

**Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly**  
***How To Follow Jesus In Every Area Of Your Life***  
**Pastor Jonathan Schaeffer**  
**October 22, 2023**

A little bit of something going on this week in my congregation. So I brought an extra water and I trust God to give me strength to make it through. Hopefully on your way in you got some notes. And those of you engage in outlining go to our page Grace he made out of just click the bulletin and you'll find these there and that'll help you along.

And also, if you want to have your Bible available, we're going to be looking at a couple of scriptures. And to those of you engaging online, really grateful to have you with us and those at our brothers at Lorain Correctional. We love you guys. I look forward to seeing you again soon. I hope. And thank you for being a part of this today.

Taking a break from our current Corinthians series to talk about a biblical perspective on a big issue that that Ohioans are being asked to speak into. And you know that I rarely speak on legislative matter. Some would say political, but when it touches on matters that are close to the heart of God, I believe I'm compelled to do so.

So if you disagree with what I'm going to say, just thank you for keeping the tomatoes, you know, at bay and if you agree with what I'm saying, you know, don't applaud. I don't want there to be a sense of people, if they disagree, that they feel alienated or they don't belong here. We are a family that God is building and growing up.

And so and we want to talk about issues that are important issues and say, what does it look like to honor Jesus and his word? So if you're a citizen of Ohio, you're going to have an opportunity to vote soon on a couple of issues. And you have an opportunity, even if you know what you think to say.

I can persuade others, I hope graciously to speak up for those who need a voice. And if you disagree with what I'm going to say, I get emails and I would welcome an email from you. You'll help my thinking to be more nuanced and I hope sharper. And I hope that my speaking today about

this topic will also help you to perhaps say, Wow, I'm hearing a perspective that Jonathan is pointing us to God's Word and and maybe you'll consider vantage point that that that you'll say.

I think that does reflect the heart of Jesus and the dignity of all people. So some people might say, hey, why do you address tough topics? PJ Because you have a habit of doing this recently. And I'll just say it just is that's that's in the providence of God. I do not like, like talking about hard topics. I'm not like a stir the pot, you know, poke the bear kind of thing.

But but when it's necessary to say we have an opportunity to speak up and and I'm really convinced that our relationship with Jesus that we have influences every part of life. And so we look for wisdom from God's word and how we make decisions, including to say, Lord, is there something you want to teach me here about when I vote, when I go to the poll, what does it look like to fulfill Proverbs 31 word says this Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, Speak up for the poor and helpless and see that they get justice. That's that's our heart, right, for poor. And that's God's heart. Every person matters to him. They're made in his image. And that means we care about laws and amendments that that would impact the lives of other people. And someone might say, you know, Jonathan, I just wish we stick to the gospel.

You know, the good news about Jesus, I don't want us to get political and all that kind of stuff. If I could just gently respond to see that's a narrow view of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus is more than just Jesus and me and our relationship. The gospel, the life, the forgiveness, the way of Jesus influences how I treat my wife Mary, that I'm supposed to love her and sacrifice for her as Jesus did for us.

It's how we do our jobs. And Colossians street says, Whatever you do, ultimately you're not doing it for your human boss. You're doing it for home for God, right? How we care for my body. My body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Like how I that's why I only take in so much Mitchell's ice cream, right? It's only so much that this body is going to say is I can stay healthy.

Although I think ice cream is one of the food groups. I'm still trying to tell Mary that how I manage my money, how I spend my free time. All of that matters to Jesus, including how I treat the people around me. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 25. Tell a parable about the sheep and the goats. And He says this.

He says, Truly, I tell you what ever you did for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine. You did what? For me? For me? So Jesus cares about how we treat others. You could say it this way When we have an opportunity to speak on behalf of others, their value, their dignity, their protection, listen to this.

To not speak is to speak right. To not speak is to speak. During the days of the abolition movement, to outlaw the evils of slavery or during the days of Jim Crow laws and discrimination, or when women's voting rights were at stake. What would you think of churches that go, You know, we don't talk about stuff. We just talk about the gospel.

