

The Sin of Abortion and why it is contrary to the Christian Faith

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I'm sure that everyone is aware of the uptick in conversation about abortion and the particulars of it. Naturally, most of this talk is in response to the leak of the Supreme Court decision on the subject, which will not actually be finalized until mid-June. But the leak has resulted in a great deal of anxiety and anger. Not healthy for the nation.

Not healthy for us as Christians to be anxious either. Remember that Paul said in Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." So, no matter what happens, we are to remain calm, cool, and collected because our trust is in the Living God.

What does the Church say about the subject of abortion? The ACNA, Anglican Church in North America, has in the canons, the basic rules of the province, that we are a pro-life Church. That life begins at conception and goes to natural death. That is the position of the province, our diocese, and our parish.

There are passages of Scripture that we can look to for guidance on this subject. But I want us to start with the account of David and Bathsheba, because it is the perfect example of what can happen when we allow ourselves to satisfy our fleshly desires.

For the past week, I've been reflecting on the account of David and Bathsheba. And what I've seen is that it shows a pattern of behavior that is common to everyone who is all about self. And that pattern is one of using one sin to try and cover up another. Think about it. David has relations with Bathsheba, another man's wife, which is a sin, and she becomes pregnant. The pregnancy is a pretty tell-tale sign that the sin occurred. Her husband, Uriah, was away while this was going on. In fact, he is fighting with David's army. So clearly, when he returns home to find his wife pregnant, he will know that something is amiss.

To try and cover up the fact that he slept with Uriah's wife, David first tries deception. He figures that He'll call Uriah home from battle, and let nature take its course. After all, Uriah hasn't seen his wife in many weeks. But Uriah decides to abstain in order to remain ready to fight for David.

When his first plan failed, David decided that he would just get rid of Uriah. So, he calls his top general and tells him to put Uriah in the middle of the battle and have the rest of the men fall back and let Uriah get killed. In effect, David murdered Uriah. He gave the order so that he wouldn't know that David got his wife pregnant. David used sin to try and cover up sin.

The same thing happened in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They sinned against the Lord. And followed that up by trying to cover their own sin by wearing fig leaves and hiding from God. They ran away from God, recall that turning away from God is sin. They did that to try and cover their sin of eating from the tree God commanded them not to eat from.

But they were busted. As was David. Both sinned against the Lord. And neither could cover their own sin. Recall that God covered Adam and Eve with animal skins. And that's the

thing, only God can cover, or atone, for our sins. We, as human beings with selfish human nature, are unable to cover or atone for our own sins. And throughout Scripture, we are told to repent and return to the Lord. In the Old Testament there were sin offerings. They would sacrifice an animal to the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins. This is meant to point us to Christ who is the unblemished Lamb of God whose blood truly covers our sins.

As bad as it is to use one sin to cover up another, as bad as it is to sin in the first place, it is worse to enable someone to do so. In Matthew 5:19 Jesus said, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Some translations say, "Whoever sets aside." Jesus is talking about the enablers. Those who ignore the commandments and teach others that they don't need to follow them as the Lord intended.

For example, the sixth commandment is "Thou shalt do no murder." Murder is defined as the premeditated taking of life. David murdered Uriah. Did he actually go up to him and slay him? No. But he gave the order that led to his death. Did Uriah do anything to justify David's actions? No! On the contrary, Uriah was faithful to David. And yet in order to cover up his sin, David ordered Uriah's death. He supported Uriah's death in order to get what he wanted according to his selfishness. It was a premeditated, unjustifiable, selfish taking of another life. Church, this still goes on today with abortion. It is contrary to the life of faith. It is contrary to the Gospel. It is sin!

The fact that so many wrestle with this issue shouldn't surprise us. The flesh is selfish. It wants only what is pleasurable and convenient for today. We are constantly doing battle with the flesh. Paul states this clearly in Romans 7:14-25. And we fight this battle in different areas of our lives. For example, in the area of sexual relations. Our flesh wants us to satisfy our desires in this area. David fought that battle, sided with his flesh, and had relations with Bathsheba. That decision had consequences. It led directly to the murder of Uriah.

Sinful sexual relationships have consequences. Sex is a gift from God that must be used as He designed it to be used, that being within the context of marriage. One man and one woman who are married to each other and only with each other. Why do I mention that? Because satisfying sexual desires in an inappropriate way at an inappropriate time often leads to abortion. The majority of abortions involve women who are unmarried. There are consequences to our actions. We all have to guard ourselves against our flesh.

Why is abortion a sin? Because it is the taking of innocent life. That raises the question, 'When does life begin?' According to some, "mainstream religion" doesn't know when life begins. I'm not sure what is meant by mainstream religion, but I do know that God knows exactly when life begins, and He has told us in His word.

To continue to live we all need three things. We need nourishment, we need oxygen, and we need blood. The unborn child receives the first two through the umbilical cord, through blood. Oxygen is not the key to understanding life. Nourishment is not the key to understanding life. No, the key to understanding life is blood. From Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for

your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.” This passage is about blood sacrifice to make atonement for sins. It points us to Christ who ultimately atones for the sin of the world by shedding His blood and dying on the cross. We cannot atone for our own sin. Christ does that. But the phrase, “life of the flesh is in the blood” shows us that in order to be alive you have to have blood. That is most important.

Some might say, “But that refers to the blood of animals.” No! It says the life of the flesh is in the blood. And verse 14 states, “For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life.” Notice the word “ALL.” And the Hebrew word that is translated ‘flesh’ is the word *bāśār* and it refers to every creature, both man and animal, that God made on the earth.

And think about the logic of assuming this refers only to animals. Don’t we have flesh? Didn’t Christ say that we are worth much more than the animals? Did Christ come to die on the cross for animals? No! He came to die on the cross for humanity. That works because life is in the blood.

