

**NEXT: The Gospel and the Next Generation**

The Children Yet Unborn

Dr. David Platt

July 3, 2011



**The Children Yet Unborn  
Psalm 139:13-16**

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Psalm 139. Let me invite you to pull out those notes that you received when you came in tonight. They're going to guide our time in the Word. Psalm 139.

A few weeks ago I found myself standing in the middle of Cairo, Egypt and Tahrir Square where just a few months ago, if you watched the news, you saw masses of Egyptians gather together in this square to stand for freedom and celebrate freedom. Just historic picture; just a few months ago. And so to stand there, to talk with Egyptians—especially to talk with various Christians, pastors in Egypt—and to hear them talk about freedom in entirely new ways for them, to hear on one hand just excitement as they talked about freedom and what this might mean for them. At the same time, to be completely honest, to hear especially our brothers and sisters talk with a bit of hesitancy even in some senses fear. Nobody really knows what's going to happen in Egypt in the days ahead. Nobody knows who's going to lead in Egypt. And our brothers and sisters know that that leadership in the wrong hands could bring about greater harm for the church.

So we need to be praying for our brothers and sisters in Egypt, really all over North Africa and the Middle East, and just historic changes that are happening there. But all of that to come back to, as I sat there thinking about what is happening in Egypt, listening to them, I could not help but to on one hand thank God for the freedoms that we enjoy, the freedoms that we celebrate on this weekend, the freedom to worship like we've been doing; freedom for me to speak like I'm speaking right now. These are freedoms that we obviously cannot take for granted.

And yet at the same time I was reminded that with freedom comes a significant measure of responsibility, and even in some senses regulation. Now we would kind of put freedom and regulation against one another. But the reality is, in freedom we want regulation against anything or anyone that would seek to abuse freedom by harming someone else. And so that leads me to the two things I want to do tonight.

I want to on one hand express deep gratefulness to God for the freedom that we have. And know this is a great gift that we've been given, and we have much reason to celebrate on this weekend—our freedom. At the same time, I want to address tonight what is...what I'm convinced is the most morally outrageous, sinfully, vicious practice that we participate in in the name of freedom. And that is abortion.

# Abortion

## **In the United States...**

In the United States, since abortion was legalized after the Roe vs. Wade court decision in January of 1973, over 45 million abortions have occurred. 45 million! That averages out right now to approximately 1.4 million abortions every year, three thousand abortions occurring every day, an abortion occurring every 20 to 25 seconds. You realize that and you realize that abortion has affected and is affecting men, women, families, children all over our country.

This next data I saw different numbers for, and I went with the most conservative one that I found. But researchers found that at least one third of American women have an abortion at some point in their lives. One out of three child-bearing women in our country have an abortion at some point in their life. That's astounding. It's eye-opening really even for us in this room tonight.

I want to say from the start that I know there are women in this room who have had abortions. I'm certainly assuming that. I can say with almost confidence that that is the case. Some of you have had abortions and no one in this room knows about it. Some of you have had abortions and maybe no one at all knows about it. And I'm not even going to begin to presume what is going on in your heart and mind even now, or what will go on in your heart and mind as we dive into this topic tonight.

Abortion has been called a secret killer—not only of babies but of moms whose abortions leave difficult wounds and deep scars. So I want to be sensitive. Oh! I want to be pastorally sensitive to your mind and your heart.

I want you to know from the start that we're going to look at the stark truth from Scripture about abortion tonight. We're going to see the sinful nature of abortion in the Word tonight because I want to show every person in this room who has thought about having an abortion... I want to show every person in this room who may be even at this moment thinking about having an abortion... I want to show every person in this room who will ever think about having an abortion... I want to lodge this word so deeply by the power of God's Spirit in your heart so that that thought will never ever cross your mind again. I want you to hate abortion after tonight because God hates abortion. I want to show you why that is.

This is not just for child-bearing women in this room, but all of us as the church, as the people of God. Now, this is key. My goal tonight is not to make a political speech. I am not running for office. That is not my job. My job as pastor is to open the Word of God, to show the people of God the Word of God, particularly as it pertains to issues in our lives, in our culture, in the church and abortion is a major issue in our lives, in our culture, in the church. And I want the people—you that God has entrusted to my care as a pastor—I want you to know what God's Word says about abortion. I want you to see the severity with which Scripture addresses it so you can think and speak biblically about it, so you can stand boldly against it. So I want to be clear on one hand, but I want to be compassionate on the other hand. I want to speak strongly and sensitively at the same time.

So particularly for women and men for that matter who have been involved in abortion in your past, I want you to hang with me. We're going to see, you can look in your notes, we're going to look at abortion and God. It's going to lead us to abortion and the gospel. My prayer tonight is that you would in the end walk away seeing and hearing and feeling the love of Christ for you. So that's where we're going. Hang with me.

