

The Dilemma of the Baby

“A couple from the United Kingdom, Paul and Deborah, recently had their last in vitro fertilization embryo mistakenly implanted in another woman. The woman aborted the baby upon knowledge that the embryo was not hers. Paul and Deborah, who have a 6 year-old, are not expected to be able to conceive again.” These words have now been carried around the world. Reported by some almost matter-of-factly and then it’s on to other news. The news from Iran, Secretary of State, Mrs. Clinton’s fall and elbow break, the landing of Continental Airlines Flight 61 with the deceased pilot and the scrubbing of the shuttle Endeavor’s launch have now eclipsed the report of a baby whose little life was snuffed out in a moment. The hospital that argues whether it was truly an abortion said these exact words, “This resulted in a moment’s distraction, which unfortunately resulted in the incident.” I would call it much more than an incident. Deborah and Paul considered it more than an incident, “In less than 10 seconds,” said Deborah, “our wonderful world was shattered when the senior embryologist stood in front of us and said, 'I'm very sorry to tell you, but there's been an accident in the lab. Your embryo has been destroyed.' We were both rooted to our seats. We were stunned and trembling. We held each other tightly, and sobbed and sobbed. It was like water from a tap. I kept thinking, 'They've killed our baby.'”

I could only find one major news media that covered it with legal discussions (this is not to say others did not do this; I only came across one). The discussion brought into question, who had rights to the embryo? In other words, whose baby is this? I want us to think about this today. We could save for another day the discussion is in vitro fertilization moral? What I want to focus on is: whose baby is this? Who has the right to decide? And what constitutes the heart of a godly parent?

1. Whose baby is this?

The couple that received the baby was informed soon after of the mistake. That very day they took steps to impede further development, followed by the unnatural loss of the baby. The couple that became partners with God in the formation of the embryo was never informed of their baby’s dilemma. Again, because of the sensitivity of this issue, I remind my readers I am not going to take the time to discuss the rightness of this method. I want to emphasize that life was present and God gives all life. So the argument briefly took place last week that the couple that contributed the embryo had full authority over the child. The other side of the argument says the mother carrying the baby has full right over her body and anything (or anyone) that her body carries.

In the argument of whose baby this is, one party was left out. Allow me to bring Holy Scripture into play: “*Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way*” (Matthew 22:19-22). The Pharisees were trying to get Jesus to indict himself. They had just asked if it were lawful to pay tribute or taxes (to Rome). If our Lord affirms the validity of the tax, he loses credibility with the Jewish nation who believes Rome is in Israel illegally and thereby taking sides with the enemy. If our Lord answers, “no,” then the Jewish leaders would be more than happy to turn Him into Rome as an insurrectionist.

Christ took the question to another and much higher level when He asked for a penny (denarius). Christ requested whose image and superscription was upon the coin. The superscription read: “Tiberius Caesar, Son of The Divine Augustus.” In the Roman culture, Caesar was accepted as a god. So Christ was saying, the coin bears his image; give it to him. Jesus says, “...*Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's...*” (Matthew 22:21). Give Caesar his denarius! I cannot be

dogmatic, but I can imagine Jesus saying these words while pointing to the coin. Then I imagine the Lord then points to the man holding the coin, perhaps followed by Him pointing to everyone assembled and saying, “...and unto God the things that are God's”(Matthew 22:21). This is the doctrine of the church espoused in the phrase: “*Imago Dei*,” “The image of God.” Since man is made in the image of God, he is obligated to render unto God that which is his, “*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*”(Genesis 1:27). Every man, woman, boy and girl are made in God’s image; therefore, by virtue of God’s creative act, we belong to God. “*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*” (Psalm 139:14). The little child that was being argued over, in fact, belonged to God!

2. God has the right to decide.

David’s comment about his baby’s life is worth noting, “*And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?*”(II Samuel 12:22). From this we understand that the life of the baby was in God’s hand. Job said, “*...Naked came I out of my mother' womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*” (Job 1:21).

When modern science and supreme courts of the land deem themselves able to decide what is life, when it begins and who lives, they are doing nothing short of playing God. “*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen*”

(Romans 1:25).

3. What constitutes the heart of a godly parent?

Solomon, when asked of God, made this great request: “*Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?*”(II Chronicles 1:10). God granted Solomon his request and made him the wisest mortal man who ever lived. His first act of wisdom was displayed when two women came to him arguing over a surviving baby. “*And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof*”(I Kings 3: 25-27). In God-given wisdom, Solomon declares the mother who wanted life for the child is actually the mother. The wise man gives us insight into true parenthood. One is in truth a parent who loves unconditionally, sacrificially and eternally. He or she wants what’s best for the child.

Father’s Day is a good day to examine ourselves and ask, do we have the heart of a godly parent?

- Pastor Pope -

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