The Truth of Life Bible Study

"Speaking the truth in love ... " Ephesians 4:15a
That Age Old Question
Look up John 18:38 to find out what it is.

Why didn’t Jesus answer Pilate?

The World’s Answer
The world isn’t concerned with listening to Jesus’ answer either. A post-modern view of truth is that it is relative, not objective or absolute. Thus, the truth of a particular statement depends on the views of the one making it. So you can have your truth and I can have mine. Even if our truths opposed each other, relativism would consider them both truths. For example, you could say, “Embryos are human beings.” I could say, “Embryos are not human beings.” Relativism would see these both as being truth if that is what we believed.

The Word’s Answer
Look up the Word’s answer to Pilate’s question.

John 17:17 –

John 14:6 –

What can happen even among those who have known the Word’s answer?
2 Timothy 2:17-19; 4:3-4 –

The Word’s Answer and the Value of Life
When it comes to the value of human life, even some in the Church have “swerved” from the Word’s answer and wandered off into the “myths” of the world’s answer. It can happen to any of us. We all need to be reminded about the Truth of Life as revealed in God’s Word of Truth.

Truth of Life #1 – Life Begins at Conception
The myth that people have wandered off into is, “No one knows when life begins.”

Read Psalm 51:5.

When does David say his sinfulness began?

Therefore, when did David’s humanness begin?

Read Luke 1:44.
John the Baptist does not just leap in Elizabeth’s womb, he leaps “for joy.” What does this indicate about John?

This truth of life from God’s Word has been discovered by embryologists and has become a truth of biology. Embryology text books used in our medical schools teach this truth. For example: “Zygote: This cell results from the union of an oocyte and a sperm. A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e. an embryo).” (Emphasis added.) Keith L. Moore and T.V.N. Persaud, The Developing Human (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1998), 2.

Truth of Life #2 – God’s Involvement in the Creation and Redemption of Life Gives Value

The myth that people have wandered into is, “Those not born or those in a coma or minimally conscious state may be human, but they do not have the same value as other humans.”

Read Psalm 139:13 and Job 10:8-12.

What words in these verses indicate an intimate involvement by God in the creation of life?

What does this say about the value of life?

Read Acts 17:24-25.

To whom does this God-given value of human life apply?

God loved what He made with His hands so much that He sent Jesus to buy us back from sin and death.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

What was the “price” that purchased us?


Exactly when did Jesus become human so He could pay the price for our redemption? (See also Hebrews 2:14.)

Jesus was shaped and formed in a womb just as we were. What does this say about the value of unborn human life?
Read John 3:16, 1 Peter 3:18, and Romans 6:10.

To whom does this God-given value apply?

**The Truth of Life #3 – Abortion is a Sin against the Lord of Life**
The myth that people have wandered off into is, “The Bible never says abortion is wrong.”

Read Exodus 20:13.

What is forbidden here?

So, is abortion a sin? What about euthanasia and assisted suicide?

**The Truth of Life #4 – The Bible Makes no Distinction between Born and Unborn Life**
The myth that people have wandered off into is, “The Bible gives less value to the unborn.”


The same Greek word for a very small child, *brephos*, is used in each of these passages.

Read Genesis 25:21-22; Genesis 17:25; Genesis 9:19.

The same Hebrew word for “son,” *bene*, is used in all these verses.

The Hebrew word *yeled* is used of the unborn (Exodus 21:22), the new born (Exodus 2:3), and young children (Genesis 21:14).

Read Exodus 21:22-25.

To whom does “life for life, eye for eye,” etc. apply?

What does this say about the life of the mother and the life of the child?

**The Truth of Life #5 – Jesus Died for Sins against Life**
The myth some Christians believe to be true is, “Sins against life, like the sin of abortion, are too big to be forgiven.”

Read John 8:10-11.
What two things did Jesus *not* do to this woman?

What does He do for her?

Read 1 John 3:19-20.

What is it we are experiencing when our heart “condemns us”? (See also Romans 2:14-15.)

Read Romans 8:1.

Why is such a statement possible?

What assurance and hope flow from this? (See Romans 8:37-39.)

**Conclusion**
Read Ephesians 4:14-15.

Paul discusses Christian unity in this section of Ephesians. What is essential for our growth in unity and into our head, Jesus Christ?

Paul is not talking about speaking the truth in love to the world here. He is talking about the importance of speaking the truth in love to and with fellow Christians. The truth of life is one of those truths Christians need to grow in and discuss with one another in love.

Discuss ways your congregation can grow in its knowledge of how the truth of life from God’s Word applies to the life issues of our time.
The Truth of Life (Teacher Guide)

Note: Occasional references will be made to Lutherans For Life (LFL) brochures which can be ordered from our online catalog at www.lutheransforlife.org. Also referenced are commentaries from our GOD’S WORD for Life Bible (GWFL). Page numbers are given if you have a Bible. (This Bible is available free for pastors from LFL.) Commentaries may also be downloaded by going to the Life Sunday page on the LFL web site. Brochures and articles can be used for teacher enrichment or as handouts or supplements for the students.

