ABORTION: The Truth – The Sanctity of Human Life

A transcript of a sermon preached by Robert Hall on January 25, 1998

Besides the children that have been killed, there are at least 15-20 million women who have been damaged seriously by abortion. And its effects on America have been simply devastating. As a church, we have a responsibility to teach the truth and to live by the truth, and to love the truth and to understand the truth. And that is that we all sin, we all fall short, and those people who have had abortions or have been involved in them are no worse than any other sinners. But there comes a day when we need to talk about it – and today is that day, since this is "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday."

Now, as I take stock of our country, what I see about it, with the Book of Ephesians in mind, is a country that is in the grip of the evil one. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Therefore the evil one uses lies to enslave people. And we are struggling with him over the souls of men and women in this country. The Weymouth New Testament in Modern Speech translates Ephesians 6:12 as, "For ours is not a conflict of mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms and empires and the forces that control and govern this dark world, the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in heavenly warfare."

One of the weapons, so to speak, of our armor is Truth. Paul says that Truth is the belt, and it is the first part of our armor that we are to put on. Again, that is because the truth will set us free. The truth will set others around us free. So the devil does not want truth to prevail; he does not want truth to be spoken in the news media or by anybody around you. The devil is interested in continuing the lies that he has in order to keep people in slavery. We are to speak the truth … in a loving way … but speak the truth!

Now, in Matthew, Chapter 11, I want to point out to you a rather interesting little portion of scripture where Jesus is speaking to people, talking about John the Baptist being Elijah. John has come with Truth, and Jesus said this about John and Himself: "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." 'But wisdom is proved right by her actions" (Mt 11:16-19 NIV).

Now let me read that to you out of the 1996 New Living Bible. "How shall I describe this generation? These people are like a group of children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 'We played wedding songs, and you weren't happy, so we played funeral songs, but you weren't sad.' For John the Baptist didn't drink wine and he often fasted, and you say, 'He's demon possessed.' And I, the Son of Man, feast and drink, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of the worst sort of sinners!' But wisdom is shown to be right by what results from it." That is probably a better interpretation of that last phrase. The NKJ translation says "… and wisdom will be justified by her children." What that means is that the fruit of what happens when the truth of wisdom prevails will eventually be shown to be right.

Now, what is the problem here with these people? What is Jesus trying to say? It's obvious that they have a different standard for what is right and what is wrong than what Jesus has … and, what His Heavenly Father has. They say you are supposed to be laughing at a certain time and you're supposed to be mourning at a certain time. And this is contrary to what the men of God (John the Baptist and Jesus) describe in their actions and teachings. The generation Jesus was speaking to was opposing the truth. They were calling good evil and evil good (Isa 5:20) because they did not want to hear the truth from John when he came to tell them the truth. They said, "This man does not have a happy face. He's not making me happy; he's not making me feel good! So I don't like him because he is telling me the truth."

Then, when Jesus came, full of grace and truth, to fellowship with needy sinners, they said, "Oh, he's a glutton and a drunkard!" So, no matter what John or Jesus did, they were not going to be happy about it. You see they couldn't be happy because they had flip-flopped their standards of right and wrong. Calling wrong right and right wrong. They were not grieved by the things that grieve God, and they were not joyful by the things that please God. So they find themselves opposing God.

When John came to warn them, he said, "Repent and return back to God. Prepare your hearts for Jesus." But they responded by saying, "This guy has a demon; don't listen to him."

Then, when Jesus came, He didn't fit their mold of what a holy man should be. So of course they criticized Him for being a glutton and a drunkard. "Look at these people He's eating with! Look at the riffraff He's hanging around with!" Neither John nor Jesus could make them happy because their standards of right and wrong are opposite the truth.

If I think about where I live today, and think about this generation, how would I describe this generation? This generation does not want to hear the truth. If I were to show a video this afternoon, right before the Super Bowl, of a live abortion or of a live partial-birth abortion on television, no one – not one person would want to see that! Nobody would say, "Hey, let's watch that before we watch the Super Bowl." They're not interested in the hard truth. They're not interested in actually seeing what an abortion is … that a little human being who is defenseless is ripped from his mother's womb (limb from limb sometimes). Brutally murdered! They are not interested in seeing that. They want to hide from that because that doesn't fit their standards of right and wrong. They have been lied to. They have believed the devil's lies.

