

Sermon for Life Observance Sunday with Abortion Emphasis

Sermon Text: Exodus 20:13

Today on this “Life Observance Sunday,” I’d like to introduce you to three people. All three are real people. All the stories I will share with you about them are true. Their names, of course, are mostly changed to protect their identity. We begin, then, with “Betsy.” Here are excerpts from her article entitled, “I had an abortion (and I don’t regret it!).” She writes:

I had an abortion last month. It was probably the hardest choice I’ve ever had to make. I love children and I want to be a mother SO badly...I’m 21 years old, I don’t have a steady job or a car or my own house, my boyfriend and I have only been together for 6 months, my health is terrible, I’m a borderline alcoholic, yada yada yada. So really, bad time to have a baby. I am not a fan of adoption...if anyone’s going to mess up my kids, It’s going to be me! And given my health and drinking, it would have been likely that I and/or my child would have been seriously damaged by the pregnancy.

So the choice was clear. Abortion was the way to go. Even though deep down I knew that I just couldn’t have a child right now, it really hurt to admit it, and I was terrified (irrationally so) that maybe the pro-lifers were right – I WOULD regret it forever, I WOULD have “post abortion syndrome,” I WOULD be [smote] by God, I would become infertile and get breast cancer and DIE, or something... so I went to the clinic with my boyfriend, filled out a few forms and went to the “counseling room” with a kind young woman who explained the procedure and asked if I had any questions... I was a little shaky so she gave me a hug as well.

After that I continued on to the exam room, where the tech did a quick ultrasound and gave me a muscle relaxant and did some other preparation with my body. The feeling kind of grossed me out. But somehow I survived... the nurse hooked me up to an IV... I honestly don’t remember much after that, but apparently the procedure took a mere 5 minutes, and it didn’t hurt at all. The nurse led me out to another waiting room and fed me juice and cookies, and I was allowed to rest for as long as I needed.

And...that’s it! I felt pretty awful for about two weeks afterward – bled for about a week, certain parts of me were swollen to painful proportions, and my emotions were a total rollercoaster, but...it got better. I’m sitting here now feeling 100% OK with my choice. My abortion went totally by the book, I haven’t been smitten by a vengeful god, I’m not wracked with guilt, and my boyfriend and I are still together and happier than ever. That’s my happy abortion story...

Perhaps Betsy’s story makes your blood boil a little. Maybe it makes you sick to your stomach. Or maybe it just makes you sad – or a combination of all those things. And you would be on solid biblical ground to feel that way. But we cannot ignore the fact that, contained in Betsy’s story, is a microcosm of not only how a world thinks without Jesus but how it tries to solve what is perceived to be a problem.

It seems so logical and in a worldly warped sort of way – even heartwarming, right? “It’s not that I don’t love kids – I do. I’m just not ready yet to be a parent. My boyfriend and I want to do whatever we feel like doing in our dating life. This problem needs to go away.” “I’m not healthy enough to be a parent. If I can’t take care of myself, then how will I ever take care of a baby? And I don’t want to pass off my mistakes on somebody else – that’s not fair. If I can’t parent, then nobody should. All of this isn’t being unloving – it’s being a responsible human being in this world.”

That actually makes sense to us sometimes, right? Hasn’t it occurred to you on a few occasions that in some extreme circumstances having an abortion or allowing for an abortion might actually be warranted or even the most loving thing to do? When there is the legitimate horror of a rape or incest, doesn’t your sinful nature whisper that having an abortion might be alright just this once – all things considered. There’s been enough trauma in someone’s life and the burden of dealing with a pregnancy might be too much or even a constant reminder of the horrible ordeal? Nobody has to know, and even if they did, they would certainly understand. Certainly God will understand.

Unbelievers certainly think that way. They argue, “Oh, you want to talk religion? God – if there is one – didn’t strike me dead after having an abortion. The god I want to believe in doesn’t want me to be unhappy in any way. As long as I’m not hurting anyone else, he’s fine with it. In fact, my life is just as good, if not better, than before I got pregnant. These are good people at these clinics. They are nice and caring and kind and helpful. Everything was quick and easy, and I could go back to living my life the way I want to live it. That’s the kind of god I want and you Christians shouldn’t be condemning anyone, then, either.”

In the midst of all the darkened thinking of the world and the silenced cries of millions of aborted children last year alone, our Almighty God speaks His Law so clearly and forcefully and with all authority in heaven and on earth in His Holy Word: ***You shall not murder.*** To those who want to make their own rules: ***You are not your own. You were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body*** and St. Paul said, ***Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.*** When it comes to a person’s “right to choose” God lays it out for the world when He says, ***There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life.*** To a sinful world that so carelessly and maliciously abuses and destroys life, God will be the vengeful God that people fear, “smiting” them to hell forever.

