

The Gender Question (Part 2)  
Selected Scriptures  
July 25, 2021  
*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher*  
*Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas*

Well, as you know, I'm taking a break from our verse by verse study of Scripture this summer. We just finished, with the end of the school year, seven years in the Book of Romans. And Lord willing, we'll start 1 John this fall, I'm excited about that. But in between we're looking at some of the issues that are trending in our culture. And last week, today, and next week, we are seeking biblical answers on the gender question that literally permeates our culture.

Now, let me begin by saying that when Christians consider these gender issues, or frankly any serious sins, it's easy for us to fall off on one of two extremes. On the one hand we treat these sins as if they're almost unforgivable. Which, of course, is never true in the grace of God in Christ. Or, on the other hand, we tend to downplay their seriousness. Neither of those responses is accurate. Scripture teaches a balanced perspective. In fact, let me give it to you this way, Scripture teaches that every single sin, regardless of what it is, is sufficiently evil to condemn a person legally to eternal hell. Let me say that again. Every single sin, regardless of what it is, is sufficiently evil alone in order to render you legally guilty before God. Because it's a failure to love God and it's a failure to love others.

That's why in James 2:10 James writes that if you keep the entire law, but you break one, you've broken them all. Why? Because it's a whole, you're supposed to perfectly love God every moment of your life and you're supposed to perfectly love your neighbor as yourself. So fail to do that once and that perfect love is shattered and gone. By the way, in the context of James 2, that sin is showing prejudice or partiality in your heart toward any person based on external issues. That's all it takes, just one time in your life, manifesting prejudice or partiality based on external issues is enough to condemn you and me to eternal hell.

But the Scripture also teaches that every sin is not equally evil in the temporal or eternal punishment that it deserves from God. So, every sin is sufficiently evil to condemn, but every sin is not equally evil. Only some sins received the death penalty in ancient Israel. Jesus spoke, in John 19:11, of greater and, therefore, of lesser sins. Scripture teaches degrees of eternal

punishment based on the kind and level of sin, for example in Matthew 11:22. So you've got to understand that while every sin condemns, every sin is not equally evil.

Let me show you how this works out. Let's take a sin that's not a real debatable one today. Let's take anger. Anger in your heart is sufficiently evil to condemn you to hell, Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:21 to 22. All that has to happen is for you to be angry with God or somebody else just once in your life and you deserve, by God's standard, eternal hell. But anger in the heart is not as evil as expressing that anger in words or physical violence. And anger in words or physical violence is not as evil as murder, the ultimate expression of anger. So you see how this works.

Now, applying this to gender, there are degrees of sin when it comes to this issue of gender that were confronted with today. There's a person who struggles with their sexuality or gender in their heart. That's sinful, as we'll see, but it's not as serious as the next level, which is changing your appearance to act like the opposite sex. And that's not as serious as the next level, engaging in sexual sin with the same sex. And that, in turns, leads to the most serious of all, and that is, championing sinful behavior as morally good. God's response varies with those degrees of sin, and so should ours. So that's the backdrop for our discussion today.

Now, the theme we're considering, we started last week, is this, our culture has rejected the objective biblical declaration that God created humanity in His image as male and female, and has embraced in its place, a subjective, unproven secular philosophy called gender theory. We're striving to understand several crucial facts about this. Last week, we began by looking at a functional definition. What does this teach? Gender theory teaches that every person has a gender identity that may or may not be their biological sex. Gender theorists use the word sex for biological sex only, and they've hijacked the word gender for gender identity. And that's how you subjectively feel. That's how you, whether you feel male or you feel female or feel something else. That's gender or gender identity. That's a functional definition.

We also considered, last week, it's philosophical formation. How did this idea develop? And we traced the progress of gender theory through three historical movements. Through Darwinian evolutionary theory, that was the foundation of it all, that laid the basis for man as an animal not made in the image of God. On that was built the sexual revolution. Niche came

along and said God is dead, there are no moral absolutes, live however you want. And that settled the framework for the sexual revolution. And that, married to the cultural revolution, cultural Marxism, in which those who are in these categories of the LGBTQ, and so forth, are the ones who are the oppressed. And therefore we need to champion them and their cause and free them from this slavery that is traditional Christian morality.

