

If you have your Bibles, would you go ahead and grab them? Genesis, chapter 1. Tomorrow, January 21, is Martin Luther King Jr. day. Then Tuesday is the fortieth anniversary of Roe v. Wade. If there is ever a weekend where you must address the subject of injustice, it would be a weekend before these two very significant days in American history. So before I get going today, because of the difficulty of the topic we will discuss, I want to lay out before you the reality of what's in this room.

One of my favorite parts of life at The Village Church is really the people who make up The Village Church. So regardless of how you've come in here today... I know some of you are strong believers, and some of you aren't. Some of you are immature in your faith; some of you are mature in your faith. What I can say that's absolutely true about every service at every campus we have is The Village Church is really a group of people who have come together as a covenant community of faith.

Our lives specifically in the past (probably a bit now in the present, but hopefully not as much so in the future) are a gigantic train wreck that sits under the umbrella and mercy of the grace of God. We are a church made up of former prostitutes, adulterers. We have some felons. So if you're using technology to read your Bible, you have your iPad or something, just keep it close, all right? We're being sanctified. Some of us might not be all the way there. Just be careful. All right?

We have those who have been divorced, those who have been divorced multiple times. We have hundreds who have been saved out of drugs and alcohol addiction. We have every type of perversion present as an example of the saving, merciful power of Jesus Christ. With that said, we will broach a difficult topic today. We will broach a difficult subject today. Here's the way I want to ask you to do me a favor as we get into this.

If at some points today things turn personal for you (and I think there's a very real chance that might occur for many of you), if at some point today the Word of God and some things that are proclaimed from the stage become personal, what I've experienced is you can go one of two ways. You can just automatically tune it out, automatically shut it down, or you can let, not guilt and shame, overcome you but maybe the sweet conviction that leads to forgiveness and healing.

As we get into what I believe to be one of the most difficult conversations to possess in our schizophrenic ridiculous culture, my plea with you is to find yourself pressing into Jesus if there's pressure on your heart,

not running from him, because our intent today is in no way to judge or to place judgment on but rather just to sit under the forgiving mercy and grace of Jesus Christ. In my 35 minutes, my goal, my plan, is to expose a tear, a gap, in the moral, ethical, intellectual fabric of Western thought. That's pretty ambitious for 35-36 minutes, but that's my plan.

I think the best way to kind of see really some of the silliness you and I are a part of is to just look at some of the outrage that has been caused over the last 12 months on a couple of issues. The first issue that comes to mind over the last 12 months that really rallied us all together in outrage was when the former defensive coordinator for the Penn State Nittany Lions was outed as a man who was brought up on 48 counts of sexual assault against children. He was convicted of 45 of them.

So 10 little boys over a period of 15 years were systematically drawn out of low socioeconomic stations in life, brought in through a charity to be taken advantage of by this old man. At the highest levels of power, men knew about it and did nothing. It led to the firing of the president of the university, the vice president of the university, the athletic director of the university, and the ball coach. *The coach*. Right? The only one they'd known in like 300 years. I mean, they just had to literally clean house there.

We were outraged. There wasn't a pundit, there wasn't a news anchor... I mean, we went dark. We wanted him to go to prison. We wanted him in the general area, didn't we? We wanted bad things to happen to this man...bad, bad, many evil, bad things to happen to this man. In our wishy-washy relativistic society, it seems like the one sacred cow for us, the one thing you had better not touch, is our kids. Don't touch our kids. I mean, furious.

I mean, we wanted Penn State to never play a football game again. We should sell the stadium and give it to the parents or to now many of those young 24-, 25-, 26-year-old men who have had their world completely rocked by such abuse from a trusted figure. In fact, in one of the most disturbing parts of the Freeh Report to me was where a graduate assistant walked in to Jerry Sandusky raping a boy in the shower, and he just walked by.

What kind of cowardly, weak man would just walk by? So he just walked by. He reported it a couple of days later to the powers that be, and then you have the cover up that occurred. This caused a rage in so many of us, in me. My default outside of the Holy Spirit is to want to punch you and catch you on fire if that's what you're involved in. All right? That's my default if the Holy Spirit is not working in my heart.

Didn't we all cry and mourn and enter into a deep level of confusion with one another around December 14 in Newtown, Connecticut, when at 9:00 a.m. a man walked into an elementary school and shot and killed 20 first and second graders and six adults? I contend to this day we would have been shocked, but we

would not have nearly been as undone if he had simply shot the adults. It was that he shot the *children*. So we cried together, even in these services. We gathered, and we cried, and we prayed.

