivate our actions?
 - d. How can our actions be rightly motivated by the love of God shown in Christ?

4. Paul, who had persecuted believers, preached a gospel that declared everyone in Christ to be free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).
 - a. Have you ever been burdened by forgiven sin and struggled with shame?
 - b. What began the process of moving away from shame? Did God use a particular person or experience?
 - c. How can we speak and encourage each other in a way that reminds us we aren't under condemnation and are free of shame? How can we stand in the gap for each other when we feel the weight of our own sin?

5. Though some of us may have not had an active role in taking the life of the unborn, we have all been guilty of passivity and apathy towards the topic in one way or the other.
 - a. What stuck out to you as Pastor Dan talked about the different ways we can have a voice for the unborn and stand for life?
 - b. Did your perspective shift at all in seeing this more holistically?
 - c. If we speak out against abortion but do nothing to help those who are in crisis, what are we saying about the value of that life as well?

Challenge: With topics like this, the easy options can be: disengage completely (it's tense, controversial, hard, etc.) or assimilate to culture's views. What is the third way- the way of the believer? Are you willing to do the hard and prayerful work in this area to reflect God's heart for the unborn, voiceless, and vulnerable?

Prayer points:

- Thank God for Christian leaders who speak out against abortion and value life.
- Confess and repent of any indifference to injustice and oppression that leads to the destruction of human life.
- Pray for the unborn and for all those who are persecuted in this world.
- Pray for mothers and fathers contemplating abortion that God.
- Pray for a global awakening to injustice and oppression that champions the destruction of human life.
- Pray for the hearts of our government leaders who have the power to enact change.
- Pray for women who have suffered abortion and their friends and family. Pray they would receive the healing and grace found in Jesus Christ.
- Pray and ask God where He might be calling you to speak and act.
- Praise God for His wonderful and personal gift of life.

STUDY DEEPER

Faithbridge Postscript:

<http://faithbridge.org/sermon/the-sanctity-of-life/#postscript-heading>

Additional Recommended Small Group Studies from LifeWay:

<https://www.gospelproject.com/2015/07/29/all-human-life-is-sacred/>

Counter Culture Study by David Platt (leader kit available through Faithbridge)

<http://www.lifeway.com/n/Product-Family/Counter-Culture>

Healing After An Abortion

The numbers are staggering—1 out of 3 women in America has had an abortion. The chances are that you, or someone you know well, may be one of those women. I hope you know by our name, Redeemed Girl, that we believe the grace of Jesus is available to anyone. We are firmly convinced that our God is a great Redeemer, and there is no sin that excludes us from the forgiveness and healing found in Him alone. I felt prompted to speak out about grace after abortion after watching the numerous videos exposing Planned Parenthood. While I hate the abortion industry and what it stands for, I do not hate women. What echoed through my mind, as my newsfeed filled with story after story of the atrocities at these clinics, were the women who fell victim to the lies and deceptions that now need to know they are not beyond God's grace. I believe there are millions of women who need to know that Jesus can take their secret pain and make them whole.

I use the word "whole" intentionally. I've walked through the healing process with numerous friends who carry this pain, and I know that wholeness is something these women desperately desire. While many attempt to ignore the pain, suppressing it with all sorts of distractions and denials, the sad reality is this: the grief will surface at some point, in some fashion. I know women in their late 60s who are dealing with the pain from thirty years ago.

There are numerous psychological and medical terms describing a woman's grief following an abortion. From Post Abortion Syndrome to PTSD, the fact is that an abortion is not just a medical procedure, as many would want us to believe. No, this choice affects a woman's soul at the deepest levels. A woman is designed to protect her womb and when violence has occurred against her child, it strikes her at the very core of her being. As a result, many women are left to deal with the resulting violation in silence. Some are silent out of shame and others from pressure by pro-choice groups who want us to pretend there are no consequences to this perceived "right."

Whatever reason for the silence, when the sin is suppressed it goes unhealed.

Wholeness is the beautiful gift offered to us by the God, who heals. Jesus came to bind up the brokenhearted and heal our wounds. If we bring our pain, shame and brokenness to Jesus, He stands ready to mend wounds. In order to heal, a woman must ...

1. BELIEVE HEALING IS POSSIBLE:

When I think of Jesus, my mind not only goes to my own experiences of profound mercy, but I can't help but think of the number of women in scripture, who discovered unconditional love and grace in Him as well. These women were outcasts from their communities and carried tremendous cultural shame, but in the eyes of Jesus, they found forgiveness. Let's never forget that Jesus is God, who came to dwell among us, to make us new and to bind up our wounds. This is the Jesus we discover in the pages of scripture, and this is the Healer I met in the areas of my deepest shame. When anyone truly encounters Him, they are transformed. His love penetrates to the deepest levels of our brokenness, bringing hope and healing.

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
Psalm 147:3*

2. BRING YOUR SECRET INTO THE LIGHT:

I recently asked a friend what brought about healing from her abortion. She replied, "Healing is a process. In many ways, I am still in the process. But the journey to wholeness began when I brought the secret out of the dark and into the light. As long as I kept it a secret, Satan had grounds to accuse me and to speak accusations over me. When I brought it into the light and confessed it to trusted friends who love Jesus, then I was able to begin my journey of healing. Confession is the first step of healing. The word of God tells us:

*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. James 5:16*

Jesus is the Light of the World. When we bring our sin and shame out of the darkness and to Him, we are washed clean.

3. BE WILLING TO SEEK HELP.

There are so many wonderful resources available for women (and men) post abortion.

See this article at <http://www.redeemedgirl.org/healing-after-abortion> for book recommendations.

CareNet: www.houstonpregnancy.com

Faithbridge resources: Care Coordinator Beth Ellis (e-mail) beth.ellis@faithbridge.org