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Sermon Notes

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Christ and Culture: Facing the Hardest Issues of Our Day

BFL Class #2

I. Understanding Our Times

A. The Decaying Orbit of America's Esteem for Christianity

B. Anti-Christian Bigotry

C. Ever-Increasing Wickedness

D. Highly Polarized "Culture Wars"

E. Specific "Hot Button" Issues

1. The Exclusivity of Christ

2. The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible

3. Abortion/Sanctity of Human Life

4. End of Life Issues

5. Sexual Immorality

6. LGBTQ

7. Feminism/Gender-Based Roles

8. The Significance/Definition of Gender (Transgender issues)

9. Race Relations/ "Social" Justice/Wealth Distribution

10. Freedom of Speech

11. Intersectionality/Identity Politics

F. The LGBTQ Strategy

1. Stages

- a. Stage I: gain sympathy (mission accomplished)
- b. Stage II: achieve normalcy (mission accomplished)
- c. Stage III: demonize, ridicule, marginalize, ostracize, and eventually punish the opposers (in process)

G. College Campuses Incubators for Anti-Christian World-view Zealots

Richard Rorty, former philosophy professor at Princeton University – to parents of Christian college students:

“... we try to arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic, religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own ... we do our best to convince these students of the benefits of secularization. We assign first-person accounts of growing up homosexual to our homophobic students for the same reasons that German schoolteachers in the postwar period assigned *The Diary of Anne Frank*... You have to be educated in order to be ... a participant in our conversation ... So we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable. We are not so inclusivist as to tolerate intolerance such as yours ... I think those students are lucky to find themselves under the benevolent Herrschaft [domination] of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents ...”

II. Our Proper Relationship to the World: Key Texts

A. “The World” = Satan’s World System of Lies and Opposition to God and Christ

1 John 2:16 For everything in the world—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

B. We Started in “the World”

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

C. Christ Rescued Us Out of the World

John 15:19 *If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*

John 17:6 *"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.*

Colossians 1:13-14 *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

D. Jesus Wants Us to Stay in the World to Be His Witnesses and to be "Salt and Light"

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

The centerpiece and top priority of this witness is the gospel:

Romans 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Matthew 5:13-16 *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Salt and light implies a strong positive effect on the surrounding world, retarding the spread of evil.

E. The World is Mixed Up with Both Believers and Non-Believers; Some of the Non-Believers are Unconverted Elect

1. Christ told a parable of the Wheat and the Weeds... all mixed together in one field (Matthew 13:24-30)
2. There is no way to root out the weeds without also ripping up the wheat
3. Both must be allowed to grow up until the harvest at the end of the age

Matthew 13:28-30 *"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'" ²⁹ "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time*

I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

4. Unconverted elect look and act just like the reprobate... think of Saul of Tarsus, the thief on the cross, Rahab the prostitute, and King Nebuchadnezzar

F. Our Struggle is Truly Against People, But Against Satan and Demons

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

G. Our Battle is With Ideas, False Doctrines

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

H. The World With Its Lusts is a Great Danger to Our Souls

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

I. We Are Commanded to Keep Pure from the World

James 4:4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

J. Jesus Prays Continually to the Father for Our Spiritual Protection

John 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one.

John 17:14-17 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

K. We Should Expect to Suffer and Be Persecuted in this World, in Proportion to Our Faithfulness to Christ

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

John 15:19-20 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

1 John 3:13 Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

III. Methodology With Outsiders

A. Sufficiency of the Bible

Jeremiah 23:29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

B. Speaking the Truth in Love

Ephesians 4:15 speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

C. Destroying Arguments, Not People

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

D. Boldness Like a Lion

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

E. Centrality of the Gospel

1 Corinthians 2:2 I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

F. Asking Questions; Challenging Presuppositions

G. Relying on the Holy Spirit to Change Hearts

IV. Need for Unity Within the Body of Christ

John 17:20-23 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Philippians 2:2 make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

I. Biblical Truth on Manhood and Womanhood

A. "In the Beginning"

In the beginning of creation:

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

In the beginning of our own lives:

We are assigned our gender by God at the moment of conception. Our gender colors our entire experience of the world in ways that are almost incalculable and beyond discerning.