I wanted to try to hand out permission, "It's okay to be perplexed." Then, man, we opened up law books, and we started looking at whether or not this is wise. We started looking into mental health. You had 20 children shot and killed, and it caused every legislature to begin to look at laws, to begin to look at how we handle mental illness. We really dug in because for us, the soft spot in American culture is our children. Don't touch our kids. Don't do it.

We'll change the laws about it. We'll relook at how we're handling health about it. You can't do it. It's the one thing that really brings us together and makes us collectively have a desire for justice. Yeah. In 1 Timothy, chapter 4, the Bible says there can be people and even groups of people who operate in life with a seared conscience. What that means is the moral, ethical, spiritual, intellectual nature of a man, woman, a group of men or women, can become severed, and they don't quite understand and don't see well what they're a part of, what they're participating in.

Ed Welch, in his phenomenal book *When People are Big and God is Small* (if you haven't read that, I commend it to you as an excellent book), uses the illustration of going into Los Angeles to teach. As he is heading into L.A., he can see the smog over the city. So outside of the city, he sees kind of this brown haze all over Los Angeles. Then once he gets into L.A., the haze disappears. Then he looks up, and there are just blue skies. He looks around, and he can't see any of the haze at all.

His point was he was sitting in the middle of it but couldn't sense it anymore. That's a great illustration for what happens when you and I operate with a seared conscience. I think probably one of the easiest places to watch this seared conscience take place in the life of our society, this rip in the fabric of our intellectual understanding of how life works and functions, is to see our absolute outcry over 30 children who were abused or murdered, and the lackadaisical, non-plugged in, non-concern about the 53 million abortions that have occurred since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.

Now, again, don't turn me off, because I know many of you right now are going, "Hey, man. A 5-year-old and a fetus aren't the same thing. You're comparing apples to oranges." Well, I am not a man who believes faith and science are in conflict with one another. In fact, I believe if we'd quit pitting those two against one another, we might all have a more robust understanding of how God functions and works in the universe.

I am aware in a room like this there are going to be those of you who really see the Bible as the ultimate authority, and those of you who do not feel the Bible is the ultimate authority at all; you think empirical data is. So here's my plan. I'm picking my words carefully. I want to prove to you the Bible and science are

not at odds when it says the moment of conception is when human life begins. That's what I'm going to argue. For those of you who are not people of faith and you think I'm trying to be political, I can assure you I have no political ties, no political connections. I have not in any way endorsed candidates.

In fact, true story. When Rick Perry (governor) joined us he called and said, "I'll be in service," I was like, "Great. We'll pray for you." "Well usually when we do that, we get a minute or two on stage." Well I'm glad he is here, and we will pray for him, but I'm not giving him my pulpit at all. That's not anything pro or for him. I just think my position is one that's a herald of the Word of God, a prophet of the Word of God and not, when all is said and done, a political man, although I do believe as good Americans we should be involved in that process.

Now, we got a dog for Christmas. He is an Australian Shepherd. His name is Gus. We named him Gus out of *Lonesome Dove*. I like him. He is smart. He is actually more obedient than my youngest child right now. He is a lot of fun, man. I mean, he really is a lot of fun. A couple of just off-topic words. He does not have any clothes. We have not bought him any clothes. I do not consider him a part of my family. He is not in my will. If I die, I don't care what happens to the dog. He does not get organic, expensive food. He gets the cheapest puppy chow I can find.

Maybe you feel sorry for Gus, but Gus is loved and lives better than a lot of human beings. I like him. I like the dog. My kids love the dog. It's been a lot of fun. Now if you look out at the creative order, there are some really spectacular things to see out there. When I think of just the power and awe that something like a lion or tiger (I won't finish that) bring to our... When you see those things, there's like this majestic component. It's awe-inspiring.

My oldest daughter loves horses. We're not in that tax bracket, but we have friends who have horses. So she goes, and she has learned to ride them and how to saddle them and clean them and all that. She loves this thing. They really are majestic creatures, but I need you to hear me say this. Look right at me. We're better than them. We're more valuable than they are. Only a fool would argue otherwise. Only a fool would say, "This horse is of equal or greater value to this 6-year-old." Only a fool would do that.

That does not happen often in our... Now I think implicitly it can happen, Sarah McLaughlin gives us the heavy sell on dogs that have been abused, but by and large, she is not saying in that commercial, "Dogs are better than people." She is just kind of doing a drive-by guilt on it. "I don't want to beat dogs anymore." Right? So in the end, we are better than, we are other than, we are of greater value than anything else in all of creation. I want to show you why that is.

