

Week 3, Day 11: Faith, Science, and the Struggles of Life

“My body! My choice!” For decades, we’ve heard this slogan. It usually stands as the rally cry of the pro-abortion crowd. How do you feel about it?

Today, I would ask you to try and take a giant step back. Separate yourself from politics and personal beliefs. Can’t we agree that Satan used COVID to get us to do some pretty crazy things? As conservative Christians, we reject the slogan: *“My body! My choice!”* That is – until now...

For those who didn’t want mandates, they took up the slogan: *“My body! My choice!”* Don’t we find this kind of strange and somewhat ironic?

I realize that devotions this week might make both sides a little upset. *“Why don’t you side with me, Pastor? No, why do you side with me?”* These devotions will not take anyone’s side but rather the side on which the Word of God stands. As we begin this week, we need to remember our core truths:

- **We are created and baptized children of God living by faith.**
- **We seek to give glory to God.**
- **We are here to show love to our neighbor.**
- **Sin, not God, is the cause of suffering.**
- **God uses struggles to give us blessings and the power of his grace.**

Based on these core truths, how do we view the slogan: *“My body! My choice!”*? There is one Bible passage that hits at the heart of the issue.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.

Read the passage carefully. **You are not your own!** The body I have been granted is not my body. It is a gift that God gives me to house my soul while I dwell on this earth. This body has sin so Jesus had to die for this body. He saved this body. He rescued this body. He bought this body. I have no choice over my body except the choice to glorify God with my body. Every choice I make is to give honor to him.

We can’t expect the unbeliever to accept these thoughts because unbelief, by its very nature, is self-centered. But we are Christians. We know better – or at least we ought to know better. For the Christian therefore, the argument *“My body, my choice”* is illegitimate from the get-go. It’s not your body. It’s not your life. You are not your own. It’s not up to you to decide what is best. It’s up to God. Because only he knows. And only he can be trusted to care for you and love you.

Only he died to redeem you, body and soul, from sin death and hell. We reject any use of this slogan because...

God's Truth #11: In the battles of life, my life belongs to the Lord.

Week 3, Day 12: Faith, Science, and the Struggles of Life

“My body! My choice!” We are Christians, but we are also Americans. As Americans, we cherish our individual rights. However, we need to remember that God hasn’t necessarily promised that we are to have all these individual rights. He has put us in submission to our government. The only time we can disobey our government is when it tells us to go against God’s Word. But we are Americans, and we almost make our freedoms the be-all and end-all of our lives. I love our freedoms. I thank God for our freedoms. However, in the midst of our freedoms it is good to remember the encouragement of the Apostle Paul:

Galatians 5:13-15:

¹³After all, brothers, you were called to freedom. Only do not use your freedom as a starting point for your sinful flesh. Rather, serve one another through love. ¹⁴In fact, the whole law is summed up in this one statement: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you keep on biting and devouring one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

My fellow Christians, we have to remember that we are influenced by the world in which we live. As Christian Americans, we have two documents we cherish: The Bible and the American Constitution. Let us not confuse the two or equate the two. The Bible is God’s Word. The Constitution is a human writing. The Constitution grants us freedoms that God hasn’t always said we would absolutely have all the time. Again, remember the Constitution is not equal to God’s Word. God’s Word proclaims to us freedom from sin, death, and the Devil. God’s Word proclaims that we are free from the curse of the law because Christ obeyed the Law perfectly for us and died in our place. God’s Word proclaims to us that we are not bound to keep the law in order to get into heaven. Jesus has secured our place in heaven. We are free. We have the greatest freedom of all. However, in our Christian freedom, we are still sinners with self-centered hearts. Let us be careful that we don’t use the freedom of our Christian faith to cover up the evil in our hearts. We still live under the royal law of our God – to love God and to love our neighbor. Therefore, we don’t say, *“My body! My choice!”* No, we proclaim: *“God’s body! God’s glory!”*

This has direct application to the struggles of our lives. When faced with an unwanted pregnancy, we look to our Lord and say: *“This is God’s body! Help me to carry this life to God’s glory!”*

The baby in the womb has different genes than the mother. A different brain. Different dreams. Different fingerprints. A different soul. Different everything. Every time someone screams, *“My body, my choice,”* they adamantly deny that exact right to the child inside them.

