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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

January 22, 2023

Sanctity of Life Sunday

Ephesians 5:6-13

Prayer: *Father, we just again, we thank you for gathering us together as you have, we thank you for the gift of this place, this building, this group, this people and especially of yourself, Lord, we just praise you and thank you for that gift. We also thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. I want to pray, Lord, this morning that your spirit would be here, that you'd accompany us and that again, you'd make this of lasting value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well in 1984, President Ronald Reagan set apart the third Sunday in January to be Sanctity of Life Sunday. It's a Sunday that's set apart to remember what took place exactly fifty years ago today on January 22nd in 1973. That's when the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the United States. And so for fifty years now people have been protesting and praying, and in June of this year our prayers were at least partially answered.

In June of this past year the Supreme Court in what was known as

the Dobbs decision reversed the logic that had declared that the Constitution somehow contained a right for abortion. The Court wisely reversed what was known as Roe versus Wade, arguing that this decision should not have been made unilaterally by the Court but rather individually by the legislatures of each of the fifty states. The Court claimed the legality of abortion was a decision to be made by the voters of each state and not by nine Supreme Court justices.

Well the results are still reverberating today. I mean, instead of one national law governing abortion there are now fifty different states each deciding how they're going to treat its legality, from practically banning it in states like Mississippi and Texas; welcoming it virtually in no restrictions whatsoever in California and New York. And the response to the Court's decision was immediate: There was outrage, there was a protest, demonstrations all over this -- quote -- "barbaric return to a darker age where women" -- quote -- "no longer had control over their own bodies."

Many political pundits blamed the Supreme Court's decision for the poor showing by the Republicans in the midterm elections. You know, typically the party that's out of power does very well. With our president's popularity as low as President Biden's was, many people expected what they called "a red wave," that there would be

a stunning Republican victory. Folks thought that the Republicans would sweep both the Senate and the House and they were astounded that they lost the Senate and barely won the House. Well many pundits believe it was the abortion decision that played a huge role in denying Republicans the victory that they had expected. And that's the political end of the decision. Personally I would gladly trade a mediocre political performance in the midterms for a life-changing, destiny altering Supreme Court decision that has begun the process of righting a wrong that has continued for five decades.

For the first time in fifty years genuine progress has been made towards the ending of abortion. Now you may have seen those near riots and the protests and the howls of outrage along with the mediocre political performance and wondered, was all of this worth it? And I can say with absolute certainty that it truly was, but there's an enormous amount of work that still is yet to be done.

I doubt any conservative Christian would dispute the fact that today we can look around and sense that our culture is collapsing. I would submit to you that abortion has a huge role to play in that very sad process. The prophet Hosea's words have come true. He said: *For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.*

You know there's physical, sociological and psychological consequences to abortion but people seldom consider the fact that there's huge spiritual consequences. There's macro and micro consequences and one of the macro consequences that we seldom consider is literally calling down curses from God on our culture for the shedding of innocent blood. The very first time that happened was at the very, very beginning when Cain slew Abel. This is what God said. He said: *"What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."*

Well that's not the only time God has warned us of curses that are associated with the shedding of innocent blood. *Deuteronomy 27* says: *"'Cursed be anyone who strikes down his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"* 63 million times we've done that. Verse 25 says: *"'Cursed be anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"* Well you don't get more innocent than a babe in the womb. *Isaiah 26* says: *For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.*

You see, one of the unintended consequences of our culture's love

of abortion is the curse that God has placed us under as the result of it. I mean, just think about it. For 200 of our 250-year existence, we led the world as the most blessed country on earth. In 1973 we legalized child sacrifice and within fifty years we are now facing the absolute collapse of our culture. It's the direct result of what happens when the cultural underpinnings of the entire abortion movement become normative in a culture. You see, the problem is like most sins, the effects of this sin take place incrementally usually in stages that are too small to be immediately noticed. And what it often takes to make us notice is somebody who is prophetic, somebody who's an outsider, somebody from outside who's able to look at us as a country knowing what we used to be and seeing what we've become now. And again, one such prophetic voice was mother Teresa who saw this years ago. I mean she not only had a very powerful ministry while she was alive but even in death her words sum up exactly what has happened to the United States since that fateful day in 1973 when it made the killing of children legal.

