Pregnancy, is it 'punishment' or blessing?

Written by Marie Bowen

Some would say the answer to this question depends on the circumstances of the woman—her emotional and material resources, her health, her readiness to parent, and even the health of the child. That raises another question: What is the source of wisdom in decision-making for today's Christian?

Lately, media voices have raised the question, "Why are we still talking about this after 40 years?" 'This' being abortion. The question comes from Roe v. Wade supporters who want abortion to stay legal. They are frustrated that the ‘losers’ in this debate—those convinced that the child in the womb has a right to live—will not accept their loss, go away, and be silent.

I'm one of the 'losers'. I've lost all the blessing God intended to bring through the 55 million babies aborted in America since 1973. I have also lost as a woman in the Presbyterian Church USA.

This denomination of which I am a member has taken a political position on abortion (i.e. 'pro-choice') that women alone should make decisions about whether to carry a pregnancy to term because only she knows her circumstances. She alone can assess her own strength and resources. We women have lost the spiritual guidance of our church.

**Exactly what is lost?**

Lost is any stated caution from the church about God's prohibition against the taking of human life. Lost is pastoral encouragement that we can trust God and know He will be enough for us now and in the future. Lost is the teaching that God has created the child in the womb. Lost the warning that when we take the life of an unborn child we thwart the plan of God to bring blessing through the life of that child. Lost too is the promise of the church that the community of faith will rally round us and walk with us through the difficulties of pregnancy and the daunting task of parenting for the long-term.
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Pregnancy: blessing or punishment?

Here is one example of the fundamental differences we have. Those wanting to keep abortion legal often view an unplanned pregnancy as "punishment." Never mind that pregnancy, even when it is unwanted, does not last forever. It is a 9 month commitment (give or take a few days). If a woman does not want the responsibility of parenting her child, making an adoption plan can be a loving and life-giving alternative. Yes giving birth is a life-changing event, but in today's culture it is at worst only a postponement of education, career, and goals and does not end life as she knows it.

Still, many defend abortion with negative rhetoric about pregnancy. An example is posted by The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. RCRC is an interfaith coalition working for 'reproductive choice' and other left leaning political positions. (PCUSA is a member of this organization). RCRC recently gave their first Moody-Patterson Award for Leadership in Reproductive Justice to an abortionist, Dr. Willie Parker. In his acceptance speech Dr. Parker describes his journey to accepting abortion as a "different theology" and a "different understanding." Indeed it is that! Dr. Parker states that he finds no inconsistency between his taking the Hippocratic oath and the practice of abortion. He outlines three examples of circumstances in which he has performed abortions. In each of his examples he describes carrying the pregnancy to term as punishment:

*Should the 14 year old victim of incest be punished?*

*Should the relatively innocent college girl, who underestimates the power of alcohol and becomes pregnant during a casual date, be punished to the degree of being forced to give up her college education and social standing bringing untold hardships to her family? . . .*

*What about the housewife who has several children, who is already living precariously in the circumstances in which she finds herself, and who has used contraception and despite her best efforts has experienced a contraceptive failure. Should she be punished?*

*How can we be silent?*

Throughout the whole of Scripture, pregnancy is never portrayed as 'punishment'! Always it is
described as a blessing, a gift from God.

Psalm 127:3 "Behold children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward." (NKJ)

For Adam and Eve the promise of pregnancy meant they would not die today for their sin of disobedience. Yes, they would face natural death, but God's gift of a child would preserve their spiritual life, and ours, forever!

Not every pregnancy in Scripture took place in ideal circumstances, but every child in the Bible is received as a gift from God. So how should Christians today make choices regarding abortion? Are the feelings, circumstances, plans of the woman of first importance? Should we de-value what God has created in the womb because he/she may not be 'perfect' in our eyes? Dare we speak as God and say, "It would be better if this child were never born?"

No! Each living human being is unique and different from any other and he/she is created by God. She is given to us as a gift. He is made by God to bless the world in ways we cannot see. Our lives will be touched and changed and blessed as we welcome each child into our community of faith. Dare to trust God. Make Scripture our primary source of wisdom for decision making and relish the joy of God's gift to us in children.