

Answering Transgenderism

Transgenderism

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Yesterday, October 28, 2019, the Cincinnati Inquirer reported on what they perceived to be a news story. Cincinnati City Councilman, Chris Seelbach, an open homosexual, had called for a boycott of the Tri-health local hospital network. He called on Tri-health to actually terminate the employment of a nurse who had made comments on her personal Facebook page which challenged the reality of transgender identity. The nurse's post was admittedly profane but it was on her personal page, a matter of private expression. This story illustrates what is at stake in our social structure and helps illustrate why we are spending time examining the issue of the Bible and transgenderism at Truth Community Church. Think with me for just a moment about what we just heard. A homosexual elected official used his public position and access to media to pressure a corporation to fire a nurse for private comments that he disliked. Beloved, that is a chilling reality. You're not even allowed to voice disagreement, and if you do we will punish you even though you have not harmed us actually in any way whatsoever. Tri-health quickly and predictably placed the nurse on administrative leave and issued the standard statement on tolerance and diversity in bowing to the pressure of Councilman Seelbach.

Beloved, here's what I want you to see as we start this evening, the threat of this transgender activism and this transgender ideology, the threat is real, the threat is immediate and the threat is local. Speaking from Cincinnati, Ohio here as I speak, right? This is our world in which we live and we need to be equipped to live in it and to respond to it in a godly biblical way. In transgender ideology, if a man feels like a woman, whatever that means, whatever it means to feel like a woman, half of you here might be able to help me understand that, if a man feels like a woman and he chooses to live like a woman, then society is now declaring that he is a woman regardless of his anatomical structure or anything else corresponding to external reality. As we saw last time on last Tuesday as we looked at the sad path that led us transgenderism over centuries abandoning further and further God's revealed truth which was restored to us in the Reformation, and reaching a point of postmodern so-called reality where the very concept of objective truth is denied and truth is whatever you make it out to be, transgenderism is the logical outcome of that. If I believe, if I think, if I assert that I am a woman with the biological sex of a man, then not only am I a woman, you must agree with me and you must affirm that or you are committing a crime against humanity. The autonomy of the individual trumps everything else including anything by which until just a few years ago

external reality was measured. Autonomy, the god of autonomy is supreme now and that's why we are addressing it here from the pulpit of Truth Community Church.

Now with that said, beloved, I want to make one thing very clear. I'm under no delusion as I speak this evening, it is very difficult to take on transgenderism today because postmodernism has created this radical relativity that allows men to determine truth for themselves; what a few years ago would have been labeled a psychosis is now enforceable dogma upon the rest of the world. It is autonomy taken to an extreme and what we need to do, what we're endeavoring to do in this somewhat brief series is to offer a biblical answer for society and for the people of God. We're mindful primarily of the people within this room and our corporate body of Truth Community Church as our primary object of concern; we want to prepare you and equip you before transgenderism actually affects your immediate family and you're dealing with it immediately. We're trying to get a little bit ahead of the curve as a body for the sake of ministry to those that gather together under the name and the so-called banner, I guess, of Truth Community Church. And we're mindful also of the fact that if and when that comes to us, we will have laid a foundation corporately to be able to respond to it in a way that everybody will understand so that there will be no surprises when it's dealt with in a particular way. While that is our primary concern, we're also mindful of the fact that we're laying groundwork that hopefully will be helpful to others outside our walls. I feel like a little bit like a frontier explorer here preparing a rough map of the landscape in the hopes that younger men, better men, will come alongside and find footprints to follow that they can develop into a far better and effective defense than what I'm able to do with my limited giftedness and in the limited time that we have here. We're playing a long game here, a very long game. We're taking a very long view toward this and laying the groundwork in opposition to the prevailing spirit of our age because the very existence of truth is at stake in this discussion.