This is what she said: "America needs no words from me to see how your decision in Roe versus Wade has deformed a great nation. The so-called right to abortion has pitted mothers against their children and women against men. It has sown violence and discord at the heart of the most intimate human relationships. It has

aggravated the derogation of the father's role in an increasingly fatherless society. It has portrayed the greatest of gifts, a child, as a competitor, an intrusion, and inconvenience. It has nominally accorded mothers unfettered dominion over the dependent lives of their physically dependent sons and daughters. And in granting this unconscionable power, it has exposed many women to unjust and selfish demands of their husbands or other sexual partners."

See, the entire abortion industry is an industry driven by lies, and the lies range from boldfaced to subtle in that -- quote -- bearing of false witness has its consequences. One thing you have to understand in this entire debate that it centers around what arguably God considers to be the greatest sin we could be accused of. I mean there's lots of great sins out there, I mean, pride is certainly one of them but there's one sin that God says is at the root of all the societal sins that he holds us responsible for. I think God makes the case for one particular sin being the greatest of sins because this particular sin is what gives rise to all other sins. It's the only sin that so far as I know that scripture says causes the wrath of God to be revealed. It's found in *Romans 1:18*. It says: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men -- and here it is -- who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

All sin is an expression of the ungodliness and unrighteousness but the source of this sin is suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. You have to understand what God is saying here. He's talking about himself. He's the ultimate source of all truth and he is describing one particular reaction to truth. You can misunderstand the truth, you can ignore the truth, you can hear the truth, or you can hear the truth and have a basic understanding of it and then decide not only to not obey it, but to suppress it in unrighteousness. That's what caused the Pharisees to claim that Christ's power to cast out demons came from Satan himself. It's the one sin that Christ referred to as unforgivable because it refuses the very spirit of truth, it refuses God's Holy Spirit. Jesus said: *"Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."*

See, this is the sin, and what we're talking about here is not abortion, we're talking about suppressing the truth. This is the sin that according to the Bible is virtually behind every other sin. It's the sin that causes the wrath of God to fall down upon us from heaven itself and it's effects spread like an infection tainting everything that it touches. Today's Sanctity of Life Sunday, I mean it's literally, it's our opportunity to push back

against the suppression of truth in unrighteousness that abortion represents. And so the sin I want to examine this morning is not the sin of abortion, as I've said, but the whole galaxy of sin it produces, all by suppressing the truth.

I don't know that there's a sin more rooted in the very nature of our adversary the devil than the sin of abortion. I mean Jesus spoke about what the devil was like in *John 8*. He said: *He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

You know, if Satan were to come up with his greatest accomplishment, I think abortion would top his list because it mirrors his nature perfectly. Think about it, abortion combines murder itself with all of the lies needed to maintain, encourage and grow an industry that's literally a celebration of death. I mean since *Roe versus Wade* passed in 1973 there's been over 63 million abortions in the U.S. Of course that number dwarfs all of those killed by all of the wars combined. One out of four women in America have had an abortion. It is a celebration of the suppression of truth in unrighteousness, a celebration of lies. The abortion industry lies about what abortion is, it lies about what it does, it lies about what it does it to, and it lies about

what it does to its victims.

That's what I want to look at this morning. First it suppresses the truth about what abortion is. You know, abortion is a word seldom used by the industry to describe itself. We've all heard it so many times, we've come to accept the phrase "pro-choice" as the abortion industry's description of itself. Well, that description is in itself a lie. I mean I don't know of any other choices that anyone makes in which the actual choice is never spoken of. I mean the logical question to ask somebody who says they're pro-choice is, okay, what choice are you talking about? I mean if it's any other choice, say it was a cultural choice like gay marriage, folks would have no problem whatsoever saying I want or I don't want the right for people of the same sex to marry. If it was a political choice like the right of the state to declare whether or not marijuana use is legal, then you'd clearly state what the choice is and what choice you're on, you are either for legalizing marijuana or you're not. But the very name of the abortion industry, the name that is chosen to cloak itself with "pro-choice," well that's a name designed to suppress the actual truth of what the choice really is.

