

C3 Statement on Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health Organization

Syllabus

Millions have been affected by the tragedy of abortion. The Elders of Christ Community Church extend an open invitation to anyone with questions, seeking prayer, or in need of forgiveness regarding this issue. To any woman who has had an abortion, we welcome your questions and your concerns, and freely and openly offer you the grace and forgiveness of God that comes through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Scripture clearly teaches that life begins at conception and that each person is created as an image bearer of God. God calls Christians to seek justice for the “fatherless” (**Psalm 82:3**) and advocate for the voiceless (**Proverbs 31:8**). The unborn are the most vulnerable among us and they should be protected by the law and the state. 49 years ago, the Supreme Court of the United States abused its authority in its landmark case of ***Roe v. Wade*** by (a) refusing to protect the life of the unborn by providing them with equal protection under the law and (b) purporting to take away the ability of the People to decide the profound moral question of when life begins and how best to protect it through the democratic process. Instead, seven of the nine justices “discovered” in the Constitution an unwritten right for women to decide for themselves the fate of their unborn children. Since that fateful decision, an estimated 60 million abortions have taken place since 1973, a tragedy and a holocaust of grave significance.

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court reversed its disastrous opinion in *Roe* and corrected at least one of its errors. In ***Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization***, five of the nine justices recognized that *Roe* had been wrongly decided as it takes the important questions of life away from the People and their elected representatives. Accordingly, in an act of humility and justice, these justices returned this important question back to the People to decide the issue. As a Church, we praise God for this outcome and the opportunity it provides to us to petition our elected representatives to protect the life of the unborn. To this end, there is much work to be done and the Church must do it in love and filled with the grace of our God. In this statement, we set out the position of the Church on this momentous moment in human history, how the legal ruling impacts the work of the Church, and provide guidance to the Church regarding the opportunity and responsibility God has given to us moving forward. In this moment the Church is called to:

- 1) thanksgiving for God's faithfulness,
- 2) faithfulness to the truth of Scripture on this issue,
- 3) service to others in need and crisis, and
- 4) finishing the work of advocacy for the unborn.

Above all, we reaffirm our commitment to the Gospel and its offer of grace, forgiveness, and healing to all, including those who have had, promoted, or supported abortion. Everyone is a sinner and in need of grace and forgiveness. It is through the power of the Gospel that men and women obtain freedom from sin and death, and that hearts and minds, and ultimately societies, are transformed and changed. God's grace is available to all who believe, and forgiveness is given to all who repent.

Statement of the Elders of Christ Community Church

God is life (**John 1:4, John 5:26, John 14:6**) and the giver of life (**Acts 17:25**). He has created mankind as His image bearer (**Genesis 1:26-27**) and endowed all with life (**Genesis 2:7**). God's word makes it clear that life begins before birth. God gave to women the incredible gift to conceive and give birth to children (**Genesis 4:1, Genesis 29:31-35**). It is God who opens the womb and gives the gift of children (**Genesis**

33:5, Psalm 127:3). The twins Jacob and Esau struggled together in their mother's womb (**Genesis 25:22**). God knit King David together in his mother's womb (**Psalm 139:13-14**) as He does with each of us (**Isaiah 44:24**). We are known by God even before He forms us in the womb of our mothers (**Jeremiah 1:4-5**). It was John the Baptist who first recognized Christ while still in his mother's womb (**Luke 1:41**). There can be no doubt that God's word teaches that life begins at conception and that children in the womb are image bearers of God and worthy of the protection of the law and their parents. Accordingly, on the testimony of Scripture alone, we believe unequivocally that children in the womb are created in God's image and that any attempt to take the life of the unborn is a grievous sin and an attack on the very image of God.

