

September 2008



HAPPY NOTES *at home*

for the Vineyard Church family



The Vineyard's View on Sanctity of Life

by Happy Leman

Introduction

After having just finished our fall preaching series entitled “Ask Jesus” we received a few comments and emails asking why we did not talk about abortion. These individuals wondered why—since we had talked on the environment, politics, and life after death—we did not use this opportunity to address the abortion issue. Frankly, we had 5 weeks to cover a wide variety of subjects (based upon the questions we received from the program insert). After prayer and discussion, we selected 5 topics about which we had received prior repeated inquiries. We felt they were timely, and important for our short series.

Further, we assumed, perhaps somewhat incorrectly, that members of our church family at The Vineyard would know where we have historically stood on the subject of life and abortion. Allow me to use the rest of this Happy Note to lay out our thinking on our view of life.

God is Pro-Life

God is the Creator of all things, including all human life (see Genesis 1:26-28 / Colossians 1:15-16). Every human being is created in the image of God, and reflects God's glory. God's original command was for mankind to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Because God is the author of human life, and he determines the length of life (Psalm 139:16 / Job 14:5), it is therefore sacred and of inestimable value. Everything about God oozes life in its fullest manifestations.

This Vineyard is Pro-Life

From the very beginning of our church in 1978, we have embraced the sanctity of life. We have stated this publicly in our preaching and teaching and reflected this belief in our programs, ministries and outreaches. We have never wavered. To us, the Bible clearly reveals God is “pro-life,” and so are we. All human beings are worthy of dignity and respect—including the unborn, elderly, handicapped, terminally ill, weak or infirm, marginalized, oppressed, poor, illiterate, and so forth. We see sanctity of life issues as extremely important. Consequently, the church can and does lift its voice, and speaks plainly, when we believe that a violation of biblical values regarding life, freedom, or dignity occurs.

A Very Sensitive Topic

Addressing the subject of abortion in particular can be a difficult task in a congregation. On one hand, we try never to shrink back from our responsibility to proclaim the whole counsel of God and Scripture. On the other hand, we want to be sensitive to those in our church family that have suffered the trauma of abortion in their past. We desire always to extend God's love, hope, forgiveness, and ministry to bring healing to those with very painful pasts. Many of us know women who have had abortions. We deeply love these women and feel absolute compassion for them.

Our Focus

Please hear my heart of compassion in the following comments. The church as a corporate body principally is charged with proclaiming and demonstrating the coming Kingdom to as many people as possible. By doing this, our goal is to bring people into relationship with Jesus Christ and live as part of the family. Ultimately, we want to change the world one heart at a time as we stick to “the main and plain.”

All ministries and activities can be worthy pursuits and good works that result from our changed hearts. We want to be known first and foremost as a church that represents Jesus Christ and continues his work. We want to talk about the Father’s love, the Good News of Jesus to seek and save the lost, and the power of the Holy Spirit that causes the fruit of the Spirit to ripen in our lives.

A Calling for Some

Clearly, some of you as members of the church may be called to give your lives and to stand up for any number of worthy causes, in which you feel led by the Holy Spirit. We bless these efforts. In fact, we believe that many in our church family are already mobilized in the battle for the sanctity of life by their active participation in the political process, volunteering at the Crisis Pregnancy Center, serving in our Teen Mom ministry, serving as foster parents, reaching out to women who have suffered the trauma of abortion through Healing Journey, and in dozens of other practical ways.

Final Thoughts

Yes, we are definitely pro-life. We always have been and we always will be. The issue is one of focus. As a corporate church, we focus on proclaiming and demonstrating the Kingdom. The members of the church focus their lives on doing the main purpose and finding avenues which allow them to express their Christianity in general and their calling in particular. I hope this helps your understanding. If you have questions, feel free to contact one of our pastors.

*Happy Notes at Home are a monthly reflection of community life at The Vineyard Church
and are produced by Happy Leman.*