

Sanctity of Life

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[0 : 00] Let me begin this morning by just pointing out the fact and giving you some explanation as to why it is we're taking a break from the book of Mark. As we have been verse by verse preaching through Mark and we are in chapter 4 right now.

The parable of the sower and the soils which I am incredibly excited about. It's one of my favorite parables and really looking forward to preaching on it. Last week Clay very graciously gave me a little break as I had so much going on last week and so we didn't talk about it then.

And this week as I continued to prepare for it and as I try to be sensitive every week to what God would have me preach on, I was led elsewhere.

In great part because some of you may not know but January is National Right to Life Month here in the United States. And today is actually this Sunday is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.

So as some of these things were working in me this week, that was brought to mind. And I said, well maybe there is where we need to head today. And so I would just ask that you join me in a word of prayer and then I'll show you where we're headed this morning.

[1 : 15] Father God, we do thank you for the blessing of your church that we might come together, sing praise to your name, hear preaching from your scriptures, and glorify you as we go out into this world.

And I just pray, Father, that this day as we come together amidst the distractions of the morning, as many of us are tired as it's starting to feel a bit warm in here, I just pray, Lord, that you will give us keen ears to hear by your spirit and apply the truth from your scripture to our living every day.

We desire to see this happen because we want to see your praises sung amongst the nations. And so we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So we're going to look a bit today in John chapter 17 and we're going to go some other texts as well, primarily be in John chapter 17 today.

And you really are asleep if you haven't noticed that I carried a garbage can up onto the stage and that I also have a cardboard box sitting on the lectern below me where my water would normally be. So I may get a little bit parched this morning. In this cardboard box are 80 plus little figurines that are 12 week old baby-ish, I will say.

[2 : 32] Kind of a cheap recreation of one, so it's not terribly accurate. But this is about the size of a 12 week old infant that would be in its mother's belly. It has arms and legs, toes, fingers.

It has all of its organs. The kidneys have actually begun to purify the system and excrete urine. This little one pees in its mother's womb. Eyes and nose, they begin to play with their umbilical cord.

They do acrobatic tricks inside the womb already at this age. Often around this time, moms are starting to get really sick because of all this motion going on inside their tummies.

The sad thing is that here in the United States, 1.2 million unborn children are aborted each year. Since Roe v. Wade was passed 40 years ago, that means that there have been over 50 million children aborted in this country since 1973.

And if we take that number, which was last year's number, 1.2 million children aborted, and we start to apply a little bit of math to that to get some picture of the scope of what that would look like, it breaks down to 3,288 children a day, 137 per hour, 2.3 per minute, and to keep our math simple, that's one every 30 seconds.

[3 : 59] Now, I would assume that this morning there aren't many or any abortion clinics open, so we may not actually be experiencing abortion at this rate right now. I'm very aware of that, but it's difficult for us to wrap our minds around what 1.2 million looks like.

And I've endeavored over this past year to find something that I could afford to purchase 1.2 million of. It's a challenge. The best thing I've come up with so far was BBs, little metal BBs like you'd shoot from a BB gun, but I don't have five grand to buy that many BBs.

1.2 million is a staggeringly high number, and it's so difficult for us to understand. And I think as a result, both with this social issue and with many others, we tend to kind of push it off. We kind of out of sight, out of mind. We think about it. It may have some effect on us. We say, well, 1.2 million, that's a staggering number. And then we lay it to the side, and we go about the everyday troubles.

We deal with the things that are in our little sphere, and we don't really think beyond to the world around us. Now, there are two types of sin.

[5 : 08] There are sins of commission, and those are those things that we've been commanded not to do, and yet we do them anyway. Most of you work very hard at not participating in sins of commission, but there's also another type of sin, and that's the sin of omission.

There are things that we are commanded to do, and we just don't do them. And many of us neglect these things altogether. And I think that most American Christians, and I can't point a finger at any individual person in this room, but I certainly can point a finger at myself and say that most of us are guilty of sins of omission by not being more active in seeking justice in our world.

I would sum that up for myself with the simple term apathy. I just get lazy about the problems of this world. I just get comfortable with the day-to-day, and I don't break for the things that are happening in each day in this world.

One child every 30 seconds. I tend to preach for about 45 minutes. Hope that doesn't turn any of you off right now. And so here's what I'm going to try to do.