Now, it's essential to understand the philosophical formation of these ideas. And if you weren't here last week, I encourage you to go back and catch up. But today we come to the third crucial fact about gender theory and that is the cultural expressions. How is this trending? How is our culture's rejection of the biblical view of sex and gender practically demonstrating itself? Well, there are several ways. Let's walk through them together. First of all, this expresses itself in the desire or effort to adopt the physical characteristics and gender role of the opposite biological sex. Sometimes it's just a desire in the heart. Other times that desire is acted upon. But its goal is to demonstrate the physical characteristics and to assume the gender role of the opposite biological sex to the one in which you were born.

Now, sometimes this happens by downplaying created sexual distinctions and just pursuing androgyny. In other words, there's not an active attempt to look like the opposite sex. Instead, there is a watering down of the differences between male and female with a desire for there to be this, sort of, this oneness, this androgynous sort of look and appearance. That's very popular in our culture. But often this particular expression includes an individual's deliberate choice of hair length and style, particular clothing, actions, ways of speaking, and sometimes even hormone therapy and surgery to appear like the opposite sex. In other words, it's not just pursuing a sort of androgynous look, it's a desire and effort to pass off as the opposite sex.

Now, sadly, these choices often lead to such things as anxiety, depression, addiction, and even thoughts of self-harm and suicide. Why is that? Because it's impossible to change your biological sex. If you're here this morning and you struggle with these issues, listen, you cannot change the reality of who God has made you. Hormones can alter male or female appearance and some external expressions. Surgery can offer, excuse me, can alter sexual structures. But you cannot change two things. You cannot change your reproductive capacities and you cannot

change, more importantly, the chromosomes that mark almost every cell in your body as either male or female. That simply cannot be changed.

So what does the Bible say about trying to alter your sexual appearance? Clearly not everything that's at our disposal today was at the disposal of people in the biblical times. But there are several ways this was attempted then. I just want to point you to one. It's in Deuteronomy 22:5. Deuteronomy 22:5, it says this, "A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh your God." Abomination. The Hebrew word simply means they are repugnant to God, they are something that God finds extremely distasteful. Why? Because He made male and female, He made you who you are, and the effort and desire to be something other than He made you is a direct affront to God Himself. And so, by the way, this verse is not saying that you know, men wear jeans so women shouldn't wear jeans. That's kind of how sometimes it was illustrated when I was growing up. That's not what it's saying. This verse is saying you don't deliberately try to arrange yourself, your clothing, your hair, and everything else, to appear like the opposite sex. That's the point. That's one expression.

A second expression of this issue in our culture is sexual involvement with members of the same biological sex. Now, understand folks, this is not always involved when someone struggles accepting their biological sex. However, this is often involved, as is clear, even from the acronym LGBTQ, and so forth, that I explained to you last week. I mean, think about it, lesbian, gay, and bisexual are the first three words in that acronym. All of those have to do with sexual sin. So much of the gender debate is, in fact, driven by sexual sin.

Now what is this? Well, it includes, first of all, sexual attraction. Contrary to what some, even in the professing Christian community teach, sexual attraction to members of the same biological sex is not morally neutral. It's not innocent. Why? Because it's contrary to God's creative design. Genesis 2:24 says, "a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife," a woman, "and the two of them," man and woman, "will become one flesh." That's how God designed it. And so, the sexual attraction is sin even if you don't cultivate it. Why? Why isn't it just a temptation? Because it's more than a temptation. It grows out of James 1:14, it grows out of our lust. It is a desire for something that God has completely forbidden, a sinful

desire that comes from our flesh. And just like the sinful desire attraction that a married man might feel towards someone who is not his wife is sin, in the same way sexual attraction in this context is sin as well.

