

## **Title: Embracing God's Design: A Biblical Perspective on Abortion**

Sermon Series: The Bible and the Social Issues

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Where: St. John UMC, Prospect, KY

When: June 23rd.

Text: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

### **Introduction**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, I come before you with a heavy heart to address the sensitive and controversial topic of abortion. As followers of Christ, we are called to uphold life's sanctity and protect the most vulnerable in society. However, I understand that this issue is complex and polarizing, and I ask for your patience and understanding as we delve into the theological implications of abortion.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20:** "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."

#### 1. The Theology of the Body:

In the beginning, God created man and woman in His image, and He saw that it was good. Our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made, designed by God for a specific purpose. The Theology of the Body teaches us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, deserving of respect and reverence. When we fail to recognize the inherent dignity of our bodies and the bodies of others, we diminish the image of God within us.

- Psalm 139:14: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

#### 1. Genesis 1:27 (NIV):

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

- *\*The Imago Dei Principle\**: Human life is sacred because it is created in the image of God (Latin: *\*imago Dei\**). This applies to all stages of human life, including the unborn.

The value and importance of the human body, as well as how it relates to living out the religious life, vary among the major religions of the world. Here are some key differences in their perspectives:

- **Christianity:** In Christianity, the human body is considered the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore should be respected and taken care of. Living out the religious life involves honoring the body as a gift from God and using it to serve others in a way that glorifies God.
- **Islam:** In Islam, the body is seen as a trust from Allah and should be kept pure. Living out the religious life includes following the teachings of Islam to keep the body healthy and free from harm. Practices such as fasting during Ramadan and performing the daily prayers demonstrate the importance of the body in worship.
- **Hinduism:** In Hinduism, the body is viewed as a vessel for the soul to experience the physical world. Living out the religious life involves maintaining the purity and balance of the body through practices such as yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda. The body is seen as a tool for spiritual growth and self-realization.
- **Buddhism:** In Buddhism, the body is considered impermanent and a source of suffering. Living out the religious life includes mindfulness of the body and maintaining it as a means to achieve enlightenment. Practices such as meditation and mindful eating help practitioners to transcend the attachment to the body and reach a higher state of consciousness.

These are just a few examples of how different religions approach the value and importance of the human body in relation to living out the religious life. Each tradition has its own teachings and practices that guide followers in caring for the body and using it as a tool for spiritual growth.

We have established seven key building blocks to a biblical theology of the body. Our discipleship needs to effectively communicate these seven building blocks of a theology of the body.

- Creation is good, and our bodies are trustworthy; God created us with a joyful union of body and spirit. Because the goodness of creation flows out of God's very nature and character, the created order has inherent moral boundaries. Therefore, our bodies embody moral agency.
- God created and fashioned our material bodies in his image, and they are icons once foreshadowing and now recalling the incarnation and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. The physical body is the avenue through which God conveys the

means of grace and unfolds his plan of redemption, including our own bodily resurrection at the climax of the ages.

- Christian marriage between a man and a woman is an icon pointing to the greater mystery of Christ and his Church.
- The physical body is a beacon or sign to the world of God's presence and redemptive purposes. Our bodies are "**mobile temples**" with a missional presence in the world. The sacraments are not merely "for us." They are given to us so that we might sacramentally embody new creations in the present order as missional witnesses of the church to the world.
- The daily tasks and duties of life serve as sacramental markers of God's presence embodied in the whole of life,

## 2. The Theology of Sacred Life:

Scripture reminds us of the preciousness of life and the value of each individual soul. In **Psalm 139 reads**, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."

Every life is a gift from God, and we are called to cherish and protect that gift. The theology of sacred life compels us to defend the unborn, to advocate for their right to live, and to provide support and resources for mothers facing unplanned pregnancies.

- Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

- Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

While not directly addressing the issue of abortion, this commandment clearly forbids the taking of an innocent life. It upholds the value and sanctity of life, which can be extended to a belief in protecting the unborn.

### **Luke 1:41-44 (NIV):**

"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice, she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.'"

This passage depicts the unborn John the Baptist recognizing and responding to the presence of Jesus while both were still in the womb, emphasizing the personhood and vitality of the unborn.

These verses demonstrate the belief that God values and forms life from its earliest stages and that the intentional taking of innocent life goes against His will. They provide a biblical foundation for supporting the sanctity of life from conception.

### 3. The Theology of Abortion:

Abortion is a deeply divisive issue, but we must approach it with grace and humility. While we must uphold the sanctity of life, we must also show compassion and understanding to those who are struggling with the decision to terminate a pregnancy. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves, to offer forgiveness and redemption to those who have experienced the pain of abortion, and to work towards a society where abortion is no longer seen as a viable option.

- Proverbs 24:11-12: "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?"

- Matthew 22:39: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

### 2. Psalm 139:13-16 (NIV):

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

- God's active role in forming life in the womb suggests personhood and significance from the earliest stages of development.

### 3. Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV):

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

- The recognition of personhood and divine purpose before birth.

### 4. \*\*Exodus 20:13 (NIV)\*\*:

"You shall not murder."

- Taking the life of an innocent human being is prohibited, and if the unborn are considered human, this extends to abortion.

## 2. Original Language Insights

The Hebrew term \*râcham\* (רחם) used in passages like Psalm 139:13, implies compassion and the womb, highlighting God's nurturing role in human formation.

## 3. Theological Considerations

- Doctrine of the Soul\*\*: Ensoulment is often believed to occur at conception (based on Psalm 51:5), suggesting that the embryo possesses personhood from the point of conception.