## **In the World...**

Now this is obviously not just an American issue. In the world, over 46 million abortions occur every year. That's 130,000 abortions occurring every day. 130,000. Do you remember the feeling you had when that many people were killed almost instantly in an earthquake in Haiti? That just shook you because you said, "Oh, that's horrible!" Do you remember not long ago when 150-200,000 people were killed in a cyclone in Myanmar and an earthquake in China, just back to back? Or a few years ago when Tsunami came in Southeast Asia and swept away a quarter of a million people just like that? Massive disasters in our day.

What I want you to see tonight is the moral disaster of even greater proportions—130,000 helpless babies being dismembered and destroyed every single day. And we hardly even notice it. A woman has an abortion almost every second of every day. I do not believe it is an overstatement to call abortion a modern holocaust. I believe that is an understatement because every single month we surpass the number of people systematically slaughtered in the world. And just as German Christians did not need to hide from the reality of what was happening in concentration camps, we in this room cannot, must not, hide from the reality of what is happening 3,000 times a day in our country and 130,000 times a day all around the world in abortion clinics.

Now, I know I've already made some strong statements here—maybe even some that are uncomfortable for you. But I want to show you why in the Word. Here's the deal. When we come to the Word, we don't see the word "abortion" in the Bible. Instead we see a theology of who God is, who man is, and how God is working in the world. And I'm convinced this is the fundamental starting point for thinking about abortion.

Abortion is not primarily a political issue. The goal tonight is not to be Republican or be Democrat. This is not primarily a political issue. It is not primarily... Abortion is not primarily a social issue. It's not primarily a women's issue. Abortion is not primarily a children's issue. Abortion is primarily a God issue. I want you to raise your sights above all the fray—political, social, women, children, this, that—raise your sights above the fray and see how abortion relates to God. That's our starting point.

So you've got two texts at the top of your notes; one from Psalm 78 where we started nine weeks ago. So you're holding Psalm 139 in front of you. We're about to read that in a second. But I want you to know where...even where we're at tonight started. When I knew we would be walking through this series on passing the gospel onto the next generation, we would start in Psalm 78. I was reading, meditating, praying on Psalm 78 and it says (this is just a reminder; you don't have to turn there; you can if you want) the Bible says, *We will "tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done... [God] commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, [listen to this] the children yet unborn..."* (Ps. 78:4-6).

As soon as I saw that phrase, "*children yet unborn,*" I couldn't help but ask myself the question, "How will we pass the gospel unto the next generation if we eliminate the children yet unborn?" And so I sensed God was saying, "You need to address that phrase in the Word—children yet unborn." So that's what now leads us to this passage in Psalm 139.

A picture that David, the psalmist here, gives us of the unborn. So we're going to start in verse 13 and read just four verses. This is God speaking to David. Listen to what He says, *"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it*

*very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them"* (Ps. 139:13-16).

Let's pray. Oh, God, we pray tonight that you would help us to see ourselves in this text. Help us to see where we, each of us in this room, where we once were in our mother's womb. Help us to see your intimate relationship with us at that moment. So help us to see ourselves in this text and then help us to see others in this text. Help us to see babies that are in mothers' wombs even in this room and babies that are in mothers' wombs all across city, country, the world. Show us your relationship to them, we pray. Guard me, I pray, we pray, guard me from saying anything, anything at all that does not align with your Word. I pray that you'd do all of these things as we think about this difficult issue for our good and for your glory. Amen.

## **Abortion and God**

Okay. Three truths that spring from Psalm 139 and are echoed all over Scripture. So we're not going to have time to turn to a bunch of different places but you might, if you're taking notes, you might want to write down...just I'm going to throw out tons of Scripture here and there along the way, springing from Psalm 139 that are echoed all over the place. These three truths concerning abortion and God. That's where we're starting.

### **Abortion is an Affront to God's Sovereign Authority as Creator**

Number one. Abortion is an affront to God's sovereign authority as Creator. Abortion is an affront to God's sovereign authority as Creator. "*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb*" (Ps. 139:13). God is the Creator. [Keep going in your notes here.] He is the Giver of life. God alone has the power and authority to give life. A man and a woman can come together in an attempt to reproduce life but the reality is only God ultimately can produce life. This is His work. Only God. Job 33:4, "*The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*" Job 12:9-10, "*In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.*" Your breath is in God's hand.

He is the Giver of life, and He is the Taker of life. Job 1:21, when Job's children die in a tragic picture of Job 1, Job falls on his face, "*And he said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away.'*" The Lord gives life. The Lord takes away life. This is His prerogative. This is His work. Deuteronomy 32:39, God says, "*I put to death and I bring to life. This is my prerogative to put to death; my prerogative to bring to life.*" That's why suicide is a sin—not the unpardonable sin, but definitely sin, because it's God's prerogative, God's authority alone to give and to take life. And abortion is an affront to God's sovereign authority as Creator. Abortion, like suicide, says, "*No, we are in control of life. We decide when someone lives and we decide when someone dies.*" Not true. God, our Creator, alone makes these calls. Abortion is an affront—an offense—to the authority of the one who gives life and takes life.