In Genesis, chapter 1, let's pick it up in verse 26. **"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"** Now listen to this. **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**

You and I, as human beings, we alone (as opposed to all the rest of creation) were made in the image of God, which means we possess things nothing else in creation possesses. We possess a moral, spiritual, and ethical nature that does not exist in the rest of creation. Now let me tell you what I'm not saying. I'm not saying your dog isn't smart. I'm not saying your cat doesn't get depressed and doesn't eat when you're out of town. I'm not saying these things don't have value.

In fact, even this own text would say to be abusive toward or to neglect creation actually goes against the mandate God has put on man as image bearers, as caretakers of creation. Let me tell you what I absolutely am saying. Your dog is not wondering why he is here; you are. Your cat isn't concerned about what happens when she dies; you are. Your horse is not trying to find God; we are. We have a spiritual nature the rest of creation doesn't.

We are wholly different than the rest of creation. We are far more valuable than them. Nobody really tries to argue this point, no one who would be listened to, right? I mean, you could very quickly categorize that as crazy, right? "No, Matt. My cat Bootsie is more valuable than your 7-year-old son, Reid." See, you could say that, and I would just go, "Oh, okay." *Cuckoo*. We'd be fine. I'd be fine with you. I would just know where to file the way you think.

You and I probably would not be able to have an intelligent conversation with one another if you think Bootsie the cat is as valuable as my 7-year-old son. People don't make that argument. Not even around this issue of abortion do they make that argument. So the issue then becomes when does life begin? When does life begin? If we're not going to make the argument that Bootsie the cat is more valuable than my 7-year-old, then the argument has to become that a baby in a womb is actually not a baby yet, not a human being yet.

So the moment we become those image bearers becomes of imminent importance in this issue. So flip over just a couple of pages to Genesis, chapter 5. So if you think in a way that's linear, this should be helpful. Genesis, chapter 5, starting in verse 3. **"When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his..."** What? **"...image, and named him Seth."** So if you think in a way that's linear, you have God creating man and woman in his image. **"...in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**

Then Adam begins to have children, and the image of God that is put in to Adam is now in that image passed onto his son Seth and then passes forward through the line of the man from human to human to human, right up until this day where you and I are image bearers of God and are reflectors of the glory of God simply by being human. What we see begin to take place is an understanding in the Scriptures that the moral, ethical, spiritual nature of mankind is present in the womb.

So let me show you this. Psalm 58, verse 3, says, "**The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.**" So the Bible just said that moral, spiritual thing that's in a human being, that's present in the womb, which is why when they come out of the womb, they go astray. So they're estranged in the womb, which is why they come out lying. Everybody who has a child says, "Amen." Yeah? So they come out estranged, and then they began to lie.

Job 14:4: "**Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one.**" Job 15:14: "**What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous?**" Do you see what's happening here? This is talking about moral, spiritual nature that's present in the womb. Not after birth. In the womb. So if we want to define humanity as having an intellectual, moral, spiritual nature, then the Bible says that's happened in the womb. That's happened in the womb.

In fact, Psalm 139... We don't have enough time to unpack this whole verse because I want to get into how science is going to support this. Then I want to call us to action lest we be complicit in the greatest genocide the world will ever know. Psalm 139 says God knits us together in our mother's womb, both the formed substance (what you can see) and the unformed substance (the parts of us that you can't see, our personalities, how we respond to stress).

I have three children. They're all extremely different. They were all born into the same home. Now God blessed Audrey. She got the least sanctified version of us, which is why she is the way she is, but when all is said and done, if you have multiple kids, they're different despite the fact they're in the same house. The Bible tells us in Psalm 139 God knit us together, knowing the days he would have for us. Knowing what was coming for us, he knit us together in our mother's womb.

So one of the things I've joked about for the whole time I've been pastor here is I am a loud person. I'm just loud. It's not just preaching. I'm just loud. I've always been loud. One of the great ironies of my life is what I got grounded for, what I got detention for, and what I got whipped for, because we didn't have "time out" when I was a kid... If your dad knocked you unconscious, that was time out. So we didn't get to go to the corner and think.

I used to constantly get in trouble for it, and now I get paid for it. Be loud about Jesus. Now I get paid for it. One of the great ironies and how I understand breaking down Psalm 139 is God, knowing he was going to save me, knowing he was going to call me, knowing he was going to appoint me to his service and knowing he was going to give me the opportunity to herald his goodness and grace to mankind, put some extra vocal folds in there. He sets up a type of energy in me that's weird. Right? That's God stuff knitting me together.

