

When the controversial topics start to come up, how do we as Christians respond? Sometimes when the dust settles there isn't a clear idea of who took the high-road. If our instinct is to dish out the truth and nothing but the truth, then we most likely aren't dealing in Jesus' truth. No doubt, Jesus was concerned with the truth and sought to bring the truth to everyone He encountered on Earth, as well as those He encounters now.

So if Jesus is ultimately concerned with the truth, then why would someone who is dishing out the truth not be imitating Christ in their actions? Most of the time, I think we truth-tellers, a.k.a. Christians are being Christ-like; however, we fail at times to do truth God's way, which is to deliver the uncompromising truth with unfailing love and undeniable grace. To be like Christ we must speak the truth in love, while being gracious. I hope the rest of this article will be an example of delivering just that, uncompromising truth, love, and grace.

As I write this, I am saddened by the recent developments in the state of New York's laws concerning abortion. It is sad to read and hear about the perceived victory of the pro-choice/ pro-abortion agenda. This is a development that ought to make us mourn over the lostness of this generation.

Abortion is something I have spent much time pondering over because of two key moments in my short "adulthood." When I was yet 18, I found myself in the position of becoming a teenage father. With our lives in the balance, my then girlfriend, now wife and I had a decision to make. Would we abort the child, having only known each other a total of 9 months and our whole lives before us? It might have made the most-worldly sense. Would we put the child up for adoption, choosing life? Or would we choose life and raise the child. Well, it is no secret that we chose life and couldn't be happier with our decision.

We chose life, because we knew at the very beginning of Brittany's pregnancy that there was a human life hanging in the balance. That what was growing inside the uterus of my wife wasn't just cells dividing, and tissue growing, but rather a precious life. It is that same line of thinking that led us to grieve over the loss of a second pregnancy at 14 weeks in 2012. We had become joyful and began making plans for this bundle of joy, only to hear the bad news, that the pregnancy had terminated itself.

Abortion is the ending of a pregnancy, the ending of what some say is already life, and what some say leads to life. When does life begin, at what point do we declare it wrong to end it? I have strong opinions, as I am sure you do as well. Through my study of the Scriptures, my faith leads me to believe that at the moment of conception, life begins. Therefore, there is no point in which we can morally end a pregnancy, because in doing so we end a life.

God says to Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." How is it that God could know someone before conception, if we can't say that there is life until after a heartbeat, or after it can survive outside the womb? Yet, God knew Jeremiah and had a plan for his life, God knew the unborn. The Psalmist declares, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb" in Psalm 139:13. God knows us before conception, before our heart beats, before our lungs are fully functional. How could God know us in the fetus stage of life, if we were just a collection of tissue in the uterus, or until we can survive without the provision and protection of our mother's womb?

Another perspective we need to examine is, can a "non-living human" express emotion? Does a fetus in the utero experience emotions? There is a biblical account that would seem to prove that a fetus in the utero, can indeed experience and express emotion. In Luke 1:39-45, we read the account of Mary, the expectant mother of Jesus, going to visit her cousin, Elizabeth the expectant mother of John the Baptist. In verse 41, upon Mary entering the home of Elizabeth, the fetus in Elizabeth's uterus leaps. In verse 44, Elizabeth who is reportedly filled with the Holy Spirit, declares that her child leaped for joy. Joy being an emotion, that according to the Scripture, Elizabeth's unborn-child felt.

I don't write this to create a hostile environment, to enrage you, to upset, or even convict you. If you don't agree with me and my interpretation there isn't much more to say. I write this article on the basis that abortion is an end to life, and it is often a

choice out of convenience. Sometimes it is done as means to try and save the mom. I am not here to judge or convict. I do however have three application instructions to give:

1. Pray for our nation, pray for our leaders, pray for those who find themselves in situations wondering what road to take. Pray that God would give us an understanding of what life is, and how He wants us to treat life.
2. If you have been hurt by an abortion, know that God loves you and wants to help you through this. God offers real help in the midst of the grief and loss after an abortion.
3. Finally, recognize that on the other side of the arguments and debates are people, who have been created in the image of God. They are people that God deeply cares about, and on that basis, we need to care about them, **EVEN IF**, we don't agree with them. We need to speak truth in love (Eph. 4:25), and as the Lord Jesus did always speaking full of GRACE AND TRUTH (John 1:18).

Again, this isn't a letter about politics, it isn't an official statement of my churches, it is one pastor's personal reflection and interpretation of the scriptures. I sincerely hope and pray that the Lord be with us all during times like these.

Love,

Pastor James