### **Abortion is an Assault on God's Glorious Work in Creation**

Second: abortion is an assault on God's glorious work in creation. See this. Not just the reality of God's authority as Creator but the glory and the beauty of God's work in creation. I want you to see this right after David confesses God's work in creating Him, listen to what he says, "*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.* [Verse 14] *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*" Huh! Follow this in your

notes. The way God creates people compels praise. The way God creates people compels praise. David is describing this person-forming work of God that is taking place in the mother's womb. "You formed me—my inward parts. You knit me together." Then he responds in worship. "I praise you—the way you formed my inward parts; the way you knitted me together in my mother's womb."

This work of creation creates awe and amazement, and it does, doesn't it? And you think about it. Especially what we know that David did not know. It's awe-evoking, praise-compelling. What happens in the mother's womb leads to worship. To think, "Okay, God takes little egg and sperm (now, we're not going to go into reproduction 101, but you're following with me, okay?). Okay, little egg and sperm, and within two weeks, there's a heart that is beating and is circulating its own blood. Within a few more weeks, fingers are forming on hands. Brain waves are detectable. After just six weeks these inward parts are moving around. Two weeks later, you have discernible finger prints, discernible sexuality, kidneys forming, functioning, then a gallbladder. By the twelfth week, all of the organs of a baby's body are functional and the baby can cry. All of that within three short months! The first trimester—heart, organs, brain, sexuality, movement, reaction—and God on High is doing all of this! That evokes awe, amazement, praise, worship!

So then, to imagine, at this moment, during this time period, to insert a tool, take a pill, undergo an operation to definitively rip apart that which is being created—that is an assault on God's glorious work in creation. There is no way around that. Most abortions take place between 10 and 14 weeks of gestation—what they say is the optimal time, quote/unquote, for dismemberment and removal. And during that time, 10 to 14 weeks what we just talked about, God has been forming this glorious work of creation.

Look at this one picture. I'm going to show you one picture. This is after one trimester. What God has knit together. See the beauty of what God is doing, the intricacy of the person God is forming. To be ripped apart—an absolute assault on His glorious work in creation. Now this is, right here, this is the crux... The crux of the debate concerning abortion. The crux of the debate concerning abortion is what is going on in the womb? And God is clear in His Word. The womb contains a person formed in the image of God. That's clear. Psalm 139, other texts. Genesis 1:26-28. God is creating, forming a person in His image unlike anything else in all creation. He's knitting together a human being.

Now, people have argued and will argue, "Well, what is full personhood? When does an embryo or a fetus become a person?" And this really is the most important question. Virtually every argument in the entire abortion controversy comes back to this one question: "What is the unborn? What or who is in the womb?" Because once that question is answered, every other question comes into perspective. The reality is if the unborn is not human, then no justification for abortion is even necessary. Some people say, "Well, the unborn is not a human person. It's just some non-viable tissue mass—just a part of a woman's body." Others say, "It's only a potential human, or a human that's not yet a person." So, playing games with words here. And the reality is, if this is true, then the argument is over. If it's not a person, have the abortion. No justification for abortion would even be necessary at that point.

On the other hand, if the unborn is human, no justification for abortion is adequate. No justification for abortion even begins to make sense. This is where I'm indebted to Gregory Koukl, theologian, philosopher, apologist, who wrote a good little booklet called *Precious, Unborn, Human Persons*. Just a great little resource. People say abortion is such a complex issue. There's just no easy answers. But here's the deal: if that which is in the womb is a person, then abortion is not complex at all. You think about it. Once it is granted... Now, I

know there may even be some in this room who would say, "Well, the unborn who is in the womb is not a person." But assume for a second it is a person; that that which is in the womb is a person created in the image of God. If that is true, then every single justification for abortion falls apart.

People say, "Well, women have the right to privacy with their doctors." Certainly, we all have a right to a measure of privacy, but no privacy argument is ever a cover for doing serious harm to another innocent human being. We have laws that invade our privacy whenever we start harming another person's welfare. Privacy is not the issue here.

"But women should have the freedom to choose." Sure, in some things but not all things. Yes, women should have the freedom to choose in this or that, but women, men for that matter, we don't have the freedom to simply eliminate toddlers when they become burdensome to us, or teenagers for that matter. [Teenagers in this room did not particularly appreciate that comment and I can respect it.] No woman has the freedom to kill her child, if it's a child, right? No freedom of choice there.

"Well, making abortion illegal forces women into back alleys with coat hangers to do abortions themselves." Let's think about this: if it is dangerous to kill a person, should we make it easier for them to do so? If it is dangerous for a man to rob a bank, should we create laws making it safer for him to rob a bank?