What are the devil's lies? "This is just inconvenient right now; it is just a blob of tissue anyway; it won't hurt anybody; it's the best thing to do right now; there's no danger of any side effects. THOSE ARE LIES! And those lies have permeated our culture and been put forth on the news and in TV shows and movies … even from some of the doctors and other so-called "medical experts." And people have believed those lies because they wanted to.

What they don't tell them is that there are women who are dead because they went into a clinic to have an abortion. There are women who have had uterine lining infections and cervix punctures. There are cases of pelvic inflammatory disease and sepsis. These are women whose insides will never be the same.

There are women who are emotionally scarred and hurt forever because of the world's lying standards because they went into an abortion clinic. But you won't hear very many talk about it; it's too painful; and that shame and guilt must be suppressed. But the bumper sticker is true. "Abortion: one dead, one wounded." That's the sum of it, but they don't want to hear it. The whole abortion system thrives on lust and greed. So they don't want to hear about it.

How shall I describe America in this generation? We are enslaved by this sin and don't want to hear Truth. You see, the truth prepares a heart to receive Jesus. John's ministry was to prepare us to receive Jesus. To prepare – to fill in the valley with grace; to knock down the mountains of pride through being humbled. Truth does that! But if you don't want to hear the truth you are going to be a slave to sin, as Jesus said in John Chapter 8. ""I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin (vs. 34)." But if you "know the truth, the truth will set you free (vs. 32)."

You and I, and all true believers, are responsible to proclaim the truth; we are responsible to tell it like it really is. And be forewarned, they hated John the Baptist for telling the truth and they hated Jesus when He told them the truth. And most will hate you when YOU tell them the truth! But that's our job; that's our ministry. We are proclaiming that trusting in Jesus the Christ and the truth written in His Word is the only way to get to God the Father and experience real life. We need to proclaim that truth to them even though it's not always pleasant and it's frequently not well-received.

But that's not all we're supposed to proclaim, because Jesus said they also called Him a glutton and a drunkard when He associated with the people who needed Him. That sounds very gracious, right? So was He just always full of grace for these people? Or did He also tell them the truth? John 1:14 says that Jesus was "full of grace AND truth." Only Jesus could pull that off. Mere mortals tend to err in one extreme or the other. Some of us are happy to be very gracious with people, but we fail to tell them the truth. Others are happy to be brutally honest with people, but there's no grace! Only in Jesus do we find the perfect balance.

What did the Pharisees say when Jesus was eating with some of the marginalized people that they felt were disreputable sinners? They asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Mt 9:11-13)."

As a church we must proclaim at least these two things: First of all, the truth of sin and the need of a Savior. Yes we want to call black, black and white, white, but we can't forget to also proclaim the Good News that Jesus came with a message of grace and love and forgiveness. He was offering the world reconciliation to God the Father. And so our ministry is a ministry of reconciliation. It is a ministry of bringing people to know the Lord by hearing the truth about sin AND the truth about forgiveness.

My favorite example of this is in John Chapter 8 when Jesus went to the Temple early in the morning and He's there praying. A bunch of the religious rulers brought a woman (I don't know if she was set up for it or what) caught in the act of adultery. They brought her to the Temple, outside, and they put her in front of the crowd and said, "Teacher, we caught this woman in the act of adultery."

Now the question that goes through all the ladies' minds is, "Where was the man with whom she was committing the 'very act of adultery?!'" I don't know where the man was; the Pharisees don't bother with that detail. But, they had the lady; and they put her before the crowd who had been listening to Jesus teach, and they essentially said, "Okay, we caught her committing adultery. The Law says to stone her; what do you say?"

Well now, this is obviously a trap because if Jesus says, "Don't stone her", He's violating the Law (Le 20:10; De 22:22) … and He can't violate the Law (for one thing, He's God), because that would give them something they could use against Him. They could charge Him with teaching the people to violate the Law. If He says, "Well then, stone her", He's violating His own love and compassion and what He's been preaching – the forgiveness of sins.