So last time we looked at the sad path that led to transgenderism, we looked at the intellectual path which I've already alluded to, how we drifted away from the Reformation's emphasis on revealed truth, followed a pattern in human thought, a decline in human thought that led us to this postmodern age in which we now live, and then we also considered the cultural path that we followed in the United States and Western culture for the last several decades of the sexual revolution and everything that that has entailed. All that I was trying to do last week was to kind of give some historical perspective to how we got here today and part of my reason for doing this, I want to say, is that people that I consider friends and people that are certainly sympathetic with everything that I say, I think that their approach is not helpful on dealing with this matter. It is not helpful, it is not constructive to simply hold up transgenderism to ridicule and say you'd have to be out of your mind to believe this. In a sense, that's true but that does nothing to explain why people believe it, and it does nothing to answer it. To simply insult people for what they think and what they believe is no answer to it and provides no stable philosophical basis upon which to respond to it and to move forward. We need to do something more than that. We need to do more than simply experience moral outrage at it. We have to be able to look at this objectively and say what is the answer to this.

So if there was any merit to what I said last week about the intellectual path and the cultural path that led us to this point, today's message now is forward-looking and the title of tonight's message is "Answering Transgenderism," by which I mean how do we respond to it? What is the Christian response to transgenderism on a biblical philosophical level? How do we break the stalemate when people are saying, "That's your reality, I've got mine. Leave me alone. You can't question what I think about myself." How do you begin to answer something like that? It's almost self-insulating from critique or review, isn't it? Well, so what I want to do tonight is just parallel the points tonight. We looked at the intellectual path and the cultural path last time, tonight I want to give you an intellectual answer and a cultural answer to this phenomenon, this ideology, and hopefully give you some perspective that will give you a sense of how we move forward from here.

So let's just take a moment to discuss the intellectual answer to transgenderism. As I said last time, transgenderism rests on a worldview – oh, this is so important, beloved. This is everything, what we're about to say here in the next few minutes. Transgenderism rests on a worldview that believes that truth is found in the heart of man; that what you think and what you feel is the ultimate determiner of reality. Men can decide for themselves what is true and some people would be shocked to think that that presupposition of theirs is even open for discussion but it is and Scripture responds with a twofold answer that is a collision of cosmic proportions between biblical thought and humanistic thought, and I'm convinced that we have to understand and deal with this issue at this most fundamental level, we have to challenge that assumption that men can know what is true by looking inside their hearts. That is not true. That is fundamentally false. That is a lie from the pit of hell itself.

The Bible teaches, so I'm giving you a twofold response, a twofold intellectual answer here, a negative and a positive. First of all, the Bible teaches that mankind does not know what truth is and further, that mankind does not want to know what the truth is. The mind of man is utterly broken. It is out of order. It is distorted and cannot be reclaimed to anything functional by human effort alone. The mind of man is broken and the will of man is perverted and this cannot be avoided in this discussion because if you understand that the mind of man is depraved and lacking truth and not seeking truth, then you can understand why it is not possible for truth to be found in the feelings of a man or a woman in what they think and believe about themselves or what they say about the world about them. Feelings are no source of truth whatsoever.

Jesus Christ himself made this clear in the Gospel of John. Look at John 3:19 with me as we turn to some Scripture now. John 3, beginning in verse 19. Jesus said,

19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world [meaning that Christ himself has come into the world] and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

The heart of man is diametrically opposed to what truth is, truth found in Christ, truth found in the word of God revealed, and Scripture says that men do not want the truth but rather they prefer to love the darkness in which they find themselves in. They love their sin and therefore they are morally opposed to the truth and this means that the heart of man is no vessel by which truth could be communicated whatsoever.

Jesus goes on to say,

21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

So part of the beginning of our answer to the intellectual challenge of transgenderism is to say that your whole premise of what is true and where truth is found is fatally flawed. You cannot find truth in the heart of man whatsoever.

Jesus' apostle, Paul, was even more explicit and instructive on the point. Turn to Romans 1 with me. Romans 1:18 through 23 as a start. The word of God says that, verse 18,

18 ... the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 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. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and 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.

