

A Question that Haunts Me

There's a question that haunts me. It's a simple question – just four words – yet it rings with the weight of a judge's gavel, sealing the verdict for all time.

“What did you do?”

That's the question posed by a speaker at the Southwest Minnesota Pro-Life Rally in mid-April. But in truth, it's not just the question itself, but the way that it was posed, that has kept those words ringing in my mind for three weeks.

Just imagine, Allen Unruh challenged us – *imagine standing in the midst of God's people from every age, comparing notes about your time on earth*. One speaks of the slave trade that was so prevalent in his age, describing his small role with the Underground Railroad. Another talks about the Holocaust and how she was involved in the Resistance movement. A beautiful saint from Navarre talks about the French persecution of the Protestant Huguenots, quietly telling how she convinced influential relatives to ease their suffering.

Eyes turn to you, and someone asks: *when did you live?* As soon as you speak your answer, you hear mutters and see a host of raised eyebrows.

“*Wasn't that during the Slaughter of Infants?*”

“*How many were killed in the womb? Hundreds of millions, wasn't it?*”

“*What a bloody time! We wept at the world's cold heart ...*”

They all know about the time when you lived. Abortion made it *infamous*.

Looking upon you with renewed interest, this crowd of saints from every age inquires: *What did you do?*

There's an old curse that says: “May you live in interesting times.”

“Interesting” times are those periods marked by turmoil and unrest. They are the ages highlighted by the history books, in which great wars are fought and sad atrocities are committed.

Hearing that someone lived through such a time, we cannot help but wonder: *What was your role? What part did you play? Did you wear a white hat – or were your hands bloody?*

As Brother Unruh put it: “What did you do?”

For those who attended the rally, the question could not remain hypothetical. Not with Beth Garret present.

Beth is a quiet 27-year-old who looks uncomfortable standing before a crowd and using a microphone. But she is willing to endure the spotlight to talk about abortion – because she was supposed to be one of its victims.

Beth's birth-mother began the abortion process, but complications arose. She was rushed to the nearest hospital – which happened to be Roman Catholic, and strictly pro-life. Doctors saved both mother and (unwanted) child.

Growing up wasn't easy for Beth. Because of the attempted abortion, she suffered from respiratory problems and seizures. But she was adopted by a Christian family, and she learned to trust in Christ for all things.

“Life is such a gift,” Beth said. “We *need* to stand up against abortion.”

Of course, that will mean different things, depending on what gifts God has given you, Beth said. But the important thing is that you do *something*.

What did you do?

We need to stand and fight, Unruh said, because of how often that gift of life is being destroyed. Look at the worst tragedies in our nation's history:

- ✓ Civil War: about 529,000 soldiers (Union & Confederate) died.
- ✓ World War I: about 116,500 American soldiers died.
- ✓ World War II: about 405,400 American soldiers died.
- ✓ Korean War: about 36,500 American soldiers died.
- ✓ Vietnam War: about 58,000 American soldiers died.
- ✓ Operation Enduring Freedom & Operation Iraqi Freedom: about 5,300 American soldiers died (between 10/2001 & 2/2010).

Since the start of our nation, about 1.17 million members of the American armed forces have died during our various wars and conflicts (including deaths not directly related to battle).

In comparison, conservative abortion statistics indicate that:

- ✓ 1.31 million babies were killed *in the U.S. alone* in 2000.
- ✓ In 2005, the number decreased to 1.21 million in the U.S.
- ✓ Between 1973 (when abortion was legalized in the U.S.) and 2005, more than 45 million babies were killed by abortion in the U.S.
- ✓ Today, the total number of legal U.S. abortions is about 52 million.
- ✓ About 22 percent of all pregnancies in the U.S. end in abortion.

But that's just numbers. Let's put it in perspective. In our *best* years, we kill more children by abortion than all of the American soldiers and sailors who have died in all of our wars since 1775. Each *day*, enough children are killed by abortion in America to populate Hills nearly six times over.

And that's not even considering the fact that abortion is a worldwide phenomenon. In 2003 (the latest year for which I have statistics), 41.6 million children were killed by abortion – in that year alone.

It's hard to wrap your mind around such numbers. Try this:

- In America, in a *good* year, U.S. abortion deaths equal the population of South Dakota (812,000), plus half that number again.
- About 9 million people, total, live in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa. Kill every resident of those three states four times, then kill everyone in Minnesota again. That's how many die of abortion in our world every year – *during a year when the numbers are low!*

That's the age in which we live. The question echoes: "What did you do?"

Allen Unruh wisely notes that abortion isn't really the problem. Abortion is merely a tragic symptom of the far-greater problem of *moral relativism*.

Moral relativism is the idea that there are no enduring truths; no absolute right or wrong. It's the idea that all truth is open to negotiation and change. Every individual and every generation gets to re-define "truth."

Moral relativism is the root that bears a whole host of tragic fruits. It's what seeds the lawsuits that spring up like dandelions everytime someone is injured. It's what allows folks to think they have a right to make their neighbors pay for their healthcare, their housing, and their food. It's what causes society to believe that homosexual marriage is no different than heterosexual marriage.

Moral relativism is borne of our world's rebellion against God and its departure from His Word.

Without turning them back to God, we might *slow* the atrocities our nation commits, but we cannot stop them.

Of course, we know that many will refuse to turn to God. Until Jesus returns, weeds will grow and increase, just as much as the wheat – sin and rebellion, just as much as repentance and godliness. But as God's people, we're called to do all that we can to increase the harvest of the *wheat* of righteousness, while preventing the spread of the *weeds* of godlessness.

Jesus said we are to be the salt and the light of this world (Matt. 5:13-16). That means it's our calling to teach America what it needs to know.

- We need to teach them that God exists, and that His Word is true.
- We need to explain, time and again, that actions have consequences – and that the consequence of sin is judgment.
- We need to show them, individually, that they need Christ.
- We need to teach them, corporately, that they need godly leaders who serve Christ and rule for His glory.

Our God loves justice and hates evil (Isa. 61:8). Therefore we, His children, must love justice and hate evil. We must "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" and "defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Prov. 31:8-9). We are called to "rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked" (Ps. 82:4). We are called to lead the nation in humbling ourselves, repenting of sin, and seeking the forgiveness of God (2 Chron. 7:14).

"But wait a minute – what can I do? I'm just one person. I'm not rich or influential or exceptionally wise. What difference can I make?"

It's true: we are a small church, and our members are not influential. None of us holds public office. None of us is rich.

In the eyes of the world, we are not a threat.

But Scripture reminds us: "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world, and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are" (1 Cor. 1:27-28).

God did not defeat the army of Midian with a numberless host. Instead, He raised up the least man of the lowliest tribe of Israel (Judg. 6:15); and he thinned the ranks of that lowly leader until a mere 300 were following Gideon. Otherwise, Israel would have boasted that they had delivered themselves by their own strength, rather than giving the glory to God (Judg. 7:2).

We are weak; that's true. But our God is *mighty!*

At the pro-life rally, Allen Unruh reminded us: "It's never the wrong time to fight for what's right." However, I would add: it is *always* the wrong time to *decline* to obey the Lord.

A day is coming when we will have to answer: *What did you do?*

Next week, we'll consider some of the things we can do. By my count, there are at least five *categories* of ways that *each* of us can make a difference.

But before I talk about them, I want to ask you to think about it for yourself. Consider the magnitude of the injustice that fills our land. Consider the evil that has infiltrated our nation. And prayerfully consider: *What should you do?*