Secondly, sexual lust. In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus is obviously dealing with heterosexual lust, but He makes it very clear that lust in the heart, sexually desiring another person, is sinful. And just as it is true in the case of heterosexual lust, it is also true in the case of homosexual list. Turn to Romans 1. Paul makes this very clear in this passage, Romans 1:26. And I'm going to look at this in a different way in just a moment, so I'm not going to explain it in its context yet; I'll get there. But I just want you to notice the beginning of verse 26, "God gave them over to," notice, "degrading passions." In other words, the lust itself is degrading. He defines, by the way, those passions, or those strong desires, as those in which women sexually desire and become involved with women and men with men. Notice, Paul calls such homosexual desires or passions "degrading." The Greek word means to be in a state of dishonor or shame. Paul is saying, homosexual desires dishonor, or bring shame, to the person who nurses and pursues them.

A third expression of this sexual involvement is actual sexual intimacy. Stay here in Romans 1 and now let's read both verses together. Verse 26,

For this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Now, I don't have time to cover this text in great detail, I did when I taught through Romans, you can go back and listen to that message, but let me just point out to you that Paul here in these two verses is making six statements about homosexuality. First of all, the first three words, "For this reason," says that it is an expression of God's wrath, His wrath against paganism. That doesn't mean every person who is tempted with homosexual desires, or every person who sins that way, is the worst of sinners. It simply means that when a culture, God gives a culture over to homosexuality, it is the fruit of that culture's rejection of the true God as He's revealed Himself in creation and their buying into paganism. "For this reason," because of

their paganism, because they exchanged the true God for false gods, “God gave them over to these degrading passions.”

Secondly, this text says that homosexuality dishonors those who desire and practice it. Notice “degrading passions,” I already pointed that out. Thirdly, this passage tells us that homosexuality is a sinful choice. Notice verse 26, “the women exchanged,” don’t miss that word, and in verse 27, “the men abandoned.” Both words imply deliberate action. It’s a sinful choice. Now don’t misunderstand, it’s possible that some people are born with a sinful propensity, a predisposition toward homosexuality, we don’t know for sure, but it may be, and if it is true, it’s in the same way that a person is born with a predisposition to anger, or a predisposition to lying. The fact that I was born with a propensity toward anger, and expressed that in many ways before my conversion, doesn’t mean that I’m not culpable if I give into it. It just means I’m more easily tempted to sin in that way. So, the temptation to homosexuality may not be a deliberate choice, but dwelling on that temptation, giving in to that temptation, enjoying it, acting on it, are all deliberate choices, just as with any other sin.

A fourth point that Paul makes here is homosexuality is against God’s creative design. Notice he uses the expression “natural,”

women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, in the same way the men also abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another.

Clearly, and I don’t need to go into anatomy, you understand this, God designed in creation for men and women to be naturally together in marriage. And this is against God’s creative design.

Number five, homosexual acts are indecent acts. Notice what he says in verse 27, “men with men committing indecent,” literally, the shameless deed. And then finally he says that homosexuality comes at a high personal cost, verse 27, “receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.” Now, we can’t be absolutely sure what Paul means there. He may be talking about the psychological effects of this sin. He may be talking about the disease that can come with this sin. He may be talking about the homosexuality itself as the penalty. Or he may be talking about the eternal punishment that ensues on those who are unrepentant in their

practice of this sin, as with every other sin. Regardless, clearly, he is making it clear that this is unacceptable to God.

Let's go back to the Old Testament Law. Let's start, before we get to the law, let's start in Genesis. I just want, I want to belabor this point because, frankly, the church isn't saying this. The church is ignoring what the Scripture clearly teaches. Go to Genesis 18:20, "the LORD said, 'The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great,'" and notice this, "their sin is exceedingly grave." What was their sin? Go over to 19:5, "they called out to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may have relations with them.'" What was God's assessment, verse 13, "we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it." By the way, in Jude 7, Jude 7, this is Jesus' half-brother writing, he speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah and he says, "they indulged in gross immorality."

Let's look at the law. Go over to Leviticus 18, Leviticus 18:22, "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination." Again, the word is repugnant, repulsive to God. Why? Because it's contrary to His designed purpose. Look down in verse 24 of Leviticus 18,

"Do not defile yourselves by any of these sins; [*he's just mentioned, including homosexuality,*] for by all these sins the nations which I'm casting out before you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so that the land has spewed out its inhabitants."

These were secular nations that God was taking out of their land. Why? Because of the nature of their sins, including this one, and its nature before God.

