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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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Life Chain Sunday

Selected Scriptures

Prayer: *Again, Father, we just want to thank you for your grace, we thank you for your goodness, we thank you for who you are. And Lord, this morning this is a kind of unique message, it's more of a screed than a message, and so I pray that your Spirit would accompany it. I pray that you would guide me, give me your Holy Spirit's presence and power and guide us as we hear what your Spirit has to say. We pray that it would be of permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, what do you think is the greatest sin a person can commit? You know, some people think murder and some people think pride, some people would say genocide. There's a whole host of sins that people would offer as the very worst of sins but they'd only be giving you a human opinion. You see, God has an opinion and his opinion matters a lot more than any human opinion and God and Jesus seem to hone in on one particular sin as being if not the worst, certainly among the worst and it's almost never what people think it is. This one sin that provokes the very wrath of God is spoken

of in *Romans 1:18*. It says this, it says: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.* So suppressing the truth in unrighteousness is one of the greatest sins anyone could commit, according to God's word.

Now just to give this a context, the truth that mankind was suppressing was the evidence that abounds and surrounds us in nature itself. I mean God says you can't be surrounded by this overwhelming evidence of my creative power and ability such as the air that you breathe, the ground that you walk on, the birds and the insects you see and the very trees that surround you as well as the sun that is warming you unless you actively choose to pursue this sin.

Let me give it to you again. *Romans 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.* And of course that includes the air that you breathe, the ground that you're walking on, the birds and the insects you see and the very trees that surround you as well as the sun that is warming you.

All of them shout out God's power so obviously that any reasonable person would say the evidence is overwhelming.

I go back to Romans 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

See, even Jesus alluded to this sin as the very worst not so much for its causes but for its effects. You've got to understand what God is saying here. He's talking about himself as the ultimate source of truth and he's describing one particular reaction to the obvious truth of his eternal power and Godhead as seen in creation. And what he's saying is you can understand that truth, you could ignore that truth, or you could hear that truth and have a basic understanding of it and then decide not only to not obey it but to suppress it and to suppress it in unrighteousness.

Suppressing the truth is what caused the Pharisees to claim that Christ's power to cast out demons came from Satan himself. They saw the miracle, they saw Jesus literally cast demons out of a

person. They knew the truth of that miracle. They knew the truth of it meant that Christ had to be God. They also knew what a threat that truth was to their own personal power, so they decided to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. It's the one sin that Christ labels as unforgivable. And it's not because God refuses to forgive any sin but because those who are caught up in this particular sin will always refuse to seek a forgiveness that's based on truth because they've fallen in love with lies, and so therefore they refuse the very spirit of truth which is God's Holy Spirit.

This is what Jesus said in *Mark 3:28*. He said: *"Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."*

Well, this is the sin, this refusing to believe the spirit of truth is what's intimately behind the very act of suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, and that according to scripture is what is behind every other sin. God says it's the sin that causes the wrath of God to fall down on us from heaven itself. And it's effects, they spread like an infection. They taint everything that it touches.

And so I want to take some time this morning explaining how

abortion fits perfectly into this notion of suppressing the truth in unrighteousness because today is Life Chain Sunday. And basically what that is is for an hour and a half we simply stand on a public street, we hold up signs that say what abortion actually is. And you know, people for years have questioned how effective that is and for years I've been saying it doesn't much matter whether or not it stops a single person from having an abortion -- that would be a wonderful effect -- but the actual point of standing there is to simply make a public affirmation of what is right and what is true in the midst of a culture determined to affirm what is a lie.

The lie viciously promoted by Planned Parenthood and the liberal media can be summed up in one of their favorite slogans: "Abortion is health care." That is a bold-faced lie, and it's led us to a place that no one could have imagined back in 1973 when abortion was first legalized. And you know sometimes it takes someone outside of our culture itself to speak prophetically about how much of our culture -- how much our culture has lost its ability to perceive truth. And one such person is division commentator Tucker Carlson. He made that observation about abortion just last week.

