

Is Abortion My Right?

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- [0 : 00] Come on, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up.
- Okay, well, let's pray. Father, thank you again for life.
- Thank you for your word. We know that your word brings life, speaks life, sustains life. And so we pray that your word would speak into our hearts today so that we line up with your values and your truth, that we do not live by our own decisions or our own choice, but help us to live according to your ways, for that is best for us.
- It brings glory to you, and it is good for the world in which we live. So help us, we pray. Amen.
- Well, on Sunday, the 12th of November, just a few months ago, an earthquake measuring 7.3 struck Halabja in Iraq.
- [1 : 26] As the building shook and fell, hundreds died and thousands were injured. Survival was unimaginable. The following date, eight more earthquakes struck, making rescue efforts difficult and dangerous.
- The chance of finding anybody alive was near to impossible. But yet, the community kept on digging. Two and a half days later, a baby was pulled from the rubble without any serious injury.
- Why would anyone risk searching when it is dangerously high and the chances of finding anyone alive extremely low?
- Because life matters. On the 19th of November, 2016, so just over a year ago, medical staff in a children's hospital in Aleppo, Syria, were going about their normal routine.
- Without warning, a bomb was dropped onto the hospital, and one journalist captures the scene. Nurses and other medical staff were seen scrambling through the blackness, trying to rush the patients out of the badly damaged hospital as children cried out for help.
- [2 : 49] In another room, nurses grabbed babies from damaged incubators, with one staff member using a cloth to protect a visibly undernourished child, before trying to console a weeping colleague who was also carrying a newborn.
- The nurses later moved the babies to another room, putting them on the floor next to each other and covering them with blankets. At least one of the infants still had medical tubes attached.
- Staff told Al Jazeera, that's the news agency, that all of the babies survived the attack. Why is it that we can be so outraged and full of anger when a bomb falls from a plane onto a children's hospital?
- Because life matters. When we see life in danger, we reach out to rescue and protect. When we see life cut short, we are sad, we're angry.
- You see, whoever we are, whatever our background, religious or non-religious, we have this, what is almost like an in-built conviction that life matters, that life is precious.
- [4 : 09] We want to protect life, save life, keep life. So why is there a demand in this country to end life?

How is it that people want to repeal the Eighth Amendment and open the door to what will be abortion on demand? Why is it that we celebrate the heroes who risk their lives to save a child from an earthquake, but yet ridicule and shame those who want to keep our constitutional laws that protect life?

Why is it that we shout and get angry outside the door to protect babies and toddlers who are in danger in war situations, but yet march and protest when we can't end the life of a baby before they get out of the womb?

It seems we are in conflict with ourselves. Simon Coveney, our Tornishta, if I can understand correctly, is certainly a man in conflict.

He doesn't want abortion on demand, but yet he does want to remove the Eighth Amendment. On the one hand, life matters, but then the laws that protect life are to be repealed.

[5 : 38] Why is that? Why that contradiction? Well, those who seek to repeal the Eighth will say it's different.

They say that what's in the womb is different to what's outside the womb. But that's not true. Medical science is crystal clear that life begins at conception.

The moment the sperm from the father meets the egg of the mother, life starts. All the evidence points to the fact that life begins when fertilisation takes place.

Even those who support abortion believe this. Anne Faroudi, who is the chief executive of the largest independent abortion business in the UK, said this.

Here's the quote. We can accept that the embryo is a living thing in the fact that it has a beating heart, that it has its own genetic system within it.

[6 : 41] It's clearly human in the sense that it's not a gerbil. And we can recognise that it is human life. What's in the mother's womb, what's in the mother's womb, a conception is not just an embryo or a living thing.

They are a human life. In fact, those who advocate and perform abortions admit that when an abortion takes place, they are in fact killing a life.

Faye Wattleton, former president of Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion clinic in the US, is clear about this.

Here's what she said. I think we have deluded ourselves into believing that people don't know that abortion is killing. Remember, this is somebody who supports it.

So any pretense that abortion is not killing is a signal of our ambivalence, a signal that we cannot say, yes, it kills a fetus.

[7 : 47] I would want to say a child. Of course, people will still argue that there's a difference between life in the womb and life outside of the womb. They will argue that life in the womb is, they'll term it in this way, a human being, but not a human person.

They are denied the dignity of their personhood. In other words, killing the life of a human being is okay, but it's not okay to kill a human person.

Now, I don't know about you, but I can't understand what the difference is. Surely a human being is a human person. Well, for those who are on the side of abortion, they make the distinction in four ways.