Think about murder in Scripture. Remember what God said to Cain when he murdered his brother Abel? God said that Abel’s blood was calling out to Him from the ground. Cain shed Abel’s blood. Shedding of blood. We still use this phrase today, only we shorten it to one word, bloodshed. And we use it usually in the context of war. It indicates the ending of life for the deceased. Not because they ran out of nourishment or oxygen, but because their blood was spilled out of them, their life was spilled out of them.

Every cell in our bodies needs oxygen and nourishment. Where do they get that from? From our blood. Life is in the blood. Think about a stroke. It is the loss of blood to an area of the brain. A heart attack is lack of blood flow to the heart. Cancer robs us of life because it robs healthy cells of blood. We are living beings created by God with blood. We have new life in Christ because He shed His blood for the life of the world. It does not make sense to believe that this passage from Leviticus only applies to life of animals. Because it specifically states, “all flesh,” and points us to Jesus Christ.

Some might say, “But that is the Old Testament. We are not under the Old Testament law anymore.” But that shows an incomplete understanding. We are not under the ceremonial law. This is covered by the moral law. Remember it points us to Christ, who gave His life for us. How did He do that? By shedding His blood for us by being scourged, whipped, beaten, and crucified. The same Jesus Christ, who said, “whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me.” Matthew 18:5

The early Church understood this principle concerning blood. Remember the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15. There was a decision to be made about whether believers had to be Jews in order to be Christians. James gave the verdict that we don’t have to be Jews in order to be Christians. But James also stated that all in the Church, whether Jew or Gentile, had to “abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.” That understanding that life is in the blood continued in the early Church, and it still holds true today.

Remember when Mary, the mother of the Lord, went to visit Elizabeth? From Luke 1:41, “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb” And verse 44, “For

behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.” That baby was John the Baptist. Leaping for joy in the womb because the mother of the Messiah was visiting. John was alive at that point. He was a living being.

Every human baby, regardless of what you call it, is a unique human being in the womb. The young human being is alive. And to terminate that person’s life willfully is murder. It’s a case of trying to atone for our own actions, to try and make everything all right, to try and make the “problem” go away, just as David did. But we cannot cover our own sin. We cannot atone for our own sin. Only Jesus Christ can do that. He shed His blood to atone for our sins. Our child’s blood cannot do that.

To murder a child by terminating the pregnancy is an attack on God. God knits us together in our mother’s womb. We are God’s handiwork, and we are made in the image of God. That’s why murder is so grievous a sin because it is an attack on the image of God.

To support abortion as believers shows a spot in our lives where the culture has influenced us more than God’s word has influenced us. As Christians we are to seek to grow to maturity in Christ, not remain as we are. Part of that is renouncing ungodly beliefs and replacing them with godly beliefs. The goal is to be more like Jesus. Jesus was not influenced by the culture. He did not allow the culture to influence His thinking. He fully relied on the Father for that.

We are to do likewise. As Romans 12:2 states, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” We renew our mind by studying God’s word, and by speaking and listening to Him that we would know what His will is. We trust what God says, not what the culture says. Remember that as the Church we are the *ecclesia*, the called-out ones. We ought to think and look and speak and act differently than the world. We are to be more and more like Jesus.

Remember too that Christ saved us when we could not help ourselves. And if we are to look more like Christ than we ought to be helping the unborn because they are just as powerless as we were when Christ saved us. That is the gospel! That Christ gave His life on our behalf to save us from the power of sin and death and the power of the enemy. We could not help ourselves in that. Christ helped us. The unborn cannot save themselves from death by abortion. We must seek to help them.

Jesus did not condone or endorse sin; however, He did come to forgive our sin. And that’s something to keep in mind, especially if you have had an abortion or know someone who has. And if not than think about your favorite sin instead of abortion. Nobody is blameless. “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23. We are all in need of Christ’s forgiveness. And there is forgiveness of our sins if we repent because of what Christ has done on the cross. He is gracious and full of compassion and understands where we are at in life. He had compassion on Adam and Eve, and He had compassion on King David. And though there were consequences to his actions, the Lord restored David, and later on blessed him with his son, Solomon, who he had with Bathsheba. So, if you have had an abortion, it is not an unforgiveable sin. It should not be repeated. We don’t go on sinning so that grace can

abound. But everyone who puts their trust in Christ as Savior and Lord has the same forgiveness of sins. And that is true for lying, cheating, stealing, abortion, whatever.

We are not to condemn, that is not our job. But we should never condone sin of any kind. We can say that about every sin, not just abortion. And our responsibility is the same no matter the sin. We are to point people to Christ, not away from Him. Jesus' earthly ministry began with Him stating, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We should be supporting the reconciliation of the person to God in Christ, helping them to choose life and not death, helping them to support the life of their child. That is kingdom work. That is abhorring that which is evil and clinging to that which is good. That is what mature disciples of Jesus Christ are about.

Don't worry about what others have to say on the subject of abortion. By that I mean do not be tense, or upset, because you support the life of the child from conception to natural death and others do not. Do not care that they yell at you, or argue with you, or say all sorts of nasty things to you. Rejoice when such things happen, because it shows that you are following Christ when the world is mean to you. Respond in love. Plant the seed of the Gospel. Water the seed of the Gospel that has already been planted. Trust God to bring the increase.

Abortion is a sin, just as sexual relations outside of marriage is a sin, just as lying is a sin. None should be condoned or endorsed by any Christian. Sin is contrary to the life of faith. It is contrary to the Gospel. We were not saved so that we could continue to sin. We were saved so that we would live for Christ. May we always remember that. May we all be united in Christ on the subject of abortion. May we continue to point people to Christ. And may we continue to work for the life of every human being, especially those who cannot help themselves, the unborn.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!