This is what he said as reported by author Elizabeth Johnston. She said this, she said: "Former Fox News host and culture war

personality Tucker Carlson recently drew a striking comparison between modern-day abortion practices and child sacrifice rituals throughout history. 'Human sacrifice, the sacrifice of children, the killing of children is the one constant in human civilization,' he noted while speaking to a gala held by The Center for Christian Virtue, as LifeNews reported. He pointed to the prevalence of child sacrifice in the Bible, which God 'singled out' as 'detestable.' 'Why were people doing that?' Carlson asked of the ritualistic sacrifices frequently mentioned in the Old Testament kingdoms. 'Because, of course, they believed that they were getting power and contentment and happiness in return.' Sound familiar? Carlson expounded on this point by explaining that it wasn't just the notoriously bloody Aztecs and Mayans of Mesoamerica that ritualistically sacrificed children, but civilizations across the globe and throughout history. Then, he made the very stirring point that the impulse to sacrifice one's own children couldn't possibly happen 'organically,' as it would defy evolutionary biology. 'That's an idea, an impulse that was introduced,' Carlson argued. 'Outside forces are acting on people at all times throughout history in every culture on the planet to convince people that if they sacrifice their children they will be happy and safe. And that's exactly what this is,' he continued. 'This is a religious rite. This is not a policy debate, they're not telling you that some girl got raped at 13 and she needs to go to college

and therefore, unfortunately, we need to abort the child. No. That was 20 years ago. Now they're saying, "Abortion is itself a pathway to joy." Really? So this is not a political debate, this is a spiritual battle. There is no other conclusion.' Outside forces are acting on people at all times throughout history in every culture on the planet to convince people that if they sacrifice their children they will be happy and safe.'"

Those outside forces are what we label "demonic" and they've been wildly successful in suppressing the truth in unrighteousness about the child sacrifice that we now call health care.

There's some simple and inescapable facts about abortion that prove that suppressing the truth in unrighteousness is at the core, at the very heart of this sin. And again we have to understand what we're talking about here. To paraphrase what Carlson is saying is abortion encapsulates the demonic into one sacramental act. And Jesus made it very clear that the devil himself celebrates lying, he celebrates murder. During one particularly nasty argument that Jesus had with the Pharisees he identified him this way in *John 8:44*. He said: *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own*

resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

You see, if your core nature is rooted not just in murder but the combination of murder and lies, then why wouldn't you be the outside force convincing people that the pathway to being happy and safe is by sacrificing your children? You could never, never say that out loud. You'd have to cover that up, you'd have to cover it up the series of lies and it's those lies that drive and empower the entire abortion movement.

The abortion movement lies about what abortion is, it lies about what it does, it lies about who it does it to, and it lies about what it does to its victims.

First it suppresses the truth about what abortion is. Abortion is a word that is seldom used by the industry to describe itself. We've heard it so many times we all come to accept this phrase "pro-choice" as the abortion industry's description of itself. That description is in itself a lie. I don't know of any other choice that anyone makes in which the actual choice itself is never, never spoken of. I mean the logical question to ask someone who says that they are pro-choice is, okay, what choice are you talking about? I mean, if it was any other choice, say it was a cultural choice like gay marriage, then folks, they'd have no

problem whatsoever saying I want or I don't want the right for people of the same sex to marry. Simple enough. If it was a political choice like the right of the state to make marijuana use legal, well then you'd have no problem clearly stating what side of that choice you're on. I mean you either are for legalizing marijuana or you're not.

But the very name that the abortion industry has chosen to cloak itself with, "pro-choice" is a name designed to suppress the actual truth of what it really is. You see, the choice in pro-choice is the actual taking of the life of a human being inside the womb of its mother. And there's no getting around that, I mean, the whole point of the procedure is to take the life of the baby. There's very few pro-choicers who are actually willing to say that. And they would argue that what matters most is not that, it's the woman's ability to make choices. But that ignores the fact that only one of the options in a pregnancy is actually a choice. I mean a woman who's pregnant has only three options, two of which are the normal, natural progression of pregnancy since time began. She normally will carry the child to term; she may have a miscarriage; or she can choose to abort. The only choices in three options is the choice to abort. And so to say that you are pro-choice is to imply that you want a variety of options which in fact the only option that pro-choice really means is pro-abortion.

Truth is it's just too convicting for the average person to say.

