

Is It Nothing To You?

The weeping prophet Jeremiah warned the people of Judah of coming judgment. They would not heed the warnings - and judgment came. At the close of his prophecy he gave five lamentations. In the first one he asked, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" (Lamentations 1:12). The nation was in ruins and he was vicariously suffering along with them.

On January 22, 1973, forty-seven years ago, by a Supreme Court vote of seven to two, abortion became legal in the United States of America. To borrow historical rhetoric, it is a day that lives in infamy. It was deemed legal that a woman could, by her choice, terminate the life of her unborn baby.

Nineteen seventy-three was an important year in my wife's and my life. It was the year of our marriage. Roe versus Wade created a new atmosphere in our country in the very year Mrs. Pope and I began our life together. Our children were born into this union in 1977, 1980, 1982 and 1985. It has been said the most dangerous place for a person in our county now is in the womb of its mother. More people risk death there than anywhere. Thankfully, that was not the case with our children and probably for most parents reading these words. Before our children were born, we realized we were stewards of the most important product in the earth - human life. It is estimated that over sixty-two million of my children's generation have been aborted since this infamous ruling. How many potential scientists would have had the cure for cancer in their future had they lived? How many great preachers with a message to bring millions to Christ were never offered life outside the womb? How much beautiful music would have been written if those composers could have lived? How many professors and teachers would have shaped lives for the future? We'll never know.

There's a preacher and wife who are very, very, poor. They already have 14 kids. Now she finds out she's pregnant with her 15th. They're living in tremendous poverty. Considering their poverty and the excessive world population, would you consider recommending she get an abortion? If so, you just took the life of one of the greatest proponents of the Great Awakening, John Wesley!

A white man raped a 13-year-old black girl and she got pregnant. If you were her parents, would you consider recommending abortion? If you decided to punish the baby for the sins of the father, you would have taken the life of the nightingale of some of the greatest revivals of the 20th Century, Ethel Waters!

I know some hard-hearted skeptics would argue in the other direction by saying look how many criminals will not be walking the streets because of abortion, but we take the chance of having any child go in the wrong direction, even from the perceived best environments. If you decide to go down that line of reasoning, you are not unlike Hitler and Nazi Germany in their attempt to weed out what they deemed were undesirables in their attempt to create a "super race." The only thing they managed to do was to show themselves murdering monsters in the Holocaust. In 1934, during his second year as chancellor of the German Reich, Adolf Hitler invited the leaders of the evangelical churches

of Germany to a meeting in Berlin. His goal was to silence mounting criticism from Christians of the Nazi regime and its anti-Semitic policies. Among those present at that meeting was a fiery young pastor named Martin Niemöller. Niemöller would later recall that encounter as the moment from which he knew that Germany was doomed. Hitler was amiable and deliberately reassuring as he sought support of these prominent churchmen. He promised pastors that the position of the church in Germany was safe and secure - that its tax exemptions and state support would remain unchanged under Nazi government. Niemöller pushed to the front of the group to confront the chancellor. Standing face to face with Germany's ruler, the brash young preacher asserted: "Our concern, Herr Hitler, is not for the church. Jesus Christ will take care of His Church. Our concern is for the soul of our nation."

An embarrassed silence followed and it was immediately evident that Niemöller spoke only for himself. His chagrined and embarrassed colleagues quickly shuffled him from the front of the room. Noting their timid reaction, the director smiled as he replied, "The soul of Germany - you can leave that to me." And so they did. Christians looked the other way while innocent people were slaughtered and a nation was led down the path to destruction.

I would submit to you today that we find ourselves in a similar predicament. Once again the innocents are being slaughtered, the country is being led down the path to destruction, and the Christians, by and large, are looking the other way.

Whenever God is left out of our private or public arena we are in desperate trouble. "If there is no God, everything is permissible" wrote Fyodor Dostoyevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12).

1. IS IT NOTHING TO YOU THAT GOD GIVES LIFE?

In the first chapter of the Bible it says, "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). "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). We see this creation in God's image continued, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth (Genesis 5:3). Thirty-two times in the first chapter of Genesis, we discover that God spoke the creation into existence such as the sun, moon, stars, earth and animals, but when He made man, He placed His loving hand into His creation and formed him. The Hebrew word for "form" is *yatsar*, which means to mold into a form, especially as a potter molds, shapes and makes something out of the pliable clay. When God made man and woman, it was unique only in that they were the first to experience this creation. Listen to what Jeremiah said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a

prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah was as intricately “formed” as Adam and it is to be noted this life-giving formation took place in His mother’s womb. The Psalmist cried, “I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly” (Psalm 22:10). David said, “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13). The word “cover” in Hebrew is *sakak* and is defined as to fence in, cover over, hedge in, join together, and to weave. You may ask how can that which means to “cover over” also mean “to weave?” Here is the beauty of God’s creative ability; it means that every man and woman after Adam and Eve, created in their mother’s womb, is a person before there is any shape or definable substance. Man, like his Creator is three in one. We are body, soul and spirit. We are not a body that has a soul; we are a soul and spirit that has a body. This is so very beautiful! God breathes life in the womb, weaving together his soul and spirit then He weaves together a baby’s body covering the real person. This truth is illustrated in the oldest book in the Bible, Job 10:8-12.

Understanding and believing life begins at conception brings us to the heart of the issue. Our final authority again is the precious Word of God. “So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son” (Ruth 4:13). Boaz and Ruth came together as husband and wife, but God gave conception. God gives life! Men and women do not “make babies” as modern slang usage suggests; God makes babies. The Bible records, “And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing...” (Genesis 16:2). Five chapters later we read, “For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him” (Genesis 21:2). We see this principle repeated in the Bible; God withholds life, then He grants life. Where? In the mother’s womb. When? At the point of conception. We therefore concede with the Psalmist: “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture” (Psalm 100:3).

2. IS IT NOTHING TO YOU THAT WE WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING ANOTHER’S LIFE?

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:6). “If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?” (Prov. 24:11, 12).

3. IS IT NOTHING TO YOU THAT WE SHOULD LOVE OUR CHILDREN IN THE SAME WAY GOD LOVES US?

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). Sadly, many a mother has chosen to discard the life within her before the precious little one would ever qualify as a nursing child. I know this is beyond the realm of most anyone’s belief system who is reading this, however,

the monstrous effect of the fall of mankind since the Garden of Eden necessitates that we believe almost any ungodly atrocity is possible, apart from the saving grace of God. I emphasize *apart from the saving grace of God*. Because of the saving grace of God we can not only live the life that is remarkable, but also we can actually allow God to live His life through us! One of the most life-changing Bible verses in my life is Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

The point I wish to drive home is, if Christ lives and reigns in my life, I shall love my children with God's love. My love is weak, my love is fickle, and my love will not last. On the other hand, God's love is strong, always constant and will last forever. Today, is a good time to remind ourselves to love our children through God's love. There can be no more secure embrace a child can enjoy than when he or she knows they are loved in this way. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

When Jeremiah spoke "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" (Lamentations 1:12), he was also speaking prophetically. In this verse Jesus is saying, look how much I love you! He is saying, look at my life I gave for you. Do you even care? Do you even care that I care? God so loved the world - how may we do less?

-Pastor Pope-