

# The Abolition of Man: The Deconstruction of Gender in Modern Culture

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Turn with me in your Bible to Genesis 1. We are this morning talking about, beginning to discuss, the issue of masculinity. And as we do, it is chosen because it is Father's Day and how, as Todd mentioned earlier, it is a creation of man, and yet it is a good thing to give a return to those for whom we owe so much, to whom we owe so much, our fathers and our mothers. Certainly, the gift of life itself and the blessing of having godly parents. If you have been blessed with that, what a joy that it is. I am so grateful for my dad and for what he means to me. And so, we praise the Lord. Those of you who can, rejoice in that.

But also, just be thankful for any father that we have that God has allowed us to be born and to pray for their salvation if you have unbelieving parents. An opportunity to reach out to them today and express your love and appreciation as God would have you. Scripture says, first commandment on the horizontal table of the Law, remember the Ten Commandments break into two tablets. The first tablet of the Law in the first four commandments and the second tablet in the last six. This is why Jesus breaks the whole Law down into two commandments. He says that the whole Law hangs on two commandments, love God, and love your neighbor.

Well, the first four commandments relate to the love of God. The last six commandments relate to the love of neighbor. And it's interesting that that second tablet of the Law, when God wants us to begin looking at the love of neighbor, where does he start? He starts with honor your father and mother that it may be well with you that you may live long upon the earth. And so, God greatly values the family and, as we look this morning at this, begin to look at this subject, I think we'll see how it is a picture of his own gracious character in glory in a way that he has created man, male and female.

We want to take a moment though to ask our fathers, we're going to recognize. We don't have any flowers for you guys. I know you're disappointed, but let's have all of our fathers stand. And if you are an expectant father, you count. Please stand fathers here today. That's appropriate. Amen. Thank you guys.

Now let's go to the Lord and ask his blessing on his Word and his blessing upon each of the men that stood today.

*Father, we thank You so much that we come to You and are able to speak that word. That Christ has made it so that we come to the eternal God who dwells in light inaccessible hid from our eyes, and yet we come into Your throne room with the words on our lips, "Abba Father." You have made us Your own through Jesus Christ. And we come today rejoicing in that. We come thanking You for the gift of family. As we read earlier from Ephesians 3 that the family is patterned after the family in heaven. We thank You, Father, for the glory of how You have made the world, how You have made the family. We thank You for the blessings of mothers and fathers, and particularly today we thank You for the blessings of fathers. We pray, Father, for all those that have stood today that You would help us to walk in more and more holiness, and righteousness, and wisdom. That we would be better providers, and protectors, and lovers, and servants of those whom You have given us. An opportunity to lead. We pray also, Father, for those that have had difficult relationships with their earthly fathers. We pray that You would allow them to deal with the past in a godly way and to reach out to perhaps ungodly men with the gospel. But most of all, Lord, that You would help all of us to see that whatever witness we have to the family on earth is really a pointer to look to heaven, because You are a perfect father. You, Lord, have compassion on us, and You show mercy, and You protect, You provide. And we love You in Christ for all that You have done for us. We pray that You will bless us now through Your Word. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear. And we pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.*

Well, today's message, the title, is "The Abolition of Man." The abolition of man. I borrow that, the subtitle, the abolition of man, the subtitle is "The Deconstruction of Gender in Contemporary Culture." "The Abolition of Man: The Deconstruction of Gender in Contemporary Culture." And we want to look at this, because this is important for us as Christians. Part of what it means to live for God in a fallen world is to understand where error is at work in the culture and in particular where it seeps into the church, and so that we can then, as Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 10:5, we can resist every faulty line of reasoning, everything of knowledge that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and we can walk in truth.

