

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7

“Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

“ Lord, Test My Judging Heart”

Here at Church of the King we make a point of focusing on the particular sin of abortion in our nation as we approach the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion-on-demand. That decision legalized abortion through the full nine months of pregnancy!

And yet with forty-six more years of scientific advances which confirms the humanity of the unborn child, it remains what we sadly call the “law of the land.”

In fact, even today the State of New York is working on legislation to codify that reality in their state laws to protect the right to kill the unborn even if the Roe decision is overturned.

- At bottom abortion is just a modern form of the child sacrifice that we see in far too much of human history.

Babies were sacrificed to idols so that a person or people could prosper, and in Rome fathers were even given the choice after birth to decide if the new child was good for his family or not. Unwanted children were often left at the city dumps and Providentially they were a source of growth in the early church as Christians rescued many of them and raised them as their own.

Sadly, child sacrifice even came to God’s people in the reign of King Manasseh, who was held responsible for bringing the practice of child sacrifice to Jerusalem. In II Chronicles we read that King Manasseh, “led Judah & the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the Jehovah destroyed before the people of Israel.”

King Manasseh was harshly judged individually: He was captured, taken to Babylon & tortured. But there he also repented and was restored, which should give us great hope today!

- There is NO sin beyond the reach of God’s grace! *Not even abortion.*

However, we must remember that the nation was held responsible as well:

Many years later when it came time for the judgment of Judah, we read in II Kings 23:26 these chilling words: “Still Jehovah did not turn from the burning of His great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.”

As I have pointed out before, we need to ponder just how rapidly God’s people can move from faithfulness to such depravity... From the golden age of King Solomon to the Babylonian exile was less than four hundred years... About the time that has elapsed since the Mayflower Compact!

- We have certainly kindled the wrath of God with our slaughter of some sixty million children and so this morning we will consider again how we should respond.

I want us to review some familiar passages that provide three sources of wisdom to rightly guide our actions in the battle before us:

- The Bible calls us to action!
- The Bible gives us the reason for such action.

- **And the Bible commands us to determine the rightness or wrongness of our actions as we saw in the morning text from the Sermon on the Mount.**

Our call to action comes from the Book of Wisdom that we are reading through this month: In a chapter we reach on Thursday we see this...

Proverbs 24: “10 If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small. 11 Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. 12 If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will he not render to each man according to his deeds?”

- **With one in three pregnancies today ending in the death of the unborn child at the hands of an abolitionist, we have no way to say we did not know!**

We are to be those who are willing and able to “Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter.”

This is why as a church we support ministries that help women facing an unwanted pregnancy and those who directly confront the abortion industry.

- **We must also remember that after forty-six years of this madness there are many impacted by past sins of abortion.**
- **Just as there was forgiveness even for a wicked ruler like King Manasseh or even Saul of Tarsus who was murdering Christians, we must be those beautiful feet that carry the Good News to those in need.**

Remembering those stumbling to the slaughter not only applies to the unborn who are in immediate danger of death:

- **But we are also called to remember those whose broken & hardened hearts have them on the road to everlasting damnation!**

Sadly, far too many churches are fearful of addressing this difficult issue because they know there are likely those who have participated in or assisted others in having an abortion in their congregation.

- **Not, wanting to upset them, or cause controversy means that we do not confront them with their sin and offer the hope of the Gospel.**

Again, the attitude with which this is done is just as important as the facts that are presented. And speaking of facts, let me turn to the next familiar text that should give us great comfort and guidance in the midst of this battle. With our modern science discovering the wonder of genetics and giving us a window into the womb with the ultra-sounds, there should be no doubt about the humanity of the unborn child.

- **BUT we must remember that history teaches us that humanity can be set aside for the sake of politics and/or convenience.**

There was a time here in America where the Black members of the human race were not considered as persons under our Constitution to justify slavery. In Nazi Germany it was legal to kill Jews and other unwanted groups because it was determined that they were not persons under German law.

[why legal is often placed in quotes]

- **That New York statue that I mentioned clearly states that an unborn baby is treated as a human with legal rights ONLY AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN BORN!**
- **As Christians we know that it is not man nor his governments that should determine who is or is not made in the Image of God and worthy of legal protection.**

Long before our modern science confirmed the personhood of the unborn, our Creator made it very clear in the Book of Psalms!

Psalm 139 is a glorious Psalm that speaks of God's knowledge and the wonder of our own creation:

“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.”

So just how much does our God know about us? That should change how we live our daily lives, should it not? The Psalmist then reminds us that there are no little corners of our lives where we can escape His presence:

7 “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.”

