

**SERMON NOTES**  
**Genesis 38; Matthew 12:15-21**  
**“Valuing Life, Caring for the Bruised”**

**Intro:**

- **“A woman doesn’t want an abortion like she wants an ice cream cone or a Porsche, but like an animal caught in a trap who gnaws off its own leg.”**  
**(Frederica Mathewes-Green)**

**Abortion.** The very mention of the word evokes a wide range of powerful emotions depending on your life experiences and religious background and personal convictions  
*-many of you are passionately pro-life / some of you may be strongly pro-choice / some of you are ambivalent*

*-some of you have had abortions*

*-some of you have impregnated women who then had an abortion*

*-some of you have daughters who have had abortions - with or without your consent or knowledge*

*-some of you are infertile and would love to conceive or adopt a child*

*-perhaps someone here is struggling with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy*

\* One out of every 4 babies conceived in the USA is aborted

\* *More than 40 million abortions have occurred in the USA since the Jan. 22, 1973*

*Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion*

\* 80% of women getting an abortion are unmarried

\* *20% are teenagers / 34% are 20-24 / 46% are 25+*

\* **40% of minors having an abortion report that neither of their parents knew about the abortion**

\* 47% of women getting abortions have had at least one previous abortion

\* *About 95% of abortions are purely elective with no threat to the baby’s or mother’s health*

But of all the statistics I read, two of them jumped off the page:

\* **15 – 18 % of aborting women describe themselves as *evangelical or born-again Christians* (almost 200,000 a year)**

\* **One in six women in churches have experienced an abortion – some say more**

Those startling statistics say two things to me as a pastor:

(1) *There are a lot of emotionally & spiritually wounded women in the church with some painful skeletons in their closets*

(2) Christians could save up to 200,000 babies a year simply by doing a better job of reducing the number of abortions within the Christian community and Christian families

- **Christians need to be solid in our biblical convictions that every human life has dignity because we are created in the image of God, that every life matters to God, and that God has a purpose for every life – including the weakest and most vulnerable among us**
- ***And as Christians we need to extend Christ-like compassion to the weak and vulnerable and wounded and unwanted – including unwanted babies, women with unwanted pregnancies, and women who have been bruised by having unwanted abortions***

## I. GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR EVERY LIFE

- **The woman wants to postpone childbearing // she cannot afford a baby right now // she has a relationship problem with the father, or the father does not want the pregnancy // Her parents or boyfriend or husband object to the pregnancy // She is too young to be a mother // Having a child will disrupt her education or career path // She is not ready to have kids yet or she doesn't want any more children // She doesn't want to be a single parent, and the father is out of the picture // She doesn't want her parents to know that she is sexually active and pregnant // An ultrasound or medical test shows the possibility of a health problem with the fetus**
- **These are the primary reasons why women abort their babies**
- **There is a widely-held belief in our culture that children deserve a certain quality of life or else they should not be brought into this world**
- ***It would be better for the child not to be born at all than to enter the world disadvantaged by unfavorable circumstances***
- **If the mother is too young // or if she is too poor // or if she is single // or if the baby is unwanted by the mother – or by the father // or if the father is out of the picture – or the mother and father are not getting along // or if the woman is not ready to be a mother or already has enough children**
- **Or if the doctors believe that the baby may have a birth defect or health problem diminishing the quality of life – then it is better to suction or dismember the baby in the womb than to bring it into the world under unfavorable circumstances**
- **Better to be dead than to suffer a disadvantaged life of poverty or possible abuse or possible physical or mental disabilities or to grow up in a broken or dysfunctional family**

- *Put yourself In the following story with some rather bizarre birth circumstances:*
- Your mother's first husband was such a wicked man that he was put to death by God
- *Then your mother had a sexual relationship with her first husband's brother, who was also put to death by God*
- Then your mother – a widow – returned to her father's house to live and to wait for a husband with whom she could start a family
- *Your mother was promised that she could marry the younger brother of her first husband when he grew up*
- But that promise was not kept by her father-in-law – and she got tired of waiting for a husband with whom to have children
  
- Your mother heard that her father-in-law – now a widower – was going out of town on a business trip
- *She went to the hotel where he was staying and disguised herself as a call girl and then seduced her father-in-law, who did not recognize her*
- During the night, she stole one of her father-in-law's credit cards from his wallet
- *The father-in-law never had a clue that he had just had sex with his daughter-in-law*
  
