

Reviewing Transgenderism

The Bible and Transgenderism

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Last week, I was down in Florida. I spoke at a conference at a local church with a very fine African-American pastor. They asked me to speak on the matter of transgenderism, which I was happy to do, and I did. Back in 2019, here at Truth Community Church, I did a seven-part series on that subject of transgenderism, and back in 2015, I did a five-part series on the matter of the Bible and homosexuality. Since that time, many new people have come to Truth Community Church; certainly the darkness of these things has only accelerated since I last spoke on them, it's a critical issue in society. What I'm going to do today is just do a single message on transgenderism on Tuesday, a single message on homosexuality. There are CD albums, if any of you remember what CDs are. There are CD albums on both of these themes that are free for the taking in the lobby and, of course, the series are available online as well but I want to say a word about preaching on this theme again. There's a couple of things that are really, really important to understand and for us to have a proper mindset on it all. First of all, if every June in every single year we are going to be subject to the relentless propaganda of Pride Month, then I don't think it's too much for me every five or seven years to preach a single message or occasionally do a conference on the subject. The assault comes not from the pulpit of Christian churches, the assault comes from the propaganda machines that these activists inflict upon us all and the ubiquitous parades and balloons and rainbows and all of that. It's not too much for one pastor to speak about it occasionally to his own flock so I make absolutely no apology for coming back to the subject.

Also, I want to say this to you and this, for many of you, this will not be immediately apparent. If you listen to the series, it will become more apparent. I'm not going to defend this thesis statement this morning that I'm about to make and this does frame everything that I'm going to say and why we're addressing it for the rest of the morning. But beloved, the church, speaking very broadly, the church of Jesus Christ, will lose the gospel if it fails to stand firm on this issue because transgenderism is more than a matter of personal identity, transgenderism is an assault on the principle of truth itself. The whole premise that underlies transgenderism is a direct assault on the principle of absolute objective truth, and the fact that we are increasingly being compelled to recognize this, to speak in their preferred pronouns and all of that other nonsense, the more that we would allow or give them room or stay silent even as words are forced into our mouths, we would lose the battle if we yield and allow people to dictate to us what we are to think and what we

are to speak, and to allow them to define the nature of truth itself. The church of Jesus Christ has no liberty and no option to yield on this issue. We must stand firm.

We must stand firm and so all of that prompts me to do a single message today on transgenderism, a single message on homosexuality on Tuesday, and if you'll allow me the privilege of going off on a tangent prompted by the excellent opening that our elder chairman gave us just now about propagating the faith to a generation yet to be born, understand that part of the goal, the obvious goal of the propaganda machine of Pride Month and everything in between, is to create an environment where all of these things are accepted as right and normal and true, and the longer that we go along since the Obergefell decision which forced homosexual marriage on unwilling states, the longer that we go on with that, the more that it's just going to be absorbed in the general mindset of society, let alone thinking about the nature of children that are being raised and seeing this all around them, and some of the things that are being done in the bigger cities and public schools of indoctrination on these things are just utterly shocking and, you know, there's no voice to raise up against it. Ultimately, what you and I need to understand, politicians will be no help on this issue. Even conservative politicians bend and yield on this when push comes to shove, as the state of Ohio even saw with its governor recently. And so the church becomes the last line of defense and the church must be strong and courageous. The church must be outspoken on this, unapologetic on this, running as it were to the battle, engaging the battle as David ran to Goliath to fight on behalf and in the name of the Lord of hosts. And so if I do this every five years, I won't apologize for it. The inclination is, is that why didn't you say more and more often?

And so I'm assuming all of the content of all of those 12 messages today and this week and what I want to do today is simply to outline, in light of everything that I'm assuming in those messages, knowing that many of you have not even heard them, in light of all of those things, I want to give some practical advice related to transgenderism today. I want to say that I know from private conversations that some of you have faced this in your family. We've had it in our extended family. We've dealt with it in extended circles. And some of the courage and conviction that some of you have shown has just been a great encouragement to my soul and a great testimony to the work of God in your life and your faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ and his faithfulness to you. And so we're not afraid here, I guess is what I'm saying, we're not afraid of what we see. We take strength from our Lord and we want to be faithful to him. That's ultimately all that matters.

And let me just preface before I go into things here. Let me just say this. If you or your family are being affected by this matter of transgenderism, let me invite you to quickly seek out the elders for help. We are available to you. Every person, every situation is unique. Counsel can help you. There is no shame in having to face these issues or anything like that. The only thing that matters is being faithful to Christ and God gives elders to the church in order to help people be faithful to him. And so we invite that. We welcome that. And I have in the series, there's an entire message that's directed to people that are in, you know, that are feeling the weight of identity issues and all of that, you know, and if you're, you know, if somehow you're getting confused on identity issues, come and talk to us. We want to help you. We want to protect you. We want to open the

word of God and show you things that you need to consider as you contemplate these things.

