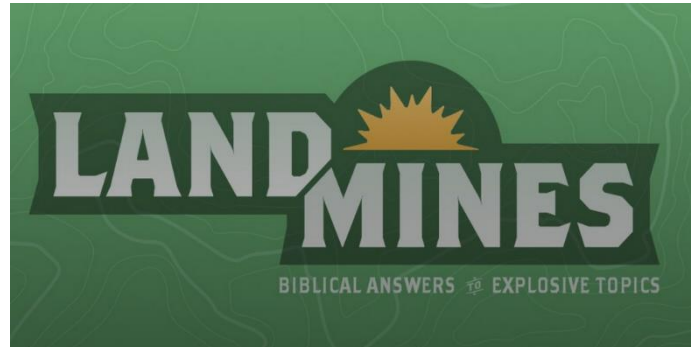




VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
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LANDMINES: Biblical Answers to Explosive Topics



Abortion

Steve Lombardo | June 2, 2019

I invite you to turn in your Bible to Proverbs 14. Just a note of warning. We're talking about "Landmines: Biblical Answers to Explosive Topics," and the topic on the docket today is abortion. I want to give a little word of warning that this is a heavy topic; probably not what I would have chosen.

I would have preferred an easier text, but that's not the kind of message we'll be hearing today. I'm not going to be showing pictures or use very graphic descriptions. My nine-year-old daughter has heard this message, so I think it will be fine, but I wanted to give you a heads-up. If you do need to leave, I understand. This is a serious message.

This past week I read a touching story about a bald eagle that died not too far from here, off Orchard Road. It was one of the bald eagles from Mooseheart. The article in the *Daily Herald* said people are really upset because the bald eagle died after being struck by a car. "The Kane County area lost a local wildlife celebrity when one of the adult bald eagles from the nest near the Mooseheart football field was killed."

"It's sad. People are really upset about it," said David Soderstrom, the freelance photographer who had photographed these eagles. The bird that died was the mother eagle. A woman who was there when the car hit the eagle said she saw the eagle dive toward the road as the car was coming. She called 911 and blocked traffic with her car until help arrived, but it was too late. The article continues, "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had the eagle's body sent to a repository in Colorado where Native Americans may petition for some of the eagle's feathers to use in religious ceremonies."

I read some of the comments on the page. Now, I'm an animal lover and when I was a kid I cried when ants got stepped on, so I get what they're saying. One commenter said, "I'm sorry for the loss of a great member of your community." Others said, "So awful—very sad." "It's heartbreaking. Will certainly be hoping and praying for those baby eaglets to fledge when they're ready to go off on their life's journey." "We're deeply grieved at this loss of life."

Meanwhile, on Friday the Illinois senate voted 34-20 in favor of the "Reproductive Health Care Act," which states, "A fertilized egg, embryo or fetus does not have independent rights." According to the *Chicago Tribune*, the legislation passed the state house earlier this week and now heads to the governor's office to have him sign it into law, as he has promised to do.

"Democratic senator Melinda Bush, the chief sponsor of the bill in the state senate, told the Tribune that the legislation is needed because 'there is a war against women's rights going on.' She said the Reproductive Health Care Act considers abortion the same as 'every other medical procedure.' The bill would repeal both the state's Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act and the Illinois Abortion Act of 1975, removing restrictions on the procedure later in pregnancy and expanding insurance coverage for abortions and related medical care, as well as contraception." This is the law that passed. I didn't see too many posts or comments in that article of people grieving over the bill that's about ready to be signed. This is definitely a landmine topic.

In one of the Seinfeld episodes back in the day, Elaine was a big abortion rights activist. That was her litmus test when she met somebody. If she found out a guy was pro-life, it was over. There were fireworks and everything just blew up. This is still a landmine

topic in our country today. Depending on where you get the numbers, we're almost split down the middle between people who think abortion is right and those who think it is wrong. That's why I think this is one of the most dangerous of the landmines.

What is abortion? Let's start here. "Abortion is the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy." That's a safe definition. It doesn't touch the landmine. It doesn't deal with the elephant in the room. I don't use any controversial terms in saying that. Everybody would agree with this definition.

There are four types of people who are listening to this message—either here today or on-line or down the road in the coming years.

- First, there are those who say abortion is wrong. I would guess that includes most of you here with me this morning. The message should help you, but it will also challenge you. I'm warning you that it will be challenging to you as it has already been to me.
- Second, there are those who say abortion is okay. Some would say there should be no restrictions, some would include restrictions, and some would say abortion is okay only in certain situations. But in some form or fashion, these people believe abortion is okay. This message, if this is you, will confront that belief. I'll lay all my cards on the table.
- The third group of people are those who are considering having an abortion. I'm asking you to please listen and ask God to speak truth to you. This whole sermon series is about truth. We're talking about these hard things, but we're speaking the truth in love. We want to have a biblical foundation for truth and even to believe that there actually is such a thing as objective truth. Truth is not subjective truth, which means if you think something is true, then it's true for you. No, there's such a thing as truth that is objectively right and which is founded in the person of God. We study His Word so we can make these calls on hard topics.
- The fourth group of people are those who have had an abortion. This message contains—as all good Bible preaching should—the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is great news for you. So listen, believe and receive the blessing of the gospel.

How did we get here and why should we care?

We're going to be looking at a lot of different Scriptures this morning and we're going to be asking seven questions. We've already been addressing the first one, whether people should care about it. The Scripture I've asked you to turn to in Proverbs 14 sort of sums up the whole abortion debate in my mind. Let's look at verse 12: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."*

In our world today, there are 56 million abortions every year, 126,000 every day. In the United States, the number is sitting at 2,400 abortions every day, or about two abortions every minute. How did we get here? Why should we care?

Our world has a long history of infanticide. Did you know that? In the ancient peoples of the world, even before the ancient Greeks, archeological evidence shows that one in ten of their children were sacrificed to petition the gods to be on their side. Carthage was known as the zenith of a sacrificial system that would kill or harm infants and children. Then in Sardinia, the island that looks like Italy is kicking it, they found bones of 3,000 little babies that were sacrificed to the gods. We read about child sacrifices, especially of the firstborn, throughout history and through archeological studies.

Also, in Old Testament times, the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Canaanites, Moabites, and the Sepharvites all practiced some form of child sacrifice. The Bible recounts the heartbreaking history of child sacrifice that was practiced in the name of the god Molech, the god of the Ammonites. Molech worship was practiced by the Ammonites and Canaanites who revered Molech as a protecting father-figure god. They would build statues of Molech made of bronze, with his hand outstretched. The statue would then be heated to a high temperature, after which the babies would be placed in his hand to die as a sacrifice to him—or they would be thrown into the fire below the hands to be burned as an offering to Molech.

But God prohibited the children of Israel from child sacrifice in general and from Molech worship specifically, in Leviticus 20 (NIV):

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Say to the Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him. ³ I myself will set my face against him and will cut him off from his people; for by sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. ⁴ If the members of the community close their eyes when that man sacrifices one of his children to Molek and if they fail to put him to death, ⁵ I myself will set my face against him and his family and will cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek.

Many other Old Testament passages affirm this “zero tolerance policy” God had for child sacrifice. In Proverbs 6:17 we read that God hates the hand that sheds innocent blood. The youngest, the weakest, the most vulnerable among us have always been a target—and always will be a target—in the evil world in which we live. Why? Because they don’t have the strength, the voice or the power to defend themselves.

Fast forward to 1973 in our country when the law of the land in *Roe vs. Wade* made abortion legal. Should you care? Yes! Thousands upon thousands of babies are aborted and you should care. But what are the reasons people give for these abortions? Maybe it would help if we knew some of the reasoning behind why people feel they need to have abortions.