"But more children will create a drain on the economy." When human beings get expensive, do we kill them? I want you to think about this. Koukl mentions a little girl named Rachel. Family friends had a little girl named Rachel. I want you to hear his description. Eye opening. He writes:

"Rachel is two months old but she is still six weeks away from being a full-term baby. She was born prematurely at 24 weeks, in the middle of her mother's second trimester. On the day of her birth, Rachel weighed one pound, nine ounces, but dropped to just under a pound soon after. She was so small she could rest in the palm of her daddy's hand. She was a tiny, living, human person. Heroic measures were taken to save this child's life. Why? Because [Koukl writes] we have an obligation to protect, to nurture, and care for other humans who would die without our help—especially little children. Rachel was a vulnerable and valuable human being, but [get this] if a doctor came into the hospital room and instead of caring for little Rachel took the life of this little girl as she lay quietly nursing at her mother's breast, that would be homicide. However, if this same little girl, the very same Rachel, was inches away, resting inside her mother's womb, she could be legally killed by abortion."

That makes no sense. That is utterly ludicrous. If that which is in the womb is a person, a child, everything...everything revolves around, what is happening in the womb? And Scripture makes this clear. The womb contains a person being formed in the image of God. You cannot believe God's Word and deny this. And once this is realized, there is absolutely no adequate justification for abortion. One of the wonderful things that Psalm 139 does for us is it gives us a glimpse into what God sees, and what God knows, and what God is doing in ways that we don't realize in the womb. And when we read Psalm 139, we realize though the unborn is visibly hidden from man, he or she is never hidden from God. God sees. God works. He's forming; He's knitting; He's creating; He's nurturing; He's shaping; He's crafting in a way that evokes praise and awe. And abortion is an assault on that glorious work of God.

The way God creates people compels praise, and all of God's works—all of them—are wonderful. "*I praise you [verse 14], for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*" All of God's works are wonderful. Now part of, in a sense much of, the contemporary defense in abortion involves denying assaulting this reality. Abortions happen here and around the world because child-bearing is seen as inconvenient. It's costly—too much for a woman in a certain situation. It's inadvisable, even irresponsible, some would say, for a woman to move forward in a certain situation and have a child; based on career; based on relational situation; based on emotional situation.

This complicated with advancements in medical technology. Whether it's the ability to detect sexuality, which is huge in some countries. For example, China, where there's a one child policy. It is advantageous to have a boy, so girls are more often aborted. Or India, where to have a girl in some parts of India, to have a girl, the dowry that's involved with that picture, it's going to bring too much of a burden on that family. So if they're able to find out that it's a girl—abortion. If they're not able to find out, a girl is born, the mother starts weeping, and decides to throw the baby out.

Due to sexuality or disability. Now, that seems repulsive to us, but we are willing to do similar things. When it comes to disability, it's obviously possible to determine whether or not a child in the womb has Downs Syndrome or a variety of other things. Maybe a particular debilitating disease that will affect that child's life. So should abortion be permissible in those kinds of circumstances? Not if you believe Psalm 139:14. Not if you believe that all of God's works are wonderful. Because when you believe this, then you know God's work is wonderful, even, maybe even especially in the case of disability.

That is all over Scripture. John 9—man born blind. People asked, "Whose fault is this that he was born blind—his fault or his parents' fault?" Jesus says, "It wasn't his fault. It wasn't his parents' fault. God did this so that His glory might be made known to and through this man. So that the wonderful works of God might be revealed to and through this man—even through his disability." Now, I don't presume to know all of the difficulties involved with disabilities. About a year ago, many of you know Heather and I began this process of adopting a special needs child from China. We've been waiting to be matched and our eyes again have been opened to the realities of orphans in the world who have disabilities. And those are the ones who have been born, who have not been aborted. To think of the number of children, who because of their disabilities, were never even born...

One article from ABC news website: a pediatric geneticist at Children's Hospital in Boston said this: "An estimated 92% of all women who receive a prenatal diagnosis of Downs Syndrome choose to terminate their pregnancies." Ninety-two percent who find out their child has Downs Syndrome terminate their pregnancies. Again, I'm not assuming to know all that goes into having a child with various disabilities, but I do want to urge you not to deny the wonderful work of God even, or especially, in disability. I want to encourage you, to urge you, to trust that God has a design and a desire to use everything, everything for the good of His people and the glory of His name. And it is absolutely wrong to play God in such situations, saying, "I know what is better than you." We do not play God; we obey God. God's works are wonderful even, especially in the case of disability.

And even, especially in the midst of difficulty. It's at this point some people ask, "Well, what about cases of incest or rape? Is abortion justifiable then?" And oh, once again, I can't say this enough. I can't presume to know what it is like to be in that kind of situation. I shudder at the horror of that happening to my wife and any other woman, for that matter. I don't even begin to presume to know the physical and emotional and relational toll that brings not

only on a woman but her whole family. But bring this back to the fundamental question: is the baby in the womb a person? And if so, then everything changes.

