

Light for Dark Times

You Must be Born Again!

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He Created Them Male and Female April 3, 2022

Sermon Text: Romans 1

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 6

As we heard in the earlier class this morning (and you can hear the same message on You Tube if you go to the Ligonier channel there and search for Harry Reeder, Gender and Sexuality), evil is rapidly increasing in this world. And one of the foremost routes this evil is choosing and pushing on many fronts is the perversion and distortion of God's created order – specifically, God's creation of human beings in His image as male and female. The President of our own nation is ignoring many other issues that really matter and which a God-ordained ruler is charged

with administering – *justice against the wicked and safety for the righteous* – and misusing his office to push wicked distortions of gender, even upon children. He is spokesman for these evil powers that want to confuse and damage children by telling them they do not have to be a boy or a girl. This is indeed child abuse and it is an evil, sinful crime before God.

As always, we as God's people must be on guard against the deceptive lies of this fallen world. And to do so, we turn to the light and truth of God's Word. God has spoken. We know what He says about these subjects, and what He says is truth. God is King, not man. Christ is the Creator of this universe, not man. And His decree is this:

Gen 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have

dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Satan always works to distort God’s truth, and to pervert God’s creation. He did so in Eden and he continues to do so today. If God created man male and female, you can know that Satan will do all he can to destroy and deny that created order. And so it is in our day.

Gender. We see it all through the creation, do we not? Male and female. It is determined at the very core of creatures – by their DNA. And this can never be changed. XY, XX in the case of man and woman. You see gender (and there are only two) in animals. You even see it in the reproductive structure of plants. Anthers produce pollen, and the Stigma at the center of a

flower receives that pollen which then grows down to the ovaries.

So, again, it is not surprising to us that Satan works overtime to distort this created order, particularly in man. In doing so, he promises great reward. Freedom, as Pastor Reeder said earlier. Break out of the bondage of God’s control and be free – that is the wicked lie.

There is nothing new under the sun, and these lies about gender and the perversion of male and female were very much present in the Apostle Paul’s day. The Bible addresses these evils and exposes their origin. Let me show you.

The Corinthians lived in a society that was just as evil as ours. Wickedness that was seen as “normal.” Idolatry. Temple prostitutes. And perversions of gender. Paul is telling them, and us, to FLEE from these things. Sexual sin in particular is destructive.

1Co 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. **Every other sin a**

person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

(19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Run from it! This kind of sin is uniquely evil and destroying. It is a sin which sins *against those who walk in it themselves!* It is not freedom. It is death.

Furthermore, we see right here in God's Word that *you cannot be right before God and walk in sin. You cannot practice evil, and Paul emphasizes sexual sin here, and still expect to inherit the kingdom of God.* You cannot be an adulterer, or sexually immoral, or a homosexual, and expect to see heaven. That is what the Bible says. That is what God says.

1Co 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the **sexually**

immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And 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.

...no more than you can be a thief, or a person who lusts for wealth, or a drunkard, or a reviler (an abuser), or a swindler/cheat, and be a Christian who is then a child of God. The thing is impossible.

As the visible church (that which claims to be Christ's church in this world) becomes increasingly conformed to the world, you will always see these things denied. People today who claim to be Christians and who are being assured that they are right with God, walk in these kinds of sins. They are baptized. They are given communion. They are told that there is nothing wrong with how they are living.

But look again at what God says. *The unrighteous will never inherit the kingdom of God.* DO NOT BE DECEIVED! Why does Paul say that? *Because the deceiver is at work deceiving the gullible.* Lies. Deceptions. Deceits. Disguises all around. Listen to what GOD says – *the unrighteous will never inherit the kingdom of God.*

Now, what else does Paul say to these Corinthians – and to us? He says that when we are born again through faith in Christ, *a radical transformation is effected in us. Right at the very root of our being.* In fact, He says that *the Christian is no longer the person he or she used to be.* The world (translate that, the people around you), insists that this change has not happened. They want you to be who you were. They do not like the new you. Paul tells us to stand against those pressures and be who you are now in Christ – a new creation. *And such WERE some of you.*

And this is the only real hope – guaranteed! Christ redeems and delivers and sets the sinner free. *Listen – you do not need to go on*

enslaved to sin. You do not need to continue being led about by the world, the flesh, and the devil – the end of which is death. There IS a remedy! These Corinthians had been made NEW.

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.

This remedy is hated by the world. If you tell someone who is enslaved to some sexual perversion of God's created order that the path they are traveling is a deception that leads to eternal death...you are guilty of a hate crime!! The gospel in other words is a truth that the world is trying to silence.

Let's go over now to Paul's letter to the Romans where we find even more insight into the real cause of all of this:

Rom 1:15-32 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. (16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to

everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

(18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

(19) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

(20) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

(21) For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

(22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and

birds and animals and creeping things.

(24) **Therefore God gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) 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.

(26) **For this reason God gave them up** to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) 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.

(28) 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. (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit,

maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) 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.

Let's sum up some of the central "take away" points in these verses:

1. Everyone who rejects Christ is under the wrath of God. If you are a Christian now, there was a time before you were born again that you were an object of God's wrath just like the rest of mankind (Eph 2).
2. All people know God in this sense – *they know that He exists, that He is their Creator and the Creator of all things.* In other words, there is no such thing as an atheist.
3. All men know these things because God has revealed

Himself to them through the creation. A single rose is more than enough evidence that God exists and that all things, including man, are created by Him.

4. Man, being born a slave to sin and a sinner in his very being, hates these truths. He hates God and though he knows God exists, that God is the Creator – he works and works and works and expends great energies on *suppressing these truths.* People, without Christ, "earth-dwellers" as they are called in Revelation, have to constantly, moment by moment, work very hard to prevent these truths about God from springing up right in their face.
5. Paul says that though God is invisible, we know Him through the visible creation, and are accountable for this knowledge. As a result, *man is without excuse.* No one can say to God – "I didn't know. You didn't give me enough data." But man does know.

And man has more than enough evidence. He is without excuse.

6. Man's fundamental sin, the sin which incurs God's wrath and leads men to hell, is – *having this knowledge of God, the sinner suppresses and denies that truth and refuses to honor (acknowledge) and give thanks to God.* Man, dead in his sin and apart from Christ, *lives his life as if God were irrelevant.* He comes into the King's realm and refuses to bow to the King, or worse – acts as if the King on that majestic throne isn't even there.

7. Instead, what man does is set up his own king – which really always turns out to be man himself. He effects this horrid exchange of the glory of the living and true God for a god fashioned by his own hands. A bug. A tree. An animal. An ancestor. The devil. A man. A woman. Any god but the true God.

And now we get down to this business of gender distortion, homosexuality, lesbianism, all sorts of twisting of sexuality. What is it? What is the cause? What is the remedy? Well:

(24) **Therefore God gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) 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.

(26) **For this reason God gave them up** to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) 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.

Therefore. For this reason. For what reason? Why this “giving them up” to these evils? *Because of*

all that Paul has said before. Because man knows the truth about God, but he refuses to acknowledge or give thanks to Him. He manufactures his own god. He insists as if he were God and God was not.

So what does God do? Well, one thing you see repeatedly in scripture is that God gives people what they want. His judgments always come with a certain sense of irony and “fittingness.” God says to such people:

Alright then, you insist upon living as if I did not exist. Here you go then – good luck with this. And He withdraws from them. What happens? That original chaos – that darkness and disorder that once was before God said, ‘Let there be light,’ comes swooping down upon the wicked.

You see the thing in, for instance, the flood of Noah’s day. No God you say? Alright then, I will give you no God – and the waters swept over the land once again, reverting into the chaos that was.

You want to pretend that you are God, King Nebuchadnezzar? Then I will let you have just what you desire – I will withdraw from you and the very thing that separates you from the beasts – My image in you – will be removed. And Nebuchadnezzar became a beast.

There are many people even in local churches who claim that they worship God but in fact set themselves up as God. And on that Day when Christ comes, what will He say to them? –

Mat 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ (23) And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

He gives them what they want. Darkness. Existence without Him.

Forever. Darkness. Chaos. No good thing.

And this all points us then to the root cause of sexual perversions which are being pushed with great energy today. *They are judgments from God against people who refuse to acknowledge Him and give Him thanks.*

See it? Look at it again:

(28) **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. (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) 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.

When a person refuses to acknowledge and give thanks to God and instead chooses some other god to serve, God at some point says “I am giving you over to exactly what you want. He withdraws from them, His light is extinguished, so that their mind is darkened even more and their sin rises to its fullness in them. That sin can take many different forms – it is not only the person enslaved to sexual sin, but it includes the man given over to envy, murder, strife, gossip, slander, and so on. *And this is not something that only happens when a person is older. Notice in this list – disobedient to parents.* A person can, at a very early age, so persist in rejecting God and be given over to His judgment. I think this is why we are being told that such people are “just born that way.”

Well then, what is the remedy? What do you tell someone who is enslaved to sin and who has been told there is no cure? You point them to Christ. You tell them what those Corinthians found when Paul preached the good news of the gospel to them:

1Co 6:11 And 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 Christ is willing and ready to wash them too.