A few years ago, the Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion group, anonymously surveyed 1,209 post-abortive women from nine different clinics in our country. Here are the percentages broken down from their study:

- 0.5%, had their abortion because of rape.
- 3% had abortion because of the health of the fetus. Maybe the baby was shown to have Down’s Syndrome, so their life was ended. Maybe the baby was shown to have some brain or other deformity, so their life was ended.
- 4% were performed due to some threat to the mother’s health. It wasn’t necessarily to save her life, but there was some health issue.
- 4% were because the woman’s education or career could not be interrupted with a pregnancy.
- 7% reported anonymously that they were not mature enough to be a mother.
- 8% did not want to be a single mother. They were scared of being a single mom, so they chose abortion.
- 19% said they were done having children. My wife knew someone who said their form of birth control was abortion. If they made a mistake, they would just have an abortion.
- 23% said they could not afford a baby.
- 25% said in general that they weren’t ready for a baby.

For these reasons, an abortion—a termination of human pregnancy—is performed. What does that abortion entail? What are we talking about? An abortion up to nine weeks can be medically induced, meaning that a woman can take something that gets rid of the process of life inside of her. From three to 12 weeks with a doctor’s assistance, she can have a “manual vacuum aspiration” abortion.

As the weeks progress, with the development of the fetus, she might surgically have to have a dilation and evacuation procedure, a “D&E.” Then if she makes it all the way to the end of her pregnancy—and if she lives in the state of Illinois—she can have a “partial birth abortion.” In this case, the about-to-be-born baby can have its spinal cord snapped or cut or cracked, then the baby can be pulled out and the parents can move on with their lives.

If you’re pro-abortion, you’ve already realized I’m making arguments that go in a certain direction. In your view I should be speaking of a fetus, not a baby. I’ve talked about late-term abortions, but I haven’t told everyone that about 90% of all abortions happen under 12 weeks. Pro-abortionists want to emphasize this because it makes it more palatable when it doesn’t have a name and the numbers aren’t that big. Then you hear people say, “We just want to make abortions available, safe and rare,” again to make it more palatable to the masses.

I remember when I was a kid about to get a shot, and they’d tell me, “All you’re going to feel is a little prick.” I definitely felt more than a prick, okay? But it was just their way of making it sound better and distract me from what was real. Similarly, we can say “fetus” or “baby” but no matter what term we use, the same thing is actually happening. I plead with you to listen to the case before us and don’t get distracted by the terms. Why is all of this happening? Here are all my cards on the table: It’s because man stands in rebellion against God. When life is cheap, the image of God is trashed—and men and women are created in the image of God.

Just as Satan does not like adoption, the forces of darkness love it when life is diminished and trashed, because life reflects our Creator God. The devil may hope to ascend to God’s throne, but there’s no chance that will happen. So his next option is to mar the very image of God in humans, then he feels he’s doing damage to God Himself.

When does life begin?

Some say a fetus is not a life, especially if it’s not fully formed. It’s a blood clot, a lump of potential—maybe—but it’s not a life. Former U.S. Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders said, “We really need to get over our love affair with the fetus.”

Well, what does the Bible say? Turn with me to Job 31:13–15. Job is making an appeal to the Lord:

¹³ If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant,
when they brought a complaint against me,
¹⁴ what then shall I do when God rises up?
When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him?
¹⁵ Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
And did not one fashion us in the womb?

Job is saying, "If I won't listen to my servants when they have a complaint, what's my excuse? Didn't the same God fashion them in the womb like they fashioned me? Don't we have the same Creator?" This is pro-life! And it's pro-life for all races and all ethnicities, for male and female. Didn't God make us all?

Then in Psalm 139:14–16 we find what is probably the most famous passage on this subject:

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶ 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 were none of them.

It's a precious life that is worth something because God has created it. It's wonderful and it begins at conception, in the coming together of the sperm and the egg. The cells begin to divide, then all that is needed in that environment is safety and nutrition for a baby to be born. I would argue that the moment of birth, biblically speaking, is the moment God begins to form the child in the "unformed substance." The moment of our birth is not the line of demarcation in the question of when life begins. So many of the arguments take that line, stating that life begins and becomes a person when the baby is "viable."

Why wouldn't we use other markers to determine when life begins? Why have we chosen to use the day of birth—especially now that medical science and fetal medicine have improved to the extent that babies are viable much earlier than at nine months? We could use the same markers we use at the end of life to determine the beginning of life. Why not look for when a heart is beating? That's often when we decide a person is dead. But we can hear a fetal heartbeat at 18 days.