I don't know if I can do it, so we're going to make it a grand experiment this morning. Every 30 seconds, Reese, who's sitting where? There he is, in the back corner, is going to put his hand in the air. I gave him a timer this morning, and he's going to put his hand in the air, and I'm going to drop one of these figures into this trash can.

[6 : 34] And here's the reason I'm trying to do that. I have no clue what it'll accomplish, but here's what I'm hoping it will accomplish. Is that as we sit here together and we study from the Word of God, we're reminded constantly that the Word of God must have some effect in our lives for this world.

And I think that if our church errs, we err to the side of sitting and listening and learning, being all deep and theological, and not actually doing anything with what we know to be true.

We come and we sit. We gain it. We're in our little Christian bubble. We go off. We hang out in our Christian bubbles. And we don't consider the fact that the gospel was made for the world. So I hope this morning it'll serve that purpose, that it will be, in fact, a bit distracting to you.

Hopefully not too much to me. Maybe why I stopped doing it altogether, but that I will continue to preach to you as this goes on. So, Reese, you ready? We have to ask ourselves, what is this life for?

When we became children of God, why did God not just bring us home with Him? It's a good question to ask. I ask that question often. I am tired of being in this world.

[7 : 47] This world is messed up. I am sick of being here. I'm sick of experiencing pain. I'm sick of dealing with the sin that plagues me so often. I want to go home.

I want to be with Jesus. But yet we're here, living between two worlds. And so, why? Why is that the case? James 4.14, James says, What is your life?

For you are a mist that appears for a little time, and then vanishes. And I can tell you that we will look back on our lives at the end of all things, and we will not regret not having spent more time with video games or watching movies or looking at Facebook, playing or watching sports, whichever category you fall into there.

30 seconds comes fast. We will not regret any of those things. But I do believe that we're all going to look back at our lives and we'll regret not having done more for the kingdom of God.

That we're going to wish that we had just done a little more for some of these causes. That we had shared our faith more readily. That we will have done more things that count in eternity versus just flittering away our time with things that make no sense whatsoever.

[9 : 03] Either here or there. Makes no sense at all. John 17, beginning of verse 13. This is aptly dubbed the high priestly prayer.

Jesus knows that his death is imminent and he's praying now on behalf of the disciples and his believers, his followers beyond that as well. And he says, But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world.

This is verse 13. That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. Now recognize that this prayer is primarily aimed at the apostles, but he broadens this whole prayer out for us in verse 20.

[10:09] So this prayer is for us, and we can learn some things from it, right? As many of us would prefer to be taken out of this world, look at what Jesus says in verse 13. I'm coming to you, I, Jesus, am coming to you, God, and speak these things in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

It is hard to recognize this and to wrap our minds around this to really understand what that means that in this day, as we deal with the troubles of this world, that we might have the joy of Christ in us. But this is what Jesus is saying, right? He is asking for these things for his disciples so that we will have his joy fulfilled in us. I think some of this is expressed by Paul in Philippians chapter 1, verses 21 through 25, where he says, For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

If I'm going to live, I get Christ. I gain Christ. But to die is a greater gain. That's what he says there. If I'm to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which will I choose? I cannot tell. I'm hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

[11:22] Right? Paul understood this conflict that was happening within him. That there was a joy that was his now and a greater joy that was to be his later. And here we see that that's true of us as well.

For whatever reason, we're left here to work out the coming of the kingdom of God as the hands and feet of Christ. And this is for our joy. Notice that Jesus asks not only for their divine protection in verse 14.

We see you make this request. Jesus knows that there will be hostility towards his disciples. Right? He has already experienced this to be true. He's about to experience it in the greatest way. And as those who follow Jesus Christ, he knows there will be hostility towards them.

So he prays in verse 14 and 15 and 16 for divine protection for them. Right? So that Jesus would spare them from the evil one.

That he would keep temptation at bay. And we have to learn later throughout our New Testament how it is that this comes about. But he doesn't only ask for that. But he also asks for their divine sanctification.

[12:28] Verse 17, verse 18, and verse 19. Right? Firstly, we can see the request that he makes of God, which is verse 17. Sanctify them in the truth.

Your word is truth. So if these people are to live in this world, be left behind in this way for your glory, I ask that you sanctify them in the truth.

And he clarifies for us what that means. Your word is truth. These scriptures here, this is the way in which we are set apart for the purposes of God.