- About 3 months later, the father-in-law found out that his daughter-in-law was pregnant as a result of engaging in prostitution
- *The father-in-law was outraged and demanded she be punished – even put to death!*
- As your mother was brought out to be punished for her sin – she produced the credit card, saying: *I am pregnant by the man who owns this credit card*
- **The credit card was her father-in-law's – he was busted for his own sin**
  
- ***So your mother's father-in-law is your father – she was pregnant with you and your twin brother***
- Your mother is a single parent who got pregnant by means of an act of prostitution with her father-in-law – *who is both your father and in some sense also your grandfather – but who never married your mother*
- **Would you call those favorable circumstances for a child coming into the world?**
- ***Surely such a child could serve no useful purpose in life and would be better off dead than being born under such sordid circumstances, right?***

- The story is not made-up
- *Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction*
- The story comes from Genesis 38 in the Bible
- *The baby boy is Perez // his mother is Tamar // and the father-in-law is Judah – one of the 12 sons of Jacob – the head of one of the 12 tribes of Israel*
- And not just any tribe – but the tribe of Israel's Kings
  
- From the tribe of Judah would come King David and Solomon – and from the tribe of Judah would come Jesus the Messiah
- *Now Judah had several sons – guess which son became the ancestor of King David and Jesus the Messiah*
- **That's right – Perez the son of Tamar**
  
- In fact, Tamar is one of only four women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:

**Matthew 1:2 - 3 (NIV)** <sup>2</sup>Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup>Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram,

- *The value of a life in God's purposes does not depend on the circumstances of the birth nor the virtues of the parents*
- **Every human being bears the divine image // Every life matters to God // God has a purpose for every life**
- *Neither the sins of the parents nor the poverty of the parents nor the life situation of the parents can diminish the value of a child's life in the sight of God*
- **Every child matters to God // God has a purpose for every life**
  
- *It is impossible to know the quality of life that will be experienced by a child in the womb*
- Some children born healthy and into loving, affluent, well-educated families end up suffering much misery in life
- *Some born with seemingly unlimited potential end up wasting their lives*
- Other children born into impoverished or dysfunctional families overcome much adversity and lead productive lives that are a blessing to many
- *Some children born with defects and disabilities end up being a blessing to their families and others*

- **And some children who are diagnosed in the womb as having such severe problems that they would be better off dead – end up perfectly healthy**

Pam knows about the pain of considering abortion. More than 21 years ago, she and her husband, Bob, were serving as missionaries to the Philippines and praying for a fifth child.

*Pam contracted amoebic dysentery, an infection of the intestines caused by a parasite found in contaminated food or water.*

She entered into a coma and was treated with strong antibiotics before they discovered she was pregnant.

*Doctors urged her to abort the baby for her own safety and told her that the medicines had caused irreversible damage to her baby.*

She refused the abortion and cited her Christian faith as the reason for her hope that her son would be born without the devastating disabilities physicians predicted.

**While pregnant, Pam nearly lost their baby four times but refused to consider abortion.** *Doctors later told Pam that her placenta had detached from the uterine wall, a condition known as placental abruption, which can deprive the fetus of oxygen and nutrients.* Doctors expected a stillbirth, Pam said, and they encouraged her to terminate the pregnancy.

She recalled making a pledge to God with her husband, *"If you will give us a son, we'll name him 'Timothy,' and we'll make him a preacher."*

Pam ultimately spent the last two months of her pregnancy in bed and, eventually, gave birth to a health baby boy August 14, 1987.

*Pam's youngest son is indeed a preacher. He preaches in prisons, makes hospital visits, and serves with his father's ministry in the Philippines.*

He also plays football.

**Pam's son is Tim Tebow, outstanding quarterback of the Florida Gators.**

- **Every child matters – God has a purpose for every life**
- **About 5 years ago, my sister Amy was told that the child in her womb had a serious defect – that the child had 0% chance of surviving the pregnancy – and that the pregnancy was endangering Amy's health and life**
- **Amy had a one-year-old boy and a husband to think of – and the doctors urged her to terminate her pregnancy within a week**
- **"The baby is not going to live no matter what – and continuing the pregnancy will only endanger your own life"**