See, the choice in pro-choice is the actual taking of the life of a human being in the womb of his mother, and there's no getting

around that because the whole point of the procedure is to take the life of the baby. But there are very few pro-choicers who are willing to say that. They would argue that what matters most is the woman's ability to choose, but that again ignores the fact that only one of the options to a pregnant woman is actually a choice. Pregnant woman has only three options; two of which are the normal, natural progression of pregnancy since the dawn of time. She normally will carry the baby to term, she may have a miscarriage or she can choose to abort. The only choice in those three options is the choice to abort. So to say that you're pro-choice is to imply that you want a variety of options when in fact the only option pro-choice means is pro-abortion. The truth is it's just too convicting to the average person to say that. And so the very name the abortion industry uses to describe itself is a textbook case of obfuscation. And again that's a fifty-cent word if there ever was one. To obfuscate means to purposely muddy the water so that people don't know what you really mean. Well the term "pro-choice" perfectly fits the dictionary definition of obfuscate -- quote -- "to render obscure, unclear or unintelligible." That's exactly what suppressing the truth in unrighteousness consists of.

And secondly, abortion also suppresses the truth in unrighteousness about what it does. If you ever notice the discussions about abortion are almost always about the political, cultural and legal

aspects of the pro-choice versus pro-life movement. And for the record, the pro-choice community intensely resents the term "pro-life." Instead they insist that we be known as "anti-abortion." I'm okay with that because I'm absolutely anti-abortion. The reason why the discussion stays out of lofty planes of politics, legality and culture is because people are loathed to get down to what abortion is really about, and that is the taking of life.

There's some simple inescapable facts about abortion. The procedure involves at a minimum four individuals: There's the mother, the abortionist, the nurse, and the baby. And what no one can deny is that at the beginning of the procedure there are four viable lives in that room and at the end of that procedure one of those lives is over. That's the point of the procedure. That's what abortionists get paid to do, to end the life that is growing within the mother. And sometimes they do it with chemicals designed to kill the baby which is then born dead, sometimes they do it mechanically by tearing the baby to pieces and removing it piece-by-piece, and sometimes they do it through a suction apparatus that suctions the baby into pieces. We all know there's no way the procedure can be done without some form of absolute brutality to the baby. That's the last thing that the abortion industry wants moms to know. There's no question that the truth of that is suppressed in unrighteousness. If you ever want to see the

pro-choice community erupt, start insisting that mothers undergoing the procedure become aware of what is actually going on. Part of the reason why abortion exists is because the industry spends a great deal of time, money and energy making sure the mother is kept at a good distance from what is actually taking place.

I mean, there's a reason why the pro-abortion lobby is adamantly opposed to ultrasounds. They're a window into what the industry wants shut down, locked up and shuddered. The industry knows that if mothers actually saw what a doctor does during an abortion, they probably wouldn't have one.

Dr. George Flesh, he's an ex-abortionist who wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*: "I believe that tearing a developed fetus apart, limb by limb, simply at the mother's request is an act of depravity that society should not permit. We cannot afford such a devaluation of human life, nor the desensitization of medical personnel that it requires. This is not based on what the fetus might feel, but on what we should feel in watching an exquisite, partly formed human being, being dismembered, whether one believes that man is created in God's image or not. I wish everybody could witness a second-trimester abortion before developing an opinion about it." That's the second point, abortion suppresses the truth about what it does.

And thirdly, it also suppresses the truth about who it does it to. This is a particularly sensitive time for race relations in the United States, I mean, from Trayvon Martin to Ferguson to the Eric Garner choking case in New York to George Floyd in Minnesota, there's been an outcry by many in the black community about what they perceive as an indifference to the lives of young black men. Well, there's perhaps there's no greater suppression of the truth when it comes to the de facto racism that lies at the heart of abortion. It has been and will continue to be largely targeted primarily at racial minorities. I'm not suggesting that Planned Parenthood is intentionally targeting minorities but I am stating that they're in the business of selling abortion and to do that they target the most vulnerable markets and they're almost always minorities. It's also a fact that Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger was a well-established racist and eugenicist who wanted to use birth control to -- quote -- weed out those she considered less fit.

Susan Enouen of the Life Issues Institute writes this -- quote -- "Sanger sought to prevent the growth of certain segments of society, including blacks, through legislation or easy availability of sterilization and birth control. She recognized that these efforts might be seen as an attempt at racial genocide, and that the best approach must include recruiting and training African

American doctors and ministers to help with the project. Margaret wrote in a letter to Clarence Gamble dated October 19, 1939, 'The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal. We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.'

