

Transcript of message by R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, on Justice Sunday, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, KY

April 24, 2005.

I am greatly thrilled to be here tonight with Tony Perkins and Dr. James Dobson and so many others. Because I believe that tonight is the start of something really important. I think this is about the people of God, Evangelical Christians, beginning to understand what our responsibility really is. Now this is a little unusual for our church on a Sunday night. We have a lot of other churches gathering with us, and this isn't what we do most Sunday nights. Why? It is because this is a Gospel church. This is a church that is established upon the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our main message is salvation through grace alone, by faith alone, through Christ alone. The main message we want to communicate is that we want to see all persons come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. We want to communicate to all that we are not calling for persons merely to be moral. We want them to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, because we don't just need instruction, we need salvation.

Now because of that, something has to explain why we would take this time on a Sunday night to talk about something like the federal judiciary. I want to make clear why there is such a sense of urgency that we would do this. It's because so much that is precious to us, so much that is essential to this civilization, this culture, this great democratic republic, is in the hands of the courts. And we know that means that much is at risk, because we've been watching. And we've been learning. For far too long, Christians have been concerned to elect the right people to office, and then go back home. We've learned the importance of the electoral process, and yet we're also discovering that that third branch of government, the judiciary, is so very, very important. We've been watching court cases come down the line. In 1973, *Roe V. Wade* – just declaring a woman's right to an abortion. We now know in the aftermath of that decision, that Justice Blackmun, who was the author of the majority opinion, even has admitted that they were determined to legalize abortion, and they just went to the Constitution to try to find an argument that will get them where they wanted to go. And they did.

Now that was a wake-up call for Americans to say, now wait a minute. There's nothing in the Constitution about abortion. By no stretch of the imagination did the founders of this nation, and the framers of that document, intend for anyone to be able to read those words and find a right to kill unborn children. But judges found it.

Fast forward thirty years from 1973 to 2003. In the case *Lawrence V. Texas*, the Supreme Court of the United States of America struck down every sodomy law in this country. You see, they found the constitutional right to sodomy. Does anyone believe that the framers of our Constitution intended for it to be there? By no means. Well if it's not there, how did the court decision get there? By reading into the Constitution what they wanted to find, which isn't there, but is constructed there, by expanding the Constitution by re-interpretation. Now, of all people, we ought to be the folks who understand that. Because we as Christians have had to understand there are people who will take the word of God,

and say it's really not about the text. It's about what's behind the text. We can take the text and make it say what it doesn't mean. We have seen that pattern. And God's people have had to learn to discern and say, no, the text is the inerrant and infallible word of God. It is what God said it is, and what God revealed it to be. And that's what must constrain our interpretations. God bless you for believing that and affirming that.

But now there are judges who using the same exercises of interpretation, find in the Constitution of the United States what's not there. And look at how much is at risk. In his dissent, in the Lawrence V. Texas case, Justice Antonin Scalia warned us. He said, this court is ready to legalize same sex marriage. It didn't do so now, but there is nothing in the logic of this decision to prevent this court from going there, and in short order. We've learned that we're going to have to exercise our Christian citizenship beyond just the ballot box. We're going to have to follow this through all the way to the nomination and confirmation of judges.

And we've learned something else. We've learned that religious liberty really is at stake. Religious liberty is on the line here because the courts also hold by their constitutional role, a responsibility to defend our religious liberty. But in far too many cases, judges have constrained and violated our religious liberty. And so now are some members of the United States Senate. We were led in the pledge by Judge Pickering. Do you know that in his process before the Senate Judiciary Committee, he was asked about something he said as president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention? He said, of all things, that Christians ought to base their decision making on the Bible. Now Judge Pickering is a radical. Because no Christian, until he said that, had ever understood that before. That is normative Christianity. That's what it means to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be a Christian incorporated into the body of Christ, and to be a faithful believer in the Church. And he was speaking as a Christian to fellow Christians about our Christian responsibility. But in the views of some radical secularists, that just invalidates him from serving on the federal bench. And we as Americans had better hear that as a wake-up call. Because if it's Judge Pickering now, it can be you and it can be me tomorrow.

Now you've heard some of the protests, and you know what they're saying against those who would argue for our understanding of what is needed, that of a recovery of the judiciary. They're saying we're just trying to speak on behalf of evangelical Christians. No, we're speaking as evangelical Christians. But I'm going to speak on behalf of former Alabama Attorney General William Pryor, who when he faced the Senate Judiciary Committee, was confronted by some who said they opposed him because of deeply held personal beliefs. Attorney General Pryor is a Roman Catholic. Those are his deeply held personal beliefs. And you know what one of those beliefs is? That human life is sacred, from the moment of conception. That's why it is as if Catholics need not apply. If it's a Roman Catholic Attorney General from Alabama today, it could be you, or it could be yours, tomorrow. This pattern of discrimination against those who hold deep convictions about human life and the institution of marriage must come to an end. We've got to bring it to an end. We've got to do what is necessary to fulfill our Christian citizenship to see it end.

They're saying something else about us. They're saying that this is partisan. Well, let me say something clearly. I long for the day when we have to choose as candidates, between a pro-life Republican and a pro-life Democrat. Between a Republican who understands what marriage is and a Democrat who understands what marriage is. Then they can compete for our vote, because they'll stand where Americans stand. And they'll understand where we need to stand if we're going to save this civilization, and to uphold righteousness. As evangelical Christians, our main concern is the citizenship that is ours in Heaven that has been purchased by our Savior. But we also understand that we have a responsibility on this Earth, so long as we are alive, until the Lord returns, to show God's love, and to contend for God's righteousness. And to tell this world that through His law, and through His word, God is trying to tell us something for our good, for our health, for our Holiness. And we, as Christians, need to be active in the public sphere, not just to impose some kind of worldview or ideology, but to be salt and light. Because that's not my idea, that's how we were commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to speak as Christian citizens. What we demand is an up or down vote on the floor of the Senate. It is nothing less than cowardice for a minority in the Senate to block these people from the vote they so richly deserve. Let's get them that vote, and we will stand with the American people with the results. God bless you.