That Age Old Question
Look up John18:38 to find out what it is.

Pilate’s question to Jesus, “What is truth?”

Why didn’t Jesus answer Pilate?

Pilate left immediately. He did not wait for an answer. Maybe he didn’t think there was one or he really wasn’t interested in listening.

The World’s Answer
The world isn’t concerned with listening to Jesus’ answer either. A post-modern view of truth is that it is relative not objective or absolute. Thus, the truth of a particular statement depends on the views of the one making it. So you can have your truth and I can have mine. Even if our truths opposed each other, relativism would consider them both truths. For example, you could say, “Embryos are human beings.” I could say, “Embryos are not human beings.” Relativism would see these both as being truth if that is what we believed.

The Word’s Answer
Look up the Word’s answer to Pilate’s question.

John 17:17 – God’s Word is Truth

John 14:6 – Jesus is Truth

What can happen even among those who have known the Word’s answer?

2 Timothy 2:17-19; 4:3-4 –

There can be a swerving from the truth in the Church. God’s people can wander off into myths. You might ask for examples such as the rejection of the inerrancy of Scripture, homosexuality being accepted or same sex marriage. The point here is to set the context for the rest of the study. We’re not talking about the wanderings of the world but the Church.

The Word’s Answer and the Value of Life
When it comes to the value of human life, even some in the Church have “swerved” from the Word’s answer and wandered off into the “myths” of the world’s answer.
It can happen to any of us. We all need to be reminded about the Truth of Life as revealed in God’s Word of Truth.

**Truth of Life #1 – Life Begins at Conception**
The myth that people have wandered off into is, “No one knows when life begins.”

Read Psalm 51:5. When does David say his sinfulness began? Therefore, when did David’s humanness begin?

*If we are sinful from the moment of conception, we must necessarily be human from the moment of conception. Sinfulness is not a trait we give to “the product of conception” or “a bunch of cells” or “a glob of tissue.”*

*For further study, see the GWFL commentary by Professor James Westendorf of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, “When Does Life Begin ”page 634a.*

Read Luke 1:44. John the Baptist does not just leap in Elizabeth’s womb, he leaps “for joy.” What does this indicate about John?

*His joyful leaping expresses a very human emotion.*

This truth of life from God’s Word has been discovered by embryologists and has become a truth of biology. Embryology text books used in our medical schools teach this truth. For example: “Zygote: This cell results from the union of an oocyte and a sperm. A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e. an embryo) (Emphasis added.) Keith L. Moore and T.V.N. Persaud, The Developing Human (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1998), 2.

**Resource: “The 3B’s of when Life Begins” (LFL brochure)**

**Truth of Life #2 – God’s Involvement in the Creation and Redemption of Life Gives Value**

The myth that people have wandered off into is, “Those not born or those in a coma or minimally conscious state may be human, but they do not have the same value as other humans.”

Read Psalm 139:13 and Job 10:8-12. What words in these verses indicate an intimate involvement by God in the creation of life?

*God “forms” and “knits.” Obviously God does not have tiny little knitting needles inside a uterus. However, the Psalmist gives a picture that God is intimately involved in the biological process for pro-creation that He set into place with Adam and Eve.*
For further study see the GWFL article by Dr. James Lamb, “God’s Knitting Room” page 712a.

What does this say about the value of life?

We could all have a tag on the back of our necks that reads, “Handmade by God”!

Read Acts 17:24-25 – To whom does this God-given value of human life apply?

God is the Giver and Creator of all life. Every human being is the work of His hands. Because of this, every human being from the embryo in the Petri dish to grandma in the nursing home deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

For further study see GWFL article “You have Unearned Moral Worth” by Wesley J. Smith page 1202a.

Resource: “The Handiwork of God” (LFL brochure)

God loved what He made with His hands so much that He sent Jesus to buy us back from sin and death.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What was the “price” that purchased us?

You might want to quote the Catechism here, “[W]ho has redeemed me a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.”

Read Luke 1:31. Exactly when did Jesus become human so He could pay the price for our redemption? (See also Hebrews 2:14.)

The incarnation of our Lord took place at His conception. Our unclean conception and fetal development need a holy conception and development. Pieper states, “Christ passed through all stages of our existence that He might fully remedy our unclean conception and birth.” (“Christian Dogmatics” Vl. II p. 84) The path to the cross did not start in a manger; it started in a fallopian tube!

For further study see GWFL article “The Annunciation and the Beginning of Life” by Rev. Ed Fehskens page 1184a.

Jesus was shaped and formed in a womb just as we were. What does this say about the value of unborn human life?
Our Savior’s presence as an embryo gives value to all embryos. Our Savior’s presence as a fetus gives value to every fetus.

Read John 3:16, 1 Peter 3:18, and Romans 6:10. To whom does this God-given value apply?