So the very name that the abortion industry uses to describe itself, it's a textbook case of obfuscation. That's a fifty-cent word if there ever was one. To obfuscate means to purposefully muddy the waters so people don't know what you really mean. The term "pro-choice" perfectly fits the dictionary definition of obfuscate. "To render obscure, unclear, or unintelligible." And that's exactly what suppressing the truth in unrighteousness consists of.

And you know the effects of abortion are not limited just to the immediate victims, that is the mother and the child. The effects of abortion extend far beyond the individual to the culture that they're part of. You see, what most people don't think, what most people don't realize is there are cosmic laws that are set in motion when you suppress the truth. I mean not only do you lose the ability to perceive the truth that's sitting there right in front of your nose, you also begin to lose the ability to hear any truth at all.

This is a principle that Jesus spoke about. He put it this way in *Luke 8:18*. He said: *"Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even*

what he thinks that he has will be taken away." And you put that in the context of truth and what Jesus is saying is that every time you're confronted with the truth and you suppress and reject that truth, you begin to lose the ability not just to take in that truth but any truth. *"Even what he thinks he has will be taken away."*

Do you ever wonder why the pro-choice side remains unconvinced regardless the growing mounds of evidence? I mean it's the principle of spiritual blindness that's at work here. I've used this example many, many times. It's an example, it's just a thought. Picture your ideas, picture your mind like an expensive camera that has an automatically adjusting f-stop. It automatically limits the amount of light that comes into it. And in every single time, picture yourself, you reject the truth and as you reject the truth that f-stop automatically clicks down a notch and the amount of light coming into the lens tends to diminish. I mean, light can still get in there but it has to be brighter and brighter because your ability to perceive it becomes duller and duller. And so what God says, suppress the truth and even the truth that you think you have will be taken away. And this applies to everyone who suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. It's just a cosmic principle.

I mean consider the great apostle Paul, I mean, he started out as a

great persecutor of the faith. This is someone who had rejected and suppressed the truth of Christianity and he did it multiple times. Just picture what happens. Each time he did that his lens clicked down a notch and then another notch and then another notch and his ability to perceive truth, it had been taken away to such an extent that God had to use a true bolt of lightning to knock him off his horse just to get through that lens.

Sadly in my work as a pastor I see this stuff all the time. If you spend a lifetime denying truths that are as self-evident as the nose on your face, you're going to find in time you've lost the ability to perceive any truth because abortion actively suppresses that ability.

Secondly, abortion also suppresses the truth in unrighteousness about what it does. I mean, if you ever notice the discussions about abortion, they're almost always about the political, cultural and legal aspects of pro-choice versus pro-life positions. And for the record the pro-choice community intensely resents the term "pro-life". They insist that we be known as "anti-abortion." I'm okay with that, I'm absolutely anti-abortion. But the reason why the discussion stays on these lofty planes of politics, legality and culture is because people are loathed to get down to what abortion really is. It's the taking of a life.

I mean, there's some simple, basic inescapable facts about abortion. The procedure involves at a minimum four people: There's the mother, the abortionist, the nurse, and the baby. And what no one can deny is that at the beginning of the procedure there are four viable lives in that room and at the end of that procedure one of those lives is over. That's the point of the procedure. It's what the abortionist gets paid to do, to end that life that is growing within that mother. And sometimes they do it with chemicals designed to kill the baby who is then born dead, sometimes they do it mechanically by literally tearing the baby to pieces and removing it piece-by-piece and then re-assembling it to make sure they got it all. Sometimes they do it through a suction apparatus that sucks the baby into pieces. There's no way the procedure can be done without some form of absolute brutality to the baby. I guarantee you, that's the last thing that the industry wants moms to know. I mean, there's no question that the truth of what it is is suppressed in unrighteousness.

I mean if you ever want to see the pro-choice community erupt, start insisting that mothers undergoing the procedure become aware of what is actually taking place. Part of the reason why the abortion exists is because the industry spends a great deal of time, money and energy making sure the mother is kept at a good

distance from what's actually taking place. I mean there's a reason why the abortion lobbyists adamantly oppose ultrasounds. It's because they're window into what the industry wants shut down, locked up and shuttered. The industry knows that if mothers actually saw what a doctor is actually doing during an abortion, they would stop it right off the bat.