Let's stop there for just a moment. What Scripture says about the nature of man, the nature of humanity, is it is the nature of man to suppress the truth, to oppose the truth in a manner that leaves them morally and spiritually culpable. They are without excuse for this. It is a moral choice that has been made, and as a result of that, their heart is foolish and it is darkened.

Now beloved, I want to tell you that when we see based on the light of the trustworthy word of God that the heart of man is suppressing truth, that the heart of man is foolish, that the heart of man is darkened, there is no possibility that truth can be found there. That is not the place where truth is made known. Man has rejected the God of truth and once the God of truth has been rejected by man, the only thing that's left to fill the void is lies and that's what we are seeing in transgender ideology. And as a consequence of the rejection, Scripture, Paul here goes on to say that God has handed man over to a depraved distorted mind which has left him in darkness and in wrath.

Look at verse 24 with me. There is this judicial handing over that God has done to mankind because they have rejected what he has clearly made known about himself even in the created order of things, so that in verse 24 it says,

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. [He goes on to say,] 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Stay with me as I read verse 28 and following.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer [here it is, beloved], God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

The judgment of God on the mind of humanity is that it is depraved and it is incapable of thinking anything proper, and in the place of the truth of God what has been replaced instead is a mind devoted to all kinds of depravity and deceit.

So beloved, what we're doing here far transcends the issue of transgenderism, understand what we're doing here is that we are cultivating and developing and reinforcing a biblical worldview to understand what is happening around us. We are not directing this attack at individual transgender people, we are assaulting an ideology that undergirds the delusions in which they live. We are in the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:4, using the word of God to destroy speculations that are raised up against the knowledge of God with weapons that are divinely powerful for that purpose. So, brothers, sisters in Christ, friends who will hear this later on, in fact, I just want to be plain that even as I'm stating these things plainly, I'm stating them with a hand open extending the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who hate what I'm saying, I'm extending the offer of salvation through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ even as they despise what's being said here from the word of God. I am not hostile to individuals but I have to speak against the ideology that undergirds it all. Man's heart is not where truth is found. To the exact contrary.

Let me take you to three or four familiar passages. Go back to Genesis 6, if you will. Genesis 6, beginning in verse 5, all the way back prior to the days of the flood, since the fall. Genesis 6:5, the testimony of the word of God is this, is that,

5 ... the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

That's the heart of man for you.

In the book of Ecclesiastes 9:3, you can just jot the reference down, Ecclesiastes 9:3, it says that,

3 ... the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.

Evil and insanity is the mark of the heart of man. There is no possibility, there is absolutely no possibility that anything true could be based on what someone feels.

In Jeremiah 17:9 it says,

9 The heart of man is desperately wicked; Who can understand it?

Then turn to Mark 7:20. As you're turning there, Jeremiah 17:9 specifically, I paraphrased it, Jeremiah 17:9 says,

9 The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Mark 7:20. Jesus said,

20 ... "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Now beloved, what that means is when you understand the testimony of Scripture about the nature of the heart of man and his fallen sinful condition, for somebody to say that, "I premise the truth of my condition, the truth of my self-identity based on what I think and what I feel inside," it is a completely self-refuting statement. They have contradicted themselves biblically by saying that, "The truth about me is found within me." No. No, within you are lies and deception. No matter how strong your feelings are, they are not a guide to what the truth is. Your heart is fallen. Your heart is desperately sick. Your heart cannot be fixed by human means, and therefore to build a worldview, to build a life

approach based on what you feel inside is to build on quickly collapsing quicksand that will engulf you in the end.

Answering transgenderism, then, in light of these things means this, the sad path to transgenderism last time, the hard path from transgenderism going forward means this, it's no less than this, this is an ultimate collision of reality: Christian preaching and Christian witness on an individual level must tell men that their minds are warped and incapable of finding truth on their own. We have to answer transgenderism on this most fundamental level because it premises its truth assertions, its truth claims on what people feel, and we have to answer that truth claim with the biblical truth claim that truth is not found in your feelings, it is not found in your heart, your heart is full of deception and you cannot trust what you feel as a guide to what is true. In other words, we have to defy the postmodern spirit of our age whether anyone is standing with us as we do or not.

