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Sermon Notes

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“Such Were Some of You”: Christ Ministers Hope to Homosexuals

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

I. Contending for the Faith in the War Over Truth

Jude 3 I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

Jude 23 snatch others from the fire and save them

Two images to this fight... one is defensive, one offensive

A. Defensive Image: a Walled Fortress... truth that we are called on to STAND AND DEFEND...

Our souls are besieged and attacked continually. Satan is very clever and focuses especially on weak spots in the wall. And one of the weakest is sexuality... from the very beginning, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened and they realized they were naked. Shame entered their marriage, and sexuality has never been the same.

B. Offensive Image: Rescuing a Dying Person

I was reading recently about a disease that affects the body's central nervous system resulting in "hyperactive and excitable ... erratic behavior... including insomnia, anxiety, confusion, agitation, hallucinations, excessive salivation, and an irrational fear of water." Once such symptoms have appeared in a human being, the disease is almost always fatal.

But imagine you had a serum that was 100% effective for curing rabies; but it had to be administered by hypodermic injection. You have the serum in a glass bottle and the needle... and you approach the raving patient, wondering how in the world you can administer the life-saving fluid into their bloodstream without them biting you and inflicting the disease on you, or attacking you violently. Love would call you to wade in, try to hold them down while they are behaving in an insane and enraged fashion at you, and administer the cure.

I can well-imagine how offensive such an analogy would be to any person who considers him or herself a member of the LGBTQ community. They think of homosexuality as a WONDERFULLY POSITIVE thing... nothing like a disease

But all sin is insanity from the heavenly perspective. We are all RAVING when we sin... and before we are converted, we are out of our minds with Satan's deceptions

Titus 3:3-7 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us

Listen to the words... FOOLISH... DISOBEDIENT... DECEIVED... ENSLAVED BY PASSIONS

ALL of us were like that before we were converted.

The Apostle Paul who wrote 1 Corinthians 6 was himself raving with irrational rage against Christ and Christians

Acts 9:1 Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.

In one instant the grace of Christ broke through and converted him forever from a Christ-hater to a Christ-lover. The spiritual rabies was cured forever.

So, we have a DEFENSIVE image of a walled fortress we need to defend, and an OFFENSIVE image of courage we need to show to save a person dying from a disease that makes them irrational

Let's return to the walled fortress

C. As We've Said... Human Sexuality is a Major Breach in the Wall

1 Corinthians 5: sexual sin and church discipline

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, and homosexuals do not inherit the Kingdom of God

1 Corinthians 6:12-20: people who frequented temple prostitution

1 Corinthians 7: marriage, singleness, and divorce

As we come for the third time to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, I do so because I believe one of Satan's top priorities in America today is to deceive people about homosexuality.

The end of this deception will be eternal condemnation for some precious souls.
The church MUST tell the truth about this sin... but to do so will require more courage than ever before.

We have the HEALING SERUM in our hands... and we're been SCREAMED AT that the life-giving fluid, the cure, is actually POISON and we must throw it away!

In the name of Christ and for the salvation of souls, we must show more courage than ever before and not throw away the gospel truth... that sinners MUST repent of their sins and trust in Christ for the salvation of their souls

D. Homosexuality at the Epicenter of the "Culture War"

1. Over the last quarter-century, major clashes centered around this issue have happened... I could list example after example
2. The Methodist Church's issue
 - a. Last week, worldwide leaders of the United Methodist denomination met in St. Louis to decide whether their denomination would perform and recognize gay marriages, and whether LGBTQ individuals could be ordained as ministers
 - b. In a shocking turn, the theologically conservative Methodist leaders from Africa stood firm on biblical truth
 - c. Here in Durham, the Methodist church on West Chapel Hill Street 1 mile from FBC was covered in rainbow banners this week in strong solidarity with LGBTQ themes
3. Major indoctrination going on at every level of education
 - a. Durham County Library has programs for LGBTQ teens
 - b. Duke University's Bryan Center
 - i) First on the right as you enter: a massive rainbow flag identifying the "Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity"
 - ii) Major strategy to indoctrinate as many Duke students as possible on their view of sexual and gender diversity
 - c. A year ago, at the end of February 2018, the Duke Divinity School's Dean's "State of the school address" was interrupted by LGBTQ demonstrators with bullhorns

