

Followers of the Way

Sermon: 28 November 2021

Preacher: Lynda Rose

Missing Millions – the world under judgment

Luke 1: 26-38

Matthew 2: 13-18

Abortion. Every woman, abortion activists say, has the right to choose what happens to her own body. If she doesn't want to play host to a parasite, she doesn't need to. She can get rid of it. This is a far cry from David Steel's assurance when he put forward his Abortion Bill in 1967. He said then, "*We want to stamp out the back-street abortions, but it is not the intention of the Promoters of the Bill to leave a wide-open door for abortion on request.*"

Since that time, the UK has seen almost 10 million abortions, most of which have been for what are euphemistically termed 'social reasons', meaning that, for whatever reason, the baby was at the time, unwanted. Globally, there are around 56 million abortions a year, which means that, since the 1960s, worldwide there have been over 3 billion abortions. Think about it. The entire population of the planet currently stands at 7.9 billion people – so over the last 55 or so years, we have 'legally' killed almost half the world's population.

I don't know about you, but the numbers are so staggering I find it hard to get a sense of what they actually mean, so to put it in a bit more of a manageable frame ... In the UK, since 1967, 10 million abortions mean that we've killed around 14% of our population – equivalent to killing the entire population of Austria, or just over the whole of the combined populations of Wales and Scotland. However you look at it, this is mass murder; it's genocide.

Now I know that saying something like this might well provoke a bit of a reaction, and it will undoubtedly make some people angry. Hold on, they say, women don't take the decision to abort their unborn babies lightly. They're driven to it, because it really is just the 'wrong' time for them to have a baby. For some women there isn't any other choice. And then they expand on that. Maybe they're too young, they say, not enough money, living with an abusive partner, have been raped ... in those kinds of situations it would be wrong to force them to have a child.

All sounds very convincing really, but what's God's take on this?

Well, we can get a pretty clear idea from Scripture. Psalm 139: 13-14 says,

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Similarly, Jeremiah 1:5 says, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

From these and similar texts, we know that every child is special. That every child is known to, and created by, God. Fearfully and wonderfully made. More than that, the Bible says ‘all the days ordained for me (are) written in your book before one of them (come) to be’. And Jeremiah can record that he was appointed a prophet and set apart before he was born. So every child has a God-given destiny. All of which means God knows and loves every child, and that there is a purpose for that child’s life.

You may know I write a weekly column for the online news service, Christian Today, and last week I was asked to write an article responding to attacks that had been made online against an Anglican priest, James Franklin, after he tweeted, “Lo, sons are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.” He was quoting from Psalm 127, of course, which seems eminently reasonable to me, but rather surprisingly his fellow clergy reacted with fury. They called him pastorally insensitive and even accused him of pandering to male patriarchy. One tweeted, ‘we should take ecologists seriously when they say we should consider the impact a high population has on the environment.”

That’s how far this nation, and the Church, has come in the last 50 years. Children are no longer seen as precious and a gift of God, but simply a by-product of sex, their value determined by whether or not they are wanted. But that is not how God views life, and our wanton and selfish destruction of the children He commits to our care is an abomination. When we reject the unborn and so casually dispose of life, we are literally rejecting God and His creation, and worshipping the devil. Abortion is blood sacrifice to Satan. Small wonder then that with almost half the planet’s population offered up on the altar of self and death, evil has grown so strong.

Can we really expect to do all this, and for God not to react? Can we really perpetuate such wanton and barbaric cruelty on others, who cannot defend themselves, and expect God just to shrug and say, ‘It’s alright ... I understand. It doesn’t matter.’

It does matter. God is a God of love, but He is also a God of justice, who cannot and will not accept sin. That indeed is why He sent His only Son to redeem us - and why Mary received the visit we’ve just heard about in our reading from the angel. Because without Christ’s atoning death, the penalty for sin would have been unpaid, and we would have remained in bondage, literally in hell.

There are huge stakes at issue here. By our celebration of sexual licence and promiscuity, and our unthinking, selfish destruction of life, we have given our allegiance

to evil. And God – because of who He is, and the battle that’s still raging between good and evil – can’t accept that. We can’t be a little bit saved. It’s all or nothing – which doesn’t mean we have to be perfect, but it does mean we have to be obedient, and to try.

Just as when Cain slew Abel, the blood of the innocent now cries out from the ground, and because of the choices we have made, God has withdrawn His protection from the earth. Covid, increasing violence on our streets, a crumbling world economy, inter-state tensions that could easily spill over into war *These are all the results of our choices.* But make no mistake - these things are not in themselves judgment. Rather, they are God’s warning of the judgment to come, when He returns. Something that will be infinitely terrible and from which there will be no appeal ... if we don’t now repent and change our ways.

Mary, when she was visited by the angel, was a young girl – maybe only about 14 or 15, maybe younger – unmarried, but engaged. In today’s climate, she’d have been at the head of the queue for an abortion. And then the child destined to save the world would have been lost, and we would have remained eternally separated from God. But Mary, we know, chose to be obedient. Lk 1:38, she says to the angel, ‘May it be to me as you have said’. I don’t think we can have any real idea, from those brief words, how very costly that decision would have been. In first century Israel, unmarried girls did not have babies. Ever! If Joseph hadn’t stood by her – and we know from the Bible that at first he was minded not to – Mary’s life would have been effectively over. But Mary knew that all life was the gift of God, and she knew that this child was special ... because the angel had told her so. So, despite the difficulties, she didn’t hesitate. ‘May it be to me as you have said.’

Think of the unfulfilled destinies of those 10 million unborn children in our country denied the chance of life – and of their children, and their children’s children. All lost. Think of the gifts that we’ll never know, and their loss to society. Without any shadow of doubt, we have grieved the heart of God. Yet He still loves us. Amazing, isn’t it? Our choices have allowed/caused the evil that we see all around. Yet He’s calling out to us ahead of His return, giving humanity a last chance to repent, before the full horrors of our choices are unleashed.

As it is, if we carry on the way we are – killing the unborn, rejecting God’s template for the family and social order, redefining biology, and making a god of ‘sex’ – there is far, far worse to come, both eternally, and here on earth now. Horrors that we perhaps can’t even begin to imagine, as we slowly kill off the human race. And men and women, and nations, turn on each other, like rats in a cage.

After Jesus was born, Satan destroyed all the male children in the area, up to the age of 2. Satan always seeks to destroy life, and in the last 50 or so years, we have destroyed countless millions of lives, so that Satan sees us as his own. For our own salvation, we must stop this selfish slaughter and honour God’s gift of life. Only then can we ask Him to help and to set us free from the darkness that’s stifling the world.