What about brain waves? When somebody is brain dead, we assume they're either almost dead or dead. But at six weeks a baby's brain waves can be measured. Some states are doing this right now. They're making the abortion laws much more difficult—praise God! They're responding to the reality of these markers, which would eradicate so much of the abortion world.

Viability—when a baby can live outside the womb—makes it harder for the pro-abortionist to claim a fetus is not a human life. Some of you remember the picture of the hand of a 20-week-old baby grasping the surgeon's finger who was operating to save his life. If the fetus is formed, it also makes it that much harder to deny that it is alive.

Joe Rogan, a podcaster, comedian and former Fear Factor host, talked about what happens when you can see the baby as it's being formed. In his crass way he said, "It makes it harder to kill them when you have to look at the little [expletive's] faces when you kill them." His point is that when you see someone's face, it's hard to be okay with killing them. I would say he's probably more pro-life than not.

Here's the situation in our country today. I'm a simple person, so I need a simple way to think about this. Woman A gets pregnant. Woman B gets pregnant on the exact same day. At six months, Woman A goes into labor and has her baby—and the baby is living. Praise God. Woman B is still pregnant. Ten days later, both women decide that they want to kill their babies. Woman A cannot, because the baby has been born. But Woman B can, because the baby has not yet been born. Does this make any logical sense to anybody? What's the difference between the baby being here and the baby not being here? It's because you can see the baby's face.

Life is not defined by viability. Life is not defined by formation. Life begins at conception.

Who is responsible for life and death?

If we can establish that something is alive, then we have to ask: who gets to decide when life should end? Another big debate in our country today is about euthanasia. It's the same topic on the other side of the coin—the taking of human life at the end of life. The states that currently allow euthanasia are California, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, New Jersey, plus starting this summer, Hawaii and Washington. These states make it legal to take life at the end of it.

There aren't a lot of light moments in a message like this, but I can relay one funny instance. It actually was the saddest time in my life up to that point, when somebody close to me died—my grandfather, Grandpa Lombardo. He was a funny guy. He came to America on a boat from Sicily. He walked into a hospital and ended up dying six days later. But while he was in the hospital, we were all there talking to him. "How are you feeling, Grandpa?" He looked around at everyone, and he said, "Call Kevorkian." If you knew my Grandpa, you would know why we laughed.

Jack Kevorkian was the "death doctor." How many people remember him? My Grandpa didn't really want me to call him; he was just trying to describe how awful he felt. He knew his time was up and was ready to go to heaven. But is it right for Kevorkian to make that call? Is he responsible for life and death? For that matter, can we ourselves make that call for life or death?

In 1 Samuel 2:6 we read, *"The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up"* (NIV). In Exodus 20:13, in what we call the Ten Commandments, we read, *"Thou shalt not murder."* How did you memorize it when you learned it as a little kid? *"Thou shalt not kill."* Life is not our call. Since the birth of our country, we have recognized that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are endowed to us by our Creator God. But we live in a culture of death, sin, rebellion. Margaret Sanger, who was the founder of the American movement of birth control in the United States and Planned Parenthood, said this: "The most merciful thing the family does to one of its infant members is to kill it."

Then compare that to Mother Teresa, who represents the culture of life. She said, "These concerns for orphan children in India and elsewhere in the world are very good, but often these same people are not concerned with the millions that are killed by the deliberate decision of their own mothers. Abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace today. For the pregnant women who don't want their children, give them to me."

Can you see the difference between a culture of life and a culture of death? "But Pastor Steve, what about severe disability? Don't we have a responsibility when the pregnancy reveals a severe disability in the child? Maybe he won't even live. Maybe he'll face a whole life of suffering and pain? Isn't it on us to save them from that? Isn't it on the mother and father to save them from a lifetime of heartache and pain?"