Now it's not enough, I just smile at the magnitude of what Scripture says about this. This is colossal. This is cosmic. This is not capable of being reduced to an internet meme. The Bible makes a fundamental assault on all the truth claims of men and repudiates them and tells men, "You're not even capable of evaluating truth, let alone telling us what the truth is." Wow.

Now that's the, in one sense, the negative, the convicting side of it. Having exposed that, then we need to tell them what to do, right? Let's just assume that somebody says, "Okay, I believe you. What do I do then?" Or in the face of hostility, of continued hostility to God's word about it, what is our message then in light of the inevitable resistance that comes when Scripture speaks so plainly and fires missiles at the proud heart of man? What is our follow-up to those truth claim assertions? Well, beloved, I love this. There's a sense in which I feel completely liberated as I'm teaching these things and have no regard for what the opinion of unbelievers is about what's being said here. You and I, we're standing on the word of God alone will. I stand alone on the word of God, the B-i-b-l-e. What I want you to see with that children's lyric, that children's verse, is that that's exactly where we're at. We're standing alone on Scripture here. So what do we do? I guess I've been asking that question for the past five minutes now. Then what's our follow-up message after having made those assertions against their truth claims? Here it is, beloved. What do we do? We must call those men and women to repent, to repent of the autonomy of mind that undergirds everything about transgender ideology. We are calling upon them to repent of the very way that they think. We are calling them to repent of all of their presuppositions about what is true. Nothing less will do. Nothing less brings it out into the open and Scripture emphasizes this message of repentance repeatedly even if the seeker sensitive movement has been too embarrassed about repentance to speak it to those who come under the sound of their voice. Scripture repeatedly calls men to repent in this fundamental way of which I am speaking here this evening.

I'm not going to have you turn to these places, just write the verse references down for your future reference. We're still under the label of the intellectual answer to transgenderism. In Ezekiel 14:6. it says,

6 ... "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations."

In Ezekiel 33:11 it says,

11 ... Turn back, turn back from your evil ways!

In Matthew 4:17, Jesus said,

17 ... "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

In Acts 17:30 it says that,

30 ... God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

Beloved, just to park it on that passage for just a moment, the truth of what we are asserting is verified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His claim to be the Son of God of and simultaneously the Son of Man is verified by the resurrection, the historical fact, the time and space reality that he rose from the dead and his tomb is now empty. That is the stamp of authenticity, the imprimatur of truth on the Bible's truth claims. Not on the passing, shifting, changing feelings of an individual. God has furnished proof of the truth of his word to all men, Christ is risen from the dead. This is not to be denied.

In Acts 26:20, Paul summarized his preaching in saying that men should repent and turn to God. Jesus said in Luke 24:47 that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be preached to all nations beginning in Jerusalem. Repent. Repent. Repent. Repent. Repent. The days for joking and humor from Christian pulpits never should have arrived, but to the extent that it has arrived and we've been in the midst of it, the days for that is over. Those days are gone. There's too much at stake. Pastors need to help and equip their people to understand these things because sooner or later, soon enough their jobs, their livelihoods, their family, their children, their custody of their children is going to be at stake because this ideology is not being refuted and challenged like it should be. It is not overstating the matter to say that it's inevitable and particularly in more liberal states or provinces like California, British Columbia, it's inevitable, beloved, that we are going to be reading about the Department of Child Services showing up at families' doors and removing children from their care over this very issue. We've got to know how to respond. We've got to know how to understand and process it. Look, you've got a Cincinnati politician calling for a woman to lose her livelihood because she spoke against this in her private Facebook page. This ideology drives people to be ruthless and we have to stand and oppose it not only for our sake but on behalf of those who will be hurt by it. We, in the words of Al Mohler, we cannot be silent, and by the grace of God Truth Community Church at least in whatever limited sphere we have, we won't be silent.

