

# Abortion:

## A Grace Community Church Position Paper

Authored and affirmed by the Elder Board



### 1 Purpose

Abortion has been a constitutionally protected right in this country since 1973 and is one of the most controversial and emotionally debated topics in American culture. The purpose of this paper is to help the reader understand the over-arching context of the abortion debate and to understand the biblical principles involved. This paper will clearly set forth Grace Community Church's position on abortion. Additionally, it will provide guidance in caring for and shepherding those who have been, or may be, impacted by decisions regarding abortion.

### 2 Background

Prior to 1973, abortion access in the United States was determined at the state level. Some states provided legal access to abortion under limited circumstances (e.g., fetal abnormality, rape, incest, or threat to a woman's health). Other states had outright bans on abortion<sup>1</sup>. Texas was one such state that banned abortion.

In 1973, in *Roe v. Wade*, the United States Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge to the Texas ban on abortion. In this landmark case, the court ruled that:

- The United States Constitution provides a fundamental "right to privacy" that protects a woman's right to choose whether to have an abortion.
- But the abortion right is not absolute. It must be balanced against the government's interests in protecting women's health and prenatal life.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of this ruling, access to abortion became a constitutionally protected right for the entire nation. Since 1973, reliable estimates are that more than 63 million abortions have been performed in this country.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "A brief history of US abortion law, before and after *Roe v Wade*." History Extra. July 5, 2022.

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/history-abortion-law-america-us-debate-what-roe-v-wade>

<sup>2</sup> Temme, Laura. "Roe v. Wade Case Summary: What You Need to Know." FindLaw. June 30, 2022.

<https://supreme.findlaw.com/supreme-court-insights/roe-v--wade-case-summary--what-you-need-to-know.html>

<sup>3</sup> National Right to Life Committee. "U.S. Abortion Statistics By Year (1973-Current)."

<https://christianliferesources.com/2021/01/19/u-s-abortion-statistics-by-year-1973-current>

In the 2021-2022 Supreme Court session, the court agreed to hear the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health* which questioned the constitutionality of a Mississippi law which significantly constrains when abortions can be performed. On May 2, 2022, a draft opinion of the court was leaked to the press. This draft opinion seemed to indicate that the court was preparing to overturn the decision in *Roe v. Wade*. On June 24, the final opinion was released and *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. This decision does not put an end to abortion in this country. It simply returns the regulation of abortion back to the states.

### **3 What is Abortion?**

The most succinct definition possible is that abortion is the intentional taking of an innocent life. The term innocent here is consistent with its use throughout the epistles. That is, it does not mean sinless perfection, but rather above reproach. The unborn child has committed no overt act that should result in their death. While miscarriages and still births occur, most pregnancies for most women, if not interfered with through disease or trauma, will normally result in the live birth of a child. Abortion prevents the birth of a child through a medical procedure that uses either physical force or chemicals to specifically and solely target the unborn child to end their life.

### **4 What Does Scripture Say?**

As stated above, the debate around abortion has been and continues to be intense. This debate has included privacy rights, physical and mental health concerns, individual freedom vs. government intervention, viability outside the womb, questions about when life begins, questions about what to call an unborn child, and a variety of other topics. Rather than get caught up in this emotional debate, the question answered in this paper is this – “What does the Bible say about human life?” As is often the case with the most divisive issues in our culture, scripture speaks powerfully, passionately, and often to this topic.

From the opening pages of scripture, this question is addressed. In Genesis 1:27 we see that we were created in the image and likeness of God.

*(ESV) — 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

David went into much more detail about God's role in giving life in Psalm 139:13-16.

*(ESV) — 13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

In Jeremiah 1:5, God Himself states clearly that it was God who formed Jeremiah in the womb.

*(ESV) — 5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*

Solomon describes children as a gift from God in Psalm 127:3.

*(ESV) — 3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.*

Luke states undeniably that the unborn child is a live, sentient, cognitive human when he describes the unborn John the Baptist responding to the presence of the unborn Jesus in Luke 1:41-44.

*(ESV) — 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.*

From the above passages, as well as others that could be listed, the following general principals are found:

1. Human life begins at conception.
2. Created in the image of God, all human life is sacred.
3. Abortion is the deliberate targeting and taking of innocent life and therefore is sin.

## **5 What About the Hard Cases?**

In taking a stand against abortion, it is necessary to consider situations out of the ordinary, those situations often referred to as the "hard cases." These cases include, but are not limited to, rape, incest, physical and/or mental defect in the unborn child, and danger to the health or life of the mother.

