

Pro-Life Theology

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Preacher: Zac Story

[0 : 00] Apparently that's my cue. I'm not on. So am I good, Roger?

You're good. Cool, cool. All right, so I have a tendency to think at 0.8 speed but talk at 3.0 speed. And I also like the sound of my voice too much.

So today I tried writing out one. See how that goes? I welcome all feedback afterwards. Yeah, to God be the glory.

Just to say out this is a, just to make it explicit at the beginning, this is a topical pro-life sermon in honor of the Walk for Life and current Colorado issues. So, yeah, with that, I shall begin.

Oh, actually a timer too, just to make sure I'm honoring the time well. Cool.

[1 : 13] Greetings, Little Log Church. Greetings, Temples of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for being here to honor our great God, Yahweh, the triune creator God of the universe.

Let us continue to honor him with a sermon. Let us start by reading the Word of God. After all, the Word of God is what sermons are supposed to be about. So, I ask y'all to turn to 2 Timothy 3.1.

2 Timothy 3.1. From there, I will read through to 2 Timothy 4.5. Now, for reasons I'll explain after the prayer, this sermon will not be our usual affair.

It is a topical pro-life sermon rather than a general expository one. So this passage will be one of many that we will look at. Still, it is a good passage to start with and maybe perhaps to end with as well.

So if you are able, please stand, at least as long as you are able, for the reading of God's Word, 2 Timothy 3.1-4.5.

[2 : 28] Here are the words of God. But understand this, that in the last days, there will come times of difficulty, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.

Avoid such people, for among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins, and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

Just as Janus and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth. Men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith, but they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Laestra, which persecutions I endured, yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

[4 : 14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I charge you, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word.

Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but have itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

And will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded. Endure suffering.

[5 : 25] Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry. So it reads the word of God. Let us pray. O Yahweh, O triune God, Father that is in heaven, Jesus our Lord and Savior, your spirit, that makes us temples.

May my words to this congregation be the words of thoughts that seek after your thoughts. And to the extent that they do so, may they be remembered.

To the extent that they fail to do so, may they be forgotten. In your precious name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. To start, let me just say that it is good that we do not do what I am doing too often.

To elaborate, it is good that most servants given at this pulpit are more strictly expositional in nature. It is good that we most regularly read God's word as it has been given to us.

As a collection of books that causally and spiritually connect to each other across time and cultures. And that, when we pick one to read, we read it through without compromise, regardless of how enlightening, depressing, intriguing, or full of genealogies it is.

[6 : 45] It is good that we do not regularly do what I am about to do, which is to give a topical sermon where I pull together passages from across the Bible according to the topic of choice. The reason for this is simple.

The expositional style forces one to deal with what the text actually says, while the topical style is more capable of being used to make the Bible say what we want it to say. For example, this style is how one cult makes the case that Isaac was God and that there is both God the Father and God the Mother.

They only do topical exegesis according to the topics determined in advance. If someone wants to make a topical sermon, then it should be done in the context of consistent exposition.

Still, it is good that we do this on occasion, for in our fallen world, issues come up that need God's light to shine on them. They need the sword of the Spirit to cut through the mess.

One way to do that is to isolate the issues according to their assertions and context and faithfully seek the passages in the Bible that have the most to say about them, never forgetting, though, what those verses were intended to be about.

[7 : 59] Here's my attempt to do so with the current abortion issue. May Yahweh be glorified in the attempt. To understand the spiritual foundational context of our situation, I have a biblical passage and a non-biblical passage to compare.

The biblical passage is Proverbs 1-7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. What I want to compare this to is the assertion made by a famous Greek philosopher and sophist, Protagoras, who lived 400 to 500 years before Christ and was Socrates' senior fellow.

He states, Let me repeat.

The Bible. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Protagoras, a person is the measure of all things.

Of things that are that they are and of things that are not that they are not. The difference here is of utmost importance. The Bible makes it quite clear that the creator, self-revealing God of the Bible is the standard by which to understand everything.

[9 : 19] Protagoras, in stark contrast, says that we are, we humans are the standard. Our attributes and abilities are the ultimate way by which to understand everything.

Often, the biblical statements are treated as religious statements while the statement by Protagoras is seen as a philosophical one. I must disagree.