The price Jesus paid He paid once for all. Of course, not everyone knows this and that is the task of the Church to share this Good News. But every human being is a human being bought with a price.

Summary of this section: We can raise the bar when it comes to the discussion of the value of human life. It is not “something” that dies in an abortion, and it is not just “someone.” It is someone created by the hands of God and someone for whom Jesus shed His blood. The same can be said of grandma in the nursing home who doesn’t know her family any more.

The Truth of Life #3 – Abortion is a Sin against the Lord of Life
The myth that people have wandered off into is, “The Bible never says abortion is wrong.”

Read Exodus 20:13. What is forbidden here?

This commandment forbids murder. It is more restrictive that “killing.” The Hebrew is “ratsach” and is the taking of innocent human life without due process of law. A different word is used for capital punishment, “to put to death” (muwth) and to kill in war (harag).

So, is abortion a sin? What about euthanasia and assisted suicide?

We have established that the unborn baby is human. They are certainly innocent in terms of having never committed a crime or an act of aggression. Since abortion destroys this innocent life, abortion is murder, a sin against the Lord of Life, and forbidden by Scripture. The same is true for euthanasia and assisted suicide?

The Truth of Life #4 – The Bible Makes no Distinction between Born and Unborn Life
The myth that people have wandered into is, “The Bible gives less value to the unborn.”

Read Luke 1:41; Luke 2:12; 2 Timothy 3:15. The same Greek word for a very small child, brephos, is used in each of these passages.

Read Genesis 25:21-22; Genesis 17:25; Genesis 9:19. The same Hebrew word for “son,” bene, is used in all these verses.
The Hebrew word yeled is used of the unborn (Exodus 21:22), the new born (Exodus 2:3), and young children (Genesis 21:14).

Read Exodus 21:22-25. To whom does “life for life, eye for eye,” etc. apply?

The woman in this passage does not “miscarry.” That is an improper translation of the Hebrew which is literally “a child comes forth.” This is a living baby born prematurely because of the fight taking place. Thus, these phrases refer both to the mother and the child.

What does this say about the life of the mother and the life of the child?

“Life for life” acknowledges the equal worth of the life of the child.

For further study see the GWFL article by Dr. James Lamb “Valuing the Life of the Unborn Child” page 82c.

The Truth of Life #5 – Jesus Died for Sins against Life
The myth some Christians believe to be true is, “Sins against life, like the sin of abortion, are too big to be forgiven.”

Read John 8:10-11. What two things did Jesus not do to this woman?

He did not condone her sin nor did He condemn her.

What does He do for her?

He forgives and admonishes her to leave her life of sin.

Read 1 John 3:19-20. What is it we are experiencing when our heart “condemns us”? (See also Romans 2:14-15.)

This is the law of God at work in our hearts. Both men and women involved in an abortion decision can feel this burden. Because of the nature of this sin, it can seem worse than other sins. It can feel too big to be forgiven. Most post-abortive women and men sitting in our pews do not need to hear the law. It is already at work.

You may also want to bring up end-of-life situations here. Many families make difficult decisions and may later struggle with whether they made the right one.

For further study see GWFL articles “ Forgotten Fathers” by Grace Kern and Dr. James Lamb page 1116a, and “God’s Word of Hope for those Weeping after an Abortion” by Grace Kern page 1116c. Grace is the counselor for LFL’s Word of Hope post-abortion hot line. 888-217-8679
Read Romans 8:1. Why is such a statement possible?

The condemnation for sin—EVERY SIN—has been taken by Jesus. But the Good News does not end there. The righteousness of Jesus is given to the sinner! This objective and imputed goodness is a powerful message of hope and comfort especially for those struggling in the depths of guilt and despair.

What assurance and hope flow from this? (See Romans 8:37-39.)

Since the punishment for sin has been taken out of the way, there remains nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus—NOTHING!

LFL Brochures: “After the Abortion There is Hope in His Healing” and “For those who have had an Abortion there is a Word of Hope for Broken Hearts.”

Conclusion

Read Ephesians 4:14-15. Paul discusses Christian unity in this section of Ephesians. What is essential for our growth in unity and into our head, Jesus Christ?

Paul stresses speaking the truth in love.

Paul is not talking about speaking the truth in love to the world here. He is talking about the importance of speaking the truth in love to and with fellow Christians. The truth of life is one of those truths Christians need to grow in and discuss with one another in love.

Discuss ways your congregation can grow in its knowledge of how the truth of life from God’s Word applies to the life issues of our time.

Some suggestions:

- Using GWFL, conduct Bible studies based on the commentaries and articles. The handy bookmark that comes free with the Bible offers an outline for such a study.
- Using LFL’s “Life Studies Volume One” conduct a series of Bible studies on the life issues.
- If your congregation is associated with a school, consider LFL’s day school curriculum Teaching For Life.
- Display LFL brochures in your congregation’s tract rack.
- Give LFL a call and ask about our Renewal For Life initiative. This is a way to help congregations applying the Gospel to the life issues as an ongoing part of their ministry.