They talk about size. So the life in the womb is different in size to life outside the womb. This is how they try to make the difference.

Second, they talk about level of development. That the life in the womb is less developed than the life outside of the womb. Or third, environment.

[9 : 05] The life in the womb is living in a different kind of environment, the environment of the mother, than life outside of the womb. And they talk about degree of dependence.

So the life in the womb has a greater dependence than life outside the womb. Now, to some extent, that is all true.

But how does size, level of development, environment, degree of dependence determine whether a person lives or dies? Each of these four categories continually changes from conception to death.

What's the difference in terms of, well, a baby in the womb is different in size to a toddler, but a toddler is different in size to a teenager, and a teenager is different in size to an adult.

It's the same with dependence. Of course, a child within the womb is dependent on their mother, but a newborn is equally dependent. And as we get older, we become dependent again.

[10 : 21] The Christian apologist Alan Shellman puts it like this, Today, the unborn are victims of discrimination. They are a class of human beings that are disqualified from being valuable based on arbitrary characteristics, their size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency.

None of these categories determines the value or life or worth of a life. A life is precious and valuable because they are a life.

Alan Shellman, again. He says the pro-life position, on the other hand, is an inclusive view. It says, No human being, regardless of size, skin colour, level of development, race, gender, or place of residence, should be excluded from the community of human persons.

This view of humanity is inclusive and wide open to all, especially to those who are small, vulnerable, and defenceless.

We must be clear that those who are seeking the repeal of the Eighth Amendment is the intentional intervention to terminate the life of an unborn child.

[11 : 51] Any other view or opinion is a lie or an illusion. It's rejecting the facts of science and it's denying the beauty of life itself.

It is, as one author put it, the extermination of the powerless by the powerful. The extermination of the powerless by the powerful.

So why is life so precious? Why should we value the life of the unborn? Well, three things and then we're going to look at three responses.

So three reasons why life is precious and then three responses. So here's the first one. First, all life is created by God. Let's go to Genesis 1.

If you've got your Bibles there, please turn to Genesis 1 right at the very beginning. Genesis 1. When God created the world, that's how Genesis opens.

[13 : 07] God formed it with mountains and rivers and seas and then God filled what he had formed with animals and plants and stars and it was all good and beautiful.

But when God came to making mankind, men and women, it was very, very different. Look at chapter 1, verse 26. Then God said, this is coming to the conclusion of creation, God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.

So God didn't make animals or plants or fish in his image. They are not like God. But when God created people, he made them uniquely different to the rest of all creation.

Because we are made in God's image, we're different to the rest of it. We can relate to God. We can represent him. We can reflect him.

We are not animals that can be put down at will or rodents that are exterminated because they're spreading disease. We are created in the image of God in his likeness.

[14 : 23] We are uniquely different to the rest of creation. So first, we are unique image bearers.

Second, we're very good. When God finished his creation, the forming of the universe and the filling of all that he had formed, he keeps saying it's repeated time after time.

It was good. It was good. It was good. But after God had made mankind, chapter 1, verse 31, God saw all that he made and it was very good.

It was very good. The creation of people made in God's image is not just good like the rest of creation, but it is very good.

Because what God creates in human beings made in his image are valuable and precious and beautiful. You show a scan of a baby to anyone and the immediate response is wow!

[15 : 33] Isn't that amazing? They begin to ask questions, no matter of the size of that little child. Do you know if it's a boy or a girl? Everyone recognizes the incredible beauty, the little tiny movements, the distinctive shape.

A tiny heart no bigger than a poppy seed begins to beat. People made in God's image are very good.

So life is created by God. Second, life is a blessing from God. Many people view children as a curse, not a blessing.

So sometimes when a mother gets pregnant they may say it's an unwanted pregnancy. Others will say that this new life within them is interfering with their lifestyle choice.

The child that they bear has become a curse. It must be removed, it must be taken away. But God's perspective is so different.

[16 : 58] Children are a blessing. To have children is a blessing. Genesis 49 verse 25 speaks of children as blessings of the breast in the womb.

Or Psalm 127 here's the quote on the screen. Psalm 127 verses 3 to 5 says children are a heritage from the Lord.

Offspring a reward from him. Blessed is the man who is full of them. Blessed is the father who has a great big family. Children are a blessing not a curse.

They are a reward not a disgrace. They are a joy not a burden. You see the main reason and you might want to come back to me on this afterwards but I think the main reason for abortion has nothing to do with rights.

