***VOICELESS SERMON WEEK 4***

*Action / Overcoming the Lies That Sin Feeds*

1:25:45 - 1:29:08

This is the last week in a four-week series we have done on the movie *Voiceless*, a story of a community’s fight against the issue of abortion and the way that God moved in their city to bring real change. It is an inspiring story, mostly focused on one man named Jesse, who is working in the inner city to bring peace and to serve his neighbors. We wanted to focus on this film and on the topic of abortion because we want change for our community, country, and world, and we believe that the fight begins with us.

This week we are going to look at this speech by the main character’s wife, and we are going to magnify the truths that she speaks in this scene so that we can learn how to take *real action* and embrace *real truth* when it comes to abortion and our world.

Let’s pray: *Lord, build up a passion in our hearts that we cannot ignore. Speak truth into us and into our world that we can take action for You in our community and our country. We pray that Your will would be done in the lives of pregnant families and that You would protect Your children, born and unborn, so that we can be used to bring Your kingdom here to Earth.*

So, we have talked about this at the beginning of our sermons for the last three weeks and we are going to talk about it again. This movie makes it clear that abortion is wrong and that we have the responsibility to fight against the murder of unborn children. The film does not mince words. And I do not want to mince words with you: abortion is evil; it is a sin. **But** if you are here today and you have had an abortion or have been part of the decision to have an abortion (I’m speaking to all of you, because men are oftentimes equally or even more responsible for these decisions), and you know the heart of God and have accepted His *eternal* forgiveness through belief in Jesus by grace, then the Lord does not condemn you. His forgiveness is eternal, thus wiping out the consequences of sin past, present, and future. You are not marked as murderer, as sinner, or as unclean. You are marked as pure, and we believe that God has mercy on the innocent, including children who have no voice and no say.

You are in a special place of power when it comes to this issue. I hope that you can find so much truth and redemption in Jesus that He can use your life to change the lives of others and change the world we live in.

Similarly, I want to remind you that shaming, pointing fingers, mocking, or condemning *anyone* is a sin. If you are or have been one of those among the Christian Church who has chosen to publicly condemn people for their sins, especially on this topic of abortion, or on sexual immorality, then you have been a hypocrite and you are among those who blemish the world’s view of Jesus. You are one of the ones whom Jesus is referring to when He calls the Pharisees a “brood of vipers.” You use the shame of others to make yourself feel more holy and all the while you are walking in the opposite direction of Jesus. But just as those who have been involved in this sin of abortion are completely forgiven and told to go about their way and sin no more, so are you forgiven through faith by the grace of Jesus. You are not marked as hypocrite or as one who casts shade on others. So go, and leave your life of sin.

Again, if you have dealt with ANY sin that this series deals with, understand that God does not condemn you if you have come to Him and asked for forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:8-10 says this: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (ESV).

Today we will focus much of our time on taking action when it comes to our fight against abortion. I hope that our suggestions and our plans will empower you to rise up and protect God’s people.

But first, I want to make sure that we are coming from a proper and biblical worldview, so that we all know *why* we are able to and asked to face this issue.

If we blindly say, “Abortion is evil and it needs to stop,” without any knowledge of why, tools to help, or faith to back up our passions, then our fight is nothing more than a fight for morals, not for Jesus’ kingdom in this world. Similarly, if we simply shrug off our responsibility in this fight against abortion and say, “Oh well, we are all forgiven so it’s not my job to worry about other people and their business,” then we are denying the call that God is placing on His Church to bring His righteousness to this world through works! We, in a sense, are saying that we do not have enough faith to follow God to that extent. We are saved through faith, but that does not give us a license to sin or to permit sin in this world. Acknowledging sin is not enough, there is still more to be done.

Church, if you are ashamed of the morals of God and you wish that you could simply conform to the beliefs of the world so that no one would look at you as a radical, an activist, or a freak, it is time to cast that shame and fear aside. Romans 1:16 says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel” (ESV), and it is time for us to take up the power of Jesus’s redemption, showing people the love and grace that comes through faith, as well as the life-changing power and call to action that comes with following Christ.

When the Church becomes surprised at sin, we lose our potency. We have talked a lot in this series about knowing the difference between right and wrong and giving sin a name, rather than just brushing it aside or beating around the bush. But if we look our sin in the face and know it and know how to overcome it, then no sin should ever “shock” us. The minute that we react in a surprised or shocked way when someone confesses a sin to us, we put ourselves in a place above them, a place of feigned righteousness that says, “I am shocked that you are that unholy. And I am better than that.” Shocked Christians are weak Christians. They are caught off guard, they are taken by surprise, and (with or without meaning to) they belittle others and weaken the potency of their ministry.