In Exodus 4:11 we read, *"The Lord said to him, 'Who gave a man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?'"* (NIV). The Lord is in control. The Lord sovereignly controls all that happens. The Lord is not caught off guard by a disability. The Lord is not caught off guard by a "problem pregnancy." The Lord is not surprised or unaware of the hardships we deal with in life. He allows everything we go through and gives us the strength to deal with them. Some of the most dedicated Christian families are the ones who have gone through the most severe hurts and pain. We don't have the right to end life in most cases.

But what about rape and incest? In that survey that was done with the 1,900 women, only 0.5% of them said their abortions were due to rape or incest. But what about those instances? That can be a tough question. Don't we have the responsibility to stop that life? Just think of being born and growing up, knowing your dad was a rapist. It's terrible.

Deuteronomy 24:16 is one of the reasons I love God's Word. It says, *"Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin."* We're not going to hold the children responsible for the sins of their parents and take their lives.

With all the current talk about abortion and all the things surrounding it, there's a couple who made a plea on social media platforms that are for abortion. They said, "If anyone out there reads this and is considering an abortion, I will take your baby. My wife and I will gladly take all your babies. I'm completely serious. If you're pregnant and you don't want your child, we do. It's not a fetus—it's a blessing. Life matters."

That was the post that started all of this. In 2015, Kevin and Nicole Cook took to social media and started to push the idea of adoption instead of abortion. They wrote, "Don't abort your baby. We will adopt. Please contact us if you'd be open to adoption as an option. #adoption is life."

Blake and Sarah Thomas, who were inspired by the Cooks, started to do their own call on social media for the same thing to save a baby's life. She says, "We wanted to put a face to adoption to help women realize that there is another great option available to them." The Thomases are parents to two young sons—an eight-month-old biological son and a two-year-old adopted son. "God has given us a love for orphans, and we are willing to open our home and our hearts to as many children as God sees fit to give us," Sarah said. And their plea seems to have worked. According to the couple, the response has been overwhelming, and they are currently going through the adoption process with one of the mothers who reached out to them.

Life is precious. With all sincerity, I would encourage you that it's not a promise of ease. It's not a promise of celebration. There might be heartache and pain in the days to come. But to carry the child to term and then give it up for adoption is a wonderful option. You can still give life to the one who didn't have a choice. You have a choice. According to the laws of our land right now, you have that choice. That baby growing inside you does not.

Shouldn't a woman have control over her own body?

Planned Parenthood says, "A woman is more than a fetus. Some people argue these days that a fetus is a person that is indistinguishable from the rest of us and deserves rights equal to women. Fortunately, our society has recognized that each woman must be able to make this decision based on her own conscience. To impose a law to find that a fetus is a person, granting it rights equal or superior to a woman's—a thinking, feeling, conscious human being—is arrogant and absurd. It only serves to diminish women." Is that true?

A few weeks ago on *Saturday Night Live*, Leslie Jones came on the set. First, she was dressed as a handmaid, then as she pulled that off, underneath was a shirt with the words, "It's mine" and an arrow pointing down. Then she made the plea for people—specifically men and men lawmakers—to get out of the business of messing with her uterus. Does it diminish women to have a belief that the life growing inside a woman is distinct?

Well, let's just mention a few facts. From conception, the fetus—the unborn baby—has different DNA than her mother. From conception, many times the baby will have a different blood type. The fetus living inside the mother has its own immune system. And half of the time the baby is male, so he is a different gender than his mother. There's a completely different person living and growing inside the womb. But some people say, "It can't survive on its own. It can't survive outside the womb. Why would we force someone to take care of that dependent? It's not our call; it's the woman's body. And since the baby is dependent upon the mother, the mother can do whatever she wants."

Now, that's dangerous thinking if we start going down that road. If we start taking out people who are dependent upon other people, we'd better call Kevorkian, take him down to the nursing homes and start making lines.

Of course that child is dependent upon his mother and will be after he's born, and he will be when he's in grade school and he will be when he's in high school and he will be when he's in college. And if you're not lucky, he will be when he's in his early 30s living in your basement. But that doesn't mean we take him out.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, we read, *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."* The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). I get it. That's a foolish message right there for the world. But that's the message of Christianity. When you come to follow Jesus Christ and trust in Him and receive Him as your Savior, you're saying you're not the owner of your life any longer—including your body. There are some things I do and some things I don't do—not because I necessarily want to or don't want to, but because Christ lives in me.