Both statements are not only philosophical, but both are deeply religious. Both are about what we should put our ultimate trust and faith in. They both deal with the basic foundation by which the entirety of creation ought to be seen in the light of.

Frankly, they are both claims about who God is. They are also both highly applicable today. The Bible and its God are, through any and all relevant arguments, the source of the one true faith from creation to the eternal afterlife.

It continues to stand the test of time and the inflourishes in it. Still, love or hate Greek thought, and I personally do much of both, is a testament to both their mental prowess and the biblical claim that nothing is new under the sun, that many of their beliefs still apply today.

[10:31] In fact, it is exceedingly difficult and perhaps impossible on our own to have a thought so novel as to not have at least a proto-version of it to be found in the writings of the ancient Greeks. Protagoras was one of those Greeks that, in statements like that above, posited a thought that applies to the core of how many people think.

This brings us to our second context, the abortion issue. Quite recently, in the great square known as Colorado, a House bill, HB 22-1279, was recently signed into law.

Its name, so to speak, is the following line, concerning the codification of a person's fundamental right to make reproductive health care decisions free from government interference.

Perhaps many of us are all too aware of abortion speak, but it is still noteworthy to point out how positive the wording makes this all sound, assuming that the words in this title are accurately used. The fact that the god of the universe died for us may hint that we are something special, which means that we should treat each other as if we are. Rights can be a great way of discussing such treatment, though like all words, their use can be so off that the definition itself becomes corrupted.

[11:47] Why use them here? The short answer is that the legislators of this state are seeking to make Colorado something of a sanctuary state for those who desire to have the life of the person growing inside of them terminated.

It's something of the mirror image of the laws that pro-life legislators have enacted in other states. They sought to enshrine a pro-choice view into this state, and our legislators have succeeded to a point in enshrining the antithesis of the pro-life version to such laws.

Going through all five pages of the bill could be instructive in certain contexts, but I need to constantly remind myself that this is a sermon. Things must be done here that cannot be well done in an apologetics lecture.

So I'll pick out a line that allows us to do the relevant biblical exposition and application. On page four, the following assertion is made in the bill. A fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus, does not have independent or derivative rights under the laws of this state.

This line may be many things, but I assert that as ultimately one of two possibilities. Either it is a measure of worth of the unborn found from a fearful study of the Bible and its God, or it is the measure of the worth of the unborn found in protogorean reasoning.

[13:11] Either it is a thought derived from the Christian faith, or it is a thought derived from the human faith. The bulk of this sermon is about figuring out which. In some ways, the passage from 2 Timothy worked well as our first text.

Among the treasure of riches found in that passage is bluntly stated that the scriptures that make up the Bible are capable for our training and correction. In order to do that, they need to be clear enough to dictate a certain degree of right and wrong.

The Apostle Paul demonstrates this fact of the scriptures in Galatians 3, 15 through 18, when he argues how the use of a singular form of word, as opposed to the plural, points us to Christ as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

Basically, the Bible is clear enough that it can teach us and train us, first in regards to itself, and then in regards to the situations that we face. Understanding that, we can look at the Bible from the perspective of abortion issues.

As with many things biblical, Genesis is a fantastic place to start. Genesis 1, 26 through 28 reads as follows, Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

[14:35] So God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them.

And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

In this section above, we see humanity created and especially so. While the whole universe reflects the nature of God on some level, only humanity does so to the degree that God makes that reflection explicit.

He makes us in his likeness then gives us authority in his likeness. It is important to note that the authority does not stem from our own abilities. Rather, it stems from God. We reflect his nature and we are to follow his commands.

This early on into the Bible, we already get a glimpse of how we are to be righteous. If we are made in his image and are getting commands by him, we remain righteous by living in a way faithful to that image and by following those commands.

[15 : 39] Important to the wording of the House Bill and abortion is also clear that we are given value through our special creation, which can be used to defend the idea that humans have special rights. If the House Bill has a problem, it may not be that we humans have rights.

So as in our study, the moral status of the House Bill is unresolved. So let us continue. The next passage will not resolve that issue, but it first solidifies the idea that we indeed have some form of special rights or something akin to that.