A great example of what it means to be sanctified. When Sam and I got married, she bought a plate that was on sale at Lifeway. And it's a red plate and it's got some bright colors in the middle of it and around the outside edge it says, you are very special.

Right? And we decided that plate for us was going to be the plate we were going to use in our family to celebrate a big thing. So we use it on birthdays, I, once a year, I've never gotten it any other time, but once a year I get the you are very special plate.

[13:26] I imagine when there are some graduations that happen and we want to build a tradition with this special plate. We'll bring it out for that very purpose. And it would be horrible to do anything else with it.

That is what it is intended for. And that is the same way that we are set apart for God. Sanctified in that way. So we've been set apart but then there's also a working out of this reality as well.

As we've been set apart we are being set apart from this world. Sanctified for a very specific purpose and that is to serve the glory of our Lord. And we're sanctified in the truth. So we should be theological. That's important. I mentioned earlier that sometimes our church may err to the side of being theological without being missional. We should be theological. We cannot dismiss that. In fact, we must be properly theological if we're going to be properly missional at all. We have to do this. This must take place. Sunday morning preaching. Bible studies. [14:23] Immerse yourself in it as much as you possibly can. Study the Word of God on your own. Use all of the vast amount of aids that are available to us to understand this precious book. We must be sanctified in the truth.

We must be properly theological if we're going to be properly missional. Going to the world. Jesus makes a request but there's a reason for the request. He asks that the disciples will be sanctified in the truth because of verse 18. He says, As you sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world. So have I sent them into the world. Remember the life of Jesus? We're in Mark and we're only really gone through the first three chapters and Jesus has done a massive amount of social work in the community. He has done tons of healing. And we know that He was doing that with the primary purpose of validating the message that He was bringing. We don't minimize the message in this way at all. I'm not talking about a social gospel.

[15:22] I'm talking about activity that supports and gives evidence that we are, in fact, people who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are people that understand that the gospel of Jesus Christ includes the redemption of souls but also includes the redemption of other things as well.

The corruption that sin has brought into this world. And so He knows as they've been sent into the world, as He was sent into the world, that they're going to receive trouble.

They're going to have to be set apart in a very specific way. And that's why they must be sanctified in the truth. And we can see in verse 19 the basis for His request.

He says, And for their sake I consecrate Myself. That word consecrate could also be read as sanctified. I set apart Myself that they also may be sanctified or consecrated in the truth.

Because of what Christ has done, those who are followers of Christ can be sanctified in the truth.

Can be sent into the world to accomplish the great ends of glorifying God to the ends of the earth.

[16:32] So the basis of it is the person and the work of Jesus Christ. So we must be properly theological. We must be properly theological.

But if we're doing so, we are going to be properly missional. We will in fact go out to the world. We will go change things.

The world ought to be a better place because we're here. because we have the light of Christ within us. It ought to be a better place. The University of North Georgia, I have to tell you my notes say UNG and that's the first time I've typed it.

Weird. UNG should be a better place because all you students are there at the University of North Georgia. The towns we live in, this region, should be a better place because of the grace of God that's working in us.

And do you think, do you think that people are saying of us, well I don't believe what they believe. I hate the message. Not a fan of this gospel message that they're going around preaching all the time, but I'm sure glad they're here.

[17:41] Man am I glad they're here. They make this world a better place. This should be true of us. Because while we have a salvation that comes by faith alone, hear me clearly, our salvation has nothing to do with our works.

Our works are as filthy rags. There is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. Our salvation comes by faith alone, but the good deeds do matter because they're the evidence of our salvation.

Those who are Christ will necessarily live that out in practical and real, tangible, measurable ways. We will be able to see fruit.

It's the language constantly used in the scriptures, the analogy that's used of us. Classically, Matthew 7, verses 17 and 18. So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. This is true of those who are Christ.

[18 : 44] And the immediate question must be, but wait a minute. You're tossing figurative children into a trash can every 30 seconds, and I've not done anything in my life to stop this issue.

Does it make me not a Christian? Not necessarily. Not necessarily. All of us wax and wane. All of us go through great times of fervor in our lives where we're devoted to the Lord, and at times where we're not so much.

But the encouragement here is that we must pursue good works. We must press into these things. We must fix our eyes on Jesus so that the things of this world will grow strangely dim.

I'm glad they played that song right before I preached. That we fix our gaze in that direction so that we will be actively looking for ways that we can better this place.