So we call on men to exchange their reliance on self for an exclusive reliance on Christ as he is revealed in Scripture, for men to openly confess and acknowledge they don't know what truth is, they need to be instructed, to come to Christ humbly and saying, "Christ, not only save me but teach me as my Lord and Teacher." To say it one more time, transgenderism removes the external objectivity of truth and replaces it with a subjectivity that is based on feelings. That approach to determining truth claims is a retreat into irretrievable darkness. You cannot get out of that. You cannot get out of that unless you repent of it, unless the Spirit of God opens your blind eyes to see and to understand, and that's why the Christian church, that's why the evangelical church cannot stand idly by while this engulfs our society. We must raise our voice in protest. This is our Wittenberg door. This is our 95 theses nailed on the public door in protest of everything that is assumed and accepted by society.

Transgender ideology exposes men to fall in a terrifying manner into the hands of the living God because it seals off truth from them, it seals them, as it were, under the wrath of God which we saw in Romans 1. It directs them inward to find truth rather than outward to Christ and there is no salvation inside your heart, beloved. We must look outside ourselves for truth. We must look outside ourselves for deliverance. We must look outside of ourselves for salvation because our sin has lost us and condemned us.

So I said that the intellectual answer to transgenderism is to assert the depravity of man and to call them to repentance. Secondly, instead of this reliance on feelings, we boldly assert that truth is found in Scripture alone, in the 66 books of the Bible. God has not left us without a witness. God has not left man in darkness. He has given a sure, reliable, revealed word whereby men can go and read and with the help of the Holy Spirit have their eyes opened to what is true, what is real, where reality is. What is reality? It's the way that things really are. Scripture alone tells us what that is, particularly in the realm of truth claims and in man's understanding of himself. Jesus said in John 17:17,

17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

And so understand that in the familiarity and the simplicity of things that we've said so many times here within the walls of this auditorium, the things that are familiar truth to us and that undergird our Christian lives are the things that answer this phenomenon, this ideology that has overtaken our world. We assert that God is the authority, that Christ as the second person of the Trinity is the embodiment of that authority. Christ has affirmed the authority of the Old Testament, pre-authenticated the writing of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit who is the third member of the Blessed Trinity inspired the writers of Scripture to record exactly what the God of truth wanted them to say. God cannot lie, Titus 1:2, and therefore whatever his word says is utterly reliable truth and that is where we go to find the answers to the meaning of our existence and our understanding of self.

And beloved, there's a beautiful simplicity to all of this. Go to the end of Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 28:19 and 20. We answer transgender ideology by asserting the deceitfulness of the heart of man to reject their presuppositions about truth, we call them

to repent of it and in its place we show them that Scripture is the place where truth is found. Stop looking inside your heart for truth and look to God's word for what is true. This isn't difficult. This is not complicated. And for us as believers in Christ, for us as his church, as his people, we find the simplicity of what we are to do in what he said in his parting words before his ascension. What are we to do, beloved? We are to do exactly what we're doing tonight. In Matthew 28:18,

18 ... Jesus came up and spoke to them [his disciples], saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Remember when Jesus says, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth," this is the self-same Jesus who said, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the father except through Me." Christ asserts his own authority, Christ makes his own self-verified truth claim against everything in the world and he said that all authority has been given to him. Then he gives us our marching orders. Verse 19,

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Stop there for just a moment. You know what comes next anyway. I picture, I picture the weak trembling bride of Christ under the onslaught of this ideology feeling its weakness, feeling overwhelmed, feeling intimidated by it all, not knowing what to do, and what we find here in this passage known as the Great Commission is that Christ has told us what to do. For us here and those that are like-minded with us that are committed to the Bible and teaching it, we don't have to do anything different. Jesus said, "What are we to do, Jesus?" You could approach it this way, "Jesus, what then do we do? How do we answer this worldview that is so hostile to everything that we hold dear?" Jesus says in verse 20, you go out

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you

You just go out and teach my word. You go out and assert the truth of my word. Explain what it means within its context and you call on people to believe in Christ, and that's what the church is to do.