- Amy and Marty do not believe in abortion – and they asked for another test and a second opinion
- *Their doctor urged them all the more strongly to abort the baby before the pregnancy harmed Amy*
- Marty and Amy put the baby's life – and Amy's – in God's hands
- *Yes, of course, they were anxious – and afraid – but they asked for prayer and trusted God to the best of their ability*
- A few weeks later, the baby's condition changed – and the doctors gave a much more optimistic prognosis
  
- **Show picture # 008**
  
- *Here is a picture of Emily Faith Demmings hugging our granddaughter Miah*
  
- **Show picture # 009**
  
- *And another one of Emily watching Miah play with a book*
- As you can see – Emily is perfectly healthy – though Amy and Marty would have loved her even if she were born with a birth defect
  
- **Stop showing picture**
  
- **Every life has value – God has a purpose for every life – whatever the birth circumstances may be –**
- **Every child matters to God.... and so does every woman**

## II. THE MESSIAH'S COMPASSIONATE CARE FOR THE BRUISED AND WEAK AND VULNERABLE

- *No woman wants an abortion as she wants an ice cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal caught in a trap wants to gnaw off its own leg.*
- **We talk about unwanted pregnancies – but most abortions are also unwanted**
  
- Sydna was a 2<sup>nd</sup> semester freshman at a Christian college
- *Her Christian parents were divorced, her relationship with her mother was strained, and her relationship with her father was practically non-existent*
- So she eagerly welcomed Alan's interest in her

- *She was lonely, and he was very attracted to her dark red hair and physical appearance*
- *His attention and companionship filled a void in her life – and his demands for sex seemed a fair price to pay for hanging onto Alan*
- *That summer, Sydna found herself pregnant*
- *When Alan found out that Sydna was pregnant, this was the supportive response of this loving boyfriend:*
- *“If you are thinking of continuing this pregnancy, Sydna, let me lay out the situation for you. First of all, I will tell everyone it’s not mine, and I will not allow my parents to help you. Your mother will have a nervous breakdown and probably put you on the streets. The college doesn’t allow pregnant students, so you’ll be kicked out. You’ll be on your own! It doesn’t look like you have much choice.”*
- *You’ve heard the saying: Behind every successful man is a loving, supportive wife*
- *Here’s another true saying: Behind nearly every woman who aborts her baby is an unsupportive, unloving man*
- *Sydna: Abortion was my only option; it seemed there was no other choice. I also thought that if his father was unwilling to love him, this child would be better off not being brought into the world... As I waited for the day of the abortion, I forced myself to view this child as the enemy that would end my mother’s sanity and my security.*
- *When I entered the clinic, I had felt like my heart was breaking. With each step down those four flights of stairs after the abortion, my heart got colder and harder. On the way home, Alan handed me a joint, and with it a new way of life. Armed with birth control pills from the clinic and drugs from Alan, whose shining armor was by now thoroughly tarnished, I began drowning my feelings with drugs and promiscuity. It was a lifestyle that would continue for many years.*
- *In January of 1976, Joan discovered that she was pregnant with her third child. She was 23, and she had two sons – one 2-years-old, and the other 6-months-old*
- *She had every intention of keeping this third child – until her husband came home drunk, put his fist through the TV set, and then grabbed Joan by the neck and began to beat her head against the wall*
- *This was not the first time she was beat up by her husband*
- *The next day she made an appointment for an abortion*
- *She decided that it would not be fair to bring another child into such a hostile and dangerous environment*

- Soon after her abortion, she left her husband and moved to Colorado
- *Her new boss, Chuck, was very appreciative of her work and attentive toward her*
- Joan succumbed to the advances of this married man
- *She became pregnant twice during their 2-year affair*
- Chuck insisted on abortions both times – after all, he was a married man and could neither marry her nor admit to fathering a child with her
- *She'd have to quit her job and go on welfare, and it wouldn't be fair to her other two children*
- The first abortion affected her emotionally more than she anticipated – and the second abortion was a nightmare both physically and emotionally
- *She felt used, abused, discarded and worthless – and turned to pot to ease her pain – until she decided to quit drugs – and harden her heart with bitterness and hatred instead*
  
- By the way, Sydna's story and Joan's story are both found in their book, *Her Choice to Heal*
  
- *Their stories represent thousands of women who have had unwanted abortions – women who have sinned, yes – but women who were first sinned-against*
- Women who walked into abortion clinics not as proud, strong, self-sufficient feminists – *but rather women who were weak and vulnerable and bruised and battered and scared and lonely and desperate*
  