Turn over to, oh, but before we leave this text, let me point out one thing here. Notice, this text in Leviticus 18 destroys the idea that God only forbids homosexual rape or homosexual prostitution, as some try to make it claim, and allows consensual homosexual relationships. It's crystal clear in verse 22 that all homosexual acts are forbidden, they are "an abomination." Now turn over to chapter 20, chapter 20 verse 13, "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be

put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.””” Now this text, notice, assigns moral culpability in a homosexual relationship to both the active and the passive partner. And it also tells us that in Old Testament Israel, under God’s direction, homosexual acts received the death penalty. That was how seriously God took it.

What about the New Testament? Turn to 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy 1, 1 Timothy 1:8, Paul writes, “but we know that the Law is good,” he’s talking now about the moral of God of the Old Testament, we just read it. He says, “the Law is good, if anyone uses it lawfully,” and he goes on to say it’s not in order for you to earn your way into God’s favor. You can’t do that. Nobody keeps it that well. Instead, verse 9, “realizing the fact that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious.” And then he describes them,

for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers [*By the way, that word doesn’t mean just the person who goes into someone’s home and kidnaps them, although that’s included, it refers to, really, American slavery, because it’s kidnapping someone in order to enslave them.*] and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

Paul says, this was a sin in the Old Testament, it’s still a sin against God’s moral character, and always will be.

Now, why do I belabor this? It’s because there are those in the Christian community who are doing everything they can to avoid persecution and fit in with the culture and are saying things contrary to this. For example, the current and the former presidents of a large evangelical denomination have gone on public record, both of them, one of them was plagiarizing the other, by the way, when he said it, but both of them have gone on record saying that when God speaks on homosexuality, “He whispers.” Folks, I’m sorry, I just have to say, those men will give an account for the Lord and not to me, but they are misrepresenting the God for whom they claim to speak. God didn’t whisper at Sodom and Gomorrah. He didn’t whisper in His law and He



didn't whisper in Romans and He didn't whisper in 1 Timothy. And we'll see other passages in a moment.

There's a third cultural expression of this sin and that is, the affirmation of transgenderism and it's sexual sin as morally good, the affirmation of these things as morally good. This is the next step, as I pointed out at the beginning. You understand that there are individuals in the media, on social media, and the entertainment industry who are promoting gender theory and criticizing all who disagree. There are educators at all levels, parents beware, educators at all levels are indoctrinating their students with gender theory. I read an excerpt from a book in the last couple of weeks called **The Gender Fairy**, in which four year-olds are told, your parents cannot tell you what gender you are, only you know, and only you have the right and authority to decide. This is happening at all levels.

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network has launched a curriculum that they hope will be used in 100,000 middle schools and high schools in the US. The curriculum includes a homophobia scale that ranges, this is the homophobia scale now, it ranges from repulsion, pity, tolerance to full acceptance. Did you hear that? Even full acceptance is still a form of homophobia. These same people argue that the correct attitude that people ought to have begins with support, but progresses, these are their words, to admiration, appreciation, and a word that essentially means promotion. That's when you really have gotten over your homophobia, when you admire appreciate and promote. Businesses are enforcing gender theory through personal pressure on employees by education and employment policies and through political pressure on entities and states. The leaders of large companies are forcing their moral will on states and other entities.

Governments are passing laws that make it a crime to refuse to recognize a person's perceived identity gender. All the way back in 2009, the government of Quebec instituted the Quebec policy against homophobia. Specifically, their policy forbids, listen to this, it forbids "affirmation of heterosexuality as a social norm or the highest form of sexual orientation." So it's not enough to say, okay, you know, they want to make those choices, they can make them, for you to say there's something that's better, something that's higher, is a violation of the law. Where does this come from? Go back to Romans 1. You remember that because of paganism,

God, three times here in this text, says that “God gave them over.” In verse 24 He gave them over to sexual sin. In verse 26 He gave the culture over to homosexuality. In verse 28 He adds this, “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind.”

