

Smoky Mountain Reflections
Easter #2 April 2012

Happy Easter!! As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I find myself reflecting on the wonder of Life. What a sweet gift from God! He created it, He redeemed it, and He celebrates it with a burst of color every spring. Buds transition to full bloom and all the bright colors burst into an full array of greens that will serve as our summer canopy, shielding us from the sun while wisping sweet sounds on the breeze. Sadly, while the beauty of this annual cycle of life plays out, we live in a time and place where life and the most fragile and vulnerable are unsafe, sacrificed on the altar of personal freedom.

In this election year, you may find yourself saying, “Pastor—not another reflection on politics.....” Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, please trouble yourselves to read the whole article. I would much prefer to wax eloquent on the virtues of a life lived in accord with God's will, but innocent life is under attack. God’s Command to love our neighbor by not murdering is under attack by our government. God’s Command to love our neighbor by keeping sex in marriage is under attack by our government. And during an election year, if we do not speak the truth in love, and we flip the lever in a way that doesn’t reflect God's love for life and marriage, then one could honestly ask who our God is.

Eric Metaxas, the author of a recent book on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and a previous book on William Wilberforce, pointed out at the national prayer breakfast that in Wilberforce's day, going with the flow meant to see Africans as less than human and expendable. In Bonhoeffer's day, going with the flow meant seeing Jews as less than human. Today in the interest of personal freedom, we see the unborn and the infirmed as less than human and a drain on our resources. Today in the interest of personal freedom, we sacrifice the family unit while our loved ones suffer.

It does not matter if science supports the biblical view of marriage and life—the truth is sacrificed as easily as are families and other forms of inconvenient relationships and people. Here are just a few examples: Healthy marriages have been shown to be better for children, men, women, and society in study after study. Children are more likely to attend college, more likely to succeed academically, physically healthier, emotionally healthier, less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol, less likely to commit delinquent behaviors, less likely to be a victim of physical or sexual abuse, have a better relationship with their parents which decreases their chances of divorcing when they get married, less likely to become pregnant as a teenager, or impregnate someone, less likely to be sexually active as teenagers, less likely to contract STD's, and less likely to be raised in poverty. Women and men are healthier, wealthier, less likely to be victims, less likely to attempt or commit suicide, have decreased risk of drug and alcohol abuse, less likely to contract STD's, less likely to remain or end up in poverty, have better relationships with their children, live longer, have an increase in the stability of employment and higher wages, less likely to commit violent crimes. Communities benefit as well: higher rates of healthy citizens, higher rates of educated citizens, lower domestic violence rates, lower crime statistics, lower teenage pregnancy rates, lower rates of juvenile delinquency, higher rates of home ownership, lower rates of migration, higher property values, and decreased need for social services. That is what communities look like that have higher rates of in tact traditional families, no matter what the social engineers would have you believe.

Abortion does not just murder children—it also hurts all whom it touches. Women who have abortions are 81 percent more likely to experience subsequent mental health problems. Where is the media outrage on that information? That is not just true because I said it. This is from Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists—the result of a Meta-analysis of 22 studies between 1995 and 2009. These 22 studies have data on 877,181 women in six countries, and every single one showed higher rates of mental health problems. They experience anxiety 34% higher, depression 37% higher, alcoholism 110% higher, drug abuse 230% higher, and suicidal behavior 155% higher. This is just the tip of the iceberg! Pain and suffering abound when we murder the innocent and when we value our freedom over all else, making it our God.

God does not care if you vote for a Democrat or a Republican in November, but He does care if the person you vote for will work to protect life and marriage. Life and Marriage are a gift from God that we should cherish and protect. Springtime can be a little brighter if we treat each other in accord with God's will.