



## TIME OF GRACE®

# *Abortion: What Does God Say? Abortion and the Government*

## Study Notes

### *Summary*

The interaction between the church and the state is an issue that brings abortion into frequent headlines. In what way do Christian teachings, values, and beliefs affect our view of the government, its laws, and its approach to abortion? This message explores the Bible's goals for the government and applies the issue of abortion in order to clarify the answers to these questions.

	Church	State
Goal	Jesus	Justice
Cares About	Beliefs and Actions	Actions
Based on	The Bible	Human Reason
Relies on	Law and Gospel	Threats

- **1 Peter 2:13,14:** <sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.
- **1 Timothy 2:1,2:** <sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
- Christians should vote for \_\_\_\_\_.

### *Points to Ponder*

1. Look once more at 1 Peter 2:13,14 and 1 Timothy 2:1,2. Based on what the passages say (and what they don't), how would you summarize the New Testament's goal for the government in your own words?
2. Challenge: Study the platforms and positions of those running for election this year in light of the goal of the government to maximize justice. Then vote accordingly.

3. Psalm 20:7 says, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” Why is trusting in God the key to having no fear when it comes to elections?

### *Homework for Next Week*

Read Genesis 25:19-34.

Time of Grace Ministry  
**Abortion: What Does God Say? Abortion and the Government**  
1 Peter 2:13-14, 1 Timothy 2:2  
June 27, 2021

*Pastor Mike Novotny*

But I have a hunch that if you would track all the abortion conversations you've had in the past year, the majority of them were not about your pregnancy or your best friend's pregnancy; they were about all the pregnancies.

Did you know many years ago, before I moved to this city, Appleton, Wisconsin, someone put an explosive device outside of our Planned Parenthood? Because for many people, this is the issue; the issue we have to go to war for. The issue we have to fight about because it's not just one or two; it's hundreds of thousands, it's millions of people every single year affected. And here's how the argument goes: Some people say that every woman in America should have reproductive rights. That every pregnancy should be a decision between her and her loved one, her significant other and her doctor. And that any sort of state or national policy that would give a bunch of people, specifically a bunch of men, the right to make choices for her body, it would not be right. It'd be absolutely wrong.

You know, currently, the U.S. House and Senate is 75 percent male so what would a bunch of men, far, far away on the coast, know about what's right for you and for those you love? Many people would say that just wouldn't be "just." While other people would say, no, you know what's not right and you know what's not just is the decision that harms the life of a soon-to-be born child; that that child is a person, created by God at conception. That child has the right to be defended and not terminated just because of complicated circumstances and situations.

Now other people would say, no, no, no. You know, if we strike down Roe v. Wade, if we go back to the old laws of America, do you know what's going to happen? The things that used to happen in America. Abortions will still occur like they always have but instead of being legal and safe and sanitary, they'll be the kind of coat hanger, back alley, under the table, illegal things that actually hurts more people than it helps.

What I want to ask of you as I speak today is just your humility and your willingness to listen. What we're going to dive into is actually so complicated and complex that if you don't have a pen in your hand and a readiness to take notes, I think you're going to miss it because I'm going to engage you logically and biblically to think really critically about what God says about the church and the state and how all this fits together.

If someone asked you as a Christian what God wanted the government to do, do you know what you'd say? If you're like many Christians, you'd be very, very tempted to say, "Jesus." Like if the government and the mayor and the Supreme Court and the president, if the house, the senate, if all those people loved Jesus and just did the things that Jesus did and said the things that Jesus said, that would be the perfect government. That would be tempting to say but did you know

that that would be wrong to say? You see, this is not the Old Testament. The Old Testament system was what some people call a theocracy. Have you heard that phrase before? It's when the church and the state were actually the exact same thing; where God picked a guy named Moses and Moses was both the spiritual and the political leader at the same time. When Moses would speak, he was their prophet to get to their souls and he was their president to guide their society; that's a theocracy.