You say, Wow, you are missing a huge opportunity on issues that are really close to the heart of God. To not speak is to speak the means. You're okay with the status quo. And I believe we're failing. If we don't speak, we're failing to speak up for those who either are voiceless or whose voices need to be heard more loudly.

So how do we speak? I want us to look at a passage in the Old Testament, one of the prophets whose words are remarkably relevant. Today, it's Micah. A lot of anybody here named Micah. Mike is great book here. You wonder like this is a great book to look at a lot of Micah Zurich Grace But Micah chapter six if you're on your Bible app, you can look at the table of contents and, and look that up there.

And then let's take a look and see. Micah wrote these words about 700 B.C., and he's led by the Holy Spirit. His words are, like I said, really applicable even today. And here's what he says, that God holds all of us accountable for our actions and that we will be judged for injustice no matter how religious we may appear on the outside.

Here are a few of the injustices he goes after and you'll see the Scripture reference with each one. He talks about thinking up evil plans. You know, people are trying to just create havoc, fraud and greed and

violence, stealing dishonesty, mistreating women and children, hating good and loving evil. That's happening today, despising justice, murder, taking bribes. And in this book, probably the best known verse fact, one of the best known verses in the Old Testament would be in Micah chapter six.

And this verse is remarkable, not for its complexity but for its simplicity. Can we read this verse aloud together? You ready? You'll see the words on the screen here. Let's read this together. Ready? He has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God what's required?

He doesn't say, Take a pilgrimage somewhere. You know, you've got to go over to Mecca, you've got to go to Jerusalem. You have to do like and then or or some other kind of huge achievement. He goes and you go, wow, this is for like, this is for the Uber gifted, ultra talented, whatever. He says, something with the power of God's spirit within us is doable for any one of us.

That's great news. What's required of us, he tells us. Here, he says, I want you to act with justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. A sort of an echo of Jesus teaching. When someone comes and says, Hey, what's the greatest command of Jesus says, I want you to love the Lord, your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and then love other people like you, love yourself.

And Jesus has everything written in the Old Testament can be summed up in these two statements. And it's really an echo of what Micah says. Micah talks about a relationship with God. He talks about a relationship with others. So let's unpack this one verse here, starting with the final phrase Walk humbly with your God. I like the fact that it's personal.

Those last two words. It's with your God. You're not just a God. You know, the God is far away. He goes, This this is your God. You can have a personal relationship with him. You can say, you know, my savior, my, my Jesus, my father in heaven, He's your father, He's your God. And it says that we walk with them.

You know, there's something about walking with the person shows relationship, right? Some of you, if you see Marry me on public, the

most likely place you're going to see us is out in the metroparks. We love to walk together. We pray together. When we walk, we talk about it, you know? And so when we walk together, there's a sense of like, you're in relationship with each other, you're talking through stuff.

And there's also, he says, Walk how with God, walk humbly Humble means that you're always thinking of the other person. You're you're want to know what they think you what are their desires, What's their heart? If you're in a marriage relationship, it's acknowledging I don't have all the answers. Might be good for all of us just to say that on the road.

Road ready? I don't have all the answers. Right. My wife around, she's going, man, I don't know. You say it. Say it again. Trust that you're walking humbly with God. You acknowledge God. You're God and I'm not. I want to hear from you, God. I want your word to be a lamp from my feet, a light from my path.

God, I want to be surrendered to whatever you say in this book. I'm always going to come back to this book. I want to walk God humbly with you. And he's with you every We don't leave Jesus here on Sundays, right? We always say it This way. You do not walk into church today. The church walked. What? Into the building.

When you're leaving today, you're not leaving church. The church is leaving the building. And wherever you go, the Spirit of God does not live in this facility. The Spirit of God. If you put your trust in Jesus lives, where He lives in you, he's going to be with you. So he cares about every single aspect of your life.