Now, let’s move finally into action.

If you still do not know where you stand in the pro-life vs. pro-choice debate, then I urge you to dig into Scripture, find the passages that talk about murder, that talk about Jesus’s care for children and for the poor, for the widow and for the orphan, and figure out if you believe this is an important issue to God, because I absolutely believe it is. Understand that the reason the Bible never directly addresses abortion is because in those days, such a thing was so unthinkable that they would not know what it was or feel a need to address it; plus, children were always considered a blessing. If you don’t know where you stand, you need to address this and find out for yourself.

If you do not know how you and your gifts can serve the kingdom on this issue, I would encourage you to look at the ways you already serve within the church. Perhaps you love childcare, then it’s time to volunteer to help with childcare to single mothers or mothers in need so that pregnant families know they can bring a child into the world and have the resources to take care of him or her. Perhaps you have the gift of administration, then volunteer with a crisis center or shelter to take care of women and children who would otherwise be in dangerous or dire situations. Or maybe you are a businessman: give financially to centers like this and ministries like this so that they can thrive, and use your position of power to influence others to do the same. If you are a family with the means to continue your current lifestyle but perhaps can’t find the extra time in your schedule, why don’t you consider adoption? Adoption encourages women to abandon the path to abortion so that they can leave their child in responsible hands. And you can introduce reconciliation into your family, as well as diversity, learning, generosity, and much more. These are all lessons your children need anyway. And many of you absolutely do have the resources to do so.

What are other ways you can serve as an individual? Write to your legislature and explain that a person is a person, born or unborn, because right now the government calls a fetus a human, but not a person, since the constitution gives rights to every person, but not to every human. When we divide humans and persons, then we allow for anyone to be denied personhood, and with the issues in our culture right now, I’m sure you can imagine how slippery a slope that could be.

As a church, what can we do? We can host dinners and events to invite our neighbors to, and we can be intentional to reach out to struggling families so that our church can care for them. We can expand and encourage growth in our children’s ministry, so that people in the community can see there are resources for their children. We can begin programs for men who are part of the abortion process, challenging them to step up to the challenge of fatherhood, and we can disciple them to become men of God who seek His heart in all things and who promise protection to the mothers of their children. We can spread awareness of our beliefs and of why we think abortion should stop completely, we can create or distribute educational material, we can spend time with women at the clinic in town, and we can love on people who do not believe the same things that we do so we can earn the right to show them what we believe.

We can take on the label of pro-life and begin practicing that to every extent. We can always choose to protect life, be that the lives of our homeless neighbors, children or families in need, people who are hungry or needing shelter—especially in the cold—and we can support ministries and resources that provide extra care for people whose lives are in danger.

And we can pray. We can pray that God would do a miraculous thing in our country and in our world. We can ask Him to change the hearts of men and women in power so that the proper steps are taken to see our goal carried out. Ask Him to call up specific individuals to be a voice and to take positions of leadership in this fight, and be willing to offer yourself in any way that He asks of you. We can pray grace and mercy upon the lives of pregnant women who are considering abortion as an option. We can ask God that He would have mercy on the lives and souls of infants and unborn children who die without the chance to know Him on Earth, and that He would welcome them into His kingdom. And we can pray ultimately for His will to be done on Earth so that everyone can see His glory and choose to follow Jesus.

Closing prayer: *Father, we admit that we are not big or powerful enough to win this fight alone. And we ask that You would do a mighty work within us to bring us together as one Church and to follow Your call on our lives in the face of evil. Please show us as a congregation and ministry staff what you’re calling us to do to help save the lives of the unborn children. How can we help those that can’t speak for themselves? We ask that You would do a great miracle in our country and in our world to abolish abortion, both in the political system and in the social spheres so that people would know this is no longer acceptable. We pray that You would bring grace and forgiveness to women and men who have struggled with abortion or been scarred by its effects. We ask that they would feel loved and know they are redeemed in You. God, we pray Your will to be done here on Earth and that You will send Your Son again soon. May we follow You with our entire lives and may You wash us clean by His blood and seal us for the day of salvation so that we can stand in front of You, blameless and pure. You are the Ruler of Earth, the King of all, and the Lord of our lives. Amen.*