E. The Civil Rights Angle

1. Part of the intimidation Christians feel in this current climate is that the LGBTQ activists have been strategic in linking opposition to gay rights to the opposition by racists of civil rights for African-Americans during the 60's and up to the present day
2. Christians are seen the same as racists and bigots if they hold fast
3. This has come from linking homosexuality to genetics... to identity... no different than racial traits—I am Caucasian, others are black or Hispanic or Oriental... all because of amoral genes... on race, we would all say “I was born this way, this is what I am”
4. But the gay rights activists would say the exact same thing about homosexuality
5. And they then feel they're taking the MORAL HIGH GROUND with anyone who would affirm biblical truth on homosexuality
6. Mainstream media has bought into this wholesale
7. So have sports franchises... if an athlete makes a disparaging anti-gay slur during a game, within a day or so he is forced to get in front of a press conference and issue a heartfelt apology
8. They say it is IMMORAL to oppose homosexuality... clearest example in our culture for this

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

F. Homophobia

1. Along with this is the not-so-subtle accusation that Christians are mentally ill, suffering from a disease called “homophobia”
2. All phobias involve irrational fears—like a fear of strangers or fear of crowds or a fear of spiders or a fear of small spaces...
3. So homophobia is defined as
 “the irrational fear, hatred, aversion to or discrimination against people who are homosexual, or same-sex attracted.”
4. To stand up and proclaim the truth about homosexuality as a sin that God will judge with eternal condemnation is seen to be HATE SPEECH, flowing from a deep-seated irrational fear
5. Many Christians have been pounded for this

- a. In Colorado in 2012, Christian baker Jack Phillips refused to make a cake for a same-sex wedding and was forced by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission to leave the wedding cake business... representing 40% of his income. He went to the Supreme Court and won a narrowly defined ruling which left unanswered long-term issues of Christians being forced to do things that violate their consciences
- b. In 2013, Pastor Louie Giglio was dropped from giving the benediction at President Obama's second inaugural because a biblically faithful sermon Giglio preached years before on homosexuality was uncovered... Giglio was censured for his homophobic comments in that sermon
- c. Christians working for secular universities like Appalachian State have to take diversity and sensitivity training seminars to fit into how they define dealing properly with LGBTQ people

In this climate, Christians called to tell the truth for the sake of souls

II. Biblical Truth on Homosexuality

A. Simple Truth: Homosexuality is a Soul-Killing Sin

Leviticus 18:22 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

B. Homosexuality is Like Any Other Sin in Some Ways... and Different Than Other Sins in Some Ways...

- 1. A SOUL-KILLING SIN: Paul lists homosexuality along with other sins and says that none of these people will inherit the Kingdom of God if they are not transformed by the gospel

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

- 2. Key terms: “effeminate” and “homosexuals”
- 3. Just like any other sin, homosexuality is completely atoned for and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - a. You were WASHED
 - b. You were SANCTIFIED
 - c. You were JUSTIFIED
 - d. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

e. In the Spirit of our God

4. Like any of these sins, “such were some of you” means you can be a FORMER HOMOSEXUAL, just like you can be a FORMER FORNicator or a FORMER ADULTERER or a FORMER THIEF or a FORMER BLASPHEMER or a FORMER SWINDLER

This is AWESOME POWER of Paul’s phrase here... “such WERE some of you!”
This is the great hope of the gospel!