So number one, he says, Walk humbly with God. Next one, Micah says, Act justly, do what's right. Mention how Micah's day There are people who are dishonest in their business dealings. They'd oversell, under-perform. They looked out for themselves instead of doing what's right and best. For others, it was sort of every person for him or herself. And and and God says to this property goes, Hey, folks, I want you to act with justice.

I want you to do what's right. Here's how the law says it through. AMOS Another prophet, the Lord, used to speak to his people. AMOS Chapter

five. He says, A way with your noise. He hymns of praise. He's talking about their worship. I will not listen to the music of your harps or your electric guitars, your amazing worship services.

Instead, I want to see what a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous love. You know what he's saying? God loves when we worship him. But if I worship him and I walk out the doors of that worship gathering and I live for myself and I don't care about the people around me, he goes, You know what?

Your worship. You can just take it and go, It means nothing to me. I want your worship, but I want you to act justly as well. These two go hand in hand. Your integrity and your worship go together. So what does that look like? Justice means that we care for those around us. We uphold their rights. We care about their mistreatment.

And your workplace and the community. We speak up for the defenseless. We care about children in the foster care system. We advocate for affordable child care. We address like housing needs. A year ago, you might be interested to know there's a year ago of Grace. The Grace family gave over 200,000 for housing units that are the they're breaking ground.

They finally got through all the red tape and Cleveland and their breaking ground on 14 housing units for people who are underserved. It's good. It's going to be beautiful. You address injustices, mass incarceration, you you spend time with people who are neglected by others. So many people are grace doing that in a variety of ways, welcoming immigrants and refugees to northeast Ohio and partnering with the Hope Center, serving in nursing homes.

I think we're in 10 to 12 nursing homes. People at grace, dozens of volunteers. Some of you are are serving alongside the Cleveland pregnancy centers. And when I help out women in need, or maybe that a new ministry called Embrace Grace, a small group that provides resources and support for women who are an unplanned pregnancies. I love that it's getting involved in foster care and adoption.

It's numerous ones of you who are volunteering at Lorain Correctional or you guys who are who are living at Lorain Correctional saying, I care

about the people around me. I want to speak up for others who maybe are being the rights are being or they're being, you know, abused by others, or maybe is just showing mercy in your workplace.

You see somebody go, you know, they look like their heart is heavy. I'm just going to go see how they're doing or a widow in your neighborhood or whoever it might be. And you say, what can I do to care about other people? The way that if Jesus were in my skin and he actually is, if you've received him right, what would he want to do in this situation?

Let me mention another way to act with justice. And this is where I think of Micah. We're speaking in our day vote in a way that honors the image of God in every person from conception all the way to death, vote in a way that affirms the family and the role that moms and dads have with with kids.

Justice includes passing laws and amendments that impact others, or maybe not in this case, not passing a law or an amendment that would impact others negatively. Why? Because we value people like us. We act justly, and that leads to what specifically we're facing in the state of Ohio today. And we have a few more weeks until we have we go to the polls and maybe you're doing an absentee, but I want you to take a look at page two of your notes just to see a few of the reasons why I believe issue number one is a grave injustice for unborn children, for children who are under the age of 18 and for families.

Let me encourage you to read the language for yourself. In fact, I sent out to the church family yesterday a link that is is see the language dot com see the language dot com and already hundreds of you have accessed that through that email. But I've studied this proposed amendment. I've talked with others and I'm really concerned and here why here's why Number one, issue number one threatens parental rights.

The proposed amendment reads And it is an amendment which means that these things are enshrined in our state constitution, which makes it really hard to ever change it. It says this. You'll see this in your notes. The proposed amendment reads, Every individual has a right to make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions, including but not

limited to decisions on contraception, fertility treatment, continuing one's own pregnancy, miscarriage care and abortion.

Here's let's watch this By using that first little phrase individual instead of adult or woman, it's possible that anyone under the age of 18 could have an abortion or make any other reproductive decision without their parent's consent or notification. Other states have clearly mentioned an age of consent. This amendment does not. Huge concern.