What’s a depraved mind? A lot of people think that means sinning. No, people have always sinned, people have always committed these sins. What’s a depraved mind? Go down to verse 32, “although they know the ordinance of God,” “through the substance of the law written on the heart,” Romans 2, “that those who practice such things are worthy of death,” notice this, “they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

Literally, the Greek text reads this way, this makes it so clear, listen to this, “not only these things they are doing, but rather also they are approving those who practice.” Folks, this is the essence of a depraved mind. The person not only chooses to continue sinning, but affirms sin in himself and others as good. That’s what’s going on. Those are the cultural expressions, primary cultural expressions in our day.

Now next, number four, let’s consider the spiritual foundations. What is the source of this? We’ve talked about on the societal level, but individually, what are the primary heart issues that lie behind the acceptance of the tenets of gender theory? Let me give you two of them because I want to be fair in this issue. First of all, one of the issues is experiencing developmental confusion. We live in a fallen world. We live in fallen bodies. And that affects everything, including our bodies. It affects our perceptions, our minds. Romans 8 says, “the whole creation groans” under the effect of the fall.

Sadly, one effect of the fall is that, they tell us, one person in every 5,000 is born with external reproductive structures that may be ambiguous in their appearance, not chromosomes but external structures. Of course, such people require care and compassion and help. But I’m talking about even those who are born clearly biologically male or female can still at times be confused about themselves. This often happens before puberty and usually resolves with puberty and the male or female hormones that are injected into the body during that stage of life. A variety of factors may contribute to this, factors such as genetic issues, circumstances in the home, pornography, sexual abuse, another traumatic event of some kind, rejection and

loneliness, the desire for attention and acceptance, or, today it's huge, the influence of peers and online groups.

Another factor that can be behind this, this confusion, is the unnecessary tension caused by artificial cultural standards of masculinity and femininity. We can inadvertently force our children into superficial cultural expectations. For example, the colors pink and blue. You understand, those are a fabulous marketing ploy to get you to buy more children's clothes than one set. But in the past, families often chose neutral colored children's clothes so they didn't have to buy two sets. But pink and blue has stuck. I hate to tell you this, but as an adult male, yes, I have in my closet, and wear, blue shirts and pink shirts. There's nothing wrong with blue and pink.

The same thing though holds true for certain kinds of behavior. Just because a male enjoys dressing nicely, is artistic, is gentler and kinder than his peers, enjoys conversation, all of that doesn't mean he's gender confused. And just because a female doesn't like dressing in frilly dresses but enjoys sports and being outside, that doesn't mean she's gender confused. You remember Jacob and Esau, Genesis 25:27 says, "When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents." And you know the story, Esau was close to his father and Jacob was close to his mother. But in the text both are called men. They weren't gender confused. So, I'm not saying that we should ignore all cultural markers of masculinity and femininity. In fact, in first Corinthians 11, first part of that chapter, I think Paul calls us to do just that, and that is, to embrace some of those cultural markers. But those markers don't define what it means to be male or female.

The second spiritual foundation or source is the more common and the more culpable, and it's rebelling against God's Word and His sovereign decision of one's biological sex. Jesus, in Matthew 19:4-5, affirms the creation account and that God made all humanity male and female. This is Matthew 19 4 and 5, "Have you not read," Jesus said, "that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH"?" Turn to 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 11. This is a very complicated chapter and I'm not going to get into the first part of it. I think it does have to do with cultural markers in your society of

masculinity and femininity. But I want you to go down to verse, let's see, 1 Corinthians 11:15, let's start at verse 14,

Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

Now, I don't think Paul is saying that, you know, we ought to break out a ruler and every woman's hair should be longer than every man's hair or that a certain style is what she must wear. I agree with what Frank Thielman writes when he says this about this text, "Although the norms of appropriate hairstyle and dress may vary from culture to culture, Paul's point is that men should look like men in that culture and women should look like women in that culture rather than seeking to deny or disparage the God given differences between the sexes."

But folks, Scripture doesn't just affirm all humanity is two sexes or genders, it also points out that God is personally involved in determining the sex of each person. God was personally involved in determining your sex or gender. And the Scripture uses those words, as we'll see, those concepts, interchangeably, as we'll see next week. God decided whether you would be male or female. And I'll touch on this text more next week, but let me just mention it to you, Psalm 139:13. David is rehearsing what happened to him in the womb and he says this, "God, You formed my inward parts, You wove me in my mother's womb." God determined whether you would be one of those, which of those two sexes you would be, male or female. That was God's decision. And to reject that is ultimately to reject God's right to make that decision.