Ex-abortionist Dr. George Flesh wrote this in the *Los Angeles Times*. He said: "I believe that tearing a developed fetus apart, limb by limb, simply at the mother's request is an act of depravity that society should not permit. We cannot afford such a devaluation of human life, nor the desensitization of medical personnel that it requires. This is not based on what the fetus might feel, but on what we should feel in watching an exquisite, partly formed human being, being dismembered, whether one believes that man is created in God's image or not. I wish everybody could witness a second-trimester abortion before developing an opinion about it." Abortion, it suppresses the truth about what it does.

Thirdly, it also suppresses the truth about who it does it to. I mean this is a particularly sensitive time for race relations in the United States. I mean, from Trayvon Martin to Ferguson to the Eric Garner chokehold case in New York to George Floyd in Minnesota, there's been an outcry by many in the black community

about what they perceive is an indifference to the value of the lives of young black men. And there's perhaps no greater suppression of the truth than when it comes to the de facto racism that lies at the heart of abortion. It has been and will continue to be targeted primarily at racial minorities. I don't have proof that Planned Parenthood is intentionally targeting minorities but I'm stating they're in the business of selling abortion. To do that they target the most vulnerable markets and they're almost always minority communities. It's also a fact that Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger has been well-established as a racist, as a eugenicist who wanted to use birth control to weed out those whom she deemed less fit.

Susan Enouen of the Life Issues Institute writes this: "Sanger sought to prevent the growth of certain segments of society, including blacks, through legislation or easy availability of sterilization and birth control. She recognized that these efforts might be seen as an attempt at racial genocide, and that the best approach must include recruiting and training African American doctors and ministers to help with the project. Margaret wrote in a letter to Clarence Gamble dated October 19, 1939, 'The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal. We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can

straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.'" "

There's a lot more equally outrageous quotes by Sanger. You can download Planned Parenthood's attempt to explain every single one of them by putting them into the context that paints a picture of Sanger just wanting to help a particular race with its population problems. But in this case statistics don't lie, and the fact is Planned Parenthood targets Black and Hispanic communities as the primary place to put their clinics because it's good for business.

Listen to what John Piper says about this. He says --quote -- "The de facto effect (I don't call it the main cause, but net effect) of putting abortion clinics in the urban centers is that the abortion of Hispanic and Black babies is more than double their percentage of the population. Every day 1,300 black babies are killed in America. Seven hundred Hispanic babies die every day from abortion. Call this what you will -- when the slaughter has an ethnic face and the percentages are double that of the white community and the killers are almost all white, something is going on here that ought to make the lovers of racial equality and racial harmony wake up."

See, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness about the racial

component of abortion, it ignores the fact that every single day thousands of black and brown babies are slaughtered essentially by highly educated elite white folks.

Don't ever try to draw a racial connection with the abortion industry. If you recall, that was attempted a few years back by the creation of a billboard that went up in New York City and it declared -- quote -- "The most dangerous place for an African American is in the womb." Well, the Reverend Al Sharpton said that billboard -- quote -- "sends a message of racial profiling and discourages a woman's right to choose." Now far be it from me to suggest there's anything racist in the involvement of the esteemed Reverend Al Sharpton in this particular dust-up. It just so happens he's on the side of those outraged at pointing this out.

There's a pattern to this mayhem. You must be starting to see the pattern here, I mean, not only do you have the murder of children, you also have this racial component and you have a willingness not only to lie about it but to suppress any attempt to get that truth out. There's a name for that. It's called suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.

And again, Pastor John Piper, he gives the best possible reason for exposing and rejecting. This is what he says. He says: "My aim

is that those who abhor racism will abhor abortion - 'Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good' (Romans 12:9). My aim is that abortion would be as culturally taboo as racism is. My aim is to hasten the day when being publicly pro-choice will be as reprehensible as being publicly racist. My aim is to hasten the day when declaring yourself pro-choice would be like declaring yourself a white supremacist. Racism might -- and often did -- result in the killing of innocent humans; in our history, it often did. But abortion always results in the killing of innocent humans. Between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 Black people were lynched in America. Today more Black babies are killed by white abortionists every three days than all who were lynched in those years."