1 Peter 2, verse 12. Peter says, Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, and they will, they certainly will, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

[19 : 49] These deeds matter. Paul, in writing to Titus in chapter 3, says, Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle and to show courtesy toward all people.

4 We ourselves were once foolish. Here's the reasoning. Here's the gospel motivation for living in this way. We should live like this because, verse 3, we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, so that being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

So now notice, as Paul's writing to Titus, he says to him, do good works. Here's why, this gospel message, right? I'm not going to take the time to sum all of that up for you today, but because of what God has done on your behalf, in Christ Jesus.

And then look how he finishes it up. Verse 8, the saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works.

[21 : 19] These things are excellent and profitable for people. For those who are believers, certainly, but for people in general. This was the general Greek term for mankind, for humanity.

It is good for those who know Christ to devote themselves to good works for the good of everybody. One of the greatest ways we can show this world their great need of a Savior is to live in this way, to bring about social change, to show them the error of their ways, and then show them the right way to live, to preach the law to them so that they know they're sinful, so that they know they need a Savior.

We must be about this. James said it this way, religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

So to avoid the things of the world and to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, which we should be about. Hear me, we should definitely be about visiting orphans and widows. The reason he uses these two particular people groups is that these would have been the most infringed people group.

These were the people that had no rights whatsoever of their own. A widow without a husband had no property ownership, had no rights at all. Orphans had no rights because they didn't have a father.

[22 : 42] So these were people who were defenseless. And in our day and age, there are many, many defenseless who are being murdered every day. One every 30 seconds.

I think I'm getting an internal clock now, Reese. I know when to look up at you. Galatians chapter 2. I want you to turn there with me. Galatians chapter 2. This is another really wonderful example of this.

As we see Paul commending himself to the Galatian church, establishing once again with them the purity of his gospel. Because you remember that in Galatia, the Judaizers had come in who had said that Jesus is good.

This new faith you found is good, except you need to be circumcised. There's still some aspects of the Old Testament law that we need you to keep. And this was diluting the gospel message. They thought that they were saved by faith in Christ and circumcision.

And he writes the letter to the Galatians to set that straight. So he's reestablishing the purity of this doctrine. And beginning in verse 1 of chapter 2, he says, So he went.

[24 : 02] He's talking about this past tense thing. After 14 years, he went to present to them the gospel as he was preaching it to the Gentiles, which was justification by faith alone. He was saying to them, you do not need to be circumcised.

There's no need for outward religion for you to be saved. So he goes up to be sure that he was getting it right, that he was getting it straight. Verse 3, But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

Yet because a false brother secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus so that they may bring us into slavery, to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

And from those who seem to be influential, what they were makes no difference to me. God shows no partiality. Those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised, for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me from mine to the Gentiles.

And when James and Cephas, or Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave me the right hand of fellowship to barn us and to me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

[25 : 13] Now, catch what's happening here. They're having a theological debate. He has come back, presented this gospel that he's been presenting to the Gentiles to make sure that it was pure. He's gone to those who seemed influential.

I like that he adds, not that it mattered at all to him, but they seem to be influential, so those are the ones I went and talked to. And they go and they have this theological debate. And the conclusion of that we see in verse 10. So they extend the hand of fellowship.

Yes, this gospel you're preaching is pure. We're going to the circumcised. You continue to go to the uncircumcised. Verse 10, Only they asked us to remember the poor. The very thing I was eager to do.

So right on the heels of this having this theological debate about the purity of the gospels they were preaching, they say, Don't forget to do practical things to show the grace of God to us in Christ.

You catching that? Now, yet we've not seen any specific instructions to plead the cause of the unborn. I recognize that. There's a clear biblical case for what is and isn't life.

[26 : 16] And I'm not going to make that case to you today. I'm going to assume that all of you believe that to be true. It's self-evident, I would say. But we can see here that we're both supposed to speak for those who can't speak for themselves.

The widows and the orphans given to us in James. And here we see in Galatians this record of them asking to speak on behalf of the poor. Now, the poor in this day would have also been primarily disenfranchised people, not landowners, unable to make much money on their own. But even if we just define poverty the way we do in our current day, it's important to know that 57% of all abortions are had by women who live below the poverty line.

You know what the poverty line is in this country? If you're a single person, it's \$11,490. So, college students, are you guys all below the poverty line?

I think you are. Now, you can add to that simple little equation, add to that \$4,020 for each person you add to the family. And if you do the math, if you have four people in a family, the poverty line is \$23,550.