And so with all of that background, I want to ask and answer six questions for you today. With all of that said, this is a message for the church of Jesus Christ. This is a message for Christians today. I'm not trying to convince unwilling people about the sin of transgenderism. I'm not trying to share the gospel today. We've done that in other circles, other circumstances, other messages. Today we focus on what I think is necessary to help and strengthen the church of Jesus Christ in the hostile world in which we live. And so I want to ask and answer six questions for you here this morning, and we'll go through all of this relatively rapidly.

The first question that I want to ask and answer for you is, how do we trust God in a transgender world? How do we trust God in a transgender world? When we know that there are efforts made to target our children, when we see loved ones being affected by this, when we feel the effects of it, for some it's such a foreign environment, even the terminology is unfamiliar and uncomfortable, and especially those that are a little older in life and are seeing this in the sunset of their lives and never exposed to it before, it's confusing. It's unpleasant and the question is, how do we trust God in a transgender world? I can't give you the fullness of an answer to that, except to repeat what I said a few moments ago. The media, the medical world, and educational establishments are making it very difficult, in addition to employers in so many places, are making it difficult to voice any opposition to this agenda. I mean, they're making it difficult just to stay silent in response to this agenda and I want to encourage you, and you can turn to the book of 2 Peter, for this point. Again, it's very, very brief. I just want to remind you that as you go through the sweep of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, as you go through the sweep of redemptive history since the coming of Christ and follow the people of God and their afflictions and persecutions through the ages that delivered the gospel to us at this time, understand this, my beloved friends, this is not the first time that the people of God have been isolated in the world around them. This is not the first time, speaking analogically, by way of analogy, this is not the first time that the people of God have been told or tempted to offer just a pinch of incense to Caesar and acknowledge Caesar as Lord and then move on. We can't do that. We can't do that and we can't allow a false reduction to say, you know, it's just a difference between he and she. You know, it's just a little, it's just a little acknowledgment of, you know, going to a wedding or whatever it is. Those little acts are representative of entire worldviews, representative of and speak to an entire worldview and we have to settle in our minds who is Lord over our conscience, who is Lord over our tongues, who is Lord over our thought, and honor him accordingly, and to be obedient and to be faithful. Our first century brethren suffered under Nero instead of acknowledging him as Lord. There's no saying, "Well, I'll say it, but I'll have my fingers crossed behind my back when I do." No, our testimony has to be verbal. It has to be outspoken. It has to be courageous. And so we need to understand these things and to be faithful in all of them.

Here's the answer. How do we trust God in a transgender world? Simple answer: think beyond transgenderism and remember the doctrine of divine providence. Remember the

doctrine of divine providence that God is in perfect control of his creation, that God is at work in everything that happens, and the God who is in charge of everything that happens is our Heavenly Father through faith in Jesus Christ. And God knows what his people need. God knows the afflictions and the challenges that we face. And he knows, beloved, how to protect and defend his people in very ungodly times. And that's why we're looking at 2 Peter here just for a moment as the Apostle Peter looks back at Old Testament history to establish the principle that God knows how to take care of his people so that we read in verse 7, for example, we'll jump in the middle of the passage, that "if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)." Lot in the Old Testament, Abraham's nephew, looked on a wicked world around him. It suffered his soul. He was afflicted in heart. And here in Peter, we see that it tormented him, that what he saw and heard tormented him as the majority mob around him gathered to extend their unrighteousness. We read in verse 9 that "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

Scripture says that God saw Lot standing alone against the ungodly world around him. He preserved him, he protected him, eventually brought judgment on society. The point being, not so much about Lot, but the greater principle, God knows how to preserve and protect his people and we may not see how he's going to do that, we may not understand, we may feel the hot breath of affliction and opposition on our necks as we go through all of these things, but God knows all of that and he knows how to protect us. And beloved, the way he protects us is not through compromise and approval of an ungodly agenda. He protects us, the means that he uses to protect us is as we walk in faithfulness to him and refuse to yield to the propaganda machine all around us. Or to refuse to yield to, and I'll talk about this later, to refuse to yield to the personal pressure put on us by employers or by family members or by educational institutions, whatever the case may be. The path of protection is found in the path of obedience to God and being true to the gospel.