And so, we want to look at that this morning. I borrowed the title from a work by C.S. Lewis, "The Abolition of Man." He wrote this essay, I think, in the 40's. Interestingly enough, he was writing it about a philosophy of education that was taking root in England. It's kind of an early version of deconstructionism. Deconstructionism is the idea that there is really no objective truth or objective value, and as a theory of education this is where it really kind of began to make its way into modern thought. As a theory of education, the idea was that as you experience something, as you read a text, or as you see something, that your emotion is not directly tied to some objective reality out there. That your response is entirely subjective. That there is, he actually writes, he starts the book off, I looked at it again this week. I had read it some years back. It's a worthwhile read. It's a little bit philosophical. He doesn't ground everything solidly in Christian theism, but, as is so often the case, he has some brilliant insights here and there.

And he is writing about a book where they're trying to basically, they articulate this argument. They talk about a man who sees a waterfall, and one man comments to the other, "That's sublime." The image of this waterfall in this location is sublime. Now, what that means by sublime is it means it causes one to feel a sense of reverence and awe, a sense of smallness, appropriate smallness, in the face of something majestic and great. And these guys that were writing, these English educators in the 1940's, were basically belittling the idea of this objective value that this man sees. And they were saying, basically, "It's just an experience. It's an emotion. It's really not." And so, they remove any objective truth, any objective value, and they say, "It's all subjective. It's all what's happening in you is all that matters."

And Lewis's point is that when you make that step, you have taken the first step in abolishing humanity. You are destroying mankind. It's not a small thing to move from objective truth to only subjective reality and experience. You're demeaning the fact that there is a higher standard of value, that there really is a standard of beauty, and goodness, and righteousness. As Christians, we know implicitly that there is that standard. That God himself is the standard. But we see this deconstructionism has taken over all over education. It's what's led to the postmodern idea that truth for you, that's fine. This is truth for me. That is, there is no objective truth. There is no objective reality.

And so, what we see happening in America today is the abolition of man, and I borrow that title as the deconstruction of gender in contemporary culture. So, deconstructionism sees no absolute truth, no absolute value of goodness, no absolute order of function. It is entirely subjective. So, what we have happening in today in the area of gender in our culture is really an assault on humanity itself, because the culture is saying that gender is a construct, a social construct, a subjective imposition, not an objective reality. That's how we can get to the place where people can say, "Though I am a biological male, I identify as a female." And that seems reasonable, because we have accepted this idea of deconstructionism. That it's all subjective.

And so, I want us to look today at the reality that mankind does not realize, and people today do not realize fully, what they are doing. To the degree that this present contemporary assault on gender is successful, it will deface and destroy the essence of what it means to be human. It will destroy what it means to live as men and women and what it means to experience life as God intended it. I want to read for our text the passage that is foundational in the first chapter of the Bible. Genesis 1 sets down for us God's creation of maleness and femaleness and grounds it in, not only in reality, but in the reality that it's a reflection of God himself somehow.

We'll see this in verse 27. Genesis 1:26-31. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' Then

God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food’; and it was so. And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

We see here in verse 27 God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. It’s really interesting the way that the Lord sets down for us in the first two chapters of the Bible, the first two chapters given to us in Scripture, sets down so many foundational truths. And one of which is the importance of gender right here in Genesis 1:27. What’s striking is as you read the chapter in context, the only gender that is discussed among all of God’s creatures is the gender of humanity. Now, it’s not because the animals don’t have gender. They do. In fact, this is one of the biological realities that people who reject objective reality of gender have to deny. Look at all of God’s creatures. How do they come? Male and female. And so with humanity.

What’s interesting is the Lord seems to emphasize gender by not talking about the gender of the animals. He just speaks as he talks about each of the types of animals where he is talking about the birds, or the fish, or the cattle, and the creeping things, the animals of dry land. He speaks that they were created after their kind. But when comes to man, the climax of creation, he speaks of the image of God and created male and female.

One of the things that we’ll also talk more about next week, but I want to just mention also, and I shared this when we talked about femininity on Mother’s Day, and that is it’s interesting too when you look at Genesis 2, which is the second account of creation. I like to call it the slow-motion instant replay of Genesis 1. Day six. I think that’s what it is. Although, it’s not technically a slow-motion instant replay. You don’t really see the action in Genesis 2 as like a slow-motion movement. It’s actually normal time. Genesis 1 was kind of a speeded-up version of day six. It’s just, “God said.” “Let the animals come forth from the earth.” And he talks about all the kinds, and then he says, God said, “Let us make man in his image according to our likeness,” etc. He makes man, and then he speaks to man, and then the day ends.