Now I’d like you to meet someone else. She calls herself “Lisa.” She writes,

I am now 22 years old. When I was 13 I had an abortion because my mother thought it was the best thing for me to do. In some ways I agree. It would have changed my entire life but there were other options that were not considered and that I really did not know. ADOPTION! I realize at 13 I could not take care of a child. I knew nothing about having an abortion. The only thing I knew was it was there one minute and gone the next. The abortion clinic lied to me about the entire thing! They told me the baby would NOT feel a thing (LIE) they told me that it would

not hurt me (LIE) and I asked to see it afterwards and they told me it would just look like a blood clot (LIE).

I deeply regret what I have done and I have to live with the fact that I killed an innocent child. It is bad enough that we have murders everywhere but for a baby to die in his own mothers hands is not understandable. Every day is a challenge for me and I have decided instead of beating myself up, every day to try to change at least one woman's mind about abortion. If I can save at least one child from being aborted, I can start my own healing process and could feel a little better about this world...please post this letter and if any women have any questions about abortion or you are thinking of abortion please talk to someone first! Have you ever stopped to think what you are really doing? I didn't – and it cost my child their life. Thank you. Lisa.

Many have termed Lisa's experience as "post-abortion syndrome." From God's point of view we could even say it is God's calling someone to repentance through their conscience. In so many cases, God's Law does its work on a person's heart. Women will feel tremendous guilt for what they have done. Men will feel the weight of having pushed or pressured a woman to get an abortion to preserve a lifestyle or save some money.

The devil isn't stupid. He will even try to twist a call to repentance for His own purposes. He will torment people on the inside, trying to convince them that what they have done is the unforgivable sin. He will say, "You murdered your own child! What kind of monster are you? There is no forgiveness for you! In fact, there is a special place in hell for a mother who would do that to her own child."

Poor Lisa was willing to try anything to take the guilt away on her own. She would try to convince one woman every day to avoid having an abortion as her way to compensate for her guilt and pain. The devil loves that sort of thing! He knows that Lisa and countless other women will try to make up for their wrongs – only to find out such guilt never really goes away. He knows that for these people and their guilt, despair is just around the corner, and the devil will work hard to get them there.

God responds to these hurting souls too. It's summarized in the book of Isaiah when He said, ***Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*** God's people were hurting. They had suffered in captivity for 70 years. God came to them and said, "Your sins are forgiven. You will receive good things in double proportion to the sins you committed." In other words, God was quick to forgive, tender in His approach to hurting souls and more than willing to help them heal and bless them abundantly.

God says the same thing to people who struggle with guilt over an abortion. It's not an unforgivable sin. Jesus came to suffer and die on a cross for all sins including abortion. God offers a tender approach to those who are hurting because of their sinfully-poor choices and says, "I still love you. I forgive you. I will still bless you. I want you by my side. I will remain with you. Your sins – all of them – are gone forever because Jesus paid for them on the cross."

There's one final person I wanted to call your attention to. No names have been changed. It's the person that you see in the mirror each day. It's you. It's me. Our story is all too true. We are often a combination of Betsy and Lisa regarding life issues. Perhaps you haven't ever entertained getting or promoting an abortion, but it sure does seem harsh sometimes to disapprove of an abortion in extreme cases like rape and incest, and it really does seem like it's better to keep my mouth closed when the subject comes up in conversation so that peace and harmony can be preserved with my friends and family. It sure does feel good sometimes when someone else takes up the cause so I don't have to. Praying for the unborn is great in church, but it really hasn't made it on to my priority prayer list at home. When we are confronted with these things, then the guilt creeps into our hearts too. We need to repent.

God forgives us too. He speaks tenderly to us, assuring us of His forgiveness. He still loves us. He still wants us to be a part of His family, despite the times we let Him down. God sent His Son to give His life for us so that we could be assured of our life with Him forever.

Stories can be powerful and compelling, can't they? But the most compelling and most important story today is one that you might have missed. The most impressive, the most moving, the most powerful story today wasn't the one about Betsy, Lisa or you or me. The best and most powerful one was Jesus' suffering and death on a cross to take away our sins! Do you want to know why? It's because that's the only story that motivates and inspires us for all the right reasons in our life's story! And that's my prayer for all of you today. I want His story to influence your life's story so that you will be motivated and inspired to uphold and promote God's view of life like never before. May God bless us all to that end. Amen.