Number two, issue one puts women at risk. Current Ohio law requires abortion providers to explain procedure risks and ensure access to hospital transfer money. In other words, if you begin to have a problem or an abortion, you're within like this distance away of a hospital where you get the needed help. These health and safety standards could be seen as a burden and be eliminated. With this new amendment, make it even less safe for women seeking an abortion and then number three, concern.

Issue number one would make it possible for abortions to occur all through nine months of pregnancy. Now, even though even many, I should say, who are pro-choice would say there has to be some kind of most of them would say there have to be some kind of limits to abortion. Just one example. Even pro-choice people would say they have a really hard time saying that they think it's okay to abort a child a day before delivery or a week before delivery.

What about a month before delivery? When Mary and I had a miscarriage? We told people, we say our hearts are grieving because we lost a what? A baby, Right. It happened a couple of times for us. Our hearts were. Were? Yeah. Someone says, you know, I don't think this amendment would allow you to have an abortion at any time.

And and the pregnancy. Look what it says. In no such case may such an abortion would be prohibited if in the professional judgment of the pregnant patients treating physician, One doctor thinks it is necessary to protect the pregnant patient's life or health in U.S. law. Health include a person's age. Doctor could say, well, she's 38 years old, I think is dangerous or physical, emotional or psychological well-being.



That means any of those could be used to justify aborting a full term baby, an abortion. Providing physician could make that decision, leaving no clear protections for pre-born children. So my concern about issue one, absolutely, and primarily because it is going to make us probe early and the top three most abortion friendly states in our entire union, along with New Mexico and Colorado.

I will be right up in the top three. I know there's a lot of debate over abortion and women's rights and how do you navigate this? And are we going to put women at risk for back alley abortions? You know, if we pass if we don't pass an amendment like this, I like this. Just to take a quick overview, I thought I saw a clip that was so helpful that addresses the three top arguments on this issue.

And I think you'll feel better equipped. Or if you are pro-choice, to say, I need to wrestle with that one. So from the Colson Center, here's this video clip. Let's take a look.

Three of the most common objections to the pro-life position are abortion is a woman's private choice. Even if a fetus is human, it's not a person. And if you ban abortion, women will be forced to get dangerous back alley abortions that are medically unsafe. What would you say? These arguments are known as the privacy objection, the personhood objection, and the back alley objection.

Often, abortion advocates will rattle them off all together, making their case seem strong. It's not the next time these objections come up in conversation. Here are three things to remember when responding to the privacy objection. Remember this Claiming that abortion is a woman's private choice ignores the status of the unborn. No one would ever cite privacy as a good reason to kill toddlers, teenagers or adults, only the unborn, which means the assumption is being made that the unborn are not human.

To expose this assumption, say something like this. You know, I actually agree with you. You're right that abortion is a private choice between a woman and her doctor. You're right that the government should stay out of her private decisions. Your right that pro-lifers should not question her private choices. Yes, you are right about all of that. If if what?

If the unborn are not human beings? Make no mistake, the issue that divides those who are against abortion and those who are for it is not privacy concerns. It's whether or not it's okay to intentionally kill an innocent human being. Pro-lifers agree that women should be allowed to make a number of private choices, but intentionally killing an innocent human being isn't one of them.

When responding to the personhood objection. Remember this claiming that a fetus is human but not a person is an assertion, not an argument, and it undermines human equality. Why should anyone think there can be such a thing as a human who is not a person? Most of the time when this claim is made in the case of the pre-born, no argument is made to support it.

It is merely asserted. Whenever this assertion comes up in a conversation, just reply. What traits make a human a person? Often pro-abortion advocates will claim that person hood is grounded in consciousness or an immediate capacity for self awareness, or may be the ability to feel pain. But why are these traits the ones that give us value? In fact, traits of self-awareness might come and go in the course of our lifetimes, depending on our health or whether we are asleep.

But we lose our value. None of us share these traits equally. Does that mean that those with more have a greater right to life than those with less? If that's the case, you can throw human equality on the ash heap. Throughout history, some groups of people elevated other traits such as IQ, gender or skin color, to diminish their value and oppress them.