It's all about personal choice. That my life is more important than another life. I don't want this new life interfering or upsetting my life.

[18 : 19] So people not only choose not to have children but they choose to end their child's life before they're born. You see children are only perceived to be an inconvenience because they challenge our self-centeredness.

We don't want to give up our independence. Having children means I'm not going to be free to do what I want. Being pregnant means I no longer am able to pursue my dreams.

Christopher Ash an author puts it like this. This is a question he says of lining up our values with God's values. Do we agree with the Bible and face children with arms open in gratitude for the blessing of God?

Or do we turn our face away from children and count as curse what God calls a blessing? Choosing to have children is a right choice.

it is a blessing. So first life is created by God. Life is a blessing from God.

[19 : 34] And life finds purpose in God. You see medical science is great in that it can tell us that life begins at conception. We can see on a screen a little tiny heart beating.

We can see the fingerprints. We can see the baby develop. science can't tell us the meaning or the purpose for life.

We can only find the purpose for life in God. Look again at Genesis chapter 1 verse 28.

verse 28. So after the creation of the first man and woman, verse 28 says God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number.

The very, very first command that God gives to the first man and woman, and we get the second account or a fuller account in Genesis 2 where Adam and Eve are brought together in marriage.

[20 : 42] But the first command that he makes to this first married couple is go and make babies, have children. And here's the purpose. When God created the first man, Adam, he placed him in the garden to love God and serve God, to work for him and live for him.

So look at chapter 2 verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it.

He's reflecting the very nature of God. He's being what God has called him to be. Again, Christopher Ash, in his book, Married for God, puts it like this.

You can follow the quote on the screen. The job of caring for the garden was too big for Adam, the gardener, to do on his own, and so Eve is given to work alongside him as his helper.

Alongside her contribution to work as an equal human being alongside Adam, it is her unique privilege to bear and nurture children and so increase the gardening team.

[21 : 59] Together, Adam and Eve are to serve God, but still it's like the task is too big on their own. It's too much for them. The team has got to increase and that's why God gives them the command and says, go and be fruitful.

That's why God gives them the blessing of children. They are to have more children so that the children can join the gardening team, as it were.

Of course, that's not to say that we're all to be in the horticultural club or to become farmers. It's kind of giving an imagery, a picture, it's symbolism of all that God has called us to be, that God's purpose for life for human beings, for people like us, is that we too should love him, that we too were created to serve him, to live for him.

You see, God is seeking to build a worldwide family that crosses boundaries and cultures and religions and races and languages.

He is calling together a worldwide family who will love him, who will serve him and make him the centre of their lives and their world.

[23 : 17] You see, life finds its purpose and meaning in God. We know from their creation story that although God gave these commands, life didn't go as God had intended.

Man rebelled. Adam rebelled against God and said, God, I don't want you being God, I want to be God, I want to make choices and decisions for myself. And we have followed in Adam's path.

We too have been born with sin, we're broken, we're people who do exactly the same. We want to play God. We want to make the rules for life and what I can do with my life.

We don't want God telling us how we should live, I want to make my choices. that's why we need to be born again.

That's why we all need this new life. Remember what we talked about at the very beginning this morning? Turn with me please to John's Gospel chapter 1 where we started this morning.

[24 : 36] John's Gospel chapter 1 verse 11 and verse 12. You see the world is the way that it is because we have pushed God out and put ourselves in place of God.

That's why our country is wanting to repeal the eighth and make choices and decisions for themselves and ignore what God says because we want to be God.

And the only way that that's truly ever going to change is when people are born again into God's family when they begin to see the world from God's perspective.

And they need to change, that is they need to humble themselves before God and repent and turn to him. Each one of us, myself, yourself, all of us need to. So look at John chapter 1 verse 11.

This is talking about Jesus who came, who was himself born into this world through his mother Mary. John chapter 1 verse 11.

[25 : 47] He came to that which was his own, to his own people, but his own people didn't receive him. But yet to all who did receive him, to all those who accepted him, who believed in him, who entrusted their life to him, he gave the right to become children of God.

Children born not of natural descent, nor of a human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God. You see, each one of us here have a story in terms of our natural birth, a decision on behalf of our parents, that we were born into this world.

Yes, God is sovereign over that life, but this new life, this new life from God, where we change from living for ourselves and living for him, that too is a supernatural work of God, not something that I can decide for myself or choose for myself.