But Genesis 2 takes us back into day six, and slows down the action to real time, and lets us see what actually happened, how things transpired. And one of the extraordinary things we see is that when God created man, when he created all the other creatures, he apparently made both sexes immediately. But when he created man, he only made the male sex first. And he lets the man actually begin to relate to him. He puts him in the garden. Verse 15 chapter 2, “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and tend it. The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.’” So, he creates the man.

Back in verse 7, we read that God formed man from dust of the ground, but he didn't form the woman. It's like God got busy or something, and he forgot. No, of course not. The Lord never makes a mistake, but we would have expected, as he made all the other animals, they were formed from the dust of the ground, not with God's personal hands-on approach that we see in chapter 2 verse 7, but with God's direct spoken word. But they're made male and female at the same time, but when it comes to man, he makes man distinctly male, and then after a little while the female. And he makes the female from the man. He takes a rib from Adam's side and makes the woman. I'm simply calling this out right now. But I want to unpack this more, Lord willing, next Sunday. That's the plan. And talk about what it really means, all of this. But I'm calling it out to show you there is great emphasis on gender in the first two chapters of the Bible.

And that emphasis is going to continue throughout the Scriptures. But it's even emphasized by the fact that God slows things down, and part of this is his showing of the glory of how maleness and femaleness reflect his glory, the glory of God. There is a sense in which there is a unique contribution of maleness and a unique contribution of femaleness. Though there is so much that we share in common, so that our relationship with God is direct. We are equal before God, equal in power. In a sense, in the same way that God, the persons of the Godhead are equal, there is an equality among humanity of male and female. Yet, there are distinctions, fundamental distinctions, and those distinctions reflect the glory of God, and those distinctions include distinction of role, and function, and authority. And we'll see that more as we go forward.

But just to see, first of all, the fact that God slows things down so that we can see how maleness and femaleness are so fundamentally important to his plan and design. I want us to consider what we are going to do today under three points. We're talking about the abolition of man. We're really kind of looking at what's going on now to set the groundwork for how we're going to try to understand things more specifically next time. The abolition of man, the deconstruction of gender, in contemporary culture.

First point this morning is what is happening? What is happening? What do we see happening around us? Well, the first thing, there are two subpoints under this, and what is happening? We see the abolition of man. We see the abolishing of humanity. And we also see the repudiation of God. Both of these things are involved in what is happening in the deconstruction of gender. It's not all, of course, fully conscious. It never is. But if we interpret it biblically, we can see that the move to abolish gender distinctions and gender identity based in biology is actually first of all about abolishing humanity, the abolition of man.

It is to destroy man as God made him. God made maleness and femaleness. And they are distinct. We read that man, Adam, is created, and then Eve is created to be a helper suitable for him, a counterpart, a completer. He needs help. He's not adequate in himself to fulfill what God has called him to do. And she brings an essential, fundamental support. We talked about this in that message on femininity. That the idea here is really strong. The help, helper suitable. The word "help" actually is a word that is most often used in Scripture, overwhelmingly most often used of help from God. That when it says,

“God is our help and strength,” or “He is an ever-present help in trouble.” That’s the word here, *azar*, and it means help from God.

And so, that the woman is God’s help. It is God’s gift. She comes as the help from God. And so, it has an exalted position for male and female in Genesis 1 and 2. And the idea “suitable” means to be stand opposite of. The idea is to complete, to perfectly suit and fit the need. And so, man in these two distinct genders is as God created him to be. God created man to be male and female, and it’s an essential part and fundamental part of who we are, of our identity. And there are unique things about being a man, unique things about being a woman. There’s many things we share in common and many things that we can, obviously we can do the same things, but there’s a unique sense of calling, particular aspects of what it means to be a man and a woman. And to deny that is to deny the essence of who you are.

