

# **Speak Up for Those Who Cannot Speak for Themselves**

## **A Local Presbyterian Congregation Responds to our Society's View of Abortion.**

An influential theologian once said: "If I profess with the loudest voice, and clearest exposition, every portion of the Truth of God, except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved...". Today the church is fighting a battle that is more than a battle for Biblical marriage or for the protection of the lives of millions of unborn babies; it is a battle for Christian civilization and for truth.

In the eyes of many people in our society the word "Presbyterian" is associated with liberalism. This confusion is mainly caused by some Presbyterian denominations that moved away from the truth of God's Word and embraced relativism. However, there are some other Presbyterian denominations who, by the grace of our merciful God, are standing very strong on God's Word and who are prepared to proclaim His gospel boldly and unashamedly. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is such a denomination and Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church of Greeneville is a member church of the PCA.

One of the liberal denominations of our time that has caused this confusion, The Presbyterian Church (USA), began in 1970 to turn toward a cultural view of abortion that elevates personal choice above the responsibility of protecting innocent human life. The PCUSA has long embraced a very liberal view of abortion. Their stated position has been "the considered decision of a woman to terminate a pregnancy can be a morally acceptable, though certainly not the only or required, decision." Their sexuality curriculum teaches that abortion "can be an act of faithfulness before God to intervene in the natural process of pregnancy and terminate it."

As reported in the media, the PCUSA recently refused to take a stand to protect babies who survive botched abortions. By a wide margin the PCUSA's General Assembly voted in June 2014 (465 to 133) against a measure asking its members to reflect, for two years, on the plight of unwanted children, both the born and unborn.

The PCUSA's denominational medical plan "pays for abortion without restriction." To some in this denomination this has caused a crisis of conscience because a portion of the tithes of members of the PCUSA pay the dues from which abortion claims are paid. It is with no surprise that some in this denomination believe that the PCUSA's view on abortion and their approval of same-sex marriage has caused a sharp decline in membership. The denomination reported 1.76 million members at the end of 2013, less than half of its peak membership of 4.25 million in 1965 and down from 1.95 million members in 2011.

However, even if a denomination like the PCUSA which claims to be a "mainline protestant church" takes this unbiblical and ungodly position, the people in the pews can still know what is right and moral. In Scripture we find the prophet Micah's haunting words: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8, ESV). God tells us in His Word what is right and wrong. We do not have to wonder what is good as God has declared it in the Bible. While the PCUSA speaks predominantly for "pro-choice", another Presbyterian denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is unashamed and staunchly "pro-life", believing that life begins at conception. As a member church of the PCA, the

congregation of Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church (Greeneville, TN) is humbled and thankful for the grace of God as He has sustained and led the PCA to uphold Biblical truth as it relates to this issue.

The PCA has been taking a strong Biblical stand against abortion in any form by making statements like the following: "That because Scripture clearly affirms the sanctity of human life and condemns its arbitrary destruction, we affirm that the intentional killing of an unborn child between conception and birth, for any reason at any time, is clearly a violation of the Sixth Commandment". And, "That all members of the Presbyterian Church in America be encouraged to seek to bring about substantial changes in existing legislation so that the human life of an unborn child be recognized and protected". Also, "The Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will and teaches that the unborn child is a human person deserving the full protection of the Sixth Commandment, 'You shall not murder'".

In June of 2014 the General Assembly of the PCA declared, "the Presbyterian Church in America expresses its gratitude to the Lord for sustaining by his grace ministers of the gospel, chaplains, and Christians serving in the public sphere who are experiencing ostracism, penalties and persecution for taking a Biblically faithful stand for the sanctity of human life and declining to participate in the cultural redefinition of marriage". Genesis 1 tells us man has been created in the image of God and therefore every baby in the womb bears His image. "Children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Ps. 127:3). Every baby in the womb is a sacred life to be loved and protected. Murdering of an unborn child is violating God's command and authority. Jesus loves children so much that he told us that we have to be like little children to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:2-5). "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb" (Psa. 139:13). "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5).

The Bible is our only source of truth and standard of what is good and right. God's law commands us not to murder (Ex. 20:13; 21:22), regardless of whether the laws of the land allow it. The legalization of abortion is tantamount to the sanctioned exoneration of those who do evil and the disgraceful condemnation of the innocent. Such actions are indicative of a lawless society. This invites the wrath of God upon its people. "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" (Isaiah 5:20-21).

In condemning the practice of abortion, we claim no self-righteousness! The Bible teaches that we are all rebellious sinners by nature and we all fall short of the Glory of God and deserve His condemnation. We are humbled and amazed, by God's grace, through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, that He would save anyone. However, there is forgiveness for the repentant sinner; there is forgiveness even for the one who repents of committing the sin of killing an unborn child. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). God has revealed His perfect revealed will to us in the Scriptures!

The congregation of Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA) is calling all Americans and our fellow evangelicals who flinch when the "A" word is mentioned, to join the battle and bear witness to the God of life. We call them to stand up for what God calls good and defend the lives of the defenseless. "Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8-9).

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