There's a whole slew of unbelievably outrageous quotes by Sanger. You can download Planned Parenthood's attempt to explain every single one of them by putting them into the context of trying to paint a picture of Sanger just wanting to help a particular race with its population problems. But you know statistics don't lie and the fact is Planned Parenthood targets Black and Hispanic communities as the primary place to place their clinics. It just so happens it's good for business.

This is what John Piper says. He says: "The de facto effect (I don't call it the main cause, but net effect) of putting abortion clinics in the urban centers is that the abortion of Hispanic and Black babies is more than double their percentage of the population. Every day 1,300 black babies are killed in America. Seven hundred Hispanic babies die every day from abortion. Call this what you will—when the slaughter has an ethnic face and the

percentages are double that of the white community and the killers are almost all white, something is going on here that ought to make the lovers of racial equality and racial harmony wake up."

(abort73.com/abortion/abortion_and_race/)

See, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness about the racial component of abortion ignores the fact that every single day thousands of black and brown babies are slaughtered essentially by highly educated elite white folks. But don't ever try to draw that racial connection with the abortion industry. That was actually attempted a few years back by the creation of a billboard in New York City that declared -- quote -- "The Most Dangerous Place for an African American is in the Womb." Well the Reverend Al Sharpton said that billboard sends the message of racial profiling that discourages a woman's right to choose. Well, far be it from me to suggest that there's anything racist in the involvement of the esteemed Al Sharpton in this particular dust-up. It just so happens that he's on the side of those outraged in pointing this out.

Again we have to understand what we're talking about here.

Abortion is lies and murder perpetuated by the fathers of lies and murder and there's a pattern to his mayhem. I think you're starting to see the pattern. Not only do you have the murder of

children, you also have the racial component and you have the willingness not only to lie about it but to suppress any attempt to get the truth out. We call that suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.

Let me again flesh out what Pastor John Piper gives as the best possible reason for exposing this. This is what he says. He says: "My aim is that those who abhor racism will abhor abortion—'Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.' (Romans 12:9). My aim is that abortion would be as culturally taboo as racism is. My aim is to hasten the day when being publicly pro-choice will be as reprehensible as being publicly racist. My aim is to hasten the day when declaring yourself pro-choice would be like declaring yourself a white supremacist. Racism might—and often did—result in the killing of innocent humans; in our history, it often did. But abortion always results in the killing of innocent humans. Between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 Black people were lynched in America. Today more Black babies are killed by white abortionists every three days than all who were lynched in those years."

So far we've seen that abortion suppresses the truth about what it is, about how it's done, to whom it is done; and finally we look at what it does to its victims.

If you follow any of the culture wars between the pro-life and pro-choice camps you know that many of the victims of abortion are not just the babies but the mothers who've been sucked in by the lies that a simple procedure is going to solve all of their problems. And over and over again we read of women who have been devastated by the fact that they've taken the life of their own child. And again, we have statistics that have been brought out to give weight to that assertion. Iowa Right to Life reports:

"Studies within the first few weeks after the abortion have found that between 40 and 60 percent of women questioned report negative reactions. Within 8 weeks after their abortions, 55 percent expressed guilt, 44 percent complained of nervous disorders, 36 percent had experienced sleep disturbances, 31 percent had regrets about their decision, and 11 percent had been prescribed psychotropic medicine by their family doctor. In one study of 500 aborted women, researchers found that 50 percent expressed negative feelings, and up to 10 percent were classified as having developed 'serious psychiatric complications.'"

Now the pro-abortion side, they often debunk these statistics and they counter that the vast majority of women they survey suffered no ill-effects whatsoever. These are just trumped up issues that are designed to make a political position. Again methinks thou doth protest too much. I mean, consider for a second what this

position is actually saying. It's saying that a mother can take the life of a child growing within her and suffer no ill-effects whatsoever. I mean I'd be the first one to tell you that there are people who can take a life and make it seem like it's a walk in the park. I mean, the Internet is replete with people who can cut people's heads off and stone and crucify them and act like it's nothing but that's some kind of extreme. No one should be able to take life and not be affected unless it's in the life -- unless that life is in the womb? Well, some folks may be able to take life and not let it bother them but somehow or other I just can't see this as a positive thing. At the very least deep regret, pain and guilt is what should accompany any normal conscience upon realizing just what abortion accomplishes. And the absence of those feelings suggests that a normal conscience is no longer functioning. There's a sad biblical precedent that suggests that that's exactly the place that we're going to arrive at when we begin to suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Jesus was describing the state of affairs prior to his return and it sounds alarmingly like the climate we find ourselves right in the middle of. This is what Jesus said. He said: *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you*

up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold." Jesus says

lawlessness will increase and the love of many will grow cold.