You know, certainly there is graded differences between different people. I mean, everyone is not the same. Sometimes, we will get into the habit of stereotyping, and, you know, you say, for instance, we’ll say, you know, “Men tend to not notice things as much as their wives do.” I have a card my wife gave me for one of my birthdays, and it was such a perfect card. It shows this guy looking into a refrigerator, and you’re standing behind him. The card is looking behind, you know, from behind him looking at the refrigerator itself. And in the refrigerator, butter, butter, butter, butter, butter, butter, butter, butter, butter. And of course, what does he say, “Honey, where is the butter?” I have had that experience so many times. “Where is? I can’t find it.” She comes. “It’s right there.” And that’s not just male and female though. There’s not a perfect, you know, distribution among male and female that’s always the case. Sometimes, the man is going to be able to notice things more than the woman. But in general, that’s a pattern that you see. Stereotypes have reality, because they are rooted in some sense of objective, you know, experience. We see this.

And so, there are various things that God has made men and woman to do, as we will look at in Scripture as we look at men. The things we are made to need to do these. We are made for this. But it doesn’t mean it’s not hard. It’s going to be difficult. It’s not easy to be the man God wants you to be. This is why I think the culture is seeking to abolish manhood, because there really is, even though I use the term “advisedly” I don’t mean what they mean when they say it, but there has been a sense in which you could say that masculinity can be toxic.

Now, listen to what I’m saying. I’m not agreeing with them that all masculinity is toxic. No, I think that’s completely wrong headed. But that when men use the power that God has given them in self-serving dominating ways, that is toxic. But God doesn’t intend men to be like that. He didn’t make maleness to be like that. He made maleness to be about providing, and protecting, and serving, and leading. It made maleness about courage, and defending, and fighting for those you love, and laying down your life for them. That’s what he made maleness to be.

And so, I heard someone say this as actually a good way to phrase this. They said, “When people talk about toxic masculinity, they want to help bad men stop being, you know, bad men.” And they said this, “You don’t make bad men better by encouraging them to stop being men. You make bad men better by encouraging them to stop being bad.” God’s design is perfect. He knew what he was doing. And we resist his design at our own peril. If you try to live outside of God’s design, you live according to your own wisdom and to the wisdom of this world, you will inescapably suffer for it.

You’re trying to be something that God didn’t make you to be. It’s like, you know, trying to operate in a way that the designer did not plan for you to operate. You know, you get a tool. You use the tool for what God made the tool for. I mean, so think about it. A hammer is a great tool for driving in nails, but a hammer is not a great tool for driving in screws. It can work to some extent, but you’re going to have a mess on your hands, and it’s not really going to hold, and it’s going to be awfully hard to drive it in too. You’re going to make yourself miserable trying to do it. A screwdriver is great for screwing in screws. It’s not great for hammering in nails. And so, what do you do? What does wisdom do? It uses things for what they were designed to be and do. Men and women were designed to be and do complimentary, distinct things in the economy of God. At the same time maintaining the fact that the biblical balance is that we are equal before God in value. We each approach God through Christ without any intermediary. And yet, there is a distinction of role between male and female. In the same way, there is an interesting passage of Scripture, 1 Corinthians 11:3.

Now, this is a passage that is talking about order in worship, but this one verse is all we’re going to look at right now, verse 3. “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” “Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” So, what he’s talking about, he’s drawing a picture of basically God, Christ, man, woman. And if you think about this, in reality there is so much here, but one thing that is clear is if you take God and Christ, just that part of it, God is the head of Christ, that does imply some authoritative, some authority relationship. And in fact, we see Christ does only the will of his Father. Christ submits. There are things that we see in that relationship.