Galatians 2:20 says, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."* Your body is not your own. You were bought with a price. And if you have a little one growing inside you, he's a gift, she's a gift, from the Lord. In Psalm 127:3 we read, *"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward."*

How does abortion affect the parents?

Children are a precious gift, an amazing gift from God—even if they're a handful; even if they're hard; even if (and they will) they cause pain. But for those parents and those women who have gone down this path of abortion, pain and heartache has followed them. This past week I had the opportunity to read testimonies of women who've had abortions. One woman wrote about sharing her testimony with a group of teenage students. She shared about the problem of rape and pregnancy resulting from that. She

informed the whole crowd that her dad was a rapist. He raped her mom. She never knew her dad, but her mom kept her and loved her. And, by the grace of God, she was speaking about the grace of God to the masses. People were coming to Christ and receiving new life in Christ. Why? Because her mom kept her alive.

There were two letters I read this week from women who had abortions. One wrote:

I recently had an abortion. I am 22 years old and married. I do not wish to say much, but that was the worst decision I've ever made. I prayed and asked the Lord to forgive me. It hurts all the time to know that I murdered my firstborn. I was three months pregnant at the time. I often wonder what it was and what it could have been. I often wish I could take my own life to be with it. It hurts me so bad.

Another woman writes:

I was talked into an abortion by my boyfriend. We went into that clinic and they did no counseling before the procedure. I didn't realize what an abortion really was until I got one. I have cried about it for two years, and I can't let go of what I did. I went to God for forgiveness, but I can't seem to forgive myself. I'm with the fight against abortion now. My boyfriend made it his right, and I will never do the same for someone else. I regret it all the time. I don't want you to hate me for what I did; I want you to forgive me.

One of my Facebook friends talks about the different abortions she had before she was married. She recently posted, with all of the debate going on, "I wish I could have my little ones back, but I can't wait to see them again in heaven." Abortion has a profound effect on the life of the parents, on the life of the mother—one that you're not going to hear on *Saturday Night Live*, one that's not going to be debated in the House. And this leads us into question number six.

Will God forgive someone who has had an abortion?

The quick answer is what? Come on now. We're God's people. We've got to be grace-filled, because we're all there too. Jesus said in Matthew 5, "If you hate your brother you're guilty of murder. If you say *Raca*—if you say, 'He's a fool' —you're guilty of murder." We're all in the same boat. We're just at different places on the boat, and that boat's going down.

We'd better all reach out to the Master and Savior together. There is forgiveness at the foot of the cross and Jesus Christ died for the sin of abortion. Protesting is good, but if it's not connected with the ministry of saving souls, we're going to miss our whole calling. The gospel can be lost in all the debates, all the protests, and all the picketing.

Consider John 3:16–17. We all know verse 16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Verse 17 states, *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."* Jesus didn't come to condemn you if you've had an abortion. He came to save you if you've had one and He's going to deliver you by His own blood on the cross.

That's the great exchange. Jesus came and died for us, for our sin, and He took the punishment we deserved. If you would believe Him and receive Him today as your Lord and Savior, you can have all of your sin forgiven—sin in the past, sin in the present, and sin yet to come. That's how good and gracious and loving our heavenly Father is.

So, yes, there is forgiveness. Yes, there is restoration. Yes, there is healing. Yes, yes, yes! Maybe you need to hear Jesus say, "I don't condemn you." In John 8, there was a woman who was caught in adultery who was brought to Jesus. All the men were around, ready to stone her. They came to Jesus because they were trying to trick Him by saying "The law of Moses says we should stone her. What do You say, Jesus?" Jesus said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." They all kind of looked at each other, then the text says, from the oldest down to the youngest, they began to drop their rocks and walk away.

