

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

Legalizing Sin

Our topic today is one that will surely cause controversy. I want to talk with you about the legalization of sin. The very idea that some might try to legalize something that is wrong raises the question of what happens when civil law conflicts with the Law of God? In Romans 13:1-7 Paul discusses the purpose and power of civil authorities. He points out:

1. civil government is ordained of God
2. those who resist the civil power, resist God
3. those who do resist, shall receive to themselves damnation
4. the civil servant is not a terror to good works, but to evil works
5. he is the minister of God to do the work God gave him
6. the civil servant punishes evil doers, and rewards those who comply with the law

When the government or its agents overstep the authority or right that God gave them, in that instance they sin. If a Christian receives a command or is required by law to engage in that which is prohibited by God, the Christian would have to disobey, the civil servant.

Whatever rights had been given to the civil servants mentioned in our text, they did not have the right to command Peter and John to "not speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." There is no doubt that Peter and John disobeyed their command, which is what they had to do. They had no choice. In the same way, civil rulers do not have the power to grant a right not extended by God. The legalization of sinful practices by the government, local or federal, does not make the practice right for the people of God.

First of all, I would like to notice the I. Legalized Intoxicants (Alcohol and other forms of Drugs for Social Use). The use of alcohol and drugs is a widespread problem in the world today. It is estimated that about seventy percent of Americans drink some mixture of alcohol, and nearly ten million Americans use cocaine and a survey of teenagers thirteen to eighteen, revealed that twenty-six percent used marijuana on a regular basis. When drunkenness is condemned in the scripture, that principle is understood to extend to all mind-altering, addictive drugs. Very few, if any, challenge the idea that drunkenness is condemned in the Bible (Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1Cor. 6:10; Gal 5:21; 1Peter 4:3). But why is drunkenness wrong?

1. It impairs judgment. Isaiah 28:7 "...the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." Alcohol in the blood progressively suppresses the operation of those areas of the brain on which persons depend for clear insights and rational decisions. The Bible teaches that judgment is a characteristic to be cultivated, not destroyed or compromised. Phil. 1:9 "and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." (perception, discernment)
2. It steals away the drinker's self control. The desire for alcohol increases with indulgence. The more you drink, the more you desire to drink. 2Peter 1:5-6 teaches us to add temperance to our lives. That is self-control. The decision to take the first drink or experiment with drugs indicates a weakness in self control to start with.
3. After loss of self-control the drinker is defenseless against other sins.

Prov. 25:28 "like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control" NIV How many fights, brawls, acts of fornication, adultery, child abuse, and even murder have been committed by people under the influence of alcohol or drugs who otherwise would have never dreamed of such things?

4. Prolonged indulgence (in some cases only brief indulgence) leads to addiction.

No one starts drinking with the ambition of becoming an alcoholic; yet 200,000 people per year become just that. According to the National Council on Alcoholism, there are nearly ten million in the U. S. today. The national institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism estimates that nineteen percent of adolescents or 3.3 million young people ages fourteen to seventeen are problem drinkers. Romans 6:12 "let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Prov. 23:29 "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine." Gal. 5:21 declares that those who participate in drunkenness "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." What about social drinking? On a continuum between drunkards on one end and the teetotal abstainers on the other, there exist in the middle a large number of people who only drink occasionally. These people call themselves "social drinkers." Alcohol is the only drug with which people use this kind of reasoning.

Seldom say "its all right to smoke marijuana, so long as you don't use too much and get high." "Know when to say when." The idea of drinking socially without drunkenness is at variance with the scriptures. Eph. 5:18 "be not drunk with wine." "Drunk" from (methusko) means "to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process of the state expressed in methuo (drunkenness) to become intoxicated" W. E. Vine p. 343 Important to note it is a process and not merely a state, important since most social drinkers argue that they are not drunk until they reach an excessive state of drunkenness. American Heritage Dict. P. 673 Intoxicate I. to induce, esp. by the effect of ingested alcohol, any of a series of progressively deteriorating states, ranging from exhilaration to stupefaction." Since drunkenness involves a process, Christians must avoid that which sets the process in motion, i.e. never drink.

II. **Abortion:** Abortion was made legal by the Supreme Court in 1973, but is it right?

In Romans 1:31 Paul speaks of those who are without natural affection. This refers to those who do not possess the love and attachment which nature teaches all mothers to have for their young. The word literally means "no love of kindred." Abortion is one of the clearest expressions of this vice that is condemned by God. We are all shocked when we hear or read about some parent who mistreats or murders his or her child. We don't understand that. Even though we reject such events, history confirms that the practice of murdering small children was common among the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Chinese, and Hindus. The Nazi Holocaust began with the elimination of almost 300,000 Aryan German citizens who were considered defective. Before Hitler finished, his Nazi war machine had murdered six million Jews, plus another six million Gypsies, Poles, and prisoners of war. What a horrible deed. We are repulsed by such actions. Any woman who could destroy the child within her womb would have to be judged as one "without natural affection." During the decade of the Vietnam War there were 58,655 American war casualties. Our country now kills more unborn babies than that every fifteen days. During the six major wars fought by this country we sustained 1,160,591 casualties. This is a terrible loss. However, since abortion was legalized in this country in 1973, over 31 million unborn babies have been murdered by their mothers. (4,400 every day; 1,600,000 every year). Proverbs 6:16-17 "There are six things which Jehovah hateth; yea seven which are an abomination unto him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood..." Abortion sheds innocent blood. It is estimated that in a recent year in New York City alone more than 600,000 abortions were performed. Think about it, 600,000 innocent lives taken. These victims died without the benefit of a trial or counsel. They are not convicted criminals, but innocent unborn human babies. Such make Pharaoh's extermination of Hebrew boys appear as only a ripple on the ocean of time. The Slaughter of babes in Bethlehem by Herod would not equal one abortion clinic's daily quota.