Now, let's finish our time together with the biblical implications. How should we respond? Well, let me just say, I'm just going to hurry through this, there's a lot I want to share here, but I want to get in your mind; these slides will be available in the coming week online. You can capture this content. You're not going to be able to get it all down. Trust me. What are the biblical implications? How do we respond?

First of all, if you're here this morning and you're not a follower of Jesus Christ, you've never repented and believed in Him and you are involved in committing these sins, you need to understand that if you are enslaved to these sins, and Jesus said, "the one who commits sin is a

slave of sin,” all of us were enslaved to sin at one point or another, you’re not alone in that, but if you’re enslaved to these sins, God can change you. He can forgive you and change you. It’s a sin that can be forgiven by God’s grace because of Jesus’ death in the place of sinners on the cross. Jesus paid the penalty against God’s justice for the sins of every person who would ever believe in Him. And the gospel promises you not only God’s forgiveness, but His power to change.

But forgiveness and change, Jesus taught, are only possible when we repent and we believe. Let me explain those terms. First of all, repentance is being genuinely sorry for your thoughts and actions that are contrary to what God demands of you and a genuine desire to change. So genuinely sorry and a genuine desire to change. It doesn’t mean you can change yourself. It means you have a desire to change and you’re open for God to do that. That’s repentance.

Now, when it comes to gender what that means is this, you must acknowledge your thoughts and efforts against your biological sex are a sin against your Creator. You must accept His decision to have made you male or female. You must renounce your right to determine who you are and submit to His right to decide who you are. And this is not just true with gender, but every other sin. Faith in Jesus Christ means you must not only believe the facts about Him in the New Testament, but you must confess Him as your Lord. Romans 10, 9 and 10, “if you will believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, you will be saved.” You will be rescued. You will be forgiven. The Bible teaches that true peace, shalom, wholeness, only come from a saving relationship with your Creator. It’s not going to be found in trying to change who you are. You can only know Him through spiritual salvation, the forgiveness of sins and becoming a new creation that Jesus promises to make of you if you will repent and believe in Him.

If you’re not a follower of Jesus Christ, you’re not committing these sins and you’re proud, and you essentially say, you’re congratulating yourself to say, well, these aren’t my categories, this isn’t my issue, preach it, Tom. Let me tell you, there’s a real problem. Jesus told a story in Luke’s gospel, chapter 18, in which He compared the Pharisee and a tax collector. The tax collector humbled himself, admitted his sin, sought God’s forgiveness, and Jesus said, “he went down to his house justified.” The Pharisee said, ““God, thank You that I’m not like that.””

And Jesus said, he went down to his house condemned. So, whatever your sin may be, it may not be these, it's enough to damn you. And if you don't repent of it, that's exactly what will happen. You need to repent and believe in Christ as well.

Let me move on to professing believers. First of all, if you're tempted by these sins I've been talking about this morning, 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." Listen, what you're facing, it's a real temptation. It's also a common temptation. People have always experienced that temptation. But don't let that temptation or your propensity, your inclination toward that sin, define you. If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, that's not what defines you. What defines you is Jesus Christ, and what He wants is for you to be just like Him in your moral character. So, get help, seek help and counsel from our pastors and elders. We're here to help you. The church is a hospital. So let us do that. Let others who care about you help you deal with this sin struggle in your life.

Number two, if you're a professing believer and you are committing these sins, but you are completely unrepentant, if you've basically said, you know what, I give up, it's who I am, I'm just going to keep doing this, God will forgive me. I want you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians 6, 1 Corinthians 6:9. Paul says, "do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" They're not getting in. "Do not be deceived," don't let anybody talk you into some other story, "neither fornicators," that's premarital sex without repentance, "nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate," that's the Greek word for the passive side of the homosexual relationship, "nor homosexuals," that's the Greek word for the active side, the partner, in the homosexual relationship, and he goes on to list other things, "will inherit the kingdom of God." No one who willfully, without repentance, goes on practicing these sin patterns is a believer. So I don't care what prayer you prayed or what aisle you walked, if you are unrepentant and you are content to walk in these patterns of sin, then you're not a Christian. I plead with you to turn from that sin to Christ.