But we also know that in the Bible it is clear that Jesus and the Father are equal in power and glory. There is metaphysical equality, though there is functional role difference. There is metaphysical quality, quality of being. And so, in the same way, it’s true of man and woman. When you move down into the humanity, that there is a metaphysical equality. And that when we understand what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman, there is a beauty about it that not only brings richness to all who behold it, particularly the children in the family relationship when a husband and a father are being what a man is supposed to be and when a wife and mother being what a woman is supposed to be. The children benefit most of all. But there is a sense in which we understand that we are being what we are supposed to be. We’re operating according to God’s design.

You know, you think about some verses that speak about the way that we image God. Maleness and femaleness image God. Todd mentioned a passage from Jesus where he says, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I've longed to gather your children as the hens would under her wings, but you were not willing." Speaks of a mother's protective instinct. You know, you hear the phrase, "The mother bear, don't mess with the mother bear." If you mess with a woman about her children, you better watch out, right?

But there are other verses that speak of that. I think of one that I love that is Isaiah 49:15. It says this, "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you." Think about that. When God wanted to give assurance of the fact that he would never forget his people, the best image was of a mother who is holding her newborn child in her arms. Can a mother forget her nursing child? Dad can. A dad can forget the kids easier than a woman can. And again, it's not one hundred percent all across the board, but in general, a mother's care for her children is a different order. There's a level of nurture, and connection, and connectedness that a mother has with a child that is a special gift from God and is a reflection of God, and is a reflection of God in a way that no man can reflect God.

In the same way, for a man to be providing, and leading, and directing his family, and being there engaging, and praying with his children, and nurturing their faith. When a man does that, there is power in that that even a woman cannot match. And the statistics prove this out. Even though this shouldn't discourage a woman who loves Christ, and you have children you're trying to bring up for the Lord, and your husband is an ungodly man. But the reality is the numbers just year after year after year it never changes.

You know, it's one thing to have a godly mother, and when you look at men, children who grow up and do they follow Christ. The godly mother is certainly something that's some help. But when children have a godly father, the numbers are way higher, demonstrably different. I mean, radically so. Why is that? Because God made man a head, and somehow you can argue against it, but you cannot escape the reality. When the Bible says, "The husband is the head of the wife," do you realize that is an indicative statement. You know an indicative statement is a statement of fact. It's not a command. It's not saying, "Husband be the head of your wife." It says, "The husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church."

He is the source. He is the leader. He is the provision. He is the guide. And so, even if you want to argue with it, you do so at your own peril. Again, you're arguing with God's design. But when we see it rightly, and when a godly man owns what masculinity is supposed to be and walks in obedience to God in wisdom, there is no greater blessing than having parents, a man who knows what God has called him to be, a woman who knows what God has called her to be, with still their different, distinct gifts, the opportunities and all of those things. But when they had this basic relationship right, man, that is beautiful. And the reality is it is also glorious.

So, what we see happening is when men and women are removed from these roles, they are diminished and demeaned. It's a sad thing. We become less human as we argue with



God's design. The second thing that we see, this second subpoint under what is happening, that was 1a) was the abolition of man. A) the abolition of man. B) the repudiation of God.

What's happening is people are repudiating God. The culture is repudiating God and, sadly, it's beginning to happen more and more in the church as the church adopts the thinking of the world. The church is repudiating God. To reject God's design of maleness and femaleness is to repudiate God. First of all, it's to defy his authority. In Matthew 19 Jesus speaks to the issue of gender clearly.

He says, Matthew 19:3, "Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?'" And Jesus answered them. He's asking about divorce, but he goes back to the authority of the Word, and he goes back to Genesis 2. "And he answered and said, 'Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,'" And he goes on to say, "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

But he says, "Have you not read that He who created them, created them from the beginning male and female?" When God makes a human being, he makes male, He makes female. And so, to reject is to reject the authority of God. It's a much bigger thing than, and I understand there are people who are really struggling because of the great confusion that has been created by our culture. People are struggling with gender issues, and we should have compassion and loving tenderness toward people who are dealing with this. We must. Because we must reflect the heart of God.

But we also have to love them enough to speak the truth. To defy God is to invite, well, it's great rebellion and increased guilt, and it's also just insanity. So, when folks that are struggling with gender issues, have gender reassignment surgeries, they have sex change operations, it's not merely a hurting person trying to find some sense of meaning and comfort. It is that. But it is an act of great rebellion. To believe that you can determine your gender is to essentially say, "I want to be like God."