When faced with a long, painful suffering leading to death, we look to the Lord and say: *“This is God’s body! Help me to suffer to God’s glory!”*

When faced with painful treatments with an uncertain outcome, we look to the Lord and say:
“This is God’s body! Help me to bear this treatment to God’s glory!”

We know that God has a great plan for us even when we can’t see it. We can’t listen to the lies of the world with their catchy phrases that appeal to the self-seeking freedoms in our hearts. Looking to our Lord, we follow this truth...

God’s Truth #12: In the battles of life, all life is in God’s hands.

Hymn 427, vs. 1 (Christian Worship): We Are the Lord’s

**We are the Lord’s; his all-sufficient merit,
Sealed on the cross, to us this grace accords.
We are the Lord’s and all things shall inherit;
Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.**

Week 3, Day 13: Faith, Science, and the Struggles of Life

“My body! My choice!” Absolutely not! Life is truly a gift from God. We do not have the right to put our lives into our own hands. Let’s go back to our passage from 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.

Of course, Christians do not claim, *“My body! my choice!”* Nor do we claim that we are autonomous selves. Rather, we understand that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; that we belong body and soul to our faithful Savior.

This also applies to the issues of sexual orientation and transgender issues. No matter the feelings inside a person, our body is God’s body. Our lives are gifts from him. *“God’s body! God’s glory!”* is our motto. The world lies to us about how we are to raise our children. There has been a growing trend of parents raising their children without designating them male or female. As parents, we want to raise our children to the glory of God. We need to point them to the Gospel. The Gospel proclaims Jesus’ suffering and dying for our bodies and our souls. We want our children to recognize their true identity. Identity is not wrapped up in our physical make-up or our feelings. Identity is seen in the results of Jesus’ suffering and death. Before a man sees himself as man, he sees himself as a created and baptized child of God, purchased and bought with the blood of Christ. Before a woman sees herself as woman, she sees herself as a created and baptized child of God, purchased and bought with the blood of Christ.

Christian parents can raise daughters who grow up to accept and enjoy their femininity, knowing deep down that being a girl is a good gift from God. Likewise, Christian parents can raise sons to grow up to be healthy men who embrace their masculinity and see it as a good gift from God.

God calls us to proclaim the truth and beauty of his design and the redemption of sexual brokenness in our lives and culture through Jesus Christ. Like everyone else, “transgendered” individuals are desperately in need of God’s truth and deserve to know the love and compassion of Christ as shown through his people.

The church and our own families will have to deal with these issues. Dealing with these issues is hard, and the struggle is real. Sometimes we want to shrink from these battles and retreat back into the fortress of the church. However, let us remember that every battle is an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to a broken world.

God’s Truth #13: In the battles of life, we see ourselves through our true identity in Christ.

Hymn 427, vs. 2 (Christian Worship): We Are the Lord's

**We are the Lord's; then let us gladly tender
Our souls to him in deeds, not empty words.
Let heart and tongue and life combine to render
No doubtful witness that we are the Lord's.**

Week 3, Day 14: Faith, Science, and the Struggles of Life

“My body! My choice!” Absolutely not! *“God’s body! God’s glory!”* is our motto. How does this apply to the conflict surrounding vaccines? Let’s start with something at place where we all agree. Satan has used the issue of vaccines to divide us. Whenever there is division, it is not from God. It is from Satan who would like to see us in conflict. In our conflict, Satan is happy, God is not. Listen to this encouragement from Scripture:

Hebrews 12:14:

¹⁴Pursue peace with everyone and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

Pursue peace. Peace doesn’t come naturally. We need to fight for peace. Oftentimes, we need to fight against our own heart which is naturally selfish and self-centered. Why would we pursue peace? Hebrews says: “...**without which no one will see the Lord.**” As we strive to live peacefully with everyone around us, God wants us to continue to live a holy life rather than adapting ourselves to the sinful lives of others in order to keep the peace. If all people see in us conflict, how can they see the Lord? No, as we live by the motto: *“God’s body! God’s glory!”*, others will see the Gospel of the Lord shining forth. Why should we let disagreement over a vaccine cause conflict? When people see our lives, whether in person or on social media, do we want them to see the love of Jesus, or do we want them to see our political or personal views? We want them to see the love of Jesus. So, stop the nonsense of shouting our political or personal views. Rather, let us put more energy into showing people the love of Jesus.