Rape and incest are true instantiations of evil. They result in a level of trauma, pain, and indignity to the victim that is almost incomprehensible to most of us. When pregnancy results from these violent acts, the resulting consequences become even more extremely difficult. However, the unborn baby that results from the attack is truly innocent. Scripture specifically states that "sons (children) shall not be put to death for their fathers" (Deuteronomy 24:16b).

Physical and mental defects may be such that a baby is unlikely to survive outside the womb or may require care beyond the ability of the mother to provide. Nevertheless, if taking the previous Psalm 139 passage at face value, that unborn child is still created in the image and likeness of God. Their days have been established in advance by their creator and the taking of their life through abortion remains sin.

There are certainly situations in which protecting the health or life of the mother requires treatments or procedures which may put the life of the unborn child at risk. In such cases, we want to be very clear that consenting to such treatments does not constitute abortion, as the death of the unborn child is not their primary purpose. In such cases, the potential or even certain death of the unborn child (e.g., treating an ectopic pregnancy), is the direct result of trying to save the life or health of the mother.

## **6 What If I Have Already Had an Abortion?**

When considering sin of any kind, it is important to maintain a biblical perspective. Scripture makes clear that all of us have sinned. All of us fall short of God's call on our lives.

*(ESV) — 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)*

While from man's perspective, some sins seem to be worse than others, this is not supported in scripture. James 2:10 makes this point clearly.

*(ESV) — 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*

Jesus went further in stating that even a wrong thought or careless word is enough to condemn us before God.

*(ESV) — 27 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'  
28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27–28)*

*(ESV) — 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, (Matthew 12:36)*

It must be stated as clearly as possible, all sin is offensive to God. Some sins may seem to have more collateral consequences than others, but all sin is equally offensive to God.

Therefore, whether you have had an abortion, assisted or compelled a woman to have an abortion, performed abortions, or contributed in any way to the deliberate targeting and death of an unborn child, the remedy for your sin is the same as the

remedy for every other sin – the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

*(ESV) — 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16–17)*

## **7 How Should We Respond?**

There is a documented, regrettable track record of some professing Christians who have used threats and acts of violence in their opposition to abortion. Those who have sought or procured an abortion have been stigmatized and ostracized as murderers and worse. There is no biblical support for these types of actions. While our hearts rightfully break at the thought of the number of unborn children whose lives were deliberately ended through abortion, we must avoid the trap of singling out the sin of abortion as being worse than other sins. We are called to be ambassadors and image bearers of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). That means responding to and overcoming evil with good (Romans 12:21) and protecting and caring for the most vulnerable. That also means demonstrating the love of Christ to all those entrusted to our care.

There are many complex reasons why women seek abortion. Some are of the opinion that what is growing inside them is simply a mass of cells. There are women who have had multiple abortions with full conviction that they are doing a right and good thing. But just as often, and perhaps more often than not, women feel compelled to seek abortion because they believe giving birth to and raising a child is not a viable option.

Being pro-life must go well beyond being against abortion. Women and young girls struggling with situations in which abortion seems to be their only or best option must be supported in every way possible. By loving them well, the church has the chance to help many women see that they could in fact be good mothers. The church can help them see the benefit of at least giving birth so that others can adopt. The church can help provide safety for women who are in abusive relationships, offer resources for those that are poor, provide child care for those that are alone, and by various other means establish support so that giving birth is always a viable option.

Women and young girls who have already had abortions need to be treated with love and respect. They must never be ostracized or stigmatized because of past decisions they have made. It seems at times easier for the church to be open and welcoming to someone with a history of abortion who comes in from outside the church, than when it is chosen (or discovered to have been chosen) by someone inside the church. In each and every case, we need to come alongside these women and demonstrate, not merely teach, the love of Jesus Christ.

## **8 Conclusion**

As stated above, the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* does not eliminate or outlaw abortion. It simply returns the regulation of abortion to the states. Unlike our culture and man's laws, God's Word does not change. Regardless of how federal and state law may change based on future court rulings, or executive or legislative actions, Grace Community Church believes and holds the following statements to be true:

1. Human life begins at conception.
2. Created in the image of God, all human life is sacred.
3. Abortion is the deliberate targeting and taking of innocent life and therefore is sin.
4. Jesus Christ died and rose again to take the punishment for our sin – all sin, including the sin of abortion.
5. Consent to a medical procedure to treat illness, disease, or injury of the mother that does not specifically and solely target the unborn child for destruction is not abortion, and is fully acceptable.
6. The church should provide every form of support and encouragement possible (physical, emotional, medical, spiritual, etc.) for those facing difficult pregnancy situations.
7. The church should not stigmatize or ostracize those who have chosen to abort.