Jesus said, "God makes you male or female." And to say, "I want to change my gender," is to say, "I will be like God." And what that does, the guilt of that rebellion just increases the trauma of the soul of that person, because God has put in our very character the reality of the knowledge of his law. And it's in every even an unbeliever has in their conscience the law of God written. And so, it's actually a compassionate thing to try to help people turn from that kind of action.

But the wonder of the gospel is that even if they go through with it, we still have a message that says, "You can still find meaning in who you are in Christ. You can come back to God and repent of your sin. You can place your faith in Jesus. He can begin to help you to be what he created you to be, even if you've done a surgery that has messed things up. If God created you biologically male, he still wants you to be biologically male. If God created you biologically female, he still wants you to be biologically female.

You've made this a lot more difficult, but God's grace is sufficient. And we will walk with you. We'll help you. We're not rejecting anyone. We are holding forth the Word of life!"

But life is found in submitting to Jesus Christ. It's not found in living according to your own understanding. It's not found in living according to the collective wisdom of this fallen world. So, the repudiation of God is first seen, this is in the defying of his authority and secondly in defacing his likeness. Still under 1b). What is happening? The repudiation of God. The culture is not only defying his authority but seeking to deface his likeness.

We saw in Genesis 1:27 that part of being in the image of God was being made male and female. I shared with you those verses from Isaiah 49:15 and how the mothering love of a mother of a newborn reflects God's character. In the same way, the strength of a father reflects God's character so that to deface God's image, to deface our gender is to deface God's likeness. He is saying in Genesis 1:27 that to really see who God is, to see who God is in the world, God needed to make male and female. The word "image" there in Genesis 1:26 repeated three times in 26 and 27, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Three times the word "image." It means a replica.

The word is used in Scripture in other places to speak of replicas, little statuettes, that were made to reflect something, to be a picture of something. The same way you make a little statue of something, or you make a full-size statue. The word "likeness" means to resemble. He says image and likeness. In our image and likeness. When God made man, he made man to be an image and likeness of himself in the world. And perhaps a helpful way to think about that is, God made people so that we would have the same impact that a statue, a well-made statue, to a great man has.

Years ago, in fact, when they were reading the Scriptures, one of the things that happened as empires changed throughout history was that when an empire would conquer the land, one of the things that they would often do is place statues of the emperor in key cities in the lands they had conquered. And the statues of the emperor were to be a reminder that the emperor reigns here. Don't defy his authority. See, the emperor his reign is here. The statue reflected that.

And so, in some sense, God makes man like that. Man is to replicate and reflect God. And God making man and putting him in the world was to shine forth the glory of his reign and rule over all things. Man himself is a visible testimony to God's righteous rule. And man, as that, male and female, is that. Do you see that?

And so that the attack on gender is actually like tearing down the statues that God has made to himself. And there are places where we, you know, we certainly make statues that are inappropriate at times, and that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about appropriate statues that God has made of himself, and we are defacing and

destroying, because what's happening is there is really an inner desire to deface God's likeness. It's something much more profound going on here than people wrestling with their own identity. There is. And that's why I said, "We need to be compassionate." But there is something spiritual going on here. It is the repudiation of God.

Now, the second point this morning. That was what is happening. The second point, why is it happening? Why is it happening? Again, two subpoints. The agenda of Satan and the nature of man. The agenda of Satan is the first point. First subpoint under why is it happening. This is 2a). The agenda of Satan. 1 John 5:19 says that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. Even though Christ is on the throne reigning and ruling, John says in 1 John 5:19 that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, but we are of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "The god of this age has blinded the eyes of unbelievers." Ephesians 2:2 speaks of the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience creating in them lust, unbridled lust, hatred of God.