- Having confirmed the wonder of God's knowledge and presence, the Psalmist then confirms what happens in the womb thousands of years before any man could see it with microscopes or sonograms.

13 “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.”

When we consider how God forms each of us and knows each of us you can understand the anger God displayed against His people:

Ezekiel 16: “20 “Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, 21 that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire?”

- Notice carefully that God does not call them “their” children, but rather “My children.”

The Psalmist then takes what I used to think was an odd twist, but have come to realize is no different than the teaching that Jesus gave on judging rightly.

Today, if we reflect on the wonder of what God does in the womb as the Psalmist has done & then think about one in three of them ending in violence, it should rightly make us angry and cause us to call down God's judgment.

Remembering that the Psalmist was also surrounded by child sacrifice, this is exactly what he now does:

19 “Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. 20 For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. 21 Do I not hate them,

O Jehovah, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.”

The Psalmist understands the need to be rightly outraged, but then quickly asked the Lord to judge his attitude:

23 “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.”

So yes, we should be outraged by the sin of abortion as our own nation offers up God’s children on the altar of personal peace and affluence. But we must check our attitude with the final prayer of the Psalmist; praying that God would search us and know our hearts. And that is what Jesus was teaching His own disciples and all of us in our morning text:

We must remember that we are judged by the same standard that we judge others! Have we confessed our own sins before confronting others?

- **We are not to ignore the specks that others have in their eyes, but rather help remove them. However, we are NOT to try and help them while a log remains in our own.**

So what have we learned from these familiar passages?

- **We saw clearly in Proverbs 24 that the Bible call us to action!**

For our lives today that means praying as the Psalmist prayed and being involved in confronting abortion as the Lord leads each of us. This can be anything from raising our own children in the fear & admonition of the Lord to working with a Pro-Life ministry or on behalf of political leaders, or future political leaders who understand the gravity of our sin.

- **In Psalm 139 & the history of Israel we clearly understand the reason for and the importance of such action**

Again, for today, this means that we must be informed. If you are not familiar with fetal development, there are plenty of resources available today. It is part of our responsibility in discipling our covenant children and others who join Church of the King.

- **And finally we must join with the Psalmist in praying that God would help us to determine the rightness or wrongness of our actions, remembering the Words of Jesus in the morning text from the Sermon on the Mount.**

At bottom, when it comes to the issue of abortion, we are not to hide our heads in the sand and we are not to fear being involved with real people!

- **We see the application of these principles in the life of Jesus as He ministered to the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery, and in His famous parable about the Good Samaritan.**

This is why we support as a church the ministries that not only confront the sin of abortion in the public square but those who give women a loving alternative and help those in need. This should extend to our individual lives as well:

- **God will bring those in need across your path and there are always opportunities to serve.**
- **AGAIN, our covenant children will learn by our example.**

In addition to providing practical help, we must never fear to preach the Gospel!

This presentation of the Gospel to our culture includes the praying of the imprecatory Psalms as we are doing this week as a congregation.

Our proper response to grave sin is to cry out for God's justice...

Remembering it is God's responsibility to determine how that justice will be carried out NOT ours.

- **When we understand this and truly believe that God does all things well, then we can have peace in the midst of such grave sin.**

We struggle at times to understand how God works out His justice as Asaph did in Psalm 73 when he could not understand the prosperity of the wicked. It was not until he entered God's sanctuary and considered things from God's perspective that he found peace. When we realize all of this, we begin to see that the Imprecatory prayers not only call down God's judgment but also give us peace as we remember that God is in control. It is also important to remember that we are not damning someone to hell by these prayers. As I have often pointed out as an example, the early Church had two fierce enemies in Saul of Tarsus and King Herod:

- **Both were persecuting the early Saints, even to the point of death!**

It is likely that some of the very imprecatory prayers we are praying today were lifted up against both men. In both cases God answered those prayers by slaying the wicked...

Saul fell before the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and King Herod fell before lowly worms. BOTH ceased to be enemies of God's Church:

- **One went to hell & the other went on to serve the King of Kings.**

If you me ask why one was given amazing Grace and the other hardened, I must answer as the Apostle Paul does at the end of Romans chapter eleven: "33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

The bottom-line is that we are to trust that God knows what He is doing... That sounds so simple, and yet since the time that Eve questioned God's wisdom in the garden we have all fallen so short in that regard!

And the way we demonstrate that trust is to be faithful:

Faithful about knowing the Truth

Faithful in helping those in need

Faithful in preaching the Gospel

Communion Meditation: I Corinthians 15

"26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and [f]blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks [g]in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the [h]Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many [i]sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment."