

Reviewing Homosexuality

The Bible and Homosexuality

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For tonight, I had an open slot, just as I did this past Sunday, and I wanted to take the opportunity to review some of the social matters that are now an intrinsic part of our society and will become increasingly accepted as we go along. On Sunday I did a message titled "Reviewing Transgenderism" and received a number of comments about that, and tonight I want to do a message, a parallel message titled "Reviewing Homosexuality." And I just want to explain why we're doing this. I did a five-part series on homosexuality back in 2015. Those messages are readily available online. There are CDs out in the lobby that you're free to take. Since that time, many people have come to Truth Community Church, there's a little turnover in our church, which is natural and to be expected, and so a lot of people have not heard anything from our pulpit on this matter and, of course, in the intervening decade since that material was preached, society has literally rolled over before the LGBTQ juggernaut and steamroller and it's important for us to make a statement with this time tonight. And the statement is pretty simple. Our position has not changed. We have not moved an inch from biblical teaching on this, even if society has, you know, gone the direction that it has, and I want to do this message to help Christians maybe who haven't really thought through these issues, maybe somebody's new to Christ in the past ten years and hasn't really thought through these issues biblically, just kind of assumed and assimilated what society says about it and society's embrace about it. I want to do it for that, but also for the sake of Truth Community Church, that you would know that by the grace of God, we stand firm and we're going to stand firm. By the grace of God, as long as I'm the pastor of Truth Community Church, we will never move on this issue. We will never move on this issue by the grace of God, and it's important for us to lay down these markers from time to time, lest our silence as we pursue biblical things and biblical ministry be interpreted as capitulation or indifference to the matter. No, this is a matter of great importance and frankly, my friends, this has become, I don't think it's an overstatement to say, that a church's position on homosexuality and transgenderism is now and certainly in days to come even more will be the distinguishing mark between a true church and a compromised church. There's just no avoiding that reality.

And the song that David and Catherine wrote, if you didn't notice that, of course they're not going to call attention to that, and I love them for that, they wrote that song, but it's taken from Revelation 2 and 3 and we'll be getting to that passage of Scripture soon enough. But one of the things that the Lord rebukes his church for is for their

compromise on ethical issues and we can't compromise. Ultimately, faithfulness to Christ and faithfulness to the Word of God is the only thing that matters in life and certainly in the life of a church. It doesn't matter who criticizes a church for these positions, it doesn't matter, in one sense, what the rolling things around church life may come and go and be, what matters is that we be found faithful to the Word of God. That's the only thing that ultimately matters. I live for that.

It's the only thing that ultimately matters and let me just go a step further. As I think I told you, I did my transgenderism series for a church in central Florida a week ago, and the pastor there is a wonderful African-American man named Myrue Spivey. I'm begging Myrue to come and preach for us sometime, and hopefully he will be able to do that, and I think I even mentioned this on Sunday, but it's just so deeply on my heart because it's not just about pastor to pastor, but churches to churches and also Christians to Christians and within the life of the body of Christ. Beloved, it is so important for us to stick together. It is so important as these foundational things are assaulted by the society around us and as Christians and churches are peeled off to say just enough to make themselves comfortable in the world around us and to avoid criticism and all of that, when we find each other and we find each other seeking to be faithful, it is just essential that we stick together and work through things and be faithful to one another, be faithful to our church, to be supportive of each other, to be supportive of our church, because it's already difficult and it's only going to get more difficult as greater pressure is brought to bear upon believers to compromise on issues just like this. And Myrue and I are committed to one another, to support each other, to stand with each other. I love him and I believe it to be mutual, even if it's not deserved on my end. But the spirit of this is kind of a rallying point for Christians, for us to plant our own flag of faithfulness to the Word of God, whether it's June or whether it's any other time of the year, and say, by the grace of God, we're going to be faithful no matter what, and we're not going to move on this issue. And it's important for you to understand why that is, to see how clear it is in Scripture, and what the path forward is for the church of Jesus Christ; as we become increasingly isolated on these matters, how we are to think about these things, where we are to draw our strength, and I consider it one of the great privileges of my life to be able to give voice to the Word of God in times when it's not wanted. I consider that to be one of the great privileges of my life, and I cherish it, and I cherish each one of you for being here. Those of you that are here with a desire to support us and to learn from God's Word and want to do what God's Word says, we're here. That's what we're going to do.