Modern science has only reinforced this clear Scriptural teaching. From the moment of conception, a child has everything he or she will need to develop, needing only the care of its biological mother, and the aid of her body, a body that God designed to provide that care. A child in the womb is not simply "part of a woman's body"; it is a living being with a unique genetic code that distinguishes it from every other person who has ever lived, including its mother. Within weeks it will develop a heartbeat, eyes, ears, a brain and begin engaging in behaviors that are recognizably human. It can feel pain. Unborn children are living human beings and the failure to recognize them as such is an act of dehumanization. Unborn children are also the most vulnerable members of society, lack any ability to defend themselves, or to speak on their own behalf. Accordingly, the status of the unborn only heightens the Church's responsibility to speak up on their behalf and to seek justice.

To that end, on June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States of America corrected a miscarriage of justice perpetrated 49 years earlier when that same Court issued its decision in ***Roe v. Wade***. In the 1973 Roe decision, seven of the nine Supreme Court justices engaged in an abuse of power by overturning the laws of most of the states throughout the country whose elected representatives had passed laws banning or severely restricting abortions. In Roe, the Court claimed that the Constitution contained within it a previously unknown right of women to obtain an abortion through the first trimester of pregnancy based on a presumptive "right to privacy". The Court's decision in Roe represents a grab of power by seven of the nine justices on the Court, who inserted their opinion for those of the People and their elected representatives, but also represents an abject failure to protect human life at its most vulnerable state. In 1992, a sharply divided Court, re-affirmed the Roe decision in ***Planned Parenthood v. Casey***, and expanded this "right" to terminate pregnancy until viability.

The results have been tragic. Between 1973 and 2022, approximately 60,000,000 unborn children have been killed in the womb through abortion. The blight of abortion has disproportionately affected those in under-privileged and minority communities. For example, the abortion rate for black women is almost five times higher than for white women, and the abortion rate for Hispanic women is almost double that of white women (Guttmacher Institute). However, these statistics do little justice to the horror of abortion. The human stories are even more compelling.

Melissa Ohden's biological mother was a 19-year-old college student when she had a saline infusion abortion meant to end Melissa's life in the womb. But Melissa survived and was born alive. She is now 45 years old woman who testifies about her experience coming to grips with the knowledge that her mother tried to have her killed and the road to forgiveness. Claire Culwell's biological mother was 13-years old when she went in to have a surgical abortion. Several weeks later she discovered that she was still pregnant. After she discovered that she had been pregnant with twins, one of whom had been killed by the abortion while Claire lived, she decided not to go through with a second abortion. These are only two of the hundreds of stories demonstrating that abortion takes the life of a real person and image bearer of God. Each story of survival serves to highlight the profound tragedy of the 60,000,000 who have not survived the holocaust.

We also recognize the fraud hoisted upon many women in this culture by those who promote unbiblical philosophies. For generations, cultural voices have proclaimed godless ideologies and philosophies that

have sought to diminish or destroy the God given blessing given to women to bear children. Some, motivated by the desire to sexualize women, have reduced childbearing to an impediment to sexual pleasure. Others, motivated by worldly success or power (financial, career, or political), have reduced childbearing to an impediment to these aims. Still others, seeking to correct abuses in the past where women were treated unfairly or inequitably under the law and in the culture, have sought to do so not by rightly appealing to God's word and calling culture to repentance, but by appealing to various humanist, feminist, and existentialist philosophies. These motivations and ideologies have been used to mislead many women by giving them false notions of "liberty" and "personhood" that dehumanize unborn children.

Aided by the Court's decision in Roe, these godless philosophies have led to various levels of guilt and victimhood in those who have sought an abortion or supported it, some doing so with knowledge that abortion is the taking of life, whereas many doing so having been betrayed and misled by those cultural voices seeking to push godless ideologies. This reality has led to a seething tragedy underneath the surface of society as millions of women struggle with pride, guilt, and silent devastation over decisions made to obtain abortions that cannot be undone. The remedy for this tragedy is the full forgiveness that comes with repentance and belief in the Gospel, which the Church proclaims to all who will hear.