Would you murder a child outside of a womb because they were conceived by rape? Of course not. Then why would you murder a child inside the womb because they were conceived by rape? Deuteronomy 24:16 "Why should a child pay for his father's crime?" How ought we treat an innocent child who reminds us of a terrible experience? With murder or mercy? People say, "Well, what about the emotional toll on a woman?" Again, I can't even begin to imagine but think about it. What if the rapist was caught? Would we allow the woman to murder him in order to have emotional relief? No. Then why in the world would we allow her to murder her child instead? I'm not saying this is easy. I'm not saying this is easy at all. But I'm saying this because Scripture is saying this. Because this is the whole point. All over Scripture we see it.

God has a record of taking the most evil, horrible, painful circumstances in this life and turning them into peace and life and joy. This is the crux. This is what... This is from the very beginning. It's Genesis 38. You have incest there. Then you turn over to Matthew 1 and you realize that the very lineage of Jesus Christ Himself has incest in it. You see Joseph's brothers wanting to murder him and then settling for selling him into slavery. And God uses that evil to bring about the salvation of His entire people. This is the very essence of the gospel—that God takes the very murder of His one and only Son and turns it into the way for you and I to be saved. Don't doubt the ability of our God to take that which is difficult and painful—even evil—and turn it into good.

And along these lines (just a side note) I want to encourage families in this room who have chosen to have children even though maybe you knew that child had disability and you did not have an abortion. Maybe you're walking through some major struggles right now. Maybe those struggles have been going on for years and years and years. Others have been in difficult circumstances and you've chosen to have the child, to walk a difficult road and have the child. I hope that you're encouraged here, that you made a good choice. It is always a good choice to trust the God whose works will always, in the end, show themselves wonderful.

### **Abortion is an Attack on God's intimate Relationship with the Unborn**

Third truth concerning God and abortion. Abortion is an affront to God's sovereign authority as Creator, an assault on God's glorious work in creation, and abortion is an attack on God's intimate relationship with the unborn. It's an attack on God's intimate relationship with the unborn. This flows from what we've already seen, I think, here in Psalm 139. Then I've got scriptures listed here that help reinforce this all over Scripture. Listen to the intimacy in verse 15 and 16. David says, "*My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance.*" "Before there was anything formed, you saw me!" "...in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them" (Ps. 139:15-16).

See, God here relating not merely to an embryo, but to a person. And His relationship with that person from conception, from the very forming of inward parts... This is an astoundingly intimate relationship between God on High and a child in a womb. This is fascinating. He fashions them. Job 31:15, "*Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?*" You know, another verse there, I didn't put it there, but Job 10:8-12, "Your hands shaped me and made me." God, you molded me like clay. He fashions them and He values them. I put Exodus 21:22-25 there. These are kind of confusing verses—a lot that could be talked about in them. But I... A simple point is clear.

Listen to this, *"When men strive together [meaning they're fighting] and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, [so basically forced into premature labor, when that happens] but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, [this child that comes out, if there's harm] then you shall pay life for life."* Whatever these verses lead to or are talking about, it is clear that God values this child that is in a mother's womb.

He fashions the unborn. He values them. He knows them. Jeremiah 1:5, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you..."* He relates to them. Psalm 22:10 says, (Oh, I love this!)... The psalmist says, *"...from my mother's womb you have been my God."* Isn't that beautiful? From my mother's womb you have been...you have related to me as my God. He calls them. Galatians 1:15, "It pleased God," Paul says, "Who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace." He names them. Isaiah 49:1, *"The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name."* And anoints them. This is John the Baptist in Luke 1:15. It says, *"...for he will be great before the Lord...and he will [also] be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb."* Anointed with the Spirit even from his mother's womb. The converse of that (I didn't put this verse in there; it's kind of bad news) but Psalm 51:5 says that, "We are sinful from the moment our mother conceives us." Embryos don't have a sinful nature. People have sinful natures.

## **Abortion and the Gospel**

All of this showing abortion, an attack on the intimate relationship that God possesses with the unborn. Do we see how serious this is? This is not a social issue, political issue, women's issue, children's issue. This is a God-issue. Abortion is an affront to God's character, an assault on God's work, an attack on God's relationship with precious babies that He knits together. Ultimately a God-issue and as a result, abortion is also a gospel issue. So, I hope that we have seen the severity of the sin of abortion, what we have done—an affront, an assault, an attack on God, His character, His work, and His relationship.

### **God is the Judge of Sin**

Now I want us to think about what God does. So this is what we have done in this sin of abortion. Two things I want to point out that God does. One: God is the judge of sin. God hates the taking of innocent life and He judges all who take innocent life. Mothers who have aborted babies stand under the judgment of God. Fathers who have encouraged abortion stand under the judgment of God. Grandparents who have supported abortion stand under the judgment of God. Doctors who have performed abortion stand under the judgment of God. And leaders who have permitted abortion stand under the judgment of God. Pastors who have counseled people to have abortions.