But when we turn to the pages of the New Testament, when we read about Jesus and the apostles, that is not what they encouraged us to do. Jesus and his closest friends never tried to take over the government or run for office. They had very, very few things to say about that because they knew that things had changed and the role of the church was distinct from that of the state. But for now, I just want to put up a quick chart and show you what I think are the key distinctions between the church and the state.

The church, according to the Bible, should care primarily about Jesus. The goal of the state, according to Scripture, is summarized in one word: Justice. If our government protects all the people who are keeping the law and punishes all the people who are breaking the law, God does this in heaven. If all the good people are being protected and all the bad people aren't getting away with it, you don't have to say a word about Jesus. That is the government doing its job to perfection. That's the goal.

The church, number two, cares about both our beliefs and our actions while the government or the state cares just about our actions. "Excuse me, Sir. Do you know how fast you were driving?" "The speed limit?" "Yes, you were, but do you know how fast you wanted to drive?" Right? I mean, seriously, if the cops were judging our heart, we would all be in trouble. That's not the goal. You can have it in your heart but as long as you don't act out on that and hurt other people, the government's cool with you.

Point number three: The church's beliefs and teachings are based on the Bible. The state is meant to be governed on human reason that lines up with justice. This person has obviously done good; they'll be protected. This person hasn't; they'll be punished.

And finally, in my little chart, the church as it opens the Bible relies on what we call the law and the gospel. But out there in the government system, it's not law and gospel; it's simply a threat. If you speed, you're going to pay for it. If you park downtown without plugging the meter, you're going to pay for it. If you hurt someone, you're going to pay for it. If you don't pay your taxes, you're going to pay for it. The government threatens you so that you live up to its laws and so justice and peace and harmony and order can survive.

So that's the distinction between the church and the state and just so you know I'm not making this up, let me show you how the Bible actually teaches that. 1 Peter 2 says this: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority," the state, the government. "Whether to the emperor as the supreme authority or to governors," now check this out, "who are sent by him," by God, "to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right." And so Peter says, and Paul in 1 Timothy 2, agrees with him. Paul says, "I urge them first of all that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be it made for all people, for kings and all those

in authority,” okay? “Church, pray for government.” Why? “That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” Like Paul himself, he said, you should pray for the president. Why? Not so the president becomes a Christian that makes a bunch of Christian laws. No, you pray for the president, you pray for the government, that they would do their job and we can live a peaceful life in a culture that’s filled with justice where good people don’t get hurt and bad people don’t get away with it, where there’s law, where people follow the laws, and they don’t have to be afraid when they walk out their doors. That’s a biblical view of the state.

But here’s where it gets tricky. What should the church do when the government isn’t doing what it’s supposed to? If there’s a situation, whether it’s local, state, national, where the government is not upholding the cause of justice, what should we do? Alright, imagine for a second that we live, what, some 80 years ago? We’re in Germany, we’re a faithful church, we’re preaching the gospel, we’re opening the Bible, and craziness is happening out there with the German government. What should we do? Just do our thing in here while injustice runs rampant out there? If you and I look at the headlines or we see in those situations that we’re aware of that good people are getting hurt, they’re being fined, they’re being harassed, they’re being bullied, they’re being discriminated against, they’re being hurt, what should we do? Or if bad people aren’t being hurt – they either lie or they manipulate, they hide, the church the law, they bribe, they use favoritism or nepotism or one of the other isms to get away with doing bad things – what should we do? That’s a huge question in a culture like this where we don’t just pray in church but you and I actually get to exercise a constitutional right to do something about it. In that case, what should we do?

I’m going to give you the answer today; it’s the big idea and it’s this: That a Christian should vote for, do everything they can, for maximum justice. I saw a really great webinar this past year where someone said “politics is not like a buffet. You don’t just get to pick and choose the things you like and make your perfect little candidate. You have to choose between two very imperfect options. And when you do, what a Christian should care about is maximum justice. When I put all the things together, I don’t get Jesus; he’d do it perfectly. He would make sure, he would know everything about everyone and all the innocent people would be protected and all the bad people would be punished but we don’t get Jesus. So what should Christians do? Not cop out and write our Savior’s name on the ballot just to save our conscience. We should seek maximum justice because that is primarily how the church and the state fit together.