So, in this way, homosexuality is the SAME as any other soul-killing sin – it has the power to condemn a person to hell, and it is completely atoned for and transformed by Christ

C. However, Homosexuality is DIFFERENT than other sins in some vital ways

1. It is receiving **special treatment** in our culture... we are pushed hard not merely tolerate it but celebrate it as a delightful thing

No other sin listed here has pride days and parades at Disneyworld or in city streets; you don’t see Fornicator’s pride, or Adulterer’s pride, or thief’s pride days or parades to celebrate those sins

2. Rom. 1: It is a clear violation of God’s intended order in NATURE

- a. Romans 1 lays out a NATURAL THEOLOGY... things you can learn about God by looking at creation... the mountains and oceans and stars prove a WISE, POWERFUL, LOVING Creator
- b. Homosexuality twists God’s clear intention in nature... biology... procreation... a male and a female coming together

Romans 1:26-27 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. [NASB]

III. Ministering the Gospel of Grace to LGBTQ People

A. SSA = “Same Sex Attraction”

1. People say they struggled with these desires from a very early stage
2. Controversial... some wonder how there can be a lasting Same Sex Attraction if 1 Corinthians 6:11 says “such were some of you”

B. Is There a Genetic Basis for SSA (the “gay gene”)

1. This is the BASIS of linking gay rights with civil rights... according to those activists, it's a matter of existence not choice
2. Lots of debate on this; some questionable scientific findings; such a genetic link would be extremely difficult to prove scientifically, complex human behaviors and cultural/family influences
3. I think Paul's statement SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU precludes this; the logical basis of that is that you can be transformed

C. Even If There Is a Genetic Basis, What Should We Conclude??

- genetic basis doesn't free us from responsibility
- genetic-based aggressive tendencies may breed violent, criminal attacks, but we don't condone it or embrace it
- genetic-based lethargic tendencies may breed laziness and poor-workmanship, but we don't condone it or embrace it
- genetic-based tendencies toward alcoholic excesses may lead to constant drunkenness, but we don't condone it or embrace it

D. The Complexity of the Human Heart

1. Key terms (Barr & Citlau, *Compassion without Compromise*)

- a. **Desire**: what your heart loves and hates; what you are attracted to or repulsed from
- b. **Orientation**: a dominant tendency or drive, consistent attractions/repulsions that tend to dominate the mind
- c. **Sexual Identity**: subjective sense of identity based on orientation... "Who am I?"
- d. **Sexual Behavior**: actual actions taken based on the first three; including patterns of behavior homosexuals put out to attract others of the same sex, all the way to the sex act itself

2. No one can change their own heart! But God can

Ezekiel 11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

1 Corinthians 6:11 SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU!!

E. Transformed Hearts Lead to Transformed Lives

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

1. Working from the outside back in

a. **Sexual behavior**: immediate repentance and change

- i) Actual sexual acts immediately stop... or the person has not come to Christ yet
- ii) Outward presentation, habits, clothing choices, mannerisms, speech patterns... the things a former homosexual used to do to attract other homosexuals

b. **Sexual identity**: How the person answers, “Who am I?”

- i) Old answer: “I am a homosexual”

Worldly counsel says people must “accept” this identity... you will do psychological harm to yourself if you fight your true identity

- ii) Gospel changes identity: the new answer: “I am a Christian, alive to God, free from all wickedness”

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

c. **Sexual Orientation**: dominant tendencies in the mind, strong attractions of the heart; thoughtlife, preoccupation now changes

- i) scripture works this transformation, causing the new Christian to think in new ways about everything
- ii) mind control is very much the issue in the Christian life... for all of us!!

Romans 8:6-7 the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so.

- iii) the newly transformed former homosexual has to control his/her thoughts and fight the internal battle

d. **Desires**: the strategy is “death by starvation”; basic principle: lusts you feed get stronger; lusts you resist get weaker

Rom. 6:6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin

Warfare against sin by the Holy Spirit is ESSENTIAL to salvation:

Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

John Owen:

The vigor, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depend on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh.

“You must mortify! You must make it your daily work. You must be constantly at it while you live. Cease not a day from this work! Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you!”

Refuting some recent emphases:

Recently some generally good ministries to LGBTQ people have seemed to imply you can STAY Same-Sex-Attracted, just as long as you remain celibate.