Now, a side note here. I hope this is obvious, but just in case it's not, it's obviously worth saying, the only time medical action like we're talking about tonight would be justified is in a case where a woman's pregnancy will kill her, like tubal pregnancies. Obviously it is better for one human to live—a mom—than for two humans to die—a mom and a child. The intent here—totally different. The intent is not to kill the child but to save life and in saving life, the tragic, unavoidable result in rare circumstances like that, is the death of a child. But aside from that, there is no, absolutely no biblical warrant for pastors to counsel people to have abortions, or anyone else for that matter.

Leaders who have permitted abortion, pastors and legislators, others who have worked to make abortion possible stand under the judgment of God. This obviously includes our president, whom I respect, whom I pray for, but who is proactively, aggressively working to keep the murder of innocent children legal.

Now, as I mentioned, it is not my job to give political speeches but to preach biblical sermons, to teach what the Bible says, to proclaim what God has said. But this is an area where God has spoken, even when it comes to civil authorities, leaders and our relationship to them. So I don't have time to turn there, but you might write it down. Romans 13:1-4 where Paul, in the New Testament, addresses our relationship to civil authorities and God's purpose for civil authorities. Let me read it to you. Romans 13:1.

*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. [God has instituted governing authorities.] Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers [now this is the key verse, verse 3; the leaders] are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good (Rom. 13:1-4).*

This is where we say, "Oh, there's so much to unpack here in Romans 13." But this is so simple and clear, yet so missed in much political discussion, even among Christians in the church. The Bible teaches that government is given by God for the good of people. That's what Romans 13 is saying. Government—given, instituted by God, exists under the authority of God—to be a terror to bad conduct for good. So that those who do what is good are approved by the government. That's God's design. One of the primary purposes, if not the primary purpose, of government in the design of God, is to protect and promote the good of people. And the government does this by making, enforcing laws.

Which leads to the second part here in your notes. Government is given by God for the legislation of morality. Government, given by God for the legislation of morality. Government, given by God to affirm the good. That's what is meant by legislation of morality. Governments are given by God to affirm the good and condemn the bad. That's what Romans 13:3 is all about. Affirm the good. Condemn the bad. Ensure justice. Promote good for people. That's foundational. But this is where many people say, "Well, it's not the state's job; it's not the job of the government to legislate morality." But that is a sham argument and we know it! All of us do! The state does have the responsibility of legislating morality, saying that stealing is wrong, that lying is wrong, that murder is wrong, and a host of other things are wrong. This is what the government does.

Now when it comes to the issue of abortion, people immediately say, "Well, we shouldn't take someone's right to choose away." But don't miss it! The government exists to take people's right to choose away! You cannot choose to steal for if you do, there will be consequences. You cannot choose to do a whole host of things that the government has put laws against and it's good that government says these things.

You cannot choose to speed on the road, as I was reminded of by a kind civil servant recently. [I don't understand why I-20 is 55 miles an hour! Can I get an amen? Civil disobedience. No. Okay. Listen.] So as this man—kind man —is walking up to my window, I did not look at him and say, "Bro, I have the right to choose to go however fast I want." He would look at me and say, "This pink little piece of paper here says you don't have that right to choose." He would write me a ticket. This is good.

If everyone chose to do whatever they wanted to do, what would the inevitable result be? Anarchy! "We are all free to do whatever we want!" That's not good, and yet it's the basis by which many, many in the church are saying, "Well, maybe I wouldn't have an abortion but I don't think we should take someone's right to choose away from them." We take people's right to choose evil away from them every day as a society and that's a really good thing for all of us. It is good for us to say, "No one has the right to do evil." And it's absolute moral silliness—even cultural suicide—to say that everyone has a right to do whatever they choose to do.

And this is where I want to call you, Christian, out of a muddled middle road that says, "I don't think we should impose morality on someone else." I want to cause you to realize that we impose morality on others every single day and that's a good thing for all of us. When it comes to evil, it is right for us to oppose evil—wisely, graciously, firmly, humbly, boldly to oppose it.

To say that you are pro-choice, pro-choice about what? Whether you eat Mexican or Chinese food for dinner tonight? Pro-choice about the house you live in or the car you drive? Of course you're pro-choice about those things but you are not pro-choice about rape. And you are not pro-choice about burglary and you are not pro-choice about kidnapping. So, are you pro-choice about killing children?

Brothers and sisters, moral—flowing from it political—neutrality here is not an option. Moral indifference is not an option. Randy Alcorn said it best. He said, "To endorse or even to be neutral about killing innocent children created in God's image is unthinkable in the Scriptures, was unthinkable to Christians in church history and should be unthinkable to Christians today." Which leads me then to say that God is the Judge of sin including Christians who have done nothing about abortion (i.e. me).