B. The Equality of Male and Female in Genesis 1

1. Equally in the image of God

This is massive! The most significant thing we can say about a person is that he or she is created in the image of God... created to be like God and to know God and have a relationship with God. Thus every human being is worthy of respect and honorable treatment simply because of this.

James 3:9-10 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

2. Equally commanded to be fruitful and multiply

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

3. Equally commanded to fill the earth, subdue it, rule over it

Genesis 1:28 "... fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

C. Gender-based Roles in Genesis 2 (and beyond)

1. Adam was formed first, then Eve...

This is significant for the Apostle Paul's reasoning of male leadership in the church

1 Timothy 2:12-13 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

2. Both male and female are named "Adam"

Genesis 5:1-2 When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."

3. Also, Adam was the head of the human race, not Eve; so Adam represented us at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil...just as Christ later represented us at the Cross

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

4. Adam named the animals, and he also named woman twice

Genesis 2:23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man."

Genesis 3:20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

5. Eve's role was submissive to Adam's

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

1 Corinthians 11:8-9 Man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

D. The Equality of Male and Female in Christ

Galatians 3:26-29 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

E. Gender-based Roles in the Church and Home

1. Headship/submission as an overall principle

1 Corinthians 11:3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

2. Headship/submission and love in marriage

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

3. Male leadership in the church

1 Timothy 2:12-13 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

Christ chose only men to be Apostles (more on this later)

There is a clear pattern of male leadership throughout the Bible; there is only one godly female leader over men in the Bible, Deborah, and she ruled in a uniquely disorderly and godless time in Israel's history (the Judges, when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes"); she seems to be the quintessential "exception that proves the rule".

Note: recent debates over women preaching sermons in evangelical churches, led by Beth Moore and J.D Greear, shows how persistent feminist themes are in Christian churches. They advocate a position that a woman can preach or teach men, just not serve as an elder in a local church. 1 Timothy 2:12-13 is very clear how faulty this is, for the prohibition is two-fold, based on the structure of the Greek sentence: "For a woman to teach I do not permit, neither to have authority over a man..." Two Greek verbs are negated; two things are prohibited. So for a woman to stand a preach on Sunday mornings "under the authority of the elders" still violates the prohibition. Also, Paul roots the prohibition in the created order, so it is not tied to the Fall into sin.

F. Differentiation of Role Does Not Imply Inferiority of Person

1. Christ is submissive to his heavenly Father, although they are equally God

1 Corinthians 11:3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

2. Christ was submissive to his parents, though he was sinless (and they weren't) and God incarnate (and they weren't)
3. Men and women are equally capable of thinking logically, making plans, articulating those plans, setting examples, etc. It is not because of essential inferiority of being that God assigns roles

G. Interdependence of Male and Female

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

II. The Rise of Feminism and the Attack on Gender

A. The Origins of the Modern Feminist Movement

1. Began in the 1840s with a focus on gaining the right to vote
2. Expanded in the decades that followed to include the ability of women to inherit and hold property and to receive an education
3. The women's suffrage movement attained its goal with the passing of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920, winning for women the right to vote

B. Radical Feminism and Open Questioning of Gender

1. The women's movement was mostly quiet from the 1920 victory to the 1960s

2. In the 1960s, many women were strongly active in the civil rights movement and the anti-war demonstrations
3. This activism led to a growing Women's Liberation movement
4. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) challenged the basic roles of women in society, saying that simply being a wife, housekeeper, and mother was not fulfilling women's fullest potential. She called it "the problem with no name," namely that women, despite being married with children and living in relative comfort as homemakers were deeply dissatisfied with their lives
5. Central to this growing Women's Liberation movement was a desire for equal pay and equal job opportunities, so that women could be free from men economically. The term "Glass Ceiling" came in highlighting the frustration women felt at limitations on upward mobility in careers because of their gender
6. Another strong component of this movement was the desire for sexual freedom, including gay rights and abortion rights; other issues related to the lives and experiences of women came to the fore, such as rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence
7. The more radical aspects of the women's movement began to be openly hostile toward men, to develop an "us vs. them" mentality, and become openly homosexual; this led to a wider and wider questioning of gender itself
8. Accepting of LGBTQ people as able to define their own sexuality led to making a strong distinction between "sex" (biologically defined) and "gender" (personally defined)