And so, tonight's message is not really a review of the biblical basis of and giving articulation to everything that Scripture says about homosexuality. We covered that in the series. I'm assuming that material, I am assuming that material in this message, and so I just point you to all of those other messages for it. Let's just lay the markers clear without apology and all of that. Scripture in Leviticus 18 declares homosexuality to be an abomination to God. It is a sin against the created order of God and everything goes from there. Sometimes you will find people saying, "Yeah, but Jesus didn't say anything about homosexuality," which is a very wrongheaded thing to say that shows no understanding of the doctrine of inspiration or anything like that. Jesus spoke about sexual sin clearly in Matthew chapter 5, and the thing to understand is that the entire Bible is the Word of

Christ, the entire Bible comes to us by inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all being of one essence. And so the Bible speaks with the mind of God, with a single voice, each person of the blessed Trinity speaking in everything that it says, and the apostles whom Jesus Christ appointed as his authorized representatives to speak on his behalf and deliver the Word of Christ to the church after his ascension all speak with a unified voice on this. So, beloved, don't be misled by those kind of red herrings from people who have no love for the truth, who do not have the Spirit of God within them, you know, and we just cannot surrender the Word of God to people who have no love of Christ and would simply twist his Word for their own purposes to their own destruction. We just have to be clear on this.

And I want to say also, I hope you detect it in my voice, there's not animosity in my heart on these issues. I'm not here in a combative spirit. It's sad and grievous to me to be able to have to declare what God's Word, because I'm just so mindful of what the implications of it are, as we'll see here tonight, just how much this issue illustrates the profound judgment of God on our society and the desperate danger that millions are in for embracing this even if they don't practice it directly, the desperate judgment they are by approving the things that God disapproves of. And so with all of that said, my message tonight is really aimed at Christians and to help Christians and the church of Christ to be able to stand firm. This is not an evangelistic message. There are aspects of that in the fuller series. I speak out of a sense of love for homosexuals that are trapped in sin, there are those that would love to be out, but their desires keep them in prison. I am mindful of the fact that increasingly even sincere-hearted people within the church are going to struggle with desires that they don't even want, that they want to resist and yet, as they're being sanctified, they're struggling with these desires and questions in their mind and knowing the truth about homosexuality and seeing it clearly in Scripture is a way to strengthen and help them and to minister to them and to help them know that their struggle against that is a worthy one, it is a noble one, it is something that God can help them with by the power of the Holy Spirit. And so there are just broad reasons to take the time to do these things that we are doing here this evening. And so I'm grateful that there are many, many churches, many, many pastors that take the same stand we do. We stand with them. We'll be there for them just as they'll be there for us. But even if they all fell away, beloved, we will not move on this issue.

And so with that marker laid down, with that flag on the hill of fidelity, what does the church do now that society not only accepts homosexuality but celebrates it and all of these things morph into even more transgenderism thing, kind of eclipse even homosexuality, we still need to lay these markers down. I want to break this into two different sections tonight. First section, what we cannot do as a church and as the people of God, and what we must do. What we cannot do, what we must do. Two sections to tonight's message. Four subpoints under what we cannot do. Six subpoints under what we must do. Time is short. We better get down to it, shall we?

What we cannot do, number one here this evening. During the time of King David, he had many men that supported him in different ways, and included among them were the men of Issachar. You read about them in 1 Chronicles chapter 12 verse 32, and what

Scripture says is that the men of Issachar were men who understood the times and what Israel ought to do, and kind of expanding that and applying it here to the church of God today, we need to know what the church ought to do, what we must do, what we cannot do. We must be men who understand the times in which we live. We must be women who know what the people of God should do in the midst of the sexual chaos all around us. We're not free, and trust me, beloved, there were years where I did not want to preach on these issues. Scripture speaks of things of evil that should not even be spoken of and for a long time, I wanted to avoid addressing things like this from the pulpit, but I came to a better understanding, you might say. Scripture speaks to it. Scripture is given by inspiration of God. All Scripture is inspired by God. And so if Scripture says something, we should teach it, we should express it as the Lord gives us time and strength, and so it's right for us to do this but also, this is unavoidable. We cannot miss this issue. Even if we could go into an annual coma in the month of June, we would still find ourselves dealing with these issues and frankly, a coma through the month of June sounds kind of attractive when you think about all that we have to endure as the propaganda machine ramps itself up into increasingly high gear.

But all of that said, we have to address this and so we need to know, first of all, what we cannot do and, first of all, we lay down this marker. What we cannot do, first of all, we cannot approve homosexuality. We cannot do that and be faithful to God in any way. To accept homosexuality, to affirm it, to support it, to make room for it in our thinking would be unfaithful to Scripture and to Jesus Christ, the one who saved us from our sins. If you want to turn and follow along with me as I go quickly to different Scripture passages, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9, we're faced with a choice between what our society loves and the kingdom of God. These two matters do not intersect. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9, we read, "do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" And he says, "Do not be deceived." Take note of that, beloved. There's an emphasis, it's not enough for Paul simply to say what follows, he warns us that we are subject to a spirit of deception on the very things that he's about to say and so he highlights and lays upon the people of God an obligation to undertake an understanding of the truth and a commitment to be faithful to it. "Do not be deceived about what follows," he says, "neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." This is plain. This is not subject to debate. Unrepentant homosexuals, unrepentant idolaters, unrepentant adulterers, and all of these others that are listed there but for tonight, specifically seeing that Scripture emphasizes the role of homosexuality here, unrepentant people in that realm will not inherit the kingdom of God which is to say that they're not born again, they are not Christians, no matter what they may say about themselves, and if they die in that unrepentant state, they will perish in hell forever. This is the teaching of Scripture and the fact that society does not like it has nothing to do with our obligation to speak the truth and it is no limitation on our responsibility to speak the truth.

Now, Paul goes on quickly in verse 11 and gives the great ray of gospel hope here, says that to be in that condition is not to be permanently condemned if one would only repent and turn to Christ because he goes in speaking to the church, he 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 by the Spirit of our God." And I have friends who are Christians who came out of homosexuality, and they are some of the dearest people I know, and they bear the fruit of the Spirit in ways that put me to shame. And we need to say this very plainly, homosexuality is not the unpardonable sin. Homosexuality is grouped with sins that a lot of us are guilty of. We're all sinners who fall short of the glory of God. And so, on the one hand, we say plainly that Scripture says unrepentant homosexuals cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, and yet at the same time, it issues a loving call of the gospel to come to Christ, to come and be saved, come and let Christ deliver you from that, that you would have eternal life and find forgiveness of your sins.

The point for now in this brief summary that we're making, in light of that, we cannot approve homosexuality. It is an abominable, it is an abominable betrayal of the gospel and it would be an abominable betrayal of love to approve homosexuality and give to people who are in eternal danger a sense in the name of Christ that it's okay and there's nothing for them to be concerned about, the idea being you could continue in this without fear of the judgment of God. That's what we're saying if we approve of homosexuality or if we make allowance for it. We can't do that. For the sake of their souls, we cannot do that. It doesn't matter what anyone thinks about us. We have to be faithful to Christ and his Word, first of all, and then we have to be faithful to the souls that God gives us to speak to and we cannot compromise the Word of God and give them a false sense of security and as it were, stand at the edge of hell and watch them walk toward it and fall into it without us having raised protest of the Word of truth against the path that they're on. That is a despicable betrayal of fidelity to Christ and a despicable betrayal of love to those to whom we are called to present the gospel. And we must be clear on this and so that is why we cannot approve homosexuality. Scripture is clear. We want to be faithful to our Savior who loved us and gave himself up for us, and we want to be ever so faithful to the souls that God might bring to us to testify. And so we cannot approve homosexuality.

Now secondly, secondly we cannot stop it. We cannot stop it. The train has left the station and if you turn to Romans chapter 1, you see a biblical reason why we cannot stop it within the purpose and the judgment of God. A widespread acceptance of homosexuality in any culture is a mark of a society that has been abandoned and given up by God and in Romans chapter 1 verse 24, we read this very clearly. This is in the context of Paul's desire and eagerness to preach the gospel in verses 16 and 17. He wanted to go to Rome. He wanted to preach the gospel. He wanted to declare the the message of salvation to a society that was under the wrath of God, verse 18, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." So Paul wants to preach the gospel precisely because the wrath of God has been manifested in his day.

And then you drop down, for the sake of time and context, verse 24, we see what the wrath of God looks like. This is the manifested or the revealed wrath of God in present time with a reality that there's a future wrath distinct from this that is still to come when at the great white throne judgment of Christ and other aspects of the tribulation to come,

which we'll deal with in the book of Revelation. Here we see the wrath of God manifested, and how is it manifested? Verse 24, "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done." God abandoned them to their lusts and allowed their lusts to just run their course. That's what we see in our day.

Verse 28, "God gave them up to a debased mind," verse 29, "They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." Beloved, is there any clearer description of American culture than that? We see these things not only practiced, but celebrated; at every level of media, government, and corporate affirmation, this is a thorough going approval of that which God abominates. You see what's happening and it's frightening on two levels. One, it's frightening to realize that men are celebrating that which God condemns and as they do so the wrath of God is being manifested, and you realize that this is happening because God has handed over, he has removed his restraining grace, he has removed his restraining hand and said, "Okay, have at it, have at it." And as men have at it thinking they are free, they're diving deeper and deeper into slavery.

And so, beloved, in light of that, you and I, we must know the times in which we live. We must be men and women of Issachar, so to speak. We must be sober in spirit and realize that what we see is not simply men and women and the world around us pursuing something that's anti-biblical, but to realize in a very sobering, frightening way, this is a recognition of the judgment of God upon the world around us. And as a result of that, the fact that God is at work in this, God again working out his purposes in everything that happens, God in providential control of everything that happens, God furthering his purpose which he had established prior to creation in his divine decree, he creates the world and implements it and operates it by his providence, this is something that God is at work in and therefore, we can't stop it. We can't stop it because the LGBTQ propaganda empire is never going to go away in our lifetimes, absent a really miraculous revival at the hands of the Holy Spirit, but also recognizing that in a hidden greater way, the purpose of God is being outworked as he handed over men who rejected him, a society that rejected him, handing them over to the natural consequences of their rebellion. And so we can't stop this. Over the course of the past 40 years, we tried political solutions and constitutional amendments at state levels and all of that, and these were just flapping pieces of toilet paper in the wind against the purposes that were at

work, and so a political answer was never going to be sufficient because the hearts of men were so corrupt that they would have nothing of it. And now as a result of that, beloved, we are in the exhilarating, glorious position as the church of Jesus Christ as being the only institution to speak against this and to speak on behalf of God for it. I don't relish that in one sense, but I think that there is an exhilarating glory to being a Christian in this time, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, committed to the Word of God, and trusting God to honor his Word, whether any men stand with us or not, no matter what men do and say against us in the process. I want to be on God's side here, don't you? I want to be on God's side and God's side is known by looking at Scripture and seeing what he says.

And so what we cannot do, we cannot approve homosexuality, we cannot stop it. Thirdly, I kind of alluded to this earlier in what I said in my own approach to my pulpit in years gone by, thirdly, we cannot ignore it. One of the reasons that I'm doing this message tonight, we cannot ignore it. Scripture speaks to it. Activists are aggressive and well-organized in that whole realm. This is part of our world and we must deal with it. We can't hide behind the walls of our home and pretend this doesn't exist. We're not doing anybody any favors that way. We're not doing anybody any good that way and so that's why we're reviewing these matters this evening.

Turn to 1 Timothy chapter 1 very quickly. 1 Timothy chapter 1. In verse 8, we read this, "Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted." There you see it again in the Word of God. We can't ignore this. It's in the world around us. It's part of the fabric in which we live, and Scripture speaks to it plainly. I mean, if you just read, beloved, if you just have a practice of reading the Bible from cover to cover on an ongoing basis, you're going to encounter the whole matter of homosexuality in the Old Testament and in the New. We can't ignore this. There's something almost encouraging about that, realizing that part of the reason, part of what God was doing when the children of Israel went in and conquered the land of Canaan, God was giving them the land, and as you read in Scripture, you find that he was also simultaneously judging the nations that were practicing these very sins of which we're talking about now. And so, from the very beginning of the collected people of God, this was part of the world and so if God brought his people through it then, he's going to bring us through it now. There's nothing to be afraid of. We don't have to shrink back in fear and we certainly don't have to apologize for being a voice for what God says.

Now, fourthly, the other thing that we cannot do. I've said that we cannot approve homosexuality. We cannot stop it. We cannot ignore it. Fourthly, we cannot fear. We cannot fear and, of course, this applies not only to homosexuality but the whole transgender insanity that is engulfing the world around us. We cannot be afraid and, beloved, we can stand in a position of courage if we keep in mind why it is that we exist and what it is that is ultimately most important to us. The most important thing is not

clinging to a secret pocket of morality of people that are like-minded like us. That's not it. The most important thing in the world is the advance of the church of Jesus Christ. That's the thing that ultimately matters. That's where the purpose of God, the positive purpose of God is being forwarded, is in the church of Christ, and we know because we know Christ and because we know something of the Bible, we know that God accomplishes his purposes always and without fail and one of the things for the love of the church and for the love of Christ who loved the church and gave himself up for it, we always can come back to what Jesus said in Matthew 16:18. Don't bother to turn there, I'll read it and move on. Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ will build his church no matter what we see happening around us. Don't let the air of inevitability that these people like to create about their movement, in all of the parades and all the rainbows and all of the stuff in the stores and all of that, don't ever let that cause you to lose sight of the fact that while Christ may withdraw, let it flourish for a time until the sin is complete, Christ is sovereignly, surely, perfectly, without fail building his church, accomplishing his purpose, and nothing that anyone can do, nothing that this whole mess of stuff can do can stop him from accomplishing what he wants. Christ will build his church successfully. He will build it well. He will build it completely. He will build it victoriously. Greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world.

And so we cannot fear. We cannot capitulate and be afraid. We look at this with discernment, we're men of Issachar in that way, and yet we look at it and we're strong and courageous as the Lord commanded Joshua. He said, "You go in and you conquer, you go in and conquer this land and as you do, you be strong and courageous." Paul is saying similar things to Timothy, "Don't be afraid. Be a man. Stand up and be strong in these things," and that's what we need to do. And one of the ways my dear friends, one of the ways that you can further the purposes of Christ in your realms of influence is to ground yourselves in the sovereign purposes of God, ground yourselves in the sure providence of God, the sure work of Christ, and to project your confidence and your courage in the private relationships and the circle of influence that you have and say, "Yes, this is difficult. It's going to be hard for Christians in this world, but I'm not afraid. I believe God when he says he will build his church. I have assurance that I'm a Christian and I'm in his sovereign purposes and in his sovereign church, and while things are difficult, I'm not afraid. I'm going to stand strong." And as we stand strong, we help others be strong also that otherwise might be weak. So we can't capitulate to fear in the midst of it.

So that's what we cannot do, cannot approve homosexuality, we can't stop it, we can't ignore it, we cannot fear it. All right, so let's pivot now to what we must do. What we must do and beloved, this is where having a Christian mind as we developed that last year in that 55-part series, and every aspect of that having its own particular role to play in having a Christian mind; you can't cut out some of it and pitch it away and think that you still have a Christian mind. You can't pitch out the authority of God. You can't pitch out the existence of God. You can't pitch out the sovereignty of God and have a Christian biblical mind. It all fits together as a seamless cloth, and it is so important to understand that and to defend it and having a biblical mind here makes this all much easier for us to understand because it's not complicated. In light of everything that we've said about the

truth of Christianity and the truth of salvation and the authority of God and all of these things, ultimately, beloved, for us, it's not complicated. Other people can, you know, worry about the politics of things and send out their fundraising letters and, you know, and agitate over the latest political polls and the next election and all of that. For us, it's not complicated. For us, here's what we do, we do what the Bible tells us to do. That's not complicated, is it? You say, okay, this is God's Word. We established this. The God who exists has spoken and he's spoken in his Word. We are in submission to him. We are in obedience to him, a spirit of obedience to him. We read his Word and we implement it by the power of the Holy Spirit. We're not afraid. We read his Word and we don't resist it. We don't, you know, and there's a sense in which we realize that we've got to stick together on this and not bring divisions into the body of Christ when it's already a battle as it is.

And so we embrace the Word of God and we understand that we read it and we do what it says. That's not complicated. You know, and I said in just about the very first meeting of Truth Community 12 years ago, here's our philosophy of ministry. I've told you this many times, I don't get tired of saying it. Here's our philosophy of ministry: we open the Bible, we teach it, and we deal biblically with the consequences. It's not complicated. It's not complicated. We don't have to follow after the fads. We don't have to come up with a lot of programs to try to keep people interested. This is what we do. If people want to follow us, we want everybody to follow that will follow but if that's not what people's interested in, we're not going to chase after them to try to bring them in for something that's not in their heart to do. But for us, it's simple, we believe the Word of God, we read the Word of God, we teach the Word of God, we seek to obey the Word of God by the power of God. And so we do what Jesus commanded and I've got, I think, a half dozen points here that I've got to go through really quickly.