This is where I have been the most convicted as I have approached this issue because I am the chief of sinners on this one. I point the finger here at myself, for I have been shamefully passive when it comes to this issue in the church. And I have been brought to repentance this week. Martin Luther said, "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God, except precisely the point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proven, and to be steady on all the battle fronts besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

I'm not saying this is the only battle raging in our culture. As we walk through the Word, we are seeing all kinds of battles raging in our culture, in the church, in our lives, in our hearts, in families, so we're addressing those. This is not the only battle, but this is a battle raging in our culture that is affecting literally millions, upon millions, upon millions of people. And if I, or if you, sit idly by while millions of children, individuals, people in the image of God all around us are dismembered and destroyed, and we do nothing, then we are directly avoiding God's command to speak and to work on behalf of the weak and the oppressed and the innocent among us. And that is sin. God is the Judge of sin.

### **God is the Savior of Sinners**

But thankfully that is not all. Ladies and gentlemen, God is also the Savior of sinners. God is the Judge. He hates abortion. God is the Savior. He loves sinners. So, I want to encourage you here, okay? Now begin to rise up a little bit. So, we're down, looking at the depth and severity here. Now rise up. I want to encourage you, particularly, every woman who has aborted a child; every father who has supported abortion; anybody who has encouraged abortion; performed abortion; permitted abortion; counseled abortion; or have done

nothing about abortion. Know this! Hear this! Feel this! Lodge this deep within your heart, your mind, and your soul! God forgives entirely! Entirely! Psalm 103:11-12, "*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love [mercy] toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*"

Isaiah 43:25 God says, "*I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.*" I will not remember your sins! "*If we confess our sins [1 John 1:9], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" To every woman in this room who has had an abortion, hear this: Christ has paid the price for your abortion. Christ has endured the penalty for your abortion. To anyone who has been involved in abortion any of these other ways, or not been involved... This is the whole beauty of the gospel: God on High has sent His Son, who has lived a sinless, perfect life—the life that we could not live—and He has stood in our place. He has taken all of the wrath and judgment due your sin and my sin upon Himself. He has taken it all. All the guilt, all the condemnation of sin He has taken upon Himself. So that when you are in Christ, you are free from sin and forgiven of all your sin. "I remember your sins no more," God says.

Now we've talked about this before. We know this doesn't mean that God has amnesia, that He has forgotten that you had an abortion, forgotten that you encouraged this abortion, whatever it may be. He doesn't have amnesia. He's omniscient. He knows all things. The beauty of the gospel is the God who knows all things—everything about your past, abortion and otherwise—the God who knows all of that in Christ does not hold you accountable for any of that. For any it! You're forgiven not just partway, but entirely.

He forgives entirely. He heals deeply. God does not desire for you to live your life in pain and regret, but in peace and joy. Yes, to hate the sin of your past, that's a good thing in every area of our life. Oftentimes the pain of sin in the past is a powerful deterrent to sin in the future, right? That you've been down this road of sin, you know that's painful and that deters you from going down the road again. You know that's not a good road. And so, in that sense pain of sin in the past is good but don't let pain of sin in the past rob you of peace in the present. Know Luke 7:47-50, when Jesus speaks to a woman who had lived a sexually immoral lifestyle, He says to her, "*Your sins are forgiven...your faith has saved you; [now] go in peace.*" Oh, hear this. God desires His peace to be your possession. He forgives entirely. He heals deeply.

He restores completely. Oh, hear this! In Christ, in Christ, you are not guilty anymore! Romans 8:1, "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" To every woman in this room who has had an abortion, you do not wear a scarlet letter "A" on your shirt everywhere you go. When you are in Christ, the Father on high, God on high does not look at you and see the guilt of your abortion anymore. He looks on you and He sees the very righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself. You are robed, you are clothed, in His righteousness, whether you have had one abortion or five abortions; whether you have performed hundreds of abortions, or legally made possible thousands—even millions—of abortions. You turn and trust in Christ to save you, forgive you, heal you, restore you, then you are not guilty anymore.

He restores completely and He redeems fully. This is the beauty of our God, our God who takes evil and turns it into good; who takes suffering and turns it into satisfaction; who takes mourning and turns it into dancing. Oh, there are people that I know who have abortion in their past, who have experienced God's forgiveness, have experienced it in some sense just continually experiencing God's healing; who've experienced God's restoration.

And now, oh, to see these precious women and men serving other unwed mothers, coming alongside young girls who are considering abortion. I see some of these people doing adoption, orphan care ministry, taking what God has taken—that which the adversary intended for evil—and He is using it for good. This is redemption.

## **Abortion and the Church**

And this is where I want this to lead us then to think about it as the Church—what this means for us in light of all we've seen. I hope it's clear. It's clear to me from the Word. I hope it's clear to us that moral neutrality is a dangerous myth—a deadly myth—when it comes to this issue. You might write down Ephesians 5:11. Ephesians 5:11 teaches...Paul's saying there that we not only avoid works of darkness, we don't just avoid works of darkness, but we oppose works of darkness. We don't just oppose evil, we act against evil. We don't just sit passively by when surrounded by evil. We avoid and we act.