Beyond the human toll lies the impact that the Roe decision has had on America's political process. The role of the judicial branch of our government is clearly defined. The immense power of our courts to interpret the laws of our nation is premised on an implicit humility. Judges are not to act as policy makers who substitute their opinions for the will of the People. Rather, they are to faithfully interpret the Constitution and laws to provide clarity. Since 1973, the issue of abortion has poisoned the nation's politics. Those who disagree with Roe's central holdings, as we do, have been left with few options in the political process. The Court's decision to remove the question of abortion from the People and their elected representatives has resulted in zero-sum politics that has largely divided the nation. Those of us who recognize the wickedness and injustice of abortion have been forced into a long-term political struggle focused on the appointment of Supreme Court justices who will serve to bring an end to Roe and alleviate this American holocaust.

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court issued its ruling on **Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization** and finally began to undo the injustice that it began in Roe, and the tragedy that has unfolded since.¹ In Dobbs, five of the nine justices ruled that Roe and Casey were wrongly decided and overturned both. In an act of judicial humility rarely seen within government, the five justices who voted to overturn Roe and Casey recognized that it is not the place of the Court to answer this important question. Accordingly, the Court's majority opinion provides as follows:

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled. The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision...."

"Roe was on a collision course with the Constitution from the day it was decided, Casey perpetuated its errors, and those errors do not concern some arcane corner of the law of little importance to the American people. Rather, wielding nothing but 'raw judicial power,' the Court usurped the power to address a question of profound moral and social importance that the Constitution unequivocally leaves for the people. Casey described itself as calling both sides of the national controversy to resolve their debate, but in doing so, Casey necessarily declared a winning side. Those on the losing side—those who sought to advance the State's interest in fetal life—could no longer

¹ The Dobbs case revolved around a Mississippi law that bans abortions after 15 weeks of gestation. Jackson Women's Health Organization sued Thomas E. Dobbs (Mississippi's chief health officer), claiming that 15 weeks is before the "viability" line set by the Court in the Casey decision.

seek to persuade their elected representatives to adopt policies consistent with their views. The Court short-circuited the democratic process by closing it to the large number of Americans who dissented in any respect from Roe.”

“It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people’s elected representatives. ‘The permissibility of abortion, and the limitations, upon it, are to be resolved like most important questions in our democracy: by citizens trying to persuade one another and then voting.’”

In summary, the Court in Dobbs returned the profound moral question of abortion to the will of the People and their elected representatives.

As a Church, we celebrate and praise God for this outcome. In addition, we thank the five justices on the Supreme Court for humbly doing their job as faithful judges. Finally, we give thanks for the many faithful political leaders, activists, prayer warriors, and servants who have faithfully stood for truth over the last 50 years, assured that the truth would ultimately prevail and seeking to mitigate the effects of Roe. We recognize God’s providence in the decision that was made, while also recognizing the call of God on the Church to remain faithful and complete the tasks God has given to us.

June 24, 2022, stands as one of the most significant moments in the history of the American church. It is the end of one great battle and the beginning of many more. The Court’s decision in Dobbs is a testament to God’s faithfulness. It is with that faithfulness in mind that we turn to the work at hand. It is with an eye for finishing the work started that we provide the following guidance to the Church body at Christ Community Church:

(1) Now is the time for thanksgiving. We are called by God to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) but are frequently able to do so with deeper meaning and significance when God has shown Himself to be faithful. Accordingly, in this moment, we encourage heartfelt thanksgiving to God. Praise Him for this outcome. Thank Him for what He has done through the men and women on the Supreme Court, political leaders, activist, and private individuals who have stood firm in this fight.