I don't know what He wrote on the ground; I would love to see it. I don't know if He wrote the Ten Commandments or if He wrote their names out beside what their sins were. We're simply not told. But regardless of what He wrote, it certainly had its effect on the accusers. They kept demanding an answer, so He stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" Then he stooped down and wrote in the dust again. And as He wrote (and prayed, I believe), they began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. And Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

Now this is an interesting question. "Has no one condemned you" means this: Under the Law there has to be two witnesses that have to say you are guilty of sin in order to be put to death by stoning. You wouldn't be convicted unless you had two or three witnesses (De 19:15). But now there was no witnesses left there; only Jesus was left with the woman, asking her "Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she answers. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Now of all the people in the universe who had the right to condemn her, it was Jesus. He was God. He was sinless. He knew the Law to perfection. He was in God's Temple; He had the right to forgive sins … and still has the right to forgive sins. He looked into her eyes, knowing that He had the right, and He said, "I do not condemn you." He could say that, knowing that He would go to the cross and die for that sin. Knowing that she was guilty, knowing that she *should* die, He looked at her and said "I don't condemn you! You're free to go and leave your life of sin."

Man, that's an awesome, awesome moment! Because there's not one person in this room, including your pastor, who has not broken the Law of God and thus is deserving of death (see Jas 2:10). Some of you might be saying, "Well, I never murdered anyone, I never committed adultery, I never … Well let me tell you what. Commandment Number Ten says you shouldn't even *want* to! Thou shalt not covet. You shouldn't even *want* to break one of the Ten Commandments. Is there anybody in here who has never even *wanted* to break one of the Ten

Commandments? We have all wanted to. We are all guilty! We are all guilty … just like that woman. But when we came to the cross, we had our sins forgiven.

Abortion, in a lot of ways, is no worse than any of the other sins even though there are greater consequences than some other sins. The person who actually *commits* adultery will suffer more consequences than the person who only sins in his heart in this way, though God sees and judges both, and both are enough to condemn us (Mt 5:28).

And yet, all of our sins are forgiven because they have all been paid for by Jesus. We are Jesus' representatives, and we are here to preach and to proclaim that truth of reconciliation. And what that means is that, because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ … the perfect sacrifice in our place … a person who is counting totally on that wonderful sacrifice is acceptable to God. You just need to believe and accept that truth.

Do you understand that?! That you are acceptable to God this morning? Some of you in this room have had abortions. Some of you have helped someone have an abortion. Some of you know people who have had abortions. Let me tell you something: God knew that when He saved you! God has put that sin on the cross just as He has put all sins on the cross. You are forgiven! We are to proclaim that message of reconciliation and acceptance to this world.

Now some of you may be called to proclaim Truth by getting involved in our Crisis Pregnancy Center, or to take a young girl into your home and help her. Some of you may be called to stand in front of an abortion clinic and pray; that's between you and the Lord. We are called as a church to proclaim Truth. Some of you will have to share at work with somebody that doesn't want to hear it, but you will have to state the truth. Some of you will be called to do that, but listen, we are all called to minister to 15-20 million women who are under the bondage of Satan and the lies of the devil, that they have committed the unpardonable sin and that God can never accept them. We know better! We are supposed to be telling them that, proclaiming the reconciliation of God. Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth! The only unpardonable sin is rejecting the Holy Spirit's work in your life; willingly, knowingly, and continuously rejecting the Gospel with no concern or regret (Jn 3:17-18; Jn 8:21-24). A person who has committed this sin has shut himself off from God so thoroughly that he is unaware of any sin at all. A person who *fears* having committed it shows, by his very concern that he has *not* sinned in this way.

Human beings will tell you that you cannot have grace and truth at the same time. "You can't give someone grace and mercy and forgiveness from their sins and then tell them at the same time that they are lost sinners. That just doesn't work. You can't have truth and grace at the same time." Well, humanly we can't; but in Jesus we can!

And when that woman caught in adultery looked up into the eyes of Jesus, what did she see? TRUTH! "Go away and sin no more. I know who you are. I know everything that you've ever done. I know who you were staying with, and I know all about your adultery." But He said, "Go your way and sin no more. I don't condemn you." GRACE!

Because He paid the price for that, He can do that. You ought to just meditate on that for about one year. Grace and truth; grace and truth. Think that through. We can have that in Jesus. Forgiveness … and yet know the truth.