You see, abortion suppresses the truth about what it is, about how it's done, about to whom it's done and finally what it does to its victims. I mean, if you follow any of the culture wars between the pro-life and pro-choice camps, you'll notice that many of the victims of abortion are not just the babies. It's the mothers who are sucked in by the lies that a simple procedure will solve all her problems.

I mean over and over again we read of women who were devastated by the fact that they had taken the life of their own child. And again we have statistics that are brought out to give way to that

assertion. Iowa Right to Life reports -- quote -- "Studies within the first few weeks after the abortion have found that between 40 and 60 percent of women questioned report negative reactions. Within 8 weeks after their abortions, 55 percent expressed guilt, 44 percent complained of nervous disorders, 36 percent had experienced sleep disturbances, 31 percent had regrets about their decision, and 11 percent had been prescribed psychotropic medicine by their family doctor. In one study of 500 aborted women, researchers found that 50 percent expressed negative feelings, and up to 10 percent were classified as having developed 'serious psychiatric complications.'"

Well, as you probably know, the pro-abortion side, they debunk these statistics and counters -- they counter that the vast majority of the women that they survey, they suffer no ill-effects whatsoever. They say these are all trumped-up issues designed to promote a political agenda. Me thinks thou doeth protest a little too much.

Just consider for a second, just think about what this position is saying. It's saying that a mother can take the life of the child growing within her and suffer no ill consequences whatsoever. I'll be the first one to tell you that there are people who can take life and act like it's a walk in the park. You look at the

Internet, you see that it's replete with people who can cut people's heads off, stone them, crucify them, act like it's absolutely nothing, but that's an extreme. No one should be able to take a life and not be affected, except when the life is in the womb?

Well, some folks may be able to take life and not let it bother them, but somehow or other I can't imagine this is a positive thing. I mean, at the very least, deep regret and pain and guilt are what would accompany any normal conscience that realizes just what abortion accomplishes. You know, it's the absence of those feelings that suggest that a normal conscience is no longer functioning.

Those outside forces that Tucker Carlson referred to, they're having their desired effects. When the culture buys a lie and it lives by that lie, as Jesus said, the ability to perceive a lie becomes diminished. Again he said: *"Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."*

There's a sad biblical precedent that suggests that's exactly the place that we've arrived at when we suppress the truth in unrighteousness. I mean, we lose the ability to even sense the lies that we are accepting and that in turn has a domino effect.

Jesus was describing the state of affairs prior to his return and it certainly sounds alarming like the climate that we're right in the middle of. This is what he said in *Matthew 24*. He said: *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold."*

Jesus is telling us lawlessness is going to increase and the love of many is going to grow cold. There's no question in my mind that the ability of a mother to shrug off the taking of the life of her child is not something to be celebrated as the pro-choice crowd suggests. Rather it indicates that our culture and society is in the process of heading for the moral exits. The love of many is growing cold.

Mother Teresa defined America as a deformed nation that could no longer perceive truth because abortion is a triple deformation of heart, mind and spirit. Mother Teresa said abortion hardens the heart, sears the conscience, and wounds the spirit. And again what

stands out in this particular sin, it's not just the sin, it's the wholesale suppression of the truth that surrounds it.

So what do you do? What do you do when the culture and the media are complicit and overwhelmingly powerful when it comes to promoting the agenda of the god of this world, the agenda of death itself? Well, God has an answer. In *Ephesians 5:11* he says: *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.*

God says when we encounter the unfruitful works of darkness it's time to become a spiritual whistleblower. When the industry suppresses the truth in unrighteousness about what it is, it's time to insist that it no longer hide behind the semantics of that word "pro-choice." When the industry suppresses the truth about what the procedure actually involves, it's time to insist on shedding light on it however you can. On a local level that means doing whatever you can to support bringing light into that darkness.

I think of the pregnancy center that Elvia is doing such a marvelous job with. And they still needs volunteers who are willing to do whatever it takes. And it's still only open a few days a week because there's not enough staff to do more. If you want to have a concrete way of pushing back against the darkness

that this abortion industry thrives on, there's no better way than simply calling them up and saying, "What can you do to help?"