Well there's no question in my mind that the ability of a mother to shrug off the taking of the life of her child is not something to be celebrated as the pro-choice crowd suggests but rather indicates that our cultural society is in the process of heading for the moral exits.

The effects of abortion are not limited just to the immediate victims. They're not limited just to the mother and the child, the effects of abortion extend far beyond the individual to the culture that they're part of. We don't realize it, we don't think about it but there are cosmic rules that are set in motion when you suppress the truth. Not only do you lose the ability to perceive the truth that is sitting there right in front of your eyes, but Jesus says you will also begin to lose the ability to hear any truth at all. This is what Jesus said in *Luke 8*. He said: *"Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."*

Understand what Jesus is saying here in the context of what he was describing, what he's telling you is that every time you are confronted with the truth and you suppress it, reject that truth, you begin to lose the ability not just to take in that truth but any truth. *"Even what he thinks he has will be taken away."*

Do you ever wonder why the pro-choice side remains unconvinced regardless the evidence? There's a principle of spiritual blindness at work here. I've used this analogy many times. I said picture your spirit like some kind of expensive camera that has F-stop adjustments that automatically limit the amount of light that comes into it. Just understand that every time you reject the truth the F-stop automatically clicks down. The amount of light coming in begins to diminish. Well, you know, light still gets in there but it has to be brighter and brighter because your ability to perceive it is growing duller and duller. God says suppress the truth and even the truth you think you have will be taken away, and that applies to everyone who suppresses the truth in unrighteousness.

I use as example the great apostle Paul who was guilty of just that. He started out as a great persecutor of the faith. He had rejected the truth of Christianity multiple times and I believe every time he did his lens clicked down a notch, a notch, a notch. His ability to perceive truth had been taken away to such an extent

that God had to use what? A bolt of lightning, a bolt so bright it knocked him right off his horse. That's what God had to use to get through his lens. In my line of work as a pastor I see this all the time. You spend a lifetime denying truths that are self-evident as the nose on your face, you're going to find in time you've lost the ability to perceive any truth.

Mother Teresa defined America as a deformed nation and the reason why, she said, because you no longer can perceive truth because abortion is a triple deformation of heart and mind and spirit. Abortion hardens the heart, it sears the conscience and it wounds the spirit. Think about it. It's the product of the father of lies who was a murderer from the beginning, and again what stands out in this particular sin is not just the sin but the wholesale suppression of truth that surrounds it.

So what does one do when the culture and the media are complicit and overwhelmingly powerful when it comes to promoting an agenda of the god of this world, the angel of death itself? Well, God has an answer. *Ephesians 5* says: *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.* What God is saying is when we encounter the unfruitful works of darkness, it's time to become a spiritual whistle blower. When the industry suppresses the truth in unrighteousness about what it is, it's time to insist that it no

longer hide behind the semantics of the word "pro-choice." When the industry suppresses the truth about what the procedure actually involves, it's time to insist on shedding light on it however you can. On the local level that means doing whatever you can to support bringing light into that darkness.

You know, the pregnancy center, they're hurting for volunteers. They're always looking for volunteers who are willing to do whatever it takes. It's still open only a few days a week because there's not enough staff to do more. If you want to have a concrete way of pushing back against the darkness that this abortion industry thrives on, there's no better way than to call them up in saying, "What can I do to help?"

And finally when the industry tries to minimize the devastation that abortion reeks in the lives of the mothers who have had them, it's time to offer up the one true solution to the lies and the murder that abortion represents, and that's the way, the truth and the life of the gospel itself. It's the gospel that declares: *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person -- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die -- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

What God is saying here is he didn't wait for us to kind of clean up our acts before he decided that we're now worthy of saving, he died for us while we were still sinners and that category "sinner" includes the sin of abortion. It's an amazing thing to realize that God has never ever been surprised by our sin. It's never taken him unawares.