Which brings us to my second point for today. Well, how does abortion fit into the midst of that? If you believe Peter and Paul and you’ve accepted the chart that I just put up on the screen, how does the issue of abortion fit into not the church but the state? If the unjust death of one person is a passionate cause of justice for you and it should be, then what about a thousand? A hundred thousand? What about a million? Friends, not just if you’re a follower of Jesus, if you’re a believer in human reason and the concept of justice, you need to care.

Now some of you are thinking right now, I have a hunch, “Okay, Pastor. Wait, wait, wait – are you kind of saying that I should vote like this?” I mean, you’re not saying it, you’re not naming names, but I think most of us know that, you know, these people tend to support abortion and these people tend not to. Are you kind of sort of telling me what to do next time I’m in the voting booth? And my answer, like let me put my cards on the table, is absolutely not. What

I'm telling you to vote for is maximum justice. When you think about a candidate, should you think about their view of abortion? You should. Do you know what else you should also think about? Their view of war. Did you know in the early centuries of Christianity, whether a war was just or not was of infinite importance to their conscience? Like, if we go to war not to defend human life but because we want land and power and money, innocent people will suffer and die and that's not just. So any leader who would lead me into that, that's not justice. You should think about that. Are there any policies or personal character in a political leader that would attack the cause of justice when it comes to race? If there is any person of color who has a harder time with life because of our American system and the policies in it, if innocent people are getting hurt and bad people are getting away with it, should you care about that? If you care about justice, yes. If there's sexism in our country where innocent women are being punished just because God gave them those chromosomes instead of that, should you care about that? That political leaders love and see women as equals, made by God, equal in the cause of humanity, that is an issue of justice. There are so many things that you and I need to care about because Jesus cares about them and the concept of justice cares about them, too. Is a political leader honest? Do they have integrity? Do they care about standards? Or will they manipulate every possible system and hide and lie and deceive and deflect and point fingers and blame? Friends, that is not justice and I think one of the reasons our culture is exploding is because we've stopped caring about justice and we started caring about a political party. And once, in the end, that becomes the center in our moral solar system, the asteroids of sin blow us apart.

And so what I'm praying that you'll do is you will think for a long time about who is closest to the concept of justice. And I wish – trust me – I wish it was just simple: A or B. These people are always right and these people are always wrong. That would make my life so much easier but, friends, the world is not like that and this matters too much just to believe the spin and the hype and the one side. Instead, you and I need to think, we need to listen, we need to research, we need to study, we need to make lists of who appears from our human perspective to be closer to rewarding good people and punishing bad people. So at the end of the day when you and I cast our vote and a friend asks us, "Why would you do that?" Our answer is, "Because I love justice. And maybe I'm wrong, but it seems like this instead of that was the closest we could get to it." That is what helps you sleep well as a Christian. Do not put your hope in presidents or political parties. Seek maximum justice and you will have done the will of God.

Now, I should say amen and pray because you and I need it but I want to say one last really quick thing. I want to talk to you about the example of a New Testament church. We don't have time for it today but if we could somehow speed read these 27 books and look at Jesus and Peter and Paul and John and James to see what they talked about, what they told the churches to do in all these letters, do you know what we would find? We would find a church that, on occasion, did talk about justice out there but spent almost all of its time talking about Jesus in here. Like, if anything I said in the last few minutes has frustrated you or confused you or made you question me or our church, the only homework that I'm going to give you before you walk away is just to read the Bible and figure out if I'm wrong or not. Like, if the apostle Paul had his own Facebook or Instagram account, what would you have found on it? I think I know the answer to that question because he left us a lot of evidence. Did Paul ever speak out against injustice in political figures? He did. On occasion, he would appeal to the Roman system of government. If innocent people were being hurt, that wasn't right and he would plead for the case of justice. But