And finally, when the industry tries to minimize the devastation that abortion wreaks in the lives of those mothers who are victimized by it, then it's time to offer the only true solution to the lies and the murder that abortion represents, and that's the way, the truth, and the life of the gospel. It's the gospel that declares in *Romans 5:6*: *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person -- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die -- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

What God is saying here is that God didn't wait for us to clean up our acts before he decided, okay, now you're worthy of saving. He died for us while we were still sinners, and that category "sinner" includes the sin of abortion. God's never been surprised, ever by any sin any of us has ever committed. And if you've been haunted by the sin of abortion, understand God saw that sin and he paid the price of it some 2,000 years ago while he hung on a cross.

And God calls us to expose the fruitful works of darkness but he also tells us in the very same verse, *Ephesians 5:8*: *At one time*

you were darkness. God can say that about any and all of us. You see, it's through faith in Christ alone that God can also claim: But now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

There's a reason why you and I have the light of the Lord illuminating the truth of abortion that is suppressed in unrighteousness, and it's not that we were more clever, more worthy or more spiritual than anybody else. It's because God in his sovereign good pleasure granted us the grace to see, to know and understand his truth; *and to whom much is given, of him much is required.*

Abortion is a scourge that relies on the very darkness that we've been called out of. It relies on lies and the suppression of truth for its very survival. When "pro-choice" actually means "pro-abortion" and abortion actually means mechanically or chemically killing a baby and when the killing of those babies actually means racial genocide and when the effect of all of that death is profound guilt or a conscience so seared it's no longer capable of guilt, then you realize that pro-choice is not a description of a minor political difference that we might have with pro-lifers. It's a spiritual death camp. It's a death camp that enslaves those who think they're somehow -- that somehow they found biological liberation when instead what they have found is death

itself dressed up as freedom. It's our task to speak truth to that profound lie.

Now you might be thinking, well, okay, that's impossible. If you're thinking that, you're on the right track. That's what spiritual warfare is all about.

I think of the folks at the Center. The folks at the Center, they know this is not a political football. They know at the Center it's absolutely a matter of life and death because they see young girls constantly showing up at the Center with plans to take the lives of the child that's growing within them. And more often than not that's exactly what they do, in spite of the mighty efforts on the part of the staff to comfort them, to love them, to take care of any physical need that they might have. These folks have no illusion that abortion is some comfortable political difference worthy of debate. They know this is war and that the enemy of our souls hates with a passion a place that is dedicated to serving crisis pregnancies and exposing the lies that support this culture of death.

So we pray for protection from without. We also pray for support from within. Again from the type of discord and bitterness that we know the enemy would love to sew among the staff members at the

Center. I mean, just being part of the Center reminds me of how blessed we are to be on the side that we're on. And it's solely on the basis of God's grace that we're on that side.

I'm reminded of a scripture in *1 Peter 2:9*. He said: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* I mean it's that last part that really gets me. If you got that very last part, God has called us, he's called us a people of his own possession. And he's given us this profoundly critical task -- quote -- *"that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

So we who have the privilege of being called out of darkness, we also have the responsibility of proclaiming to those who are still in that darkness the excellency of him who called us out. And I get it, that task may seem impossible. But the God who called us is quite capable of doing the impossible, and those enslaved by this sin are never beyond the sovereign hand of God. Our task is simply to show up. And whether it's at the pregnancy center volunteering any way that we can or whether it's at the dinner table engaging in a conversation with someone who's pro-choice or whether it's signing a petition or calling a congressman or simply

holding up a sign for an hour and a half on a street on a Sunday afternoon, each of us has our task. And each of us must be aware of what God says in *Romans 1:18*: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.* Thank God we have the promise of Jesus who says: *"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for the grace that we have been given that we are on the other side, we are on the side of light. There are so many that are still in the darkness who have been fed an incredible diet of lies to the point where they can't even perceive what truth is, and so that is an impossible task. And so I pray that you would instruct and move each and every one of us individually and collectively as to how you want us to respond, how you want us to participate in all of this. Give us the grace, give us the insight, give us the marching orders we each need, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.