### **Look Around...**

And so this is where I don't know what this means for your life. I don't know what this means for your family. Still walking through even what this means for my life and my family. And I don't know what this means completely for us as a church in the days ahead. But I want to call us tonight, based on what we've seen in the Word, I want to call you, Christian, first look around—to learn the facts about abortion. Let tonight be a start. We've got [www.]brookhills.org rotating feature, Children Yet Unborn. Tonight, this week, sometime go there. Click on it. You've got a whole page there with resources. Stuff where you can find... Let this catapult you into... Don't be the person who just says, "Well, I just don't want to know all that's going on in a concentration camp. I don't want to know all that's going on in this over here." We need to know. Learn the facts about abortion.

See the pictures of abortion. Now, obviously tonight I've shown one little picture but I've not shown video. I thought about it but obviously I know that there are a variety of different ages represented in this room. But the reason I put this is because I believe we need to know, we need to see in a very real sense, we need to feel the horror of abortion. We don't need to hide from that reality—hide from images. We need to feel the weight of an unborn child's humanity. You watch some of these videos and you'll be struck by an unborn child's humanity in disturbing ways. And we need to experience and sense the horror of what is happening 3,000 times a day in our country all across, all across Birmingham and beyond.

So we need to learn, we need to see, and we need to listen to the victims of abortion. What I mean by this is we need to walk with one another. We need to share life with one another. We don't need to just go to Bible study classes and kind of move on with our lives. We need to share life with one another in a way that brothers and sisters find in their relationship with you an open ear to talk about what is most often hidden below the surface.

One estimate, one statistic said, "95 percent of people in the church who have lost a child to abortion have never really come to terms with it." Now, I don't know how you measure a statistic like that. "95% of people in the church who have lost a child to abortion have never really come to terms with it." But regardless, whether or not that's perfect and exact, that makes me very concerned as a pastor to know that there are people hearing this message tonight who have never told a single person about their abortion, who are suffering in silence. And so, church, I want to call us to listen.

### **Step Forward...**

And then brother or sister, I want to call you to step forward to share your burdens from the past with brothers and/or sisters. These are burdens that are not intended to be carried alone. And then, if either now or at any point in the future you even begin to contemplate abortion, share your struggles in the present with brothers and/or sisters. Step forward in the middle of the world coming down on you, in the middle of where you feel trapped in, you think, "Oh, I can't move forward with having this child. What it will mean here, or here, or here, or here, or here?" When you start thinking like that, go to your brothers and sisters, and listen to wise, loving, tender, truthful, biblical counsel.

### **Speak Up...**

And then to all of us, speak up! Speak up before God in prayer. This is a battle that is intense in our culture. It's a battle that's intense in the church and it requires prayer and fasting. Speak up. Pray before God. Speak up before God and speak up before the government. I don't know exactly what this needs to look like in each of our lives but I do want to encourage, I want to challenge you, Christian, to use your democratic privileges of free speech, representation, demonstration, to press for legal protection of the unborn. Not just to celebrate this weekend the freedoms we have but to directly address with those freedoms that which is evil around us. Speak up.

### **Reach Out...**

And finally, reach out through giving to pro-life causes and ministries. We put websites on that information page that you can go to. Through serving unwed and under-aged mothers... Oh, I'm so, so thankful to God for members of this church who are working wisely and graciously and lovingly, to address these kinds of issues, whether it's in Lifeline Children's Services or the Alabama Baptist Children's Home or Save A Life. Members all throughout this church, and there's many others who are working on this. Opportunities to serve unwed and under-aged mothers through volunteering at pregnancy centers, through supporting abortion alternatives. Explore creatively ways to do that.

And then, through adopting unwanted children. Let's show a watching culture that sees children as an unwanted liability, let's show them that every child is wanted and every child is loved. We've talked about this obviously a lot at Brook Hills here, the importance of care for the orphan to our God. You think about it: if God wants us to care about the orphan who is endangered because his parents are dead, if God wants us to care about the orphan who is endangered because his parents are dead, then how much more should we care about the child who is endangered because his parents want him dead?

Let me close with a story. A little less than a year ago in a country where girls are not wanted as much as boys, a woman—pregnant—found herself absolutely unable to care for that child. She knew she could not and would not care for the child that she was going to have. And though abortions were fairly common—relatively common in her country—she decided not to have an abortion. She went through with having her child—a little girl. And as soon as the little girl was born, this woman placed this little girl in a light blue cloth, laid her in a brown paper box and in the middle of the night took her to an orphanage, sat her on the steps in front and walked away.

The next morning, workers in the orphanage come out and see the little girl in the brown paper box; do an investigation—an examination—to try to find out who she belongs to, to no avail. And she is, this little girl, brought into the orphanage. And on Wednesday night of this last week, Heather and I got a call that this little girl is going to become our daughter. I thank God that that mom decided not to abort her little girl. And I praise God because He is absolutely the Father to the fatherless, and the defender of the weak. And He, He cares

about the child in the womb. And we are His people. So let us, in our lives, our families, and in this church care, about the child in the womb.

**Permissions:** You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:** By David Platt. © David Platt & Radical. Website: [Radical.net](http://Radical.net)