

“What About Abortion in the Case of Rape or Incest?”

Dear Sue,

I just read your article on abortion as a source to prepare a message on abortion. Thank you for a well written, well documented work. Many of the sermon reviews I have done so far lack documentation for the claims being made in the sermon. I am curious to know more regarding your point when you touched on the issue of abortion because of rape or incest. What you would say to women in those situations, and do you leave a little more room for personal decision there?

Thank you for your kind words about my article.

Since I am a woman, I've definitely thought about the possibility of pregnancy resulting from rape: what would I do if it happened to me? As traumatic and life-altering as rape is, I would still need to pass it through my Christian worldview filter, and I come to these conclusions (which also apply to incest):

1. God is still in control, even when He allows unspeakable evil into our lives.
2. Because He is good, that means He has a purpose and a plan to redeem even unspeakable evil, which means we can trust Him.
3. Pregnancy resulting from rape or incest brings an innocent child into existence, who has a right to life because God has made him or her in His image. He loves them and He has a plan for their lives, or they would never have been conceived.
4. Aborting a baby conceived by rape or incest doesn't make the pain go away, and it doesn't make the problem go away.
5. It makes it worse because the lingering guilt of abortion is horrific. A woman will often start to think of her life as divided into BA/AA (before the abortion/after the abortion).
6. In addition to the trauma of being raped or incested, a woman is then further burdened with post-abortion syndrome. (See my article "The Dark Underside of Abortion.")

I understand that from a human standpoint, giving "more room for personal decision" to abort in the case of rape or incest makes sense. But from an eternal, biblical perspective, it still violates God's command not to murder, and it still incurs the consequences of one's own sinful choice. When a woman is victimized by rape or incest, she is not responsible for what was done to her, but she is responsible for her response to being sinned against. Sinning against her unborn baby and against herself is not justified, even though we certainly understand why she would do it. The need for compassion is excruciating. Which is why, if I were were talking to someone pregnant as the result of rape or incest, I would gently and lovingly give her the bigger picture of what is at stake.

Thank you so much for asking for clarification on my position on this important question. I am grateful for the chance to explain what I have hammered out concerning this very difficult issue.

Sue