If you're a businessman, he knit you together. You have that intrinsic entrepreneurial gifting. That's God stuff knitted in you in the womb. Then Eric Mason preached on racial reconciliation and really a foundation of repentance last week. It came out of Psalm 51:5. Here's what it says. **"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."** See the moral, ethical, intellectual, spiritual nature present in the womb.

I know some of you are now just like, "I still don't buy it. I still don't understand what you're talking about. It's a woman's right. It's her body. Who are you to tell a woman what she can do with her body?" I'd like to throw out I'm not advocating doing anything with a woman's body. What I am talking about is saving a baby's life, not so much a mother's life.

The argument goes, so the straw man, ace of spades people like to throw out, "Well, what about rape, incest, and the safety of the mother?" That makes up less than 1 percent of all abortions that have ever occurred. That is a straw man argument meant to stir up fear more than it is a reality, specifically with technology being what it is, the ability to do caesareans, the ability to sustain life at 24 weeks and beyond. This is a straw man argument that does not hold grounds at all.

Just on this argument, let's just let science be our friend. At the moment of conception (so I hope I'm not about to teach your children something), when the sperm hits the egg, there is new life possessing 46 chromosomes that are completely distinct from Mom's and from Dad's. Genetically speaking, when the sperm hits the egg, you have a wholly different human being inside of Mom. It does not have the same genetic code, does not have the same chromosomal mix (wholly different than Daddy, wholly different than Mama). We have a new human being when the sperm hits the egg.

At eight weeks in the womb, the baby is sucking her thumb. She is recoiling from pricking. She is fearful of pain. She responds to sound. This is in the womb. All her organs are present. Her brain is functioning. Her heart is pumping. Her liver is making blood cells. Her kidneys are cleaning fluid. She has fingerprints at eight weeks. Literally all abortions that occur, occur past eight weeks. What you will find is those who are pro-choice will never refer to this as a baby.

In fact, some of the more ridiculous ones say, "This is a product of conception." A *product* of conception. Tissue. Thumb-sucking, music loving, fearful of pain, having tissue. It sounds a lot like my 3-year-old daughter. That's what it sounds like to me. My daughter loves music. She doesn't want to get shots. She knows now that sometimes going to the doctor equals with them sticking a needle in her. So on the way, what does she ask? If you have kids, what do they ask? "Am I getting shots this time?"

Recoils from pain. Likes music. Sucks her thumb. How is this a "product of conception"? How is this not a child? It has its own genetic code, has its own chromosomal makeup. It is wholly different than Mom. It's wholly different than Mom. Now when you live in this kind of fog, all of a sudden things get really, really asinine. When you walk with a seared conscience, things get ridiculous. Let me point out a few examples of this. I'm going to give four.

Number one, under federal law, if you touch (the actual law reads "molest"), break, or steal a fertilized sea turtle egg you can be punished up to a \$100,000 and put in prison for 10 years. Seared conscience anyone? So don't jack with the sea turtles, but suck the human life out of you. Get a vacuum pump and rip limb-to-limb, piece-to-piece off of a thumb-sucking, dream-having, heart-beating, fingerprint-possessing human being, but don't jack with the sea turtles. That's a seared conscience.

I don't know how much you keep up with international news, but there have been a series of riots that have broken out in Europe that are tragically ironic. *Tragically* ironic. See, what the census has shown in Europe is when all is said and done, women and families are choosing to abort baby girls. They want sons, so they abort baby girls and try to get pregnant again with a son. If they find out they're pregnant with a girl again, they simply have another abortion and come back.

So when that census data hit the market, secular feminists lost their minds. I mean, they began to riot. There's this massive outcry, particularly in France and in parts of the UK, as women are exercising their right to choose by aborting little girls and keeping little boys. So here's my question for secular feminism. If it's ultimately a woman's choice and that's not a little girl to begin with but a product of conception, if that's just a clump of cells and not a girl, then why does it matter? You see, this is a seared conscience. This is the type of madness that occurs when you're not seeing the smog but you're inside of it.

Two more examples. North Dakota law defines abortion as terminating "the life of a whole, separate, unique, living human being." Written in North Dakota law, in a state that abortion is legal, it defines abortion as terminating "the life of a whole, separate, unique, living human being," which means in their law, they say abortion is the murder of a human being, but it's legal murder. That's a seared conscience.

