

# Theological Equipping Class

## *Abortion*

October 18, 2020

### Introduction

Two disclaimers

Where we are going:

- a few facts about abortion
- what Christians should think about it
- why this is so controversial when it shouldn't be at all
- what are the social/political implications on this topic

### **Facts about abortion**

What is abortion? the ending of a pregnancy by some intentional means.

How is that accomplished?

- According to Planned Parenthood, the abortion procedure "gently empties your uterus"
- Surgical methods:
  1. Suction (82%)
  2. D&E: dilation and evacuation
  3. MOLD
- Non-surgical pharmaceutical means

How common?

- Almost 1 million times a year in the US.
- Roughly 1 every 35 seconds.
- Or about 2500 per day.
- Total since Roe v. Wade: January 22, 1973 – 64 million

## What should Christians think about abortion?

Is what is aborted a baby or is it merely a clump of cells or some other subhuman tissue?

When does a person become a person and when does life begin?

- Aristotle: when the mother feels movement
- The logic of Roe v. Wade: viability
- Peter Singer at Princeton: development of linguistic and relational capabilities

The problem with arbitrary standards:

Infanticide as the logical (and explicit) implication:

- Feminist Beverly Harrison: "Infanticide is not a great wrong. I do not want to be construed as condemning women who, under certain circumstances, quietly put their infants to death."
- Bioethicist Jonathan Glover: "infanticide is sometimes right" and "the objection to infanticide is at most no stronger than the objection to frustrating a baby's current set of desires, say by leaving him to cry unattended for a longish period."
- Bioethicist John Harris: "There is no obvious reason why one should think differently, from an ethical point of view, about a fetus when it's outside the womb rather than when it's inside the womb."

Why has the Church landed on fertilization/conception as being the starting point?

1. Logic
2. Science
3. Bible

Logic:

- Eagle eggs and vegans

Science:

- The US Department of Health & Human Services announced a formal position that life begins at conception arguing that any other standard is relative & subjective.
- Why? Because there are really only four key differences between a toddler and a human embryo:
  - Size
  - level of development
  - environment
  - degree of dependency

So here's the question: are any of these morally relevant to the value of or right to life?

Bible:

- Abortion in the ancient world
- Biblical texts implying life in the womb:
  - *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13)*
  - *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)*
  - *And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy." (Luke 1:41-44)*
  - *When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, 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, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Exodus 21:22-25)*

So when it comes to discussing the morality of abortion, Christians need to ask two questions:

1. Is an unborn child a human life?
2. Does God ever give man the right to kill innocent life?

Are Christians inconsistent? Pro-birth, but not actually pro-life?

- Quality of life vs. life
- Unjust murder vs. just killing

*You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)*

*There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood... (Proverbs 6:16-17)*

Are there potential exceptions to the prohibition of abortion?

## Why is our culture so obsessed with abortion?

A universal problem with uniquely American baggage

### 1. Racism

- There are currently about 43 million African Americans in the US.
- Abortion has killed 15 million black children since Roe. In fact, abortion kills more black persons than all other causes of death put together.
- Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood
  - "the gradual suppression, elimination and eventual extinction, of defective stocks — those human weeds which threaten the blooming of the finest flowers of American civilization."
  - "We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population..."
- Kanye West [planned parenthood clinics have] "been placed inside cities by white supremacists to do the Devil's work."

### 2. Feminism

- Waves of feminism: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Modern feminism isn't about the emancipation of women from actual oppression, but emancipation from the restrictions of biology...from their own bodies. From "the tyranny of reproduction" as its been called.
- So feminism relates to abortion in a number of ways:
  - 1. Sex: "sex without consequences."
  - 2. Vocation: Simone de Beauvoir wrote, "No woman should be authorized to stay home to raise her children. Women should not have that choice, because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one."
- Modern feminism is ironically anti-woman.

### 3. Existentialism

What is existentialism? "Existence precedes essence."

Truth: objective or subjective, experienced or revealed

What does this have to do with abortion?

1. First, that an unborn baby doesn't have innate essence.
2. You as a mom get to decide for yourself what is true in regards to abortion.

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

- "You are to claim your godlike, God-given role in creation by saying yes or no, secure in the knowledge that whatever you decide, after having honestly sought what is right, God will bless."
- "Abortion is a divinely blessed and guided act that can be practiced by a sovereign, isolated moral agent without regard to any external moral or legal restraints and without concern about the moral status of the target of the act."

Why the cultural needle doesn't move!

"Arguments" for abortion:

1. Women have a moral right to decide what to do with their bodies.
2. Banning abortion puts women at risk by forcing them to use illegal abortionists.
3. Men shouldn't speak to it.

**What are the political implications of a biblical worldview regarding abortion?**

Single-issue voters?

Party policy platforms over the past 50 years