Number three, what do you do if unbelievers in your life engage in these sins? Turn to Titus 3. This is what we all face, how do we respond to the people around us? Titus 3, Paul begins by

saying, Titus there's some things I want you to remind your people in the churches of, and what he says in verse 2 is, I want you to be respectful and compassionate towards people who are captured in all kinds of sins. They're made in the image of God. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. First of all, he says, don't be verbally abusive to them, "malign no one," be gracious to them, and then he says, don't be argumentative or antagonistic, "be peaceable." Verse 2, he goes on to say, don't be harsh, "be gentle." And then he says, "showing every consideration for all men." The word essentially means be courteous.

And that brings us to a second point he makes, and that is be humble. Not only be respectful and compassionate, but verse 3, be humble, "because we also were once foolish ourselves." Listen, remember that they're enslaved to their sin, just as you were once enslaved to yours. And you may not understand their sin, but you understand the power of enslaving sin because every one of us has been there.

Thirdly, be honest, be honest about your sin and theirs. Notice what Paul says to Titus, he doesn't pull any punches, we were, and they are, "disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures." So when you talk about your sins, don't pull any punches. And when you talk about theirs don't pull any punches either. Don't give into the culture. This is them just like it was you. And we need to be honest.

And then fourthly, share the gospel. Verses 4 through 8, "He saved us." Stress repentance, submission to Jesus as Lord, Christ's power to change the heart. A moment ago I quoted 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 where it says, those committing these things without repentance are not Christians. I love verse 11, which says, "Such were some of you; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." There were Christians in the church in Corinth who used to be practicing homosexuals, but whom God had changed. They were living lives of sexual purity, either in celibacy or in heterosexual marriage. By the way Christians, there's an important point for us here. Those involved in LGBTQIA+, they are not the enemy, they are the mission field. Jesus says, in Matthew 13, the enemy is the devil. He's the one who has enslaved them. Just like he once enslaved us.

Now, I want to briefly answer a couple of questions that I get all the time from people because I know these are in your minds. So let me do that. First of all, first question, how should I respond when a transgender person asks me to call them by a name distinctive to the opposite sex? Bob wants to be called Sue. Well, the elders and I are in full agreement that since a name is merely a label, we can call people by whatever name they choose, even if their intention is to make a statement about their sexuality. I don't have any problem calling Bob Sue if that's what he wants to be known as because it's a label. Now I don't mean to make light of this, but when I was growing up, you know, Johnny Cash wrote a song called "A Boy named Sue." And, you know, that was unfortunate in that day, but I don't have any problem using whatever label a person wants to use and I don't think you should either.

Second question, how should I respond when asked to use the pronouns of the opposite biological sex, Bob wants to be called she or they. Pronouns have been historically used and are still used most often to identify a person's birth sex. That means to refer to a person with pronouns contrary to birth sex contradicts the truth, regardless of that person's self-described gender identity. Now, I understand, some Christians justify this, using both name and pronouns requested. They say it's compassionate, it's gracious. They say it's acceptable because the transgender person is not using the pronouns to refer to their birth sex, but to their chosen gender identity. I understand all of that. But folks, I have to say, God never contradicts the truth. And I don't believe that we as His people should either. We shouldn't go along with their self-deception and refer to them by pronouns that contradict the truth. So what do you do? In some cases maybe your job is at stake on this issue? I suggest you simply don't use pronouns at all. I mean, you don't need to be throwing it in their face every day in every way that you disagree with them. You need to make it clear what you believe, but you don't need to do that. And so just call them their chosen name, whatever that is; you don't have to use pronouns. But if you do have to use pronouns, then I think we should use the ones that represent their birth sex.