[27 : 24] That's an incredibly low line. I don't know a family of four that can live on \$23,550.

Introduce me to them if you find them. I want to learn from them and how they spend their money.

So, family of four, \$23,550. 57% of abortions are happening with women that are categorized as below the poverty line, which means that a vast number of abortions are happening above that line for people that really are what we would consider traditionally as poor, low-income, impoverished individuals.

So, this is a rampant thing that's happening in our country. In fact, by the age of 45, one in three women will have had an abortion.

At least one. By the age of 45, one in three women will have had an abortion. And that means a lot for us because that means that there are probably people that we know who have had abortions. We may not know that they have, but they have. That means there's probably somebody in this room that's had an abortion. It's likely that that is the case. And I can't possibly, if you have had an abortion, justify your actions.

[28 : 36] But what I can say to you is that there's great grace for every sin. And we can praise God for that together because all of my sin is just as horrible as yours.

And we have an opportunity to preach the gospel to people who have had abortions. That's a great need in this country as well as this wrong, this endemic cultural wrong has affected so many, in fact, in some ways victimized a lot of women who have had abortions.

Abortion's not good for women. Health statistics, we've been able to amass a bunch of them now since it's been 40 years since Roe v. Wade. Let me just give you a couple.

Health-wise, women who have had abortions, depending on the study you look at, are at a higher risk of breast cancer, 50% and up to 300% more likely to have breast cancer.

And this is correlated back to the abortive procedure. Massive, massive damage to a woman's body. Psychologically, post-abortion patients in a study, eight weeks after their abortion, 44% of them reported having a nervous disorder, 36% of them a sleep disorder, and 11% of them had been prescribed psychotropic medicine eight weeks after having had an abortion.

[29 : 58] There's a lot of damage to a woman. I would say to you that the pro-life movement is a pro-woman movement, not an anti-woman movement. Further, women will be held accountable for their actions.

Romans 14, verses 10 and 12 says, We will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess. So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

There's a spirit issue at place with this problem. And we must be preaching the gospel to it. We must be speaking to these young ladies. We must be warning them of the judgment that will come. Right? As we need to be warning all people of this. Abortion is not good for our nation. We are a nation that was founded on liberty.

We still claim to have some. Maybe that's slipping in your opinion as we hear about all the scandals and things that are going on. It's quite likely you're feeling a little less liberated than you may have before.

[31 : 01] But we at least say that we're a nation that believes in freedom, that believes in liberty. I would argue to you that this is a biblical right that is granted to us.

One of my favorite presidential candidates by the name of Ron Paul is quoted as saying, if you can't protect life, then how can you protect liberty? The greatest minority is the individual.

There's no other Nathan Rayner. And if my rights aren't going to be protected, then how is anybody's rights going to be protected? We're having the wrong conversations on the political scale, right? If we can't protect life, then how can we protect liberty?

Abortion's obviously not good for babies. 1.2 million this year. I think it's 54 million and counting since Roe v. Wade was passed have been avoided.

And abortion is not good for our church. Abortion is not good for our church. If we're going to be people who are properly theological, who care about making a difference in this world, who want this world to say of us, I am glad that Christ Family Church exists, then this issue is not good for us.

[32 : 16] Because we need to be getting engaged with it. We need to be actively finding ways that we can bring about redemption in these situations.

And so the question is raised then, what should we do? What should we do? I hope that your heart's moving in this direction. What should we do? What can I do?

What an immense problem. 1.2 million children a year. How is it possible that I could ever be involved in bringing about change in this situation? Let me say to you firstly, pray.

Clay said rightly last Thursday evening that prayer is the thermometer for our Christian life. How many of you would admit that your life, your Christian life is cold?

Pray. Have your heart broken that this is an issue in our country. And pray. God uses the prayers of His people to accomplish His will.

[33 : 19] 1 John 5 verse 14-15 John writes, Listen, this is the confidence that we have toward Him. That if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the request that we have asked of Him. If we ask anything in the Father's will, we know that He hears us.

It doesn't always answer the way we want answered, but we know that He hears us and we know that He's working things out in His perfect timing. And we can take comfort in passages like Amos 5, 24.

But let justice roll down like the waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. I tell you this morning that God cares about the unborn. He cares about what's happening.

And He certainly could come down now and judge everyone and save all of those babies. I don't understand why He's working things out the way He is. I can't wrap my mind around why God is accomplishing His fame the way He's accomplishing it.