And so, what we see is Satan, because he hates God, he hates to see God's image. Satan hates everything about God. He rebelled against God. He despises God. And so, he despises the image of God. And he wants to deface God's image. And man is God's image. Man, male and female, are God's image and likeness. And so, it is his clear agenda to destroy gender. If he can destroy the beauty of male and female relating together, he diminishes the reality of the presence, the visible witness to the presence and power of God. Now, he can't defeat God, but that's what he's trying to do. So, that's the agenda of Satan.

But you also have the nature of man. The reason this is happening is not just because it's Satan's agenda, but it's because it's fallen man's agenda as well. Turn to Romans 1. Romans 1:18. Here we have a picture of what humanity is in our fallenness. Paul is revealing this. He is lifting back the veil to show the human heart, and the human commitment to live apart from God, and the human commitment to suppress the truth of God.

It says in Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." It is the nature of fallen men. It was our nature. It was your nature before you were born again to just suppress the truth. It was my nature before I was born again to suppress the truth. That's what Paul is saying here. Literally, to hold down the truth in unrighteousness. That is, it's not just Satan's desire to stop the truth of God from being made known. It is the desire of fallen men to stop the truth of God from being made known and to pull it down. He goes on to say. He explains this. Look how men suppress the truth.

In other words, he says, verse 19, "because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became

fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man, and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

So, this is the nature of fallen humanity that when we see truth, that in the world that shows us God’s eternal power, his glory, his majesty, the heart of man wants to pull that down, to suppress it, to run from it, to obscure it, because seeing that reminds us that God is our judge. And we see that, and this is why men hate the light, because their deeds are evil. But he says it so clear.

We have so much truth around us, he says, in verse 19, “That which is known about God is evident.” The word could be translated manifest. It is manifestly evident. The truth about God is manifestly evident all around us. And not only that, it’s evident within us. I mentioned earlier the fact that we know that there is a right and a wrong, even though we claim that there’s not. We can’t live consistently with that. People say there is no right and wrong until you do something to them, and then they want justice. If there is no right and wrong, there is no need for justice. There is no injustice. How can you talk about justice or injustice when everything is subjective? There must be a standard. And people know there is a standard though. That’s why they try to suppress the reminder of that standard. Suppress the truth in unrighteousness. So, what’s happening is the defacing of the statues, the defacing of humanity. The destruction of humanity is intended to suppress the reminder of who God is, the glory of God. And what we see when we really look at things biblically is this is exactly what we should be expecting.

Doesn’t it seem so odd that people are doing this, doesn’t it? Don’t you find yourself amazed that, you know, people now, you know, for a while there was the gender reveal parties. You saw that. We’ve had some in the church. And I’m not criticizing gender reveal parties. You know, you go to a party, and something is going to be pink or blue, and you don’t know until the last minute. And they have some creative way of Bam! You know, we used to do it like this. The gender, well, we didn’t have, the gender reveal was when the baby was born. You have a boy. You have a son. You have a daughter. That was it.

And then it got to be where, well, we found out. But you just, “Hey! Hey mom, we’re having a little boy.” That was the gender reveal party. Anyway, so now it became this exciting thing, and there is nothing wrong with that. You know, great. So, you’re celebrating that. But now, think about it, that’s actually now seen as politically incorrect! Because gender, according to the culture, is a social construct made about from the history of patriarchy and social morays imposing themselves on people.

And so, in reality, if you’re really a good parent, according to today’s mindset and philosophy, you will wait until the child decides his gender. Isn’t that amazing that we’ve gotten to that point. And even as we do that, we can’t fight the biology. You can’t fight what God has made. I heard a statistic this week that little boys versus little girls in the testing of testosterone, little boys have one thousand percent the testosterone that little girls have. That is they have ten times the testosterone that little girls have. This is why little boys find it hard to stay in their seats. This is why little boys find it hard not to be

aggressive, not to push, not to poke, not to, you know, let's wrestle. Why is that? Because God made little boys to be aggressive.