"Gender identity refers to an individual's personal sense of identity as masculine, feminine, or some combination thereof." [*Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression in Social Work Practice*, edited by Deanna F. Morrow and Lori Messinger]

C. How Feminism Has Affected the Church

1. It is difficult to trace out and define all the ways that feminism has affected the church
2. Obviously where a raising of these themes of violence against women (rape, domestic abuse) and any ways in which women have not been respected as image-bearers and co-heirs of heaven is helpful

3. However, a Christian should acknowledge that we never should have needed non-Christian society to move us back to that biblical standard
4. Liberal Christianity has embraced women in all roles in the church (priest, pastor, leader, President, etc.) without any concern for biblical texts
5. “Evangelical Feminism” has arisen, claiming to believe in the inspiration and authority of all scripture, but also asserting that verses that restrict women’s roles based on gender have been misunderstood because of sexist biases; it asserts that patriarchal and sexist views have to be cleared away, and we have to embrace full equality of the sexes as Christ intended
6. Often Paul is pitted against Jesus by these views

III. Toward a Definition of Manhood and Womanhood

A. Our Culture’s Total Inability to Answer the Basic Question

When a 12 year-old boy asks his father, “Dad, what does it mean for me to be a man and not a woman?”

Or

When a 12 year-old daughter asks her mother, “Mom, what does it mean for me to be a woman and not a man?”

Our society is LOST in answering those questions

B. Piper and Grudem’s Definition of Biblical Manhood & Womanhood

What follows is from John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*: John Piper, Chapter 1: “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity” (p. 31-59)

1. What is Biblical Manhood?

At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships.

2. What is Biblical Womanhood?

At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive, and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways

appropriate to a woman's differing relationships [John Piper, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p. 35-36]

For me, the basic stance is similar to Christ and the church; men are to act like Christ does toward the church in general; and women are to act like the church does to Christ in general. Though there is not any official authority that all men have toward all women, there are some basic behaviors and demeanors that help define masculinity and femininity

C. What is Complementarity?

Basic concept: that men and women have roles that complement each others' roles and each are vital to the health of the family and the church

TGC Confessional Statement: "men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways."

Mary Kassian, TGC: "A complementarian is a person who believes that God created male and female to reflect complementary truths about Jesus. That's the bottom-line meaning of the word. Complementarians believe that males were designed to shine the spotlight on Christ's relationship to the church (and the LORD God's relationship to Christ) in a way that females cannot, and that females were designed to shine the spotlight on the church's relationship to Christ (and Christ's relationship to the LORD God) in a way that males cannot. Who we are as male and female is ultimately not about us. It's about testifying to the story of Jesus. We do not get to dictate what manhood and womanhood are all about. Our Creator does. That's the basis of complementarianism."

IV. Imitating Christ in His Esteem of Both Men and Women

A. Christ Dealt Honorably with Women as Image-bearers of God

B. Christ Taught, Healed, Fed, Saved Women Just Like Men

He preached the gospel clearly to the Samaritan woman at the well, and revealed his status as Messiah clearly to her

He welcomed Mary's sitting at his feet drinking in his teaching like a disciple even over her sister's frustration that she wasn't helping with the housework

He set a woman free from Satanic bondage

Luke 13:16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

C. Christ Honored Specific Acts of Service by Women

Matthew 26:13 I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

D. Christ Gave Important Roles to Women

John 20:16-18 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

E. BUT Christ Established Only Men as Apostles

We should not imagine that Jesus wanted to establish women as leaders, but he was bound by culture and it wasn't ready for that... Jesus fearlessly challenged many things in religion and culture, whether the people were ready for it or not