[34 : 19] But I know this, that He's given it to us to be moving and active, to be used by Him to accomplish His will. And it starts with prayer. Prayer is the foundation for anything effective we do in our Christian lives.

It is pointless to try to do anything without first setting it to prayer. So pray. Gosh, you can do that easily. All of us can be involved in bringing about change in this way.

You don't have to run in spheres. You might live in a country someday that abortion is not even an issue. But you can still pray this would be something that would be brought to reckoning in our lifetime.

Secondly, be politically responsible. Be politically responsible. Young people, be politically responsible. I know that your one vote doesn't feel like much in the wide range of things.

But if everyone has that attitude, they're not going to take the time out of their day, not going to do their research. If everyone does that, which many people do, then people get elected that we may not want to be elected.

[35 : 24] This has happened recently, hasn't it? Be politically responsible. This is a responsibility that has been given to you to search out candidates, not just at the federal level, but at the local level as well.

We need to be vetting the people that represent us. Get to know your district. We've got congressional elections coming up in 2014. Do you know? Do you know what district you live in? Do you know who represents your district? You should find that out and you should do it ASAP. And you should figure out not just if they're pro-life, but if they're actually doing something about it.

I've heard the argument that Roe v. Wade doesn't actually have to be overturned, that the Supreme Court wouldn't actually have to overturn it, but that Congress could simply pass a law defining life, which would therefore make abortion illegal.

Now, more than likely, the Supreme Court would take that law and want to overturn it again. But could you imagine just the pace that things work at? If Congress would pass that law, we might have a year where abortion is illegal and clinics would shut down.

[36 : 29] A year would be a wonderful gift. 1.2 million children would be spared in that year. And those clinics may or may not even be able to start up. Even if that, right?

We need to be politically responsible. We need to be doing what we can to put men in power who will not just say I'm pro-life so that I can appeal to my constituency, but I'm pro-life to the point that I will do something.

I will do what I can about the issue. So be politically responsible. Thirdly, educate yourself and others with a great deal of compassion.

Educate yourself. Some of you may be surprised to even find out this morning that this many children are aborted. We tend to stay fairly oblivious to things like this and I know the world you're living in.

I know the way information is coming at you. I'm right in the midst of it all too. It's coming absolutely a mile a minute, all the stuff that's going on out there in the world. Inform yourself about this issue.

[37 : 29] There are so many causes that the Christian church can get behind and we should. A great example of that right now is the End It movement to stop sex slave trafficking. Good, good cause to be a part of.

But if we've got to pick one, this is the one. Those are tragedies, massive tragedies. I don't want to make small of that kind of atrocity. This is the big one though.

If Christians are going to get behind something, this is the one we should get behind. So educate yourself. Understand why life is life. Get that. Learn how to make a very clear, compassionate argument in that direction.

Right? The world around us is being inundated with cultural messages. Right? Inundated with it. Over years, 40 years of trying to convince people that this really isn't an issue of murder, but it's just simply an issue of convenience or ethics.

Right? That's not the case with it. We've got to educate, we've got to unwind that kind of thinking. We have to be able to compassionately have arguments, recognizing that we may never win the arguments at the time of the argument.

[38 : 34] It may not be until somebody walks away and considers the things that have been said to them and lets it sink down into them that they change their mind. I'm thankful in this day that there's quite a bit of movement.

Previously, last year, 1.2 million. The year before that, 1.3. Praise God, 100,000 children were not aborted last year or fewer women got pregnant.

I don't know which, but the numbers have been going down and there's some great movement in this direction. People are beginning to see the fallacy in the arguments. I've read some articles, two sides.

I read an article by two bioethicists who said, if we can abort children in the womb, the argument cannot be made that they're not life, we should also be able to abort children after they're born. Unfortunately, they weren't doing this rhetorically. Unfortunately, they really meant it. You have a child that's born with special needs, you don't think you can handle that child, you can make that decision at that point.

[39 : 32] They're making this argument. I've read another article, a lady who basically said to the pro-choice movement, stop saying it's not a life. That is such a dumb argument. It's an obtuse argument.

What we need to be saying is, one life is more important than the other life. Right? So their logical argument is breaking down. They themselves are beginning to see how flawed it is, and we've got to step in with a great deal of love and help them understand the reality of that.