In fact, it is only a few chapters later in Genesis that we gain further insight into how valuable it is to be made in the image of God. After the flood, Noah makes an offering to God.

After God promises not only to never strike down virtually all living creatures again, but to maintain an ordered creation so long as the earth remains, we read the following in Genesis 9, 1 through 7. And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea.

[16 : 49] Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

And for your life blood I will require a reckoning. From every beast I will require of it and from man. And from his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.

Just how much God is willing to deliver the world around us, to us, even in the now fallen world, is a sign of the privileged place he continues to maintain for us in his created order.

However, the most telling part in regards to our value is the punishment that both man and animal will receive for ending a human life. We, as those who most reflect the nature of God, are so valuable that our destruction is an insult to God worthy of death.

[17 : 56] We may still not be able to adjudicate whether the house bill is right or not, yet, but it is clear that whoever is human clearly has a protected status. It is therefore important to know whether the house bill is correct and who is, who does and do not, and who, sorry, poorly worded, who does and, who does not count as human, who is and who is not defined as human.

This brings us to our next passage, and this passage brings us past Noah, the patriarchs, and Joseph. We are now at the beginning of Exodus in the account of the oppression that the Israelites were facing.

In Exodus 1, 15 through 21, we read the following. Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shipra and the other Huah, when you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, excuse me, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.

But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. The king of Egypt called to the midwives and said to them, why have you done this and let the male children live?

The midwife said to Pharaoh, because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives come to them. So God dealt well with the midwives and the people multiplied and grew strong.

[19 : 30] And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. I have not talked much about this passage before in the context of pro-life theology.

The main reason is that it's technically talking about those who are born, while abortion is technically about the unborn. However, a reason to include this passage stems from the fact that there are only gradual differences between those who are born and not born.

In fact, the differences are so gradual that it is often difficult for pro-choicers to discern the moral difference between abortion and infanticide. If the concept of abortion rights stems from the human faith, then those rights are as contentless as the humans vapor here one day and God in the next that created them.

Further, in a condition of hostility towards God, people adherent to themselves as God will have a vapor theology that, all things being equal, will tend towards an increasing antipathy toward the biblical view.

To use Paul's words, the pro-choicer view will go from bad to worse. Infanticide is always a risk. However, even if abortion is a biblical view, this passage makes it clear that infanticide most definitely is not.

[20 : 44] And please note the if on that last statement. In fact, it is so wrong that lying for the sake of the born, which is a sin in and of itself, is not only a condoned activity, but a blessed one.

To be clear, fearing the true God and perhaps the proverbial truths that come with it is a prerequisite for knowing this act of lying to be moral and for this act to be moral. But that should not be surprising because, as stated before, it is the nature of that God and is designed and creating us to reflect that nature that gives us value in the first place.

What would normally be a sin is a virtue when it comes to protecting the lives of infants made in the image of God, so long as it is done in reverence to the very God that we are made in the image of. Only a few chapters away, we find a passage that I have also missed in past studies, Exodus 4, 10 through 12. When Moses is trying to get out of the plan that God has in store for him, here is one of the back and forth between them created.

But Moses said to the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue. Then the Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth?

[22 : 00] Who makes him mute or deaf or seen or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? The importance of this text is found in many of the reasons for justifying abortion.

We not only live in a world of disabilities, but we live in a world where a perceived disability is a reason for abortion. For example, some countries have abortion rates well over 90% and virtually 100% in some instances for the unborn who are believed to have Down syndrome.

By contrast, in the Bible, God clearly states that he makes all peoples of all abilities and disabilities and all are made in his image for his purpose. This does not quite get to the House Bill issue since the House Bill phrases things differently.

The unborn never had a right to begin with according to the definition stated in it, so such discussions are somewhat mute. However, I cannot help but feel at this point that the walls are closing in for the pro-choice position, like when a Roman army would build a wall around a city in order to cut off every means of escape.

Other options, and heavily relayed ones, are being revealed as biblically wrong and therefore factually false and ethically untrue. In fact, it may only take a related verse to close off and start starving out the assertion of the House Bill.

[23 : 17] In John 9, 1-5, Jesus passes by a blind man. Here is part of what happens. As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth, and his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day.

Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Now, much of salvific importance is happening here, and I do not mean to act like it is not there.