You say, "Oh but Lord, I'm weak. I'm not enough. You know, look, there are people with real governmental authority that are lined up against everything that we're saying here and it's getting worse, and they call me an enemy of the people." Not that anyone's called me that but you get the point, I'm speaking in some hyperbole. "Lord, everybody is opposed to what we believe. How can we ever survive? Who's going to listen to this? Who's going to believe our report about these things? No one's going to listen to this, Lord," you might say in your weaker moments. Well, Christ anticipated even that concern. He had said in verse 18, he says, "All authority has been given to Me," and then he tells us after giving us this stunning commission, he says,

20 ... lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Christ who's risen from the dead, the Christ who created the worlds, the Christ who rules over all, the Christ who is coming again, that self-same Christ of glory and honor and truth, that Christ tells us that he is with us as we do this, and therefore we're not intimidated by what anybody says, by whatever the circumstances may be. He is with us and as you in your workplace, you in your families, you in your neighborhoods, as our church in this pulpit, as we endeavor in reliance on that Holy Spirit to help us as we are faithful to this truth, Christ says, "I am with you," which means that we can just do what we do and trust the results to him without fear; that we can assert these things and then go home at night, put our head on our pillow and sleep sweetly and sleep soundly knowing that the sovereign Christ is over it all and he is helping us as we seek to be faithful to him.

And in that position, beloved, we're unconquerable. Not of anything intrinsic in us but because our Christ is unconquerable. Satan slew him through his agents, the Jews and the Romans, and Christ conquered death. There's nothing that can overthrow him. There's nothing that can overpower him. He is Lord over all and he is with us. And when I think about it from that perspective, then what it does to me is it makes me just all the more want to do this, it makes me want to proclaim this in faithfulness to him, and for us together as we learn together, as we preach together, as we minister and go out together, for us to drink deeply from the well of God, to drink deeply from the profundity of its teaching, to go beyond simply that which helps us get through our day with a happy attitude, to plumb the depths of the truth claims of the word of God and then go out and assert them and let God bless his word as he wishes to his own glory and honor, and may they forget the channel who brought it to them, seeing only him.

So that's the intellectual answer as I see it to transgenderism. We assert the word of God. We assert it against the deceitfulness of the human heart and we trust God and we trust the Holy Spirit to use us as he sees fit in the process, and we realize that there is nothing in that stand that appeals to the world and we accept that. Why do we accept it? Because we're so profoundly grateful to the one who gave his life for us at Calvary, so much so, so captive is our love and affections to that great self-sacrifice, that great one who acted in such great sacrifice and love for us, so great is our affection and our love for us that we wouldn't want it any other way.

And just to be clear in what we're saying here, is that we have the blessed privilege to offer that self-same salvation which came to us through the Holy Spirit, we offer it to those who hear even as we're declaring the depravity of their minds. And we're not offering this, we're not declaring this from a position of spiritual superiority, you and I, Christian friends, we were of like depraved deceived mind ourselves, weren't we? We once were like the Gentiles, ignorant in heart, darkened in our own understanding, disobedient in our own ways, in our own manifestation of our own depravity. We're able to stand in this position only by grace, only by pure undeserved favor, and so we are declaring to the world that which saved our soul. We're not speaking down, we're speaking as those who once were lost ourselves, as the Scripture so often declares it in Ephesians 2, Ephesians 4. We all once were like that.