Third question, should I attend a same sex wedding? Now, you're going to have to make that decision before the Lord, I understand that, there's no chapter and verse. But as you make that decision, I do want you to consider two facts that a lot of people forget. Number one, it's not a wedding and the result is not a marriage. It's unlike, say, a wedding between two unbelievers. That does initiate a marriage, a good thing that God Himself created. But that's not true when



both are the same sex. Jesus made it clear that a man and a woman, that was the divine intention, that they would become one flesh. And so let me say this as kindly, but as directly as I can, God approves nothing about that relationship or that ceremony.

Second thing you need to keep in mind is, those who attend a wedding, at least this was true in the past, are agreeing to the marriage and serving as witnesses of the vows. The language in most Christian weddings, which comes from The Book of Common Prayer, ask anyone who objects to speak or forever hold his peace. If you don't object, you're affirming the marriage. The clear implication is that all of those who are there are both witnesses and affirming the goodness and validity of this marriage. So keep those things in mind as you weigh this decision.

A fourth implication for professing believers, what do you do if professing believers in your life engage in these sins without repentance? And the answer is Matthew 18. Practice the steps given in Matthew 18, and I've preached a sermon on that, you can go online and listen.

Number five, if you're a parent, what do you do if you're a parent? Again, I'm just going to give you the list, pray and trust God. Psalm 127 is about parenting and it says, "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." You better pray that God will be at work in the lives of your kids, and trust Him to do so. Number two, gently address and correct developmental confusion.

Number three, put reasonable safeguards in place. Safeguards for what? To protect your kids from predators, to protect them, in some cases, from their peers who would sin against them in these ways, and from the internet, the worst of the internet. I don't understand parents who let their kids use all the technology with zero protections to protect those kids from what's out there, protect them.

Number four, warn them about gender theory and teach them God's truth about gender at an age appropriate level. Can I just say, if you're concerned, your children have been exposed to far more than you can even imagine, so don't be naive, you need to address this from the Scripture. Number five, keep the gospel central, keep bringing them back to the fact that we're all sinners and we all, apart from grace, deserve hell and our only hope is Jesus Christ.

Number six, if your children are sinning in these ways, and I know that's true in some cases, what do you do? If they're still in the home then don't allow them to express their sin, just like you wouldn't with any other sin. Secondly, if they're out of the home, don't facilitate their sin. Thirdly, continue to love them and accept them as your child. They're always going to be your child, however they choose to sin, so don't cut them off. First Corinthians 5, about not associating with any so-called brother, is about how we practice church discipline in the context of the church. It means don't keep them in the church, don't treat them as a Christian. It doesn't mean you should shun your child. Number four, graciously confront their sin and share the gospel with them.

And number five, never stop loving, never stopped praying, and never stopped sharing the gospel at appropriate times. Folks, the story isn't over till it's over. I love the story of the thief on the cross. Here's a man raised in a good home, a good Jewish home where he was taught about God, who became a terrorist, who killed people. But within about four hours of his death, he came to trust in the true God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. So don't ever give up. And then finally number seven, if you're a Christian, celebrate God's design of male and female. Lord willing, that's where we'll go next week, enough of the negative. Next week we're going to look at what can we celebrate of what God has done in creating us all in His image, male and female. Let's pray together.

Father, these are hard things, hard for me to teach, hard for Your people to hear. But I pray that You would give us faith to believe You. Lord, "may You be true and every man a liar." May we believe what You have said and may we have the courage and the grace to know how to stand by those truths; give us the balance. Father, help us to think like Titus 3, remembering that "we too were once enslaved to various sins and pleasures." They need the gospel just like we do. Help us not to see them as the enemy, but the mission field, to love them, to care for them, to treat them as people made in Your image, to care about them as individuals, all at the same time, as we would with anyone else, bringing Your saving gospel to bear. And Lord, I pray for those who are having to deal with these issues in a very practical way, with family or friends, give them wisdom, give them courage and grace.

And Father, for those who may be here this morning who are believers struggling with these sins, Lord, help them to realize that that doesn't define them, that they are defined as Your children, as followers of Jesus Christ, and may You give them the grace and resolve to pursue change. Lord, for those who are here who are not in Christ, help them to see, whatever their sin, they only have one hope and that's Jesus Christ and His gospel, and may they throw themselves on You and His mercy today. It's in His name we pray, amen.