In short, either you believe that each and every human being is a person with an equal right to life or you don't. When responding to the back alley, objection. Remember this? The back alley objection is based on a lie. Assumes the unborn are not human and demeans women. First, let's set the record straight. Certainly some women died from illegal abortions prior to 1973, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion in a case called Roe versus Wade.

But it was nowhere near 5000 to 10000 a year. Dr. Mary Calderon, Planned Parenthood's own medical director in the 1960s, said that the death rate from illegal abortion was so low, it wasn't worth worrying

about. Why? Because 90% of illegal abortions were performed by doctors in good standing in their communities, not back alley butchers with rusty coat hangers.

Of course, any woman who dies from an abortion, legal or illegal, is a tragedy. Notice, however, how the back alley objection. Like most popular arguments for abortion, assume the unborn are not human. Essentially the back alley objection argues that because some people die attempting to intentionally kill innocent human beings, the state should then make it safer and legal.

But of course, the law should never make it easier or safer for one human being to intentionally kill another completely innocent one. And let's be clear with our language. Women aren't forced to have illegal abortions. They choose to have them say otherwise is demeaning to women and calls into question their agency and self-control. Am I, as a woman forced to rob a bank if my employer won't give me a raise? No.

So the next time somebody brings up the privacy objection, remember claiming that abortion is a woman's private choice, ignores the status of the unborn. When someone brings up the personhood objection, remember claiming that a fetus is human but not a person is an assertion, not an argument, and it undermines human equality. When someone brings up the back alley objection, remember, it is based on a lie that it assumes the unborn are not human and that it is demeaning to women. For what would you say? I'm Megan Ormond.

If you like the link to that, just send us an email. We'll send you the link. You can watch that again. But I think that addresses why it's so important for us to consider the ramifications of amendment that would would just open the doors to almost unfettered access to taking the life of of a little one. One way to act justly is to speak up for those who need a voice, who are vulnerable or vulnerable and defenseless.

And one way to do it is to say, I'm going to vote no on this issue. I'm going to vote no. How do we speak up for moms needs as well? Absolutely. For adequate medical coverage or affordable child care? Yes, It's not an either or decision. It's a both. And. Right. We say we care about children pre-born. We care about them after they're born.

We care about parents who are near. We care. We care all the way through. But abortion can never be right, never be justified if the little one growing inside is actually a person. And we believe that it is. One more comment on this amendment. It's misleading. Maybe you could even say deceptive. They make it sound like voting against issue one is voting against care for those who need who have a miscarriage or who maybe would like to have contraception.

And and so but it's just not the case. Absolutely. We care for those who have a miscarriage or those who have an ectopic pregnancy. And this amendment sort of promotes a myth that you need to vote for a right to abortion to get that kind of care. It's simply false. In fact, here's a one minute clip from a from an OB-GYN in our state that addresses this topic.

Let's just take a quick listen.

My name is Alicia Thompson. I'm a board certified OBGYN practicing in Westerville, Ohio, with the Dove's decision in 2022 that overturned the legal precedent of Roe versus Wade. It turned the issue of abortion rights to individual states. Ohio had a trigger law in place, so within a few days it was no longer allowed to have an abortion. The state of Ohio, once a fetal heartbeat, had been detected, there was concern about whether or not it would impact miscarriage care, ectopic care.

And I can confidently say there are no laws in the United States that have ever interfered with miscarriage care and ectopic care for women. Physicians have always been free to intervene on behalf of saving the life of their patient, and whether or not that they're pregnant does not prevent us from saving that woman's life, whether it be in a miscarriage management or in the case of ectopic pregnancy.

So when it actually rubber hit the road, it did not change my day to day practice.

So make no mistake, women will get the care that they need for an ectopic pregnancy or a miscarriage. The truth is, as I said earlier, there is an agenda by writers of this amendment to make abortion as widely available as possible. That's why we're talking about this issue today.

People matter to God. Every single one. Women, men, children, preborn, born all the way through to death.