Still, there is a real nuance to this text that is important for figuring out the biblical viability of a pro-abortion position like that of the House Bill. This man was blind from birth, so if he was capable of sinning in a way that would cause him to be punished with blindness, he had to be able to do so in utero.

To use the words of the House Bill, he had to be able to sin as a fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus.

Jesus, consistent with the use of personal and proper nouns in both testaments, never rebukes the disciples for assuming unborn personhood.

[24 : 38] In fact, after pointing out that their dichotomy is incorrect, he talks in a fate-like way about the man that echoes what we read in Exodus 3. Who made this blind man?

Was it not the Lord? At this point, the House Bill seems to be biblically failing. The unborn seem to clearly be human persons and it is clear that human persons have value so immense that harm to them is worthy of punishment.

The House Bill's rights talk seems to be unethical word usage. However, I could not end the body of this sermon without a death nail to pro-abortion views, if I know where there is one at least, and I believe that I do.

In Exodus 21, after the flight from Egypt and after the Israelites have a very sobering opportunity to hear directly from God, here is what God then tells Moses.

Exodus 21, 22 through 25. When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, and the woman's husband shall oppose upon him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.

[25 : 49] But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

The reason why this text works like a death nail is that it not only contradicts the assertions found in the house bill, but it goes completely in the opposite direction in doing so.

For a start, the text makes it clear, both by calling the unborn children and by putting them in the same category as the mother, that it is wrong to even harm, let alone kill the unborn.

This text is an archetype of what is commonly called Old Testament justice, and that justice can be applied because of harm done to either or both the mother and the children.

However, this text does not stop there, for one has an incomplete understanding of the text if one does not know it's a crucial fact. The harm done in this case is unintentional.

[26 : 49] The men are fighting with each other, not her. The pregnant woman and her unborn children are considered innocent by standards. It is the men that are accountable. In other words, the value of the unborn is so well understood that even accidental damage is punishable even to the point of taking the life of the one who accidentally takes away life.

I'm going to pause here in a sec. As we talked about, I want to make sure we are Christians, not Jews. Our faith is foundational on the Jewish text, but incomplete with only it.

So when I talk about this, I encourage us to all look in New Testament eyes, always discuss. So I'm not saying that this is like a law current for us as is.

What I'm saying is, and I think Mark Harbour said it very well this morning, that we are saying that we are seeing how God thinks about this. So whether it should be enshrined in law today like it is there, regardless of the fact, we know how God sees this and what it morally looks like to him.

Back to my text. Again, for contrast, compare this to the House Bill. The born person seeking the abortion has all the rights, while the unborn person has none of them.

[28 : 11] Those seeking to terminate the life of the unborn children are protected. The unborn children are not. The biblical model more than reverses this, for even those who accidentally kill the unborn will lose their right to life, while the unborn are always protected.

Second note on this point, someone else pointed out this morning that, well, I believe this is still a death nail text, someone might be able to argue that you can only say that the unborn are human when you can show proof in that mistake, proof in that scenario.

However, I would then just appeal to Psalm 139, where it is made explicitly clear that basically as far as we can track ourselves to a beginning, we exist then.

So the Bible does not leave, and in the full context, the Bible does not leave room for that either.

Back to this. There are more passages, many of which are found as an insert in your bulletin.

Hint, hint. However, time is fleeting enough, and the case is clear enough that I must move on. But before I do so, though, let me sum what has been stated so far.

[29 : 19] Two of the major forces at work in the world and two that are at work on this issue are the adherence of God and the wisdom that he provides and the adherence of man and the wisdom that they provide. Realistically, in our partially secular society, they are the two most likely options before expositing the Bible regarding this matter.

After expositing the Bible, it is clear that the house bill only makes sense in terms of a human faith where one acts like Protagoras and decides things for oneself.

At least it makes as much sense as a finite, fallible, and by itself groundless humanity can make of it. In contrast, though, the one true God who is the creator and sustainer of us and the world around us has made it clear that the house bill and anything like it are as impoverished as they are backwards.

The rights talk found in the bill is disingenuous speech and the lack of rights of the unborn for the sake of the unborn is antithetical to how things actually are. The house bill ends up being a means

by which God can be blasphemed by the state and Protogorian adherence by the regular and therefore genocidal murder of the unborn.