Right? We've got to come up with solutions. What do we do with 1.2 million children who are unwanted in this country? 54 million in the last 40 years. What are we going to do with those people? I don't know the answer to that.

I really don't know. How do we alleviate that kind of population explosion? I have no idea, but the solution is not abortion. It's not abortion. So educate yourself and others with a great deal of passion.

Next Sunday afternoon at 1.30, I'm going to be here and I'm going to help walk you through that process, present the common arguments to you and the rebuttals to them. So if you'd like to join me for that, I'll remind you again later about that, but I'll be here to help with that process.

[40 : 38] We may even be able to sharpen each other in that way. Fourthly, get involved with a local pregnancy care center. There's work happening right where we are, right in our community to this end, trying to counsel with Christ-centered counseling with a great deal of love women who are pregnant, who are in a crisis situation.

The one we have here in town is great. It's called the Dahlongega Care Center and they do a lot of work in this county. I somehow managed to get myself to be the chairman of the board of directors. I do not know how and I don't say that to boast to you, but I say that to you so that you know I need your help.

I need your help with leading the care center and being passionate about it, for throwing into the efforts that we're trying to accomplish to raise the funds that are necessary so that these ladies can sit with these young ladies and counsel them through this process.

Get involved. They need all kinds of help and we're going to be bringing you the options. We're doing work days up there. We just peeled weeds off the side of the building the other day. Another great family, the Wadsworths went out there and replaced trim work and cleaned the inside.

They need that kind of stuff. The folks that are in the ground, in the trenches doing that kind of work need somebody to come along and sweep up behind them sometimes so they can keep on working with these people. They need money.

[42 : 00] It takes money to run anything. And we hold so tightly to it. We do so many things that are so frivolous and stupid with our money and I can tell you at the end of your life you will wish you had

spent it on greater causes.

Things that will have you gain more of Christ in that activity versus more stuff for yourself. They need that kind of support. So get involved in those ways.

I want you to reach we're going to stop the timer now. Thank you. I want everybody to put your hand over your heart. I'm not about to make you make a pledge so don't worry.

You feel that? If you're up here you may not be able to feel it. It's about right here. They're right there. You feel that? Just thumping away, right? It just keeps on going.

I heard John Piper in an interview one time say that this cause needs coronary Christians. I want you to get that phrase programmed into your head. It needs coronary Christians.

[43 : 01] Christians who are just going to continue to work and work and work and work and work to end this tragedy. Just keep on working. Movements are great.

I mean, praise God for movements. God has used movements in so many ways where everybody gets super excited about a cause. It flares up. Everybody goes gung-ho after it and then it peters out. You guys remember Invisible Children?

Those of you who were young about the tragedy in Darfur? Right? A movement. Right? It flared up. Everyone was super stoked about it and I haven't heard anything about Invisible Children in years and years and years and years.

Right? We need coronary Christians. Hear this. Our hearts keep us alive. Right? Our hearts are pumping blood to our brains, oxygenating our brains, allowing our brains to function. But you've got to get to that our brain is sending a signal to our heart to keep pumping.

Isn't it? Just keeps on thudding. I don't think about my heart beating. It just does it. My brain does this as an automatic function. Right? So there's a cycle that's going on here and the gospel should be working in us in the same way.

[44 : 00] As we've made new creations, it should be automatically feeding us into good works. We should be doing that kind of thing and our good works should be feeding our faith. It should be coming right back in as we get to see and experience God moving and working in this world.

We need coronary Christians around this cause. We need to hear the gospel truth every day. We need to hear it.

Not just the narrower version of it, which is so important for the redemption of our souls, but the larger expansive version of it that Jesus has come to make all things new. That he's setting everything straight.

That he's going to return us once again to Eden where everything was perfect. Where sin and sickness, death, abortion, none of these things existed in this state. He's getting us back to that place.

This is the gospel message and we need to be so invigorated by it every single day. And every moment of every day if we're going to live this way. If we're going to be about the cause of Christ in this world.

[44 : 58] C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity said, We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind. It must be fed.

We hope every Sunday we feed you with the good news of Jesus Christ and that that moves you to work to his glory in the world. once a Sunday, once a week is not enough.

After lunch you may need to feed the gospel into your mind again. You're going to need to do it throughout the day. You need to do it throughout the week. Meet with us other times. None of that is enough. You've got to delve into the scriptures sanctified in the truth because we've been sent into this world with a mission just as Jesus came into the world.

Let's pray together.