

The Anniversary of a Tragedy

Today marks an anniversary in America. For 39 years, it has been legal to murder American children in the womb.

Between then and 2008, some 50,766,331 were killed without ever seeing the light of day. Add approximately 1.2 million to that total for every year after 2008 – and mourn the death of 54,366,000 of your youngest fellow Americans.

It's hard to put those numbers in perspective. Try this, for comparison:

- ✓ The population of Minnesota is 5.3 million. We abort that many children every four-and-a-half years.
- ✓ The population of South Dakota is 814,180. We abort that many children in about eight months.
- ✓ The number of children killed in the womb annually nearly reaches the total of Americans killed in war (1,317,800) since America began.
- ✓ More people are killed each year through abortion than die from heart disease and cancer – combined.

That brings the matter more clearly into view – and the view is an ugly one.

This year, our local chapter of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life did something we've never before done.

In recent years, we have chartered a bus to take folks to the state Capitol for the annual March for Life. We believe that it's important for folks from across the state to gather and call our legislators to pass morally upright, Godly laws that will protect the weakest members of society from evil.

This year, we didn't charter a bus. In fact, we didn't even send out a bulletin announcement to the churches inviting folks to participate in the March for Life.

You see, the March for Life is always held on the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade court decision – which is today, Jan. 22. But today is the Lord's Day.

Members of the Board of Southwest Minnesota Pro-Life agreed that it's important to gather and remind our legislators of the calling God has given to them (Rom 13:3-4). But we also agreed that the greater need of our state and nation is for God. The most righteous laws of men will change nothing, unless God changes hearts.

So we left the bus unchartered. But that doesn't mean we think folks should do nothing about abortion. We think folks should do the most important thing of all: pray for God to transform our nation.

In the latter years of Judah, after Israel had fallen to Assyria and its people were scattered among the nations, God's people set over them a man named Manasseh. Manasseh reigned for 55 years in Jerusalem – and those 55 years, although a span more brief than the life of a man, ensured Judah's destruction.

By the time Manasseh came to the throne, the people – having seen God's judgment befall their neighbors in the Northern Kingdom – *should* have feared our holy God enough to repent. But they didn't. Instead, they followed King Manasseh heart and soul, as that wicked king "led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel" (2 Chron. 33:9).

Manasseh, to his credit, eventually humbled himself and repented.

But for Judah, it was too little, too late. They followed their king's wicked example, but they wouldn't follow his repentance. They followed his son, Amon, into even greater evil. And they wouldn't turn their hearts to follow Godly Josiah when Josiah called them back to the Lord.

And Josiah tried! He sought God from his youth, making his life a beautiful example of godliness that the people could see. He relentlessly cleansed the land of idols and illegitimate altars; renovated the temple; read the Book of the Law to the people; and reinstated the Passover. If something could be done to draw the people back to the Lord, Josiah tried it. And the prophets joined him – Godly men like Jeremiah calling the nation to repent and return.

But the people refused. “The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by His messengers. ... But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising His words and scoffing at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people” (2 Chron. 36:15-16).

America is not Israel of old. The nation is not the church.

But the wickedness of our nation is easily as great as Judah’s. The blood of 54 million infants testifies to it. And the resounding silence of millions of Christians confirms it.

Our God is holy and just. He is “the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord” (Jer. 9:24). Therefore He calls *us* to love justice and to hate evil. He calls us to “rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Ps. 82:4). He urges us to speak up for those who cannot speak, and to defend the rights of the poor and needy (Prov. 31:8-9).

If we won’t, how true is our faith? James answers all-too-clearly: “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (Jas. 2:17,26).

If our nation and its people are to have a future, we don’t need the perfect presidential candidate, an unassailable majority in congress, or a solution to our debt crisis. Those things are important, sure. But they pale in comparison to our true need: humble repentance before the King of kings. “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him (Ps. 2:11-12).

Blessed indeed are those people and nations who take refuge in Christ – showing their faith in Him by repenting of their wickedness and showing selfless love toward the poor and weak.

And cursed are they who refuse.

With that in mind, please join me in praying for our nation. Join me in asking God to give our people a heart of repentance, and leaders who will reveal that repentance by outlawing the wickedness of abortion.

And while we’re praying, let’s ask God to make us passionate in leading the charge. Unless we, who know Him, take the lead – who will?

But we cannot – unless we do so in His strength!