So, where does this leave us? Or, as much more brilliant men than I have posed it, how then shall we live?

[30 : 46] This law is now on the books and in a nation where even temporary laws refuse to die, it seems like it is here to stay. What can we do as the innocent die?

As the wise woman says to Prince Ashitaka in the film called Princess Mononoke, you cannot alter your fate, my prince. However, you can rise to meet it if you choose.

This statement managed to weigh on me even though that in the world that this film takes place in, the gods are, in a word, pathetic. Bestial, personally one-dimensional, capable of great failures, demonic failures, frankly, and ultimately nothing a few well-placed canon shots couldn't handle.

In that world, the humans acting as God managed to have the upper hand on the actual gods, but all of them, clearly, both gods and men, are ultimately at the mercy of a nameless, faithless, faceless, and very apathetic fate.

Contrast that to our world, which was created, ordered, and is being constantly preserved by an all-knowing, all-powerful, ever-present, all-just, and all-loving God, who not only created us in a way that reflects his divine qualities, but has maintained a personal relationship with us to the point of dying for us so that we will be saved if only we believe.

[32 : 09] The author of our fates is also the personal God who is our eternal Father, our Savior, and the Spirit that makes his home with us. In all important senses, he is the God that is present and in control.

Further, this is the same God who not only will win regardless of our failings in the sense of final judgment and the renewed creation, but who has already won?

Jesus rose from the dead. No enemies are left. We are 2,000 years into the longest route that has ever taken place. The enemies, regardless of what gods they take the form of, are engaging in nothing more than a malicious slash-and-burn retreat.

It is as brutal as it is petty, but petty it most definitely is. This is important because since he is totally in control of the situation, he can let and often will let the means that he chooses partake in his victory.

In these last days, God has seen fit to use the church and he has not left it without tools that can be used to rise to meet our fate, to take on the situation we have been given by God to the glory of God and to the benefit of mankind.

[33 : 21] One of these tools, I strongly believe, is the Life Network. While we must always be wary of wolves in sheep's clothing, this local organization, on both more personal and more factual accounts, consistently seems to be the real deal.

They actually save lives and help others regardless, as is seen in the fact that they do, among other things, both pre-abortion outreach and post-abortion recovery.

Frankly, our dear leaders in Denver can LARP around all they want, imagining us in their own image so long as we have community-driven, Christian-based organizations like the Life Network on our side.

So I encourage you all to please consider supporting them through the Walk for Life campaign going through the very beginning of June. And for records, doctors also save the storks, which is another local group that does incredible work.

However, one of our tools is not only of profound importance for this issue, but for all issues that we will ever face.

[34 : 31] As was read in 2 Timothy, the Bible, the very sword of the Spirit, is what is used to equip us for every good work. It does not just do so for this issue, but for every possible issue.

God is not surprised by any of them, and if we seek Him through His Word, we will be prepared for them as they come. So on the one hand, I suggest we deal with the specific issue of abortion in an abortion sanctuary state by supporting frontline workers like those of the Life Network.

However, and honestly more importantly, I suggest that we deal with this specific issue in the same way that we deal with all issues. Read God's Word, pray to Him, seek Him in the peace and understanding that only He can provide.

Only in that way can we fulfill whatever ministry the God of life has in store for us. May pro-life ministries be no different in that regard. Let us pray. Our Father in Heaven, Head of the Triune God,

glory be to You.

Thank You for being the God of life, the creator and sustainer of life and everything around with it. Thank You for being life-centered, for being human-centric, that through all the darkness, all of it, You have made us persons in Your image and You let us know that You are in control.

[35 : 56] Oh, how we forget, Father. Oh, how it is easy to lose sight. And if we had no higher hope than You, who could blame us? Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow another thousands of babies die.

But we have no excuse for You are here. You are present. You are not silent. You are in control. You have made Yourself known and You have showed us what we can do. So I pray, Lord, that through Your power we will rise to the occasion across all the things, always with the idea of Your salvation in mind, knowing who was the God who redeemed us from sin, who took us from death to life.

And may we, through that, consistently, in every sense, preach the Word of the God of life. In Your name I pray.

Amen. Amen.