It's only enabled by the Holy Spirit who helps me to see that I need to turn my life around and to go the way of God, to believe in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that when he came, he didn't come to take life, but the Son who came to give his life for all, to give his life for people like you and me, to give his life for those who have had an abortion, to give his life for those who are wanting to repeal the AIDS, to give his life for those who perform an abortion.

He's saying, you know what, I have come into this world to take the blame for all the wrong things that you have done, so that you can be forgiven, so that you can have life, so that you can now live my way and do what is right and good.

[27 : 56] The only solution that I can think of, we can have all our arguments from science, we can have all the pictures that we want, the ugliness and the brutality of some of those pictures, but the only thing that's really going to change the human heart is the good news of Jesus Christ who has come to give his life for us.

This is God's purpose for each and every new life, that every child born into this world would turn to the Lord Jesus and become part of his worldwide family, of loving him and serving him.

That's why we have children. That's why we protect life and save life and treasure life. We want children born into this world so they can enjoy God and know him and love him.

So three reasons why we should protect and value life. Life is created by God, life is a blessing, and life finds purpose in God.

Very quickly, I know our time is moving on. I just want to give three responses to life. Three things. First, we should celebrate life.

[29 : 13] Life is a beautiful gift from God. Children are a blessing and a reward and a joy. Yes, parenting can be difficult. Yes, our children may struggle through life.

Yes, our children may be born with a disability. But all life is precious and valuable, so we should celebrate the gift of life.

Protect life. I encourage us, as Anne was encouraging us to make that priority for keeping the Eighth Amendment, to speak up for the unborn.

Be a voice for those who cannot yet talk. Don't be silent on this issue. you know what? I think we need to do more. It's not just enough to say no to abortion.

We need to come in grace and mercy and compassion and provide a shelter and a refuge for those who have had an abortion, for those who are struggling and find it difficult.

[30 : 16] We need to love them. We also, and I think this is true as we think into the future, that I think together the church in this country, in this land in which we live, I think we will need to be investing our resources, financial resources, into providing centres of care, homes where young mums who are struggling with a child and have nowhere to go and are going to be finding it difficult.

We need to provide a place where they can come and be looked after and walked through and say, you know what, when you have your baby, we will stand there with you. It's not enough for us to say no.

We need to think in terms of building these centres that will be fully equipped and staffed to look after the most vulnerable of our society. That's where we need to go.

And third, adopt life. You see, again, it's not enough to say it's wrong and start pointing fingers. We need to be prepared to open our homes, to adopt children, to foster children, to say to those who for various reasons can't manage to care for their children, who perhaps haven't had the privilege of some of us in the homes that we were raised, to say, I will care for your son, I will care for your daughter.

What a beautiful and precious gift to care for life. A beautiful and precious gift to care for little children.

[32 : 03] As I think about these three responses celebrating life, protecting life, not just speaking out, not just putting my tick in the box when it comes to vote, but thinking of where I'll put my resources in building a place of care and being equipped to look after people.

Thinking about looking after other children, adopting them into your family. As I reflect on that, I have some serious, serious thinking to do.

And I think we all, as God's people, have some serious thinking to do. God has given us life. We are to protect life.

We are to show people the way of life through the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to pray. In our news sheet this morning, if you open up into the middle pages, there's a number of prayers that are written there.

If you haven't got one and you need to get one, please do. But there's a number of different prayers all the way down the page. And I'm just simply going to invite us now, where we are, to pray.

[33 : 32] It may be just simply, if you find it hard to pray out loud, just to simply read the prayer that's written there. They can just be short prayers, to thank God for life, to pray for our government, to pray for the pro-life organisation, to pray for people like Anne and the work that they are doing.

Let's pray. together. Father, we declare that you are a good God.

You are our creator God. You made us and you formed us. You delight in us.

You take pleasure in us. You give us the breath that we breathe. You give us health and strength.

You sustain us and keep us. You are an amazing God. And not only have you given us physical life, but through your Son, you have given us new and eternal life.

[34 : 56] forgiveness of all of our sin. So that we might know you and enjoy you in a personal and intimate way.

That we might enjoy your eternal kingdom of a world where there will never be again the death of an unborn.

never again will an old person die. But life will go on as you planned and you determined at the very beginning.

You will put all things right. Father, we are sorry for the times we have been silent. Please forgive us.

Father, we are sorry for the times we have given off and complained and spoken harshly to our children and not treated them as a blessing that they are.

[36 : 04] Forgive us, Father. Help us to treasure life, to celebrate life, to nurture life. We pray for your help in doing this.

Amen. I just leave an open time now for those who would like to respond in prayer. Amen.
Amen.