Secondly, let me just handle this very quickly. The intellectual answer, secondly, the cultural answer. The cultural answer by which I intend to just very briefly address the sexual revolution and how that affects us and how we respond to that and how we answer that part of it. Christians, the church, must return to a biblical sexual ethic in their teaching. We oppose those professing evangelicals who want to play footsie with the LGBTQ movement in an effort to win their approval. We cannot do that. We cannot compromise with the world on what sexual morality is. And to just get right to the core of what I think needs to be addressed within evangelicalism, perhaps almost certainly within our own body even, that Christians need to return to a biblical sexual ethic in our own lives and in our own life practice. Beloved men and women, the private use of pornography, the casual acceptance of divorce, the role of women in the church, all play a role in standing apart from the sexual revolution and calling men out of the world. We cannot engage in that which is one of the contributing sources of this transgender moment in which our society finds itself in. We cannot speak out of both sides of our mouth, or better stated, we can't be hypocrites saying one thing with our mouth and doing something different privately. And so there is plenty of room for the church itself to repent here and, indeed, we must say that those things and those practices are inconsistent with biblical salvation.

For just one text, we could look at many but for the sake of time look at Galatians 5:19. Galatians 5:19. On Sunday we looked at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, that's a crucial passage here also but for tonight we turn only to this passage. Verse 19,

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these [it's not an exhaustive list, everything that circles around this immorality and sensuality], of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We have grown so accustomed to preachers teaching a false view of grace that encourages men in their sin and affirms them as Christians even as they are living in iniquity, even as they leave their spouses to join with another mate, and we say, "That's okay. You're a Christian. It's a struggle. I understand." And we blunt the cutting edge of the knife of God's word that says people who live this way unrepentantly will not enter the kingdom of heaven. It was Jesus who said, "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did I not...?'" And he'll say, "Depart from Me. I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness."

So for us the cultural answer, as much as we might say it to the world outside, I think that this needs to be said to the Christian community, this needs to be said to us, we need to take this to heart ourselves and to understand that the prevailing licentious culture of seeker sensitive religion means that they are not Christians at all. And so we tell them even as we tell the world, that they must repent and turn to Christ to be saved. We warn

the church about the danger of its disobedience, we warn the world about the danger of its truth claims, and we come to this conclusion, a twofold conclusion here. Nothing about this is going to be easy because nothing about this tickles the ears of those who need to hear it the most. This is a direct confrontation with the way that people think and the way that people live and, in one sense, it's not going to be easy. There are centuries of momentum and inertia in place. We are going up against the Rocky Mountains with two bare hands and pushing back. Nothing is easy and no one is pre-disposed to listen which on a human level, beloved, means this, it means that we're doomed to fail, right?

Humanly speaking, we are doomed to fail but we press on, we press on in a renewed recognition of our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to help us live the Christian life and to proclaim Christian truth, and we are brought anew to a fresh recognition of how much we need the help of the blessed Holy Spirit to help us as we proclaim truth in our day and age, and we hope and we ask and we pray and we look forward that maybe the Holy Spirit will help us in our day like he helped our spiritual forefathers in the past; that maybe the Spirit of God would be pleased to help us like he did Luther and like he did Calvin and Zwingli, like he did John Knox, like he did Charles Spurgeon, like he did Jonathan Edwards in the Great Awakening, George Whitefield and John Wesley. Throughout the course of human history, the Spirit of God has been working revival in his people and converting people in large quantities, in large numbers, honoring his word as it goes forth. Maybe, just maybe the Spirit of God would do that for his people in this age as well. We ought to ask him, don't you think?

Let's pray.

Dear God, the darkness is so great and yet we serve the Light of the world. Lord Jesus, prevail in this situation. Holy Spirit, prevail among Your people. Open the eyes of those who are blind. Do it on a massive scale. Do a work of genuine revival and do it quickly. The time is short and surely there is a gathering of the elect still to be done, a harvest of souls still to be found, Father, some in the deepest depths of this darkness. May Your word reach even them. Carry it on a mission of grace by Your Spirit to their hearts that they might turn to Christ and be saved. Help us corporately as we preach, as we speak to our circles of influence. And Father, grant even in us this spirit of repentance of our own sin, of our own slothfulness, of our own indifference, our own coldness to You, our lack of love for Your people, our lack of prayerfulness, our independent selfish ways. O God, there is so much for Your Spirit to do. We ask You to do it powerfully in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

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