Now yes, we need to be wise as we do that, that's why I invite you to talk to the elders if and when these issues come up for you but, beloved, the point is we do not need to be afraid. God is with his people. He perfects his strength in the weakness of his people. He keeps us. We can trust him. He knows what he's doing. He knows how to do this. And so how do we trust God in a transgender world? We remember that he reigns over all, even over these things, that he has his eye on his people, just as he has his eye on the sparrow, and therefore we trust him as we walk day by day in obedience to him. Full stop. No need to be afraid whatsoever. Now, so much more could be said. You could kind of fill in the two weeks of messages on trusting God that I did earlier this month. They would all fit in here nicely. But that's enough on that question for now.

Secondly, not only how do we trust God in a transgender world, point number two, how do we raise children in a transgender world? How do we raise children in a transgender world? And for that, I'd encourage you to flip back just a few books of the Bible to the book of Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6, and in one sense, you could say that

there's nothing new or different for Christians to do in raising their children in a transgender world than there was before this all exploded on the scene. Nothing new. Scripture was sufficient when it was written. Scripture is sufficient now, and it tells us what to do. In Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4, we read, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." And again, providentially, and let me just speak directly to our young families, you know, it's such a blessing, such an encouragement to see so many of our young families making the consistent commitment to be with the people of God. I know it's a reflection of what's in your heart, your love for Christ, your love for his word. In ways that you don't understand, as you're doing that, you're providing a great service to raising your children in a transgender world, to establish them within the walls and the boundaries of the protection of the church of Jesus Christ. That is a vital aspect of it. And day by day in your home, you just keep teaching your children about Christ and the gospel, talking to them naturally when it comes up. If you have opportunity around the dinner table on a regular basis, however you choose to do that, just keep doing what you're doing and asking God to bless the seeds that you plant, never knowing which one is going to take root and bear fruit. And so lead your family by being faithful to a local church. That in itself will establish an outer boundary of guardrails of protection as your children interact with older, mature Christians. This is going to be a vital aspect of it because one of the primary means that teenagers are targeted is through their peers in online discussion groups that draw them away from their parents and into things that they never saw by flattering them and giving them false sympathy and false support, training their minds to question their parents and to move into a realm of evil that they don't even realize what's being done to them. Part of the way, beloved, that you protect your family is by making your family a part of an assembly, a community of believers who will have an unrecognized and invisible influence on your children and give them a context through which to see the world around them.

Beyond that, how do you raise your children in a transgender world? You know, beloved, you have to monitor what they see in all the various forms of media. And this will be shocking in the world in which we live, television and 5G internet access is not necessary for productive childhood development and I can't mandate what I'm about to say, but I would certainly delay as long as possible into college years giving your child a smartphone and the things that happen through that exposure to media that you lose sight of, you lose control of. When it comes to education, you need to be diligent to know what your children are being taught, understanding that in government-run schools, in colleges, in high schools in some areas, and especially in more liberal cities, their opinion is, you've seen this in the media, and this is why you have to be so proactive and protective in those realms, their opinion is that they have a right and a responsibility to lead your children into these things and exclude you from any voice in the process. So that it is routine for schools to hide transgender identity presentation from the parents of the child in the process and so you have to be aware of this. You have to be diligent. You have to remove them from activities that promote that worldview. And if your children are still young, if you're not already doing this, in many areas, I won't define this for absolutely every geographic region, but in many areas, public schools simply are not going to be an option. Public schools are not going to be an option for your children and so you need to

explore now what options you might have in private schools, Christian schools, homeschooling, because there is an ever-expanding government agenda to train and develop children in these matters. It's shocking to read about. It's shocking to see the opinions that these bureaucrats have about it. Look, the world has changed and if you're going to love and protect and raise your children, then you have to be mindful that the ease of government education may not be a viable option for raising your children.

Let me say another thing guaranteed to make some people angry, but you know what, I don't care. I don't care who gets mad at me over this. You need to beware of relatives that are in the homosexual transgender lifestyle. You need to take seriously the fact that they are living in open rebellion against God. And, you know, while they will vociferously contest what I'm about to say, the truth of the matter is that they will groom your children if you are not careful and so you need to defend your children from the violation of their minds just as much as you would protect them from the violation of their bodies at the hands of a predator. And so we just have to be on guard. We have to protect them. Your children don't know. And you don't have to instill fear in them, but you have to be proactive in saying, what's going on here, media, smartphones, education, relatives, education establishments say, "I've got to watch out here. I've got to be on guard against this." And take seriously the fact that there's an enemy in the camp and your children are the targets.

Now, let me say in a more positive, proactive way that, and just give you something that I think helps in protecting your children from developing gender identity issues, however we want to define that, without even discussing transgenderism specifically, beloved, you can do this, at the youngest of ages, you can teach your children that God made boys and girls. You can tell them that God made you just the way that you are and you can tell them, "I am as your mom, as your dad, I am glad that God made you exactly the way that you are. I'm glad you're my little boy. I'm glad you're my little girl. I love you just the way you are. You're made exactly the way that God made you to be." And develop that in them, to affirm them, to encourage them, to make that, and to tell them how glad you are that God made your child as he is. Give them a vertical perspective on it. "God made you. God made you a boy. God made you a girl. I'm glad he did." And just cultivate all of that in them in just the natural course, repeated over time, recognizing that, as I said earlier, you never know what conversation, what seed will take root.