- Those of us who are pro-life – and especially those of us who are pro-life men – need to understand the agonizing kinds of choices – *or the feeling that there is no other choice* – faced by many women with unwanted pregnancies who end up having unwanted abortions
  
- Most women – believing that their fetus is a baby and that abortion is wrong – are driven to abortion out of a sense of desperation and hopelessness because the alternatives seem too awful to contemplate
- *There may be some women who get abortions for purely selfish reasons -- but most women who get abortions sincerely believe that they are acting not only in their own best interests – but also in their unborn baby's best interests*
- That is the nature of the Lie that has been promoted in our culture to support abortion as a good and moral and necessary choice for women
  
- Abortion is presented as being good for women – and even as being good for unborn babies – *the lie that because the mother is in so much pain and feels so*

*trapped and is in such a hopeless predicament* – that, therefore, that baby would be better off never being born

- *That is not the only Lie that fuels 3-4,000 abortions a day in our society*
- The other Lie is this: ***sometimes it is in a mother's best interests to sacrifice the life of her baby for the sake of her own well-being***
- But the truth is: ***abortion harms the mother and father as well as the unborn baby***
- *Abortion is harmful to the dignity of women // and abortion is harmful to the souls of men*
  
- **You see, men were created to be more than bucks in rut.**
- Men who use women for their sexual pleasure and then pressure women into getting abortions are doing just the opposite of what they were created for
- *Instead of loving women and protecting their families and sacrificing themselves for the sake of their loved ones – they are using women and sacrificing their unborn children on the altar of sexual gratification*
- And when men act like animals – their soul – *and their manhood* -- are diminished in the process
  
- Abortion doesn't merely kill children – abortion harms men and women – especially women
- *Women were created to nurture and protect their children with self-sacrificing love*
- When a woman does so – her soul – her personhood – is enhanced and enriched
- *But when a woman does the opposite – and sacrifices the life of her baby – gnawing off her own leg* – then her soul – her personhood – is diminished
- ***Abortion harms the soul of a woman***
  
- *More than a million American women will have an abortion this year – but hardly any of them will talk about it*
- The typical church has a lot of emotionally and spiritually wounded women with some painful skeletons in their closets
  
- *You see, most women who choose an abortion are going against their own moral codes – and this explains why they feel guilt afterwards*
- And the guilt stops them from talking about it or getting the help they need
  
- *Many women need to grieve the loss of their baby* – even though they chose to terminate the pregnancy, it is still a loss

- *Because abortion is so difficult to talk about – many women suffer through their difficult grief issues alone – and in secret*
- *Where does she turn for help?*
- She fears that conservative, pro-life Christians would judge her and condemn her as a murderer
- And many pro-choice people in our society would deny that the woman's guilt has any validity – abortion is simply “reproductive health care” – kind of like taking out your appendix or gall bladder
- *Without an opportunity to verbally process all the conflicting emotions surrounding an abortion – many women keep their secret to themselves and repress their feelings and abort the grieving process*
- The night Diane told her parents she was pregnant, her dad hit the roof
- *He insisted she get an abortion – NOW*
- After all – he had his reputation at church and his social standing and his family business to think about
- *And he refused to have a grandchild fathered by THAT boy*
- Diane wanted to keep the baby // Dad wanted the abortion – Dad won
- Diane returned to college that fall, broke off her relationship with her boyfriend, and did well at college
- *After graduation she got involved in a sexual relationship and found herself pregnant – again*
- She knew she would have to abort – and did – without telling anyone – not her family or friends – not even the father of the baby
- *Eventually, Diane fell in love with another man and got married – everyone was pleased with her choice – and they became the perfect suburban couple*
- A couple of years later – happily married – she got pregnant – and she and her husband were thrilled
- *Then at her 14<sup>th</sup> week – she saw an ultrasound of her baby – and then some unsettling thoughts began to trouble her mind: Is this what her aborted babies looked like – not just a blob of tissue – but a real baby?*
- When their baby girl was born – everyone was delighted – but deep inside Diane continued to dwell on her two abortions – and she became melancholy
- *Would her two aborted babies have looked like the daughter in her arms? What kind of personality would each have had?*
- What should have been the most joyful time in her life with a wonderful husband and daughter was being overshadowed by haunting memories of her abortions

- *Abortion is not a harmless and liberating procedure that is good for women -- Abortion harms the soul of a woman and leaves lasting scars*
- **Women who have had abortions need the gentle, healing touch of Jesus to bring cleansing and healing to the wounded places of their soul**

**Matthew 12:15 - 21 (NIV)** <sup>15</sup>Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, <sup>16</sup>warning them not to tell who he was. <sup>17</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: <sup>18</sup> “Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. <sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. <sup>20</sup> A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. <sup>21</sup> In his name the nations will put their hope.”