This then will help us in our disagreements about vaccines or mandates or the like. When taking a personal stand, remember we may be wrong. Let me use my case as an example. Please understand that what I am about to share with you is my opinion. I chose to get the vaccine for two reasons: One is that I trust that God has given scientists, researchers, and doctors some incredible knowledge. I trust that God has used even unbelieving men and women to produce good things for the world and that modern technology makes that happen faster than in previous generations. Secondly, I want the ability to visit with people with a lesser fear of spreading a disease. What I have shared with you is my opinion. I realize that my opinion may be wrong. Years from now, if I start facing some devastating effects of the vaccine, I know that I was wrong. However, I may be proved to be right. But I based my decision on the Scriptural truth that I am a created and baptized child of God. This body is his temple. I chose to do this to his glory. I didn’t do it because I was afraid of death or disease. I did it because this is where my faith led me. Another Christian may argue that they are not getting vaccinated because they also believe their body is the temple of God and they don’t want to put anything into it that is not tested.

As Christians, we should always be charitable toward others. This means that it is better to remain humble and make it known that we might be wrong. Maybe the vaccines are moral, safe, and effective. In such a case, we can grant someone the courtesy of making their own choice. We can respect those who have received the vaccine just as we hope they can respect those of us who

have not. This would be a great victory in this time of division, distrust, and chaos, wouldn't it?

God's Truth #14: In the battles of life, act to pursue peace, not our own views.

Hymn 427, vs. 3 (Christian Worship): We Are the Lord's

**We are the Lord's; no darkness brooding o'er us
Can make us tremble while this star affords
A steady light along the path before us-
Faith's full assurance that we are the Lord's.**

Week 3, Day 15: Faith, Science, and the Struggles of Life

We began this journey 15 days ago – realizing we have only scratched the surface of our study. But the time has come to end our study. How shall we end it? When asked by people what to do in certain situations, I often don't talk about the *what* of the situation, but the *why*. Why – what is our motive? What guides us? One more time, remember our guiding principles:

- **We are created and baptized children of God living by faith.**
- **We seek to give glory to God.**
- **We are here to show love to our neighbor.**
- **Sin, not God, is the cause of suffering.**
- **God uses struggles to give us blessings and the power of his grace.**

Whether we realize it or not, every decision in life has a spiritual implication. There is a spiritual side to every decision. From something as simple as what we eat to something as complex as getting a vaccine, we need to turn to our Lord for direction and motivation.

Just recently I sat with my sister and her children in the midst of extreme grief. My sister's husband had been suddenly killed in a trucking accident. How can one make sense of the struggle and trials and griefs of life? At the cross. Only at the cross can we find true hope, comfort, and strength. Every year when we travel the Lenten journey, we see a battle unfolding the likes of which we will never face. In the battle, Jesus comes into the middle of our battles to fight for us. At the end of his battle, Jesus proclaims victory for us. With victorious hands outstretched, he holds us in the battles we face. His love upholds and strengthens us. Listen to the encouragement of the Apostle Paul:

2 Corinthians 5:14-15:

¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, because we came to this conclusion: One died for all; therefore, all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves but for him, who died in their place and was raised again.

This passage always reminds us to look up to our Lord before we look around at the struggles. We are tempted to look downward and horizontally and think only of ourselves. The Gospel lifts our eyes and hearts to the love of our Savior. Whatever we face, the love of Christ compels us to move forward in confidence. Jesus loves you more than you can imagine. In the greatest act of love, when Jesus looked down from the cross and saw us in our sin and struggle, he stayed. He stayed there to battle sin, death, and the Devil for us. He stayed there so that we could find sense and meaning in the struggles of life.

What are you facing? What is your battle? Hold this close to your heart:

- **The love of Jesus means I am a created and baptized children of God living by faith.**
- **The love of Jesus means I seek to give glory to God.**
- **The love of Jesus means I am here to show love to my neighbor.**
- **The love of Jesus means that sin, not God, is the cause of suffering.**
- **The love of Jesus means that God uses struggles to give us blessings and the power of his grace.**

In all of our struggles and battles, let us look up.

God's Truth #5: In the battles of life, first look vertically to God and see his amazing love holding you.

Hymn 427, vs. 4 (Christian Worship): We Are the Lord's

**We are the Lord's; no evil can befall us
In the dread hour of life's fast loos'ning cords;
No pangs of death shall even then appall us.
Death we shall vanquish, for we are the Lord's.**

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