Those who have a disability, those who may not every single person has great value. So let's act with justice, right? Let's speak up for those who need a voice and who needs a voice more than unborn children, friends, may we reflect the heart of God who cares for every single person and has a plan for every single child who has been conceived?

So I want to encourage you to use your voice, not only in this election, but whenever. Don't be beholden to one political party or another. Look for legislation that values life, preborn and post born and and to say we're going to speak up and we value life from womb to the tomb. Let's just be real clear. Issue one misses that by a wide margin.

It misses justice, which is why I'll vote no. We act justly. We act with justice on issues that matter for people. And then one more word here from Micah. He says, Act justly and then love what? Love mercy. I treat others as Jesus would. Aren't you grateful that our Heavenly Father is marked by both justice and by mercy that he cares about the rights of all?

But when we mess up, we come to him and he's full of mercy. Like he just. He just loves too. And so he tells us, I want you to have the same kind of I want you to love mercy, not grudgingly, to forgive someone or try to be merciful. He goes, I want you to love mercy, love it, Pass along to other people what you've so freely received from Jesus.

Forgive, show compassion. Someone who heard about my topic this week said, You know what I really love about Grace? We wear our name well as a church. I hope we do Grace Church, and that when we communicate the truth about something, we say this is the hard truth, that we can do it with grace and say, You know what?

Even if you look back in your life and you go, my goodness, I have such regret, I can't believe, like on this topic, I was party to an abortion or I encourage someone to either I have one myself or I encourage someone else. I persuaded my girlfriend or my daughter or whoever to have an abortion to go.

How could I have done that? Can we just say it again? Your father in heaven, he loves mercy and he loves you, right? So when you come to him, he never turns anybody away. He will forgive anything. And I mean anything in your life in mind. Jesus said, Whoever comes to me, I will never turn away. So come to him, ask for forgiveness.

And when you do, he'll never hold back. He will cleanse and renew and fill us in. If people disagree with you on this decision, Love, mercy. Don't be rude. Don't be nasty. Just say, you know what? We may disagree on this, but you are a person and matters to God. And because of that, you matter to me a lot as well.

So even if we don't see eye to eye on this one, I want you to know I you know, you're not going to stoop to some kind of behavior that would show them less than mercy and walk humbly with your God friends. Never forget Jesus is with us. So let's be people of hope and confidence and joy. He's already won the final battle, right?

He's coming again. He's going to make all things right when we gather on Sundays. We gather on Sundays. Why? Because today, Sunday, every Sunday is a celebration of world, of life and of Jesus coming back from death, right. Of the resurrection. The fact is that Jesus is alive today. He's at work. Nothing can thwart his ultimate plans. We know that in the end, he's going to write the final chapter, right?

So we trust him, we follow him, we love him, and we say, Jesus, would you give me a heart like yours? Give me a heart. Letters, in fact, together as his people can we say together this this verse, and just make this our own commitment? Let's say it. You'll see these on the screen. Ready Let's say together allowed.

He has shown us what is good and what does the Lord require of us to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God? Jesus, Would you make it so in our lives we pray? Lord, I think often we may be get one part of this right or we stumble in another. Maybe we love justice and we're like, I speak to this, but we don't do it humbly, or we don't really have much mercy.

Or maybe, Lord, we have so much mercy. We never speak truth. And so, Lord, we're just inviting you to come to fill our hearts by your spirit and

that we will be people who live out this word that you gave through Micah for us, Lord, that what you require would be what we said. That's what I want to do, Lord, if that's what honors you, Lord, that's what I want to be, Lord, I pray for a defeat of issue one in our state for the sake of people who matter so much to you.

The polls may not look good, but God, you can do anything. There's nothing too hard for you. And so we want to say today we trust you, we love you, and we know that in the end, whatever happens, you are God and you're the victorious one. And so we trust you and we thank you for hearing our prayers.

Jesus, in your name, we pray. Amen. The song we're going to sing here, you continue to pray that God will be everything He wants us to be. Let's let's make this our that Jesus would be the answer our lives. And for those we love, let's stand together as a team leads us.