I. **History of Abortion.**

In the Greek world, abortion and infanticide were commonly practiced as a means of family limitation. We are not to conclude that such was accepted by everyone.

The Hippocratic Oath states "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel; furthermore, I will not give a woman an instrument to produce abortion" (World Book, under Hippocrates) Abortion was also practiced during the period of the Roman Empire. The practice was punishable by banishment or death, but as the Empire grew more decadent, the laws were not enforced. With the coming of Christianity, abortion was vehemently condemned. Early extra-biblical writings reflect the opposition of Christians to abortion from the earliest times. The Epistle of Barnabas (AD 138) states "Thou shalt not kill the child by abortions." The Didache (AD 80) ranks abortion with the sins forbidden in the Ten Commandments. Tertullian (AD240) calls abortion homicide. On January 22, 1973 abortion became legal in the United States.

Since that time countless millions of unborn children have been aborted out of selfishness and immorality.

II. When Does Life Begin?

The primary question that demands an answer is this: "is the fetus a human life?" Is that which is growing in the mother's body alive? The Supreme Court did not address this vital question. They only determined that a woman had a right to an abortion if she wanted one. The answer to this question, however, is crucial in the determination of truth regarding this all important subject. What The Bible Says: 1. Life is a gift from God. "He giveth life and breath to all things." Acts 17:25 God alone has the right to take man's life. Only human life is made in the image of God. Genesis 1:26 Because of this human life is elevated to a plane above all other forms of earthly life. 2. Christ taught the value of human life in John 3:16 and Mark 16:15-16. Little children were precious to him Matthew 19:14. 3. In the scriptures there is no distinction between babes in the womb and those born. The word "brephos" in the Greek is used to describe the baby in Elisabeth's womb and is used interchangeably for both prenatal and postnatal babies Luke 1:41. It means "an unborn child, embryo, fetus, a newborn child, an infant, a babe." Thayer page 105. Anyone who questions this should ask themselves "was it the Christ-child in Mary's womb or just a lifeless blob of fetal tissue? The following scriptures teach that the unborn child is a human being: Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou comest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." If Jeremiah's mother had chosen to have an abortion, she would have killed Jeremiah. Isaiah 49: 1, 5 "Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken ye peoples, from far; Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name...and now, saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant." This indicates that Isaiah was a person before birth. Job 3:11 "Why did I not die from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when my mother bore me?" If the fetus had died in the womb, it would have been a person, it would have been Job. The scriptures teach "thou shalt not kill" i.e. "thou shalt do no murder." The deliberate taking of a human life is murder. Abortion intentionally kills a human life. The abortion victim is totally innocent, having done no wrong towards the mother, the doctor or society. Murderers Will Be Punished Exodus 20:13 "Thou shalt not kil," Deuteronomy 27:25 "Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person." Proverbs 6:16-17 God hates "those who shed innocent blood.

God hates abortion. What does God think of the premeditated taking of a child's life? We cannot take the sin of abortion lightly; "Lo children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Psalms 127:3 Abortion may be legal, but it is clearly wrong.

III. The Significance of Abortion in Our Society.

1. Abortion signifies a rejection of the knowledge of God.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication,

wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." Romans 1:28-31)

2. Abortion on demand, signifies that family values are on the decline, as well as sexual morals.

Marriage is honorable Heb.13:4 Fornication is a sin. 1Cor.6:18 "Flee fornication. every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body". The sin of fornication is often responsible for unwanted pregnancy, which results in abortion.

3. Abortion is evidence of a loss of respect for human life. "And God said, let us make man in our own image and after our likeness..." Man is not a brute animal, but a person created in the image of God.

Since Abortion is murder, it is but another manifestation of how little we value human life in our society today.

4. Abortion indicates that covetousness is taking our land by storm. Children are discarded, like garbage, because they will cramp someone's lifestyle. "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Luke 12:15. When someone chooses death over life, their own pleasure over the joy of being a parent, all to enjoy a self-indulgent lifestyle, there is trouble abroad in the land. Everyone should give serious thought to what God says about abortion. He will not let this grievous sin go unpunished. If God will not permit us to kill a child already born and get by with it, neither will he let us get by with killing an unborn child. Abortion is a sin, it is murder in the first degree. A tragic inconsistency: If a person takes an egg containing the pre-born American bald eagle and destroys that little pre-birth environment, thus destroying the baby eagle developing within, that person can be fined a great amount of money and could even be subject to criminal action and prison time for killing a bird. But the same person can take a human child in its pre-born environment and not only murder that child, but receive government funding to do so.