What do we do, first of all, in reviewing homosexuality? The first thing, in my opinion, that we do, we humble ourselves. We humble ourselves and for this I do want you to turn to Matthew 7. We'll be reviewing Matthew 7 as we ultimately get back to the Sermon on the Mount later this year. Matthew chapter 7. As we maintain our position on these things, we're mindful of something that the Lord warned us about. It's easy to point out the sins of others and to ignore our own and our Lord told us not to do that. In the first five verses of Matthew, we read this, he said, the Lord says, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." And the point here is that as we set forth the Word of God, we're mindful of the fact that we ourselves are sinners, redeemed by grace, purchased by the blood of Christ, and we're mindful of the fact in the spirit with which we approach this is one of fidelity to Scripture, one of grief toward ungodliness, but we're mindful of the fact, and I like to put it this way, we're mindful of the fact that while some of us may not be guilty of the sins of homosexuality or transgenderism, we're mindful of the fact that we've got plenty of our own sins to deal with, plenty of our own sins that

we've committed in the past, plenty of our own sins that have been washed away by the blood of Christ. We're not here in a proud, self-righteous way, no matter how much we might be accused of that. You know, we look at ourselves and we realize that we have our own sins that we've committed. We're mindful, as I like to say, that while perhaps we haven't committed the sins of homosexuals, you know what? They haven't committed a lot of the sins that we've committed. And so we're humbled before the Word of God, we're humbled before a holy God. We're seeking to be faithful servants of the Lord who redeemed us, but we say these things not from a position of spiritual superiority, but from a position of having been saved by grace and it's important for us to remember that so that we're speaking these things with the right spirit. And in due time, I'll deal with the fact that people who have no love for Christ and no love for the Word would use Matthew 7:1, "Judge not," in order to silence us. I'll deal with that later. That's a complete abomination of its own, that men who do not love God, do not love Christ, do not believe the Word, would take two words out of the entire Bible, out of 1,189 chapters in the Old and New Testaments, try to reduce all of the Bible to that simple admonition, "You can't judge anybody." Well, that's not what Scripture teaches and we'll deal with that eventually. For now, the point simply is we humble ourselves as we're mindful of the fact that we ourselves are saved by grace.

Now secondly, what we must do, we teach the Bible. We teach the Bible. We teach the Bible so that men will know the counsel of God. That is what Christ has commanded us to do and our prerogative, our right, our authority to teach the Word of God and to declare it to men is not derived from the U.S. Constitution, it is not derived from the permission of those who hear us, it's not derived from having a friendship with somebody before we have a right to speak. We have a right and a duty and a prerogative to speak the truth because Christ has commanded his church to do exactly that, and as we saw in our series on the biblical mind, Christ is the highest authority in the universe and Christ commands us to speak and to teach. Matthew 28 verse 18, Jesus came and said to his disciples, and the disciples representing the church that would follow in the ages to come, Jesus came and said to them, his parting instructions just before his ascension, he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Blessed be the name of the Lord who is with us no matter what. Blessed be his glorious and holy name.

With that said, what you must understand, what we must understand, what the church must come back to is that we are under divine mandate to teach the Word of God. We are under divine mandate to teach everything that Jesus has commanded us in the Old Testament, which he affirmed, in the New Testament, which he pre-authenticated and empowered his apostles to record what he wanted revealed. And so we must teach the Bible based on the command of Christ, and we're not at liberty, like Thomas Jefferson tried to do, to cut up different pieces and cut out what he didn't like, cut out the miraculous things and just leave ourselves with a moralistic document devoid of supernatural religion, or to change around the commands to try to make allowances so society won't be so hard on us or so confronted by us. We're not at any of that liberty. We

are under obligation to teach the Word of Christ. As it says in the book of Acts through the words of the apostle Paul, to teach the full counsel of God, and there is nothing in the Word of God that we should hold back out of fear or out of shame or out of a desire to curry favor with men. We can't do that.

Beloved, I'm speaking to Christians here. I'm appealing to the things that are deep in your heart as a born-again believer in the things that I say here. We're talking about what Christ, our Lord, and our Master has instructed us to do and we're not at liberty to say, "But Lord, that won't be popular. But Lord, that might be offensive. But Lord, but Lord, but, but, but, but, but, but." No. There's no "buts" that we say in response when Christ says, "Do this." Our response is in the spirit of Isaiah, "Speak Lord, your servant listens. What shall I do? What would you have me do?" We come to this with a spirit of compliance, a spirit of submission, a spirit of dependence, knowing that we have the blessed privilege of being under the Divine Commander, that we present ourselves as soldiers reporting to duty and saying, "Lord, what must I do?" And Scripture says, "You must go and teach all that I've commanded you to do and I'm with you always, even to the end of the age." The only Christian's response to that is, "Yes, Lord. Give me grace, Lord," the church of Christ should say to him, "to be unashamed, to hold nothing back, to declare your counsel in the fullness of your power, the fullness of your counsel in the fullness of your power, to the fullness of whomever you would give to hear us and to trust you for the fullness of the result throughout all the ages of eternity." That's what the church does. Anything less than that, anything that resists that, anything that undermines that is from the devil and opposed to the purpose of Christ.