almost all the time, instead do you know what Paul did? He gushed about Jesus. That's what Peter did, that's what James did, that's what John did, and I think I know why. The reason was because they knew, even in their day, that there was no supreme court that could save you. They knew that there was no president that could purify you. They knew that there was no government that somehow could get a sinner like you or like me to God. They knew that only Jesus could do that and so, when they saw the power and the love and the grace of Jesus, they were so infatuated that they could not stop talking about it. And so, yeah, they spoke about this injustice that they saw but if you knew them, they would just drip Jesus. His love, his mercy, that was their passion. Their greatest fear was not in the election of that candidate. Their greatest fear was that someone that they knew wouldn't hear the gospel from their lips.

And so they got at it. And I hope that we do, too. Brothers and sisters, our neighbors and our friends, our family members and our social media enemies might need to hear the truth about justice from us. But mostly what they need is Jesus. In a time, in a season, where people are freaking out, where fear has consumed them, where they haven't found their hopes and their dreams, their hearts aren't satisfied in this candidate, in the oval office or that one, in this majority in the supreme court or flipped the other way, what people desperately need is God. And they can have him through Jesus. So let us be people in our conversations, in everything that we say and do, that the world knows that, "Yeah, she might be into politics," and "I think I saw him say something about that but do you know what they are always talking about? Jesus." Because if we do that the church will have accomplished its goal to bring people to the only Savior who can bring others to God.

Ten days ago, I got an email from a member of our church; a member that I greatly respect. Now, I greatly respect her and her family not just because of their faith in Jesus but because the way that faith has extended into their lives. This is a family that has given incredible amounts of their energy and their time and their money to love people. People struggling with life, people addicted to meth, people struggling with pregnancy, people from broken homes. Like, I'm not sure if there's anyone at our church who has done more sacrificially to love the people in our community besides them. What I didn't know about this amazing family was their background. Ten days ago, the mother emailed me and she recalled many years ago when a U.S. government official said that abortion was a great solution for pregnancies that were not planned. And this woman from our church responded with these words, which she said I could share with you today. She said, "Our whole family would not exist if this was the case. I was the 'mistake' of a married man and a recently divorced woman. My husband was the unplanned baby of a family and his mother was 41 at his birth. Both of our adopted children were the results of unplanned pregnancies of young people in unmarried, uncommitted relationships. My whole family unit shouldn't exist according to the criteria of planned and wanted but here we are by the grace of God." By the grace of God.

Friends, is life complicated? For sure. Does there appear to be many good reasons whether it's age, a relationship, an affair, where we shouldn't bring children into the world? It might seem that way. Oh, but God has amazing plans. And the lives that we think won't have a chance, won't have a good life, God knows and God does great things through our weaknesses. "Here we are," she said, "by the grace of God" and I'm so glad they are. For the sake of justice but even more for the cause of Jesus.



Let's pray.

Dear God, you said that if we ever lacked wisdom, we could ask you and you would give it. And if there's one thing that I feel like I need right now, that maybe we all need, it's wisdom to just think and to rethink; to not be easily persuaded by shallow arguments but instead to stand with you and to think really critically and deeply and humbly about such issues.

Father, we're insanely blessed. There are many cultures where people just did not have the rights and privileges that we do in modern America and that is a gift but it's a gift that often scares us and unnerves us. And so would you please guide us? Help us to know the best thing to do and at the end of the day, Father, help us to put our trust in you. We love you because we know that you loved us first. We know that presidents and appointments and governments come and go but your love and your mercy and your Son will endure forever.

And so we walk out the doors today, we change the channel today, God, with hope because we are not just anyone; we are your people who are dearly loved, knit together in our mother's wombs, saved by the blood and at the cross of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, a spirit that is not one of timidity and weakness but one of power and of confidence and self-control.

God, our culture is tearing apart at the seams. What people need is love and so you call us to love. May your word guide us that our lights would shine so brightly and this world would realize that we are disciples of Jesus who direct our eyes and our faith towards him. Give us wisdom, God. Give us that love and we pray it all in Jesus' beautiful name and all God's people said amen.