But it is vital to recognize some things

- 1) God cares about the heart as well as the actions and lifestyle; it is possible to stop sinning with the body but to sin **with the mind and heart** through lust. God wants us to put those lusts and thoughts to death
- 2) It is not required for a person to have strong sexual desires at all... the essence of the gift of singleness (1 Cor. 7) a person does NOT burn with lust and can manage desires
- 3) God can & does give us entirely new desires... former homosexuals can have a new heart and a new love for a spouse
- 4) People who had a lifestyle of sin in the past need to be continually vigilant over those same temptations coming back; so former alcoholics will have to be extremely careful about alcohol the rest of their lives in ways that others don't; so former homosexuals have to fight in ways most of us don't

IV. Practical Examples of Grace-Filled Ministry (again from *Compassion without Compromise...* Barr and Citlau)

Q1 How can I have a meaningful conversation about this issue without getting into an argument?

- Note the difference between “arguing” and “making an argument”; it never helpful to “get into an argument” with someone in which one or both of you is angry, raising voices

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- Five applications
 1. **Have the right mindset:** don't seek to "win" the argument; seek to open a door by creative question-asking: "What do you believe about this?" "Why do you care so much about this issue?"
 2. **Speak your convictions clearly:** especially tie your convictions into scripture, which has converting power
 3. **Pay attention to conversational context:** "walk in wisdom"
 - a. Follow societal rules you know... like we whisper in libraries: are you at work, in a Bible study, on the street?
 - b. Discern who you are speaking to: Is he homosexual? Does he have an ax to grind? Has he just learned that his daughter is a lesbian?
 - c. Control the "thermostat": What is his emotional temperature? If he starts to get hotter, acknowledge it and step back. Your conversation should be "gracious, seasoned with salt"
 4. **Don't expect agreement every time:** Paul was in prison, so he knows the truth won't always be welcomed
 5. **Pray!!!** God alone can change someone's heart!

Q2 My neighbors are a lesbian couple. We occasionally converse and have a cordial relationship. I have never out-and-out told them that I think their lifestyle is sinful. Am I just being a coward? Or is it okay not to mention this and just try to be a good neighbor to them?

- Be a good neighbor! Build relationships through acts of kindness; show hospitality; invite them to your home; don't worry about being the "moral police"... this isn't cowardice, but just simple kindness
- BUT tell them at the beginning of your relationship that you are a follower of Christ and seek to live according to the Bible
- AND when the right time comes, don't be afraid to speak the truth... most importantly, look for opportunities to share the gospel of Christ above all else; this alone has converting power, not God's law against homosexuality
- Become increasingly aware of what God may be doing in your friend's life... ask God, "Lord use me for whatever you want to do in ___'s life. As God opens doors, walk through them!"

Q3 The bank where I work is celebrating "diversity week." The branch manager, whom I've been sharing the gospel with, is engaged in a homosexual relationship and has encouraged us all to put a rainbow-flag magnet stating "Celebrate diversity!" on our office doors for the week. What do I do?

- Don't display the rainbow magnet! You will be sending the wrong signal, and it will be difficult to undo the damage

- That flag represents a “declaration of independence” from God’s Kingdom; don’t fly it!
- Resist the urge to be drawn into a dead-end debate. Don’t explain why, just say you’d rather not and (if forced to give some explanation) say “I just don’t align with that particular cause.” If someone forces you for a further explanation, say “I value our friendship, and I respect your right to maintain your opinions; I ask that you extend me the same respect.”

Q4 My homosexual brother and his partner are having a wedding. As a Christian, of course I don’t agree with what they are doing, but if I refuse to go to this ceremony or if I speak out against it, I risk any sort of relationship with my brother and his partner in the future. What should I do?

- This is a painful reality that many (most?) of us will likely face over the next number of years
- It will extend to all the usual aspects: engagements, showers, invitations, adoption news, etc.
- My advice: don’t attend the wedding. Why? We cannot celebrate what the Bible censures
- BUT it is important for you to communicate your love to the family member in other ways, to keep the relationship alive as much as possible

Final word:

In heaven, the truth of SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU will be marvelously consummated. We will spend eternity totally free from our sins – we will be clothed in robes washed white by the blood of Christ; we will have minds totally consumed with the glory of God; we will have hearts aglow with love for God and for each other. The sins that dominated our lives on earth will only serve to show the magnitude of God’s amazing grace. And friends... I CAN’T WAIT for that sweet day!