And so, we teach the Bible and as we teach the Bible, I alluded to it earlier, turn over to Romans chapter 1, as we teach the Bible, we bring to bear to sinners what to them is the central theme of the Bible, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel which Christ gave, which Christ accomplished, the gospel of Christ which saves, and we do so without shame, recognizing, my dear, dear friends, recognizing that as we are under obligation to Christ to obey and to teach his Word, we are under obligation to those around us to declare it without compromise or dilution. In Romans chapter 1 verse 14, the Apostle Paul, and these are blessed, blessed words, he says, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel," which is Paul's way of saying in the negative, the positive thing, what he's really saying is, "I'm proud of the gospel. I own the gospel. I embrace the gospel. I'm eager to preach it because I love it and I am proud of it." He says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"

And so, beloved, one of the blessed, glorious things as you read church history is there's no anticipating, there's no knowing when God will pour out a genuine revival upon the church, when he would bring a harvest of souls in a glorious way as he did in the days of Jonathan Edwards, as he did in the Welsh Revival of 1904 and other times through the book of Acts and all that. We have no way of predicting when that would happen. We

would love to see the Holy Spirit fall down and bring great numbers of conversions if he would do so, if he would be pleased to do so. We don't know if or when God would do that, but we do know it's the preaching of the gospel that God uses to convert people. It's, you know, salvation comes by faith, faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ and so we preach the Word of Christ. We preach the gospel. We preach all that Jesus commanded. That's what we do in an age like this and in that sense, it's no different if we had lived in AD 400 or AD 1400 or in AD 2400. The command is the same. We're doing the same thing, under the same authority, with the same responsibilities that have been true since the coming of Christ.

It's not complicated and, you know, we hope, we trust, we pray that there would be a harvest for the gospel to be found among homosexuals and transgender people. When they come to the end of things, they realize the fruit of everything that they've pursued, they feel the weight of conviction, they feel the weight of sorrow, they feel the weight of shame, they feel the weight of pain in their bodies, they feel the weight of pain in the way that others have used them. Don't tell me about love being love when the reality, as I said elsewhere in this series, when the reality is that this is predominantly, so much of it is just a drunken orgy of taking advantage of people. Hundreds of partners. This is documented fact from the Obama administration, certainly no friend of the Christian church. You know, they average hundreds, thousands of partners. Hundreds and thousands. Don't tell me this is love. This is just unbridled lust using people to fulfill your own desires often in completely anonymous encounters. This is not love. My point at this point in the message is, is that those that are on the end of that and have been used and have been abused and taken advantage of and darkness envelops their mind, maybe God by grace would bring light and hope to them through Jesus Christ who says, "Come to me all you who labor and I will give you rest." That the free, clean mind of the Holy Spirit is given and imparted to those who will believe and the darkness can be replaced with light, the judgment can be replaced with forgiveness, hell can be replaced with heaven, a path forward can be found from the gutter. And the gospel is the power of that salvation to everyone who believes.

I believe that, don't you? This is not academic truth. This is the power of God of which we speak and so what we must do is we must teach the Bible, we must preach the gospel, and as men come to faith, women come to faith, brings us to the fourth thing that we must do, we must minister to repentant homosexuals. We must minister to them. We have to help them. We have to help them establish new life patterns. We have to teach them biblical doctrine which will assure them of the love of Christ. We have to assure them that in Christ, they are now dead to sin, that they have been transferred out of the realm of death and Adam and into the realm of life in Christ, and that is a genuine spiritual reality, no matter what the conflict may be that they feel inside their hearts. And we help them understand that. We teach them the doctrine that will ground them and establish them and then we help them establish new life patterns.

Listen as I read Ephesians 4. I'll just allude to it for the sake of time. Paul talks about putting off the old, putting on the new, and helping them work through that, and I am so grateful for some of you that I know have come alongside men who have repented like

this and you have strengthened them and you have helped them and you have been an instrument of Christ in their lives and they have told me how you have enabled and helped them to grow in Christ, and I'm so grateful for that. That's worthwhile. That's worthwhile. Maybe thousands, maybe millions would reject, but man, those precious souls that come and respond and you see the grace of God in an individual life and we as a church having the opportunity to come and nourish them with the grace that saved us and that sustained us and has changed us. That's a great blessing for a church to have and so we'll teach them, we'll help them to break off their relationships, change their phone numbers, destroy the pornographic material in their possession. We'll assure them that Christ forgives and gives power to obey even when they stumble, for we all stumble in many ways.