Now, to North Dakota's defense, any woman in the state of North Dakota who wants to have an abortion has this read to her before she is able to have the abortion, and then they give her (by state law) 24 hours before she is actually able to have it. So they've written their law this way as a chance to try to stop women from having abortions predicated upon convenience.

Here's the last one I'll give, and then I want us to talk about really what our role should be as the people of God in such a horrific issue. If you're a young woman in here or maybe an older woman (I didn't say *old*; I said *older* woman) and you were pregnant in your first or second trimester and you were driving toward the abortion clinic to have an abortion and on the way to the abortion clinic you were hit by a drunk driver, that person is charged with involuntary manslaughter of your baby. But if you make it to the clinic, the doctor in the clinic is legally allowed to take a vacuum pump and rip that baby to shreds in your womb.

This is a seared conscience. This is madness, and this is the air we breathe as a society and a culture. So what are we to do? I think looking back on history, there are these moments in time that I'm so baffled by why more people weren't in the fight. Several years ago I was preaching out of the book of Colossians. We got to that part near the end of Colossians (chapter 3, I believe) where he begins to say, "Slaves, be obedient to your masters."

That's a problem text for me, so I just began to research slavery as much as I could in the first century and then throughout the centuries and then began to look at what really occurred in the African slave trade and what drove that. It was honestly sugar for tea and biscuits in England that drove it. Then what the English learned in the Caribbean, the guys in the 13 colonies took advantage of to do tobacco and cotton in our industry on the East Coast during those days.

As I began to look around at how Africans were dehumanized... They were not brought here as slaves. They were brought here as princes and kings and businessmen and husbands and fathers. There wasn't like a land of slaves where we went and got slaves. We went and stole people and dragged them here, dehumanized them, which led to hundreds of years of oppression that in some places is still going on.

So studying that and then that leading me up to the Civil Rights Movement, one of the things I wonder as I read about the dehumanization that was occurring all over the South and then even into the North just 30 and 40 years ago is where in the world was the church? What was she doing? What was she thinking? Where were my grandparents? What were they thinking? What were they doing?

When I begin to have conversations with some of my aunts and uncles and how they wish they would have marched with King but they were just indifferent, they just thought it would work itself out. How they wish they could get back into time and fight the noble fight. Instead, they were quiet. In areas of their heart,

they still to this day live in a bit of shame that they didn't do more, speak up more, engage more over a serious injustice that was all around them.

I think this is going to be one of those issues for us. Science is already pushing the ball forward rapidly. In 1973 when Roe v. Wade occurred, there was no sonogram. We can see our babies in the womb now. There are studies now showing the baby is dreaming in the womb. Science will eventually, I believe, turn over Roe v. Wade. It will only be a matter of time.

I think really the opportunity you and I have is to "march with King," if you're tracking with me, rather than sit on the sideline and hope this works out. "Oh, Chandler says science will eventually turn it over. Whew! Good." Instead of being those on the sideline, we might actually actively engage really what is the most horrific oppression, horrific injustice, horrific genocide the world has ever seen. So how do we do that? That becomes the question I want to answer in just the next few minutes.

Ephesians 5:11 says, **"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."** What I want to try to do is just lay before you true things today. I'm trying to expose darkness. Then you find in Matthew 25, verse 40, this story of God speaking to his people at judgment day. Matthew 25:40 says, **"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"**

Who is more vulnerable, who is more the least of these than the unborn? Who is more fragile, who is in need of more protection, who is in need of more help than the unborn? So what are we to do as the people of God? The first thing we need to do is *repent*. Some of us need to repent for actively being involved in this. There's grace and mercy for you. I started the way I started on purpose. There's forgiveness and mercy for all.

In fact, God has been drawn biblically and historically through those who have been involved in some of the most heinous things ever. It was William Wilberforce who was a slave trader who Christ radically transformed who spent the rest of his life opposing the slave trade and eventually got it illegal in the UK. So it's oftentimes God draws out of heinous sin those who will be used powerfully by God to overcome that heinous sin.

So please do not walk in shame, but rather seek the forgiveness of God who readily makes it available to you. Not all of us have been involved actively. Most of us have been involved by simply being *laissez-faire* about this issue of just thinking it will work itself out, of thinking it doesn't have much to do with us, of (God help us) wanting to be seen as cool and hip Christians.

You understand that's never going to happen, right? You do understand there's a growing hostility toward the things of God, and that's not going to change anytime soon. In fact, I think you're already beginning to see a rapid progression of how we're viewed in the public sphere. It's not overly positive. Some of us need to just repent about being unconcerned about this issue.