- Sanctity of Life\*\*: Christian theology holds that life, a gift from God, is sacred and warrants protection.

## 4. Scientific and Biological Perspectives

- Fetal Development\*\*: Embryology shows that a distinct human life begins at conception. Key milestones include:

- Heartbeat\*\*: Detectable around 6 weeks.

- Brain development\*\*: Starts in the first trimester with detectable brain waves by 6-7 weeks.

- Pain perception\*\*: Some studies suggest fetuses can feel pain by 20 weeks.

- Genetics: At conception, the zygote has a unique human DNA distinct from both parents, signifying a new individual human life.

## 5. Ethical and Philosophical Arguments

- Human Rights: If the unborn are human beings, they should be afforded the same rights as other humans, including the right to life.

- Potentiality: The potential for a fetus to develop into a full human being warrants protection.

### **Call to Action:**

1. Engage in dialogue and education: Encourage congregation members to engage in open and respectful dialogue about abortion. Provide resources such as articles, books, and videos that offer different perspectives on the issue. Host educational seminars or

panel discussions to facilitate constructive conversations about the theological and ethical implications of abortion.

2. Support organizations that provide alternatives to abortion: Encourage congregants to support organizations that offer resources and support to women facing unplanned pregnancies. This could include volunteering at pregnancy resource centers, donating to organizations that provide financial assistance to pregnant women, or offering mentorship and emotional support to individuals considering abortion.

3. Pray for healing and reconciliation: Create a space within the congregation for individuals who have been affected by abortion to find healing and reconciliation. Offer prayer groups or counseling services for those who have experienced abortion, either personally or through loved ones. Encourage congregants to pray for the healing of hearts and the restoration of relationships impacted by the pain of abortion.

By implementing these tangible applications, the congregation can actively respond to the theological teachings presented in the sermon and work towards promoting a culture of life, compassion, and understanding in their community.\_

Combining biblical, theological, scientific, and ethical perspectives provides a robust case against abortion. Sacred Scripture affirms the sanctity and personhood of the unborn, while science confirms the continuity of human life from conception. Together, these disciplines support the Christian stance against abortion.

**Quote:**

In conclusion, let us remember **Augustine of Hippo's words:** "God has shown us the way to freedom by giving us the freedom to choose." As we reflect on the theology of the body, the theology of sacred life, and the theology of abortion, may we strive to embody Christ's love and compassion in all that we do.

**Prayer:** Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before you with humble hearts, seeking Your wisdom and guidance on the issue of abortion. Help us uphold the sanctity of life and show compassion to those struggling with this decision. Grant us the courage to speak out against injustice and to work towards a society where all life is valued and protected.

In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.

**Benediction:**

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may His face shine upon you and give you peace. Go forth in His love and grace, knowing that you are called to be a light in a dark world. Amen.

## Sermon Notes: Biblical and Theological Case Against Abortion

### Abortions Laws USA

Here is a brief overview of the states in the USA and their abortion laws as of my knowledge cutoff in 2021. Keep in mind that laws may have changed after this period, and the specifics can vary:

#### States with Restrictive Abortion Laws or Bans

1. **Alabama**: Full ban, exceptions only for severe health risks.
2. **Arkansas**: Near-total ban except to save the mother's life.
3. **Georgia**: Bans abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected (around 6 weeks).
4. **Kentucky**: Similar fetal heartbeat laws, bans around 6 weeks.
5. **Louisiana**: Bans after fetal heartbeat detection, around 6 weeks.
6. **Mississippi**: Bans after a fetal heartbeat is detected.
7. **Missouri**: Bans abortions after 8 weeks.
8. **Ohio**: Near-total ban after 6 weeks.
9. **Tennessee**: Bans abortions after around 6 weeks.
10. **Utah**: Bans after 18 weeks.
11. **Texas**: Bans past six weeks.
12. **West Virginia**: Near total ban, exceptions for health risk and fetal abnormality.
13. **South Carolina**: Ban after heartbeat detection around 6 weeks.
14. **Oklahoma**: Various restrictive measures.
15. **South Dakota**: Almost all abortions are banned, only to protect the woman's life.
16. **Idaho**: Bans past six weeks.
17. **Montana**: Bans past 20 weeks.

#### ### States with Less Restrictive Abortion Laws

1. **California**: Allows abortions up to fetal viability (~24-26 weeks).
2. **New York**: Allows abortion up to 24 weeks or post-24 weeks for health reasons.
3. **Oregon**: No major restrictions, allowed to fetal viability.
4. **Washington**: Permits to fetal viability.
5. **Illinois**: Up to viability, later if needed to protect life or health.
6. **Massachusetts**: Up to 24 weeks, later for health risks.
7. **Connecticut**: To viability, later if necessary.
8. **Nevada**: Permits up to 24 weeks.
9. **Vermont**: No gestational limits.

10. **New Jersey**: No gestational limits.
11. **Hawaii**: To viability.
12. **Colorado**: No major restrictions.
13. **Rhode Island**: Up to viability.
14. **New Mexico**: No major restrictions.
15. **Maine**: Up to viability, later under certain conditions.
16. **Alaska**: Permits to viability.
17. **Delaware**: Permits up to viability.

### ### Mixed or Situational Restrictions

1. **Florida**: After 24 weeks/ third trimester permitted only to protect life or health.
2. **Pennsylvania**: Bans after 24 weeks unless necessary to save life or health.
3. **Michigan**: Bans most after 24 weeks.
4. **Virginia**: To third trimester, then under limited conditions.

It's always a good idea to consult up-to-date sources such as legal databases, government websites, or organizations focused on reproductive rights for the most current information.