If you've been haunted by the sin of abortion, understand God saw that sin, God paid the price of that sin over 2,000 years ago while he hung on a cross. God says in *Ephesians 5: Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.* But he also said just three verses earlier: *For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*

The thought that God is expressing here is critical to understand. This scripture that God wrote reads like he wrote it specifically for the abortion industry. This is what he says. He says: *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it*

is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible.

See God calls us to expose the unfruitful works of darkness but he also tells us in *Ephesians 5: At one time you were darkness.* God can say that about any and all of us. It's only through faith in Christ alone that God can claim *but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.* There's a reason why you and I have the light of the Lord illuminating the truth of abortion that's been suppressed in unrighteousness and it's not because we're more clever or more healthy or more worthy or more spiritual than anybody else, it's because God in his sovereign good pleasure granted us the grace to see, know and understand this truth and *to whom much is given, of him much is expected.*

Abortion is a scourge. It's a scourge that relies on the very darkness we have been called out of. It relies on lies and the suppression of its truth for its very survival. I mean when pro-choice actually means pro-abortion and abortion means actually mechanically or chemically killing a baby and when the killing of those babies actually means racial genocide and when the effect of that death is a profound guilt or a conscience so seared it's no longer capable of guilt, well then you realize that pro-choice is not a description of a minor political difference we might have

with pro-lifers, it is a spiritual death camp that enslaves those who think they somehow have found biological liberation. Instead they found death itself dressed up as freedom. And it's our task to produce God's truth in response to that profound lie.

You might be thinking, okay, that's impossible. And if you're thinking that, you're on the right track because that's what spiritual warfare is all about. I go back to the Center, the Center in Pennsylvania that we all are connected with. The folks at the Center, they know that abortion is not a political football. See, they know that right there it's absolutely a matter of life and death. They see the young girls coming in there constantly, coming to consider with plans to take the lives of the babies that they're carrying. And more often than not that's exactly what they do in spite of the mighty efforts on the part of the staff to comfort them, to love them, to care for them, would give them any physical need that they might have. The folks that are there have no illusion that abortion is some comfortable political difference worthy of debate. They know this is war. They know that the enemy of our souls hates them with a passion. And they know this is a place dedicated to serving crisis pregnancies and exposing the lies that support the culture of death. And so we pray for protection for them from without and support from within from the type of discord and bitterness that we know the enemy loves, loves to just

continue to breed into any place that's good and right and true.

I've been associated with the Center for many, many years, and that's one of the things that we always had to work on as people say, you know, sometimes they just -- people get into arguments, people get into strife, people get into struggle who are on the staff. Where did that come from? I know exactly where it came from. Not only is there pressure from outside, there's pressure from inside because that's how the enemy works.

Me just being part of the Center reminds me how blessed we are that we're on the side that we're on and it's solely on the basis of God's grace that we're on that side. I'm reminded of the scripture in *1 Peter* that says: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

And that last part is the most amazing part. God has called us a people for his own possession and that he's given us this incredibly critical task. He says that *you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* And so we who have the privilege of being called out of darkness also have the responsibility of proclaiming to

those who are still in that darkness the excellency of him who called us out, and the task may seem impossible but the God who called us is quite capable of doing the impossible. And those enslaved by this sin are never beyond the sovereign hand of God. And our task is really simply to show up.

And whether it's at the pregnancy center volunteering any way we can or whether it's at the dinner table engaging in a conversation with someone who's pro-choice, whether it's signing a petition or writing or calling a congressman or whether it's simply praying for this scourge to end, each one of us has our task and each one of us must be aware of what God says in *Romans 1:18*: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.* And so we thank God we have the promise of Jesus who also says: *"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Let's pray.

Father, I just again, I thank you for Sanctity of Life Sunday. I thank you that once a year we are called to focus in on exactly on what has taken place in this country. I just think of the curse that we are under. I think of -- we look around at the collapse of our culture and how connected that is to the fact that we are taking the lives of the innocents to the tune of 63 million. And

Lord, many people think that the war is over, the battle is won, the Dobbs decision has done it. The Dobbs decision just started phase two of this war. Now there's fifty individual wars that are taking place state to state, and we happen to be in a state that's one of the worst. So I pray for wisdom, I pray for insight, I pray for a renewed sense of urgency in going about the task of dealing with those who do these things in darkness and bringing your inexpressible light to bear on it. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.