We'll minister to them, those that are truly repentant, and as I said on Sunday, if someone comes and says, you know, we find out that they're homosexual, you know, we'll minister to them as long as they're here not to disrupt, as long as they're here not with an agenda to try to influence us in a direction that's anything other than biblical. You know, they'll find a welcoming arm here. There is a difference. As I said before, there is a difference. If someone comes, I'm just being very practical right now, but the response if someone's a registered sex offender is going to be different. That has to be handled differently because then there are other considerations in play about the safety and protection of an entire body that takes into account, and so that may be handled differently. But as a general policy, a general principle, a repentant homosexual comes, they're going to find that we're a friend to them in the name of Christ and we'll welcome them, and we have welcomed them as God has given us opportunity over the years.

Number three was we minister to repentant homosexuals. Number four, we brace for persecution. We brace for persecution. We realize that many will oppose us in this. These things go out over, messages go out over the internet as you minister to people in individual situations, we realize this will provoke confrontations within families even. We realize that as we minister the Word of God and in this way in particular, that men and women will lie shamelessly about us. We accept that. We accept the misrepresentations. We accept the consequences of that because our reputations don't matter. Our reputations are irrelevant. What matters is that we're faithful to Christ and to the people that he puts in our path. And Jesus told us that it would be that way and just listen as I read Matthew 5:11, and 12. We looked at this several weeks ago, but intrinsic to being a Christian, is that sooner or later you'll be misrepresented. Intrinsic to it, intrinsic to the reality is that there will be opposition just as Christ was met with opposition from Satan, just as the apostles were met by rioting crowds, just as Elijah was met by the prophets of Baal, just as Abel was met by Cain who killed him in Genesis. It is the nature of Christian living, it is the nature of ministry that there will be virulent opposition to us at times, and all of it in the hand and the purpose of God and we have to, as hard as this is, we have to accept that and embrace it and look to our Lord and to his promise and what he said about it.

What did he say? Verse 11, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for

your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Blessed are you, people revile you, persecute you, say all kinds of lying evil against you on account of Christ. Christ looks at us, and I know that some of you feel the weight of that, maybe you're going through it right now. You feel the weight of that. You know how unjust it is. You know how ridiculous the falsehoods that are being said about you are, and you're unable to do anything about it. You don't even, in one sense, you don't even want to take up a defense of yourself. I get that. I understand it, beloved, and I say this to help you and to strengthen you. Christ says he's perfectly aware of that. You can rejoice, you can be glad, you can be at peace. because the one who watches over you is storing it all up and what seems like difficult affliction and misrepresentation today is going to abound in geometrically greater blessing in heaven so that at the end, when we stand before Christ in heaven, somehow there will be a great reward attached to the misrepresentations of today and if you could only see that, beloved, if you could only know that and get one little tiny glimpse of it now, you'd embrace all of it for the sake of the eternal reward which can never be taken away from you. If you could just see a glimpse of it. But you know what? You've got something better than a glimpse that you'd forget, you have the sure, trustworthy, Word of your Lord saying, "It's okay." Rejoice. It's more than okay. Be glad because your reward is great in heaven. Christ will not allow his servants to suffer misrepresentation on earth without countermanding that with a much, much greater reward in heaven, and as we maintain this posture in the world in which we live, we expect opposition to come, sometimes from unexpected sources, but we accept it in hope based on the Word of our trustworthy Lord.

So, we brace for persecution knowing what the outcome is, and finally, point number five, what we must do: we humble ourselves; we teach the Bible; we minister to repentant homosexuals; we brace for persecution; finally, we take heart. We walk out tonight as victors in Christ. We walk out not as those that are troubled in the sense that we don't know what the path forward is. We have a perspective from God's Word on this which is more than sufficient to give us strength, power, and authority, and confidence, and courage as we go forth, beloved. I cannot emphasize that enough. I cannot emphasize that enough. We will not be intimidated by temptations to compromise. We will not be intimidated by lies. We will not be intimidated by the world around us. We look to Christ and we find in him alone every strength, every resource, every truth necessary to sustain our souls to go forward and live the life that he's given to us without fear. In Jude 24 and 25, we read, "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."

Let's pray.

Gracious Lord, in light of that majestic doxology, we simply ask you to keep us until we enter safely into the kingdom of heaven. In your blessed name we pray, amen.

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