The second thing we can do is we can *pray*, guys. This is a spiritual issue. You don't have the science in front of us that we have in front of us and not be moved to do anything about it unless your eyes are blinded, your conscience is seared. So we can pray. We can pray for judges. We can pray for those working with women. We can pray for advocacy and pregnancy centers. We can pray. In fact, we're going to gather on Wednesday night across our campuses, and this is what we're going to pray around.

Third thing. You can *vote for those who are pro-life and not vote for those who are pro-choice*. Now let's chat, because some of you are like, "Oh, you're a one-issue voter?" A couple of things. I think you can be pro-life and be a miserable political leader. I think you can be a pro-life moron. I just absolutely believe it, but here's the thing. We're all one-issue voters. There are hundreds of "one issues" that could disqualify a guy from political office. Would this not be one of them?

So if a man were to stand up and say, "I do not believe black men and black women should be able to hold political office," would that not be a singular issue that in almost everybody's mind (outside of some buffoons in the sticks) would disqualify him from public office? Would it not? Are you telling me in general our culture would tolerate that ridiculousness? Oh man, that dude would get torched.

Why would this issue not be an issue that really matters if what we're saying is the people of God, that both the Word of God and even secular science, support that what's growing in a woman is a human being, and they're advocating the murder of that human being?

The next thing we could do is we can *support with money, time, and energy those who are in this fight*, whether that's giving time, energy, effort, money to advocacy and pregnancy centers or, if you're able (this is a huge one), looking into and considering adoption. So here's the thing I know about The Village Church. There are hundreds and hundreds of couples struggling with infertility who get all bogged down in the bureaucracy of adopting children.

The church can do some things here that are beautiful for women. My favorite story coming out of The Village is there was a 17-year-old girl who became pregnant here. One of our couples actually had that young woman move in with them, and they helped her through all that. She had a bit of a train wreck in regard to home life, so she moved in with them. Then when her little daughter was born, another covenant

member of the church actually adopted that little girl. This is how we engage the brokenness around us, not with judgment, not with drive-by guiltings, not with hostility, but with love and mercy and solutions.

Let us help. Let us walk with you. How can we serve you? How can we encourage you? Oh that we wouldn't be unmoved around this issue. Oh that we'd feel the weight of the fight we've been called to. If not us, who? Even in the amount of time I've spent with you today, there have been dozens and dozens and dozens, if not hundreds, of baby girls and baby boys murdered for the sake of convenience. We walk with enough people here at The Village Church to know if a pregnancy even becomes endangered, they're encouraged that way.

In fact, I was just talking to a young man in our church. They gave birth prematurely to twins. The water broke at 24 weeks. It looked like the first baby was in a lot of distress. The doctor said, "Hey, the best thing for you guys, the best thing for your wife, the best thing for this baby is to abort the first one so the second one might live." They scoffed at that.

Little Titus was born. He didn't make it long before he died, but we held in our hands in that hospital room a fully shaped, fully formed little boy with a little nose and a little mouth and little ears. He only lived about 25-30 minutes, but he lived. His little brother made it full on and is alive and well and growing. This is the fight we're caught up in. To be indifferent is to make us complicit with this travesty. So across all of our campuses, we have set up tables in the foyer with either advocacy and pregnancy centers or adoption agencies or ways you can connect, ways you can get involved, ways you can begin to engage.

I pray you'd be moved to write your governors, to write your senators and your Congressmen and Congresswomen, that we might put up a good fight in our day so 20 years from now, we can go, "I marched with King. I marched with King. I didn't just sit at home and hope. I marched with King." That would be my hope for us as the people of God. Roe v. Wade started here in Dallas. It would be awesome to see it crushed here in Dallas. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for these men and women, the opportunity to just sit under your truth. I know these are hard things. I pray for young women in here, young men in here, who have participated in these deeds of darkness. God, I pray they would taste the sweet conviction of the Holy Spirit and not be crushed by shame and guilt. I pray for those of us who have been complicit by indifference that you would, God, stir our hearts to action.

I pray as we move into just a few moments of sitting under the truths about your nature and grace, your love for us, how you've never failed us, have never left us, never abandoned us, but you've always been near and good and right, you have invited us to come near to you. God, I pray we wouldn't rush out but sit

under that. I pray as we're moved to pray with others or seek counsel from pastors or ministers who will be up front or in the back (depending on campuses) that you would stir our hearts up toward that end. It's through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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