Now, I understand sin has messed up the design. Sin has messed with it. That's why we talk about masculinity can be toxic. Masculinity itself is not toxic. It is God's glorious design, just like femininity is God's glorious design. And we resist these things at our own peril, and it's actually insane. And I know that this gets affected by the way that parents raise their kids, but you let a bunch of kids in a room, and you put some toys around, the boys are going to go to the guns, and the girls are going to go to the dolls most of the time.

And when it doesn't happen that way, listen, when it doesn't happen, as godly parents, and sometimes it doesn't, because there are certain things that we don't understand exactly how it all works. Sometimes, genetically there are things that are going on, and sometimes the little boy may be playing with dolls, and what a parent should do is lovingly, graciously help them cultivate masculine traits. Lovingly, not condemning. But lovingly saying, "No, you are a boy. God made you a boy. And so, little boys, we don't play with dolls. Little girls do." But keep reinforcing God's love for this child, God's design is good, and better, and best.

Listen, the reality is, as I've said, there is two ways to live. You can follow your heart, or you can submit to God's Word. And everywhere that choice comes up, the wrong answer is follow your heart. And it stays that way. After you have come to Christ, you have a new heart in Christ, but you still have a sin nature. And you cannot trust your heart. I cannot trust my heart. I must submit to the Word of God. And life is found in submitting to the Word of God. Against your feelings, yes!

To think your feelings, in a sense, the world is a mess around you, and you think your heart is not a wreck? No, the world, the mess that's out there, is a picture of what's going on in here for each one of us. Bible says it. Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" So, the heart must be submitted to Christ and his Word. And the reality is that fallen men though will not submit. And because they won't submit to God and his Word, they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And one of the expressions of that today is the desecrating of gender in our culture as an attempt to tear down the glory of God as if they could succeed in that. But though they try with all their might, they cannot just tear down the glory of God. The glory of God will stand and remain unchanged. You can try to break God's law, but when you break God's law, you seek to break God's law, you break yourself against God's law. God's law remains unchanged. That's the reality.

He's God. You and I are not! And so, we must humbly, and we as Christians, are people who by God's grace have now been made to see. We were blind, but now we see. We were just as blind as every unbeliever out there. There, but for the grace of God, go we. There is no basis of pride. That's foolishness. That's ridiculous for you to be proud and to look down on the unbelievers that are struggling in the dark. No, there, but for the grace of God, go you. But you must love them enough to humbly with a servant's heart care

about them and compassionately point them to the one who can deliver them. His name is Jesus and he can rebuild any broken heart. The church is filled with people who used to be going their own way, following their own hearts, wrecking their own lives, such were some of you but you were washed, you were justified, you were sanctified and it can be true for any person who will place their faith in Christ. We have the best news that the world desperately needs to hear and we can use the issues of the day to address it because it all points back to the issue, will you submit to God and his Word and his Son as your Lord.

Next week, we will talk about how we should respond to what's happening and why it's happening.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

*Our Father, how grateful we are for Your truth, that You did not leave us in our rebellion and our sin but You have given us a perfect testimony in the pages of Scripture to show us Your character, Your righteousness, and the way of salvation, that You have made a way for sinners to be made clean by placing their faith in the finished work of Your Son. As we sang about earlier, Lord, He bore our sin and therefore bore Your righteous wrath against us. Jesus experienced that and because He experienced what we deserved and has paid that debt in full, we experience what He deserved which is acceptance into Your throne room, a new heart, a new life, eyes to see, ears to hear through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, help us be people, there are folks here that are probably wrestling in ways with the way that You have made them. We can struggle with these things, Lord, and we look around us in the world, there's so much pressure and seeking to conform us to its mold. Thank You that You are a compassionate Savior, that You come and say to us in our struggle, in our confusion, just to follow Jesus. We trust You and wherever we are, no matter how far we've strayed, Christ is able to bring us out. Just go to Him, surrender to Him, and we're to help one another. That's what the Christian life is. Lord, thank You for that, to walk together, to help one another, to obey You in every area of our lives for the glory of God and the praise of His Son. We pray that You will be exalted in the way that we live in the area of gender and the way that we live in every area of our lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*