See, the older you are, the wiser you are, and you know you're not always right. The younger ones still think they're right all the time. They're the last ones to hang on to their rocks. But then they realize, "No, I don't have it figured out, but this Man Jesus does." So they left. Then Jesus said to the woman, "They're all gone. Is there anybody left here to condemn you? Then neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."

That's the Savior we worship. That's why we come together and sing and rejoice. Yes, I'm going to talk hard about abortion, because it's a sin. It's the culture of death and the devil and evil. But I'm going to sing my heart out when it comes to the grace of Jesus Christ that saved me from death and can save you from death as well. There is forgiveness for abortion.

Who will speak for the unborn?

Proverbs 31:8–9 says, *“Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”* Open your mouth. Know the facts about life, the facts we’ve talked about today. Know the truth of God’s Word. Don’t be intimidated by culture. Don’t be intimidated by people who say they’re progressive, but that you’re old fashioned and backwoods. Don’t be pressured by *Saturday Night Live*; that show stinks anyway. Don’t be listening to culture. Stand strong for life, because you’re speaking for the one who might have a voice if it could be heard. Speak up, but be sensitive to the situation.

I know a girl who had an abortion in high school and where she lived, one of the churches in town would put crosses out in the church yard on Sanctity of Life Sunday. Back in that day, there were 4,000 abortions a day in our country, so there would be 4,000 crosses in the church yard. Then she would drive by that church during that week and see all those crosses and she would just weep, thinking, “I’m not good.” Which was true, but she also thought, “I’m not accepted by God or any of those Christians. I’m without hope.” She was in darkness and disarray over her sin. It was important to not go to this young lady and hammer her with the truth. That was not the time to deliver the law to her; it was time to deliver the gospel. She needed to hear the message of love and forgiveness.

Church, we’ve got to have some wisdom in how we talk to people. But for the bombastic, for the Margaret Sangers of the world, we need to speak the truth. We need to expose the lies of this death movement. Human life is being slaughtered and discarded by the minute. How many have died since I started preaching this morning? And how many of us can only think about how fast we can get to lunch right now, while little babies are being dismembered and thrown out in the garbage like trash?

God, forgive us for being a people who won’t open our mouths for those who can’t speak.

Here’s our application. Let me give you three things that you can do.

1. Be convinced of the truth we have talked about this morning. Life begins at conception. Life is precious. Only God has the authority to give and take life. Be convinced of this. Study up on this. Let’s have a conversation about it.
2. Don’t give people reasons to criticize you for your stand for life. Here’s what I mean. Care for all life. Care for the unborn and for the born. It seems there’s a disconnect sometimes when people are so pro-life in one section of the community, then they kind of forget about the babies after they’re born. So why don’t we have a culture of life from the cradle all the way to the grave—and before the cradle? Let’s say from conception to the casket. I like that better. We need a culture of life. From conception to the casket, we’re going to care for all life. Don’t give the world a place to criticize.

One of the biggest criticisms I’ve seen in all my research for this message—in all the articles and all the programs I’ve watched and all the interviews—the one that particularly stood out to me was a guy who said, in a rant and rave, “How many of these pro-life people ever come alongside the unwed mother? How many of them are doing any of the work? They’re holding their signs and preaching their holier than thou message?” I wanted to say to him, “I know a lot of people who are rolling up their sleeves and doing the work.” We know plenty of them, but maybe he has a point. Maybe we’re quick to speak, but slow to act. So let’s not give the world reasons to criticize us.

3. Get involved. I know you have a Life Group here at this campus and we just started one at Plano. We copy everything you do here at Sugar Grove. I’m not kidding. We copy every single thing, because I love you guys and you’re doing it right. So join the Life Matters team. Something like 45 of you have already joined it. Brainstorm on ways we can speak and act for life. Write your representatives. Email them. Connect with them on social media. Let your voice be heard. We’ve got a strong voice, Christians. Volunteer at Pregnancy Information Center. Find other ways to help. Go talk to Michelle Gerken. She can tell you some ways you can be involved in life.

Want to go all the way? Adopt! Oh boy, that’s hard. But you can do it. Right, Lisa? You can.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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