(2) Now is the time for humble faithfulness. God accomplished this task largely through the faithful work and humility of many individuals over the last 50 years. That humility and work must continue. We must continue to pray for elected officials and seek policies that promote and protect life and women from the moment of conception. This will be done, as it has been done in the past, by faithful adherence to and the proclamation of God’s Word. In firmly standing for and proclaiming the truth, we must not forget to do so faithful with Scripture’s command:

“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:22-26)

We stand for and contend strongly for the truth, but our speech is always to be kind and edifying, whether in person or on social media. In this way, we distinguish ourselves from the world. The world believes that hearts are changed by the force of their own will and the strength of their arguments. The Church recognizes that hearts are changed by the Spirit of God working through us and in His Word. God grants repentance. He is at work in His people. We can be assured that God is at work in us when we proclaim His Word faithfully and seek righteousness, faith, love, and peace while patiently teaching and enduring evil. This is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of confidence in our God to do the work.

(3) Now is a time to serve others. If you know someone who has had, or is considering, an abortion, pray for them and minister to them. Offer hope alongside the truth. As the laws of our land change rapidly following the Court's decision in Dobbs, there will be many new opportunities to serve our neighbors. James reminds us:

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:27)

God has a heart for the fatherless and women in crisis. By God's grace, abortion rates will fall in coming years. As a result, there will be more children and mothers who need assistance. The church is frequently, and wrongfully, criticized for failing to care for children after they are born. Although this critique is flawed and untrue, it is a challenge we must rise to meet. The needs will be many (adoption, foster care, charity, mental health, and supporting ministries that care for women in crisis). In the coming days and months, we will seek to resource the Church with opportunities. As you become aware of opportunities, we encourage you to involve the Church if possible.

(4) Now is a time to complete the task. The outcome in Dobbs is incomplete. As identified above, the Court's decision in Roe failed in two respects. Not only did the Court in Roe remove the important issue of abortion from the People by dictating by fiat a right to abortion, but it should also have settled the issue of abortion on Constitutional grounds in the opposite direction. Life begins at conception; this is a Scriptural truth supported by science. The founding document of our nation clearly identify life as an inalienable right that cannot be taken away without due process of law. The Declaration of Independence provides:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men....” (Declaration of Independence)

The self-evident right to life beyond dispute, it applies to the unborn, and it is the very purpose of government to secure that right. This reality is codified further in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution which states:

“... nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” (14th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States)

Accordingly, it is our firm belief that the proper role of the Court, before God and underneath the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, to protect all life from conception and to provide it with equal protection under the law. Therefore, we are resolved as a Church to continue to pursue justice for the unborn and to advocate for their protection until that task is complete. In the meantime, as much as it is up to us, we will seek to advocate for laws that protect the unborn while simultaneously promote the welfare of children, women, and seek to strengthen the family.

(5) It is always time to proclaim the Gospel. To that end, we recognize that society and culture is not primarily changed from the top down by government fiat. Rather, it is changed by the proclamation of the Gospel that goes out and changes the hearts and minds of individuals. These individuals who have been transformed by the Gospel then build families that continue to teach that truth and live by it, generation after generation. The Gospel is the good news that God Himself has come in the person of Jesus Christ, lived a perfect and righteous life, died on our behalf at the Cross, and that all men and women can be

forgiven by repenting of sin and trusting in Christ for their forgiveness of sin. It is that Gospel that provides freedom from sin and death and a firm hope in the redemption of all things. It is in that Gospel that there is hope for all sinners, including those who have had an abortion, promoted abortion, or supported abortion in the past. We proclaim that Gospel and our work will not be done until we have proclaimed it everywhere.

It is by these means that societies are transformed over time by the power of God working in the hearts of men and women. Thus, it is our fundamental task to continue to proclaim the Gospel so that you might be equipped to engage with society and lead your family well. True and Biblical freedom consists in men and women living in light of the truth of the Gospel. Armed with this truth, we can live in the midst of any society assured that we are free and serve God accordingly regardless of political fortunes or current circumstances. It is with this confidence that the world will be transformed by the grace of God.

We love you Church and praise God for you.

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