\* NLT: *He will not crush those who are weak, or quench the smallest hope,*

- ***A bruised reed he will not break***
- ***As the Messiah prophesied by Isaiah, Jesus is the gentle, Spirit-endowed, Suffering Servant who brings grace and truth to the nations***
- **The Messiah compassionately cares for those who have been bruised and abused and are about to lose all hope for the future**
- ***The Messiah gently reaches out to the weary and burdened – the helpless and oppressed – the poor and the needy – the weak and the vulnerable – the sinful and the sinned-against***
- **Those who have been treated unjustly will receive justice – those who need mercy and forgiveness will receive mercy and forgiveness – those who need healing and deliverance will receive healing and deliverance**
- **Who are the weak and vulnerable and mistreated and unwanted?**
- ***Most often – women and children***

There are some women in this room who know what it is to be treated like play-things or sex-objects / *to be used and abused and discarded by men*  
**-to feel worthless and beyond hope of a joyful and purposeful life**

**I say to you in Jesus= name that you matter intensely to God**  
***-I say to you in Jesus= name that in the eyes of God you were worth the death of His only Son to bring you to Himself and make you His daughter***

**-I say to you in Jesus= name that all your sin is forgiven – even the sins of sexual immorality and abortion --if only you will come to Jesus Christ and accept what he did for you on the Cross**

*Come to Jesus: A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,*

As Christians who believe in the sanctity of human life and the dignity and worth of every human being – *we are called to serve and protect and care for the weak, the sick, the poor, the powerless, the unwanted, the disabled, the fatherless, the bruised & broken --as Christians we are called to stand up for all the unwanted and marginalized --* whether because they are poor or immigrants or racial minorities or elderly or homeless or severely & chronically sick or AIDS patients or mentally or physically handicapped or unwanted, unplanned, unborn children

- **As Christians, we stand against the Lie that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived**
- **And as Christ-followers, we stand against the Lie that there is such a thing as a life so sinful or bruised or hopeless that it cannot be redeemed**
- *To uphold the sanctity of human life is much more than opposing abortion and voting pro-life*
- *To uphold the sanctity of human life is to show God's love for the weakest and most vulnerable of all human beings*
- That includes the unwanted baby in the womb
- *But it also includes children born in poverty and the fatherless and the at-risk children and youth in our schools*
- It includes minorities and refugees and immigrants in our area
- *And it also includes the young woman who is feeling so desperate and so hopeless and so alone and so trapped that she is considering gnawing off her own leg*
- And it also includes the woman who has already done so – *whose soul has been damaged by aborting a child -- and who is in desperate need of the healing grace and forgiveness and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*

One night, during a post-abortion group therapy session, as Norma was struggling with the idea of God=s forgiveness, the leader asked her to think about what she expected from her young son whenever he did something wrong

*-@I want him to see the wrong action through my eyes - without denying that he did it or making lame excuses for why he did it, and I want to know that he is really and truly sorry for what he did.@*

-She was perplexed when the counselor asked if she ever remained cold and punishing toward her son once he had reached the point of true repentance.

-@*Why on earth would I do that? He is my child - I love him!*@

-Then she slowly began to realize that God, as her loving heavenly Father, had been patiently waiting 5 years for her to simply turn around and ACCEPT His forgiveness.”

- **Believe the Good News of the Gospel:**

**Truths such as these:**

- *God’s grace is greater than all our sin*
- *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*
- *We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*
- *There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*
- *If God is for us, who can be against us?*
- *Nothing can separate us from the Love of God in Christ*

*Come to Jesus: A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,*

- Think of the most compassionate and merciful person you know – a safe, gentle person in whom you could confide your most shameful secrets
- *Jesus is as gracious and compassionate as that person – and even more so*
- **In the Gospels – every time someone comes to Him in weakness and humility and brokenness – Jesus extends grace and mercy and forgiveness and healing**

*Come to Jesus: A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,*

**Let Jesus love you and accept you and forgive you and heal you and give you a new life -- today**

Prayer

*“Come to the River of Life”*