At the same time, let me say this, and when I was a really young boy, a really young boy, I had a doll that I liked to play with. I did. A Penny Bright doll. And I'm telling you this now simply so Dane Logan won't tell you about it later because he knows the secret and so I'm just getting the secret out before Dane has anything to do with it. I played with a Penny Bright doll. You know what? Don't overreact. Don't overreact if your young boy wants to play with dolls, or if your girl likes to climb trees or throw baseballs. Don't overreact to those things. Don't impose, listen carefully to me, don't impose adult interpretations on innocent childhood development. Don't live in that kind of fear and don't make a big deal out of it. Don't slap the boy's hand or whatever, you know, as he's reaching to do something to play with a doll or whatever. You don't have to go to those routes. Focus on developing the principles in their minds and let the natural growth and

development of childhood take place, trusting God, praying for your children without fear of what's, you know, of what one individual action might mean long term. You can't live with that and your kids will pick up on the pressure that that puts on them.

And so don't think those ways but also, beloved, let me just say this, and this is really hard for Christian parents to hear because I know the mindset of at least some Christian parents, and I'm speaking very broadly, not about anyone within the walls of Truth Community Church, but serious, devoted, loving Christian parents tend to think that they can guarantee an outcome in their child's life if they only structure the life around certain principles and certain activities and all of that, and the truth of the matter is we can't guarantee the outcome. We can't guarantee that our children are going to grow up to be adults who love and serve Christ. That's not within our power to guarantee. We can only be faithful in what we do, and then we have to trust God for the outcome. And for some, we see loving, faithful Christian parents who have to grieve over an outcome in their adult children and as elders, we grieve with you, we sympathize with you over that, we pray for you so much, but just understand that what we're talking about here today are principles of faithfulness in parenting, not promises that guarantee a particular outcome. And you say, "But I don't like that. I want a guarantee. I want to know how it's going to come out. I don't want to have to walk the lonely path of those kinds of difficulties that you're describing." And the answer to that is, we don't get to decide that. We don't get to decide that. We don't get to determine that and what we do is we trust God in the midst of it. We trust God for the outcome of our parenting. We trust God for what he does and if we're wounded by these things, we humble ourselves and we trust him more and we cry out to him for help and grace, and if he gives us godly children, we rejoice in that and we give him thanks and give him all of the praise, knowing we failed many times along the way, and if he brings sorrow, if the outcome is sorrowful, then we say, "Okay, Lord, I submit, I accept this too."

And I understand, beloved, believe me, I understand that this is one of the great tests of faith that could ever come to a Christian is to see that sad outcome but we're left with a question, do we mean it when we say, "I trust God"? Or do we mean, "I trust God as long as the outcome is to my liking"? That's not really trusting God, is it? Anybody can be happy if they always get what they want. The question, the test, is how do we respond when life brings us sorrow? Some of you have walked this path. You know what I'm talking about and understand that the pulpit of Truth Community Church is with you 100%, absolutely without without any qualification.

We can raise children in a transgender world. Those are just some ideas on how to do it. Now thirdly, we've asked and answered, how do we trust God in a transgender world? We remember his providence that he takes care of his people no matter what. How do we raise children in a transgender world? We raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We are faithful to bring them into the fellowship of the church. We don't skip church just because a bird sat on the car and we really don't want to have to wash it off before we go. The cheap lousy excuses that people give for their infidelity to gathering with the people of God endless, and young parents, you just have to resolve in your mind, you have to think through what we're going to do

and how we're going to structure our lives. And for those of you that are here, I'm grateful for you. I trust and pray that God will bless your fidelity to what he calls for in his word. God is the one who said, "Don't forsake the assembling together with the saints."

Thirdly, thirdly, let's ask and answer this question: how do we respond to transgender people? How do we respond to transgender people? And for that, I invite you to turn to Matthew chapter 10. Matthew chapter 10 and, you know, part of the challenge, just rubbing my eyes as I contemplate the difficulty of what of what we're addressing, part of the challenge is that over decades the church has conditioned us to put a priority on relationships no matter what and that's not the teaching of Scripture. That is not the teaching of Scripture. The teaching of Scripture is the priority and preeminence of our devotion and our love to God himself. The preeminence and priority of our love and fidelity to Christ himself. That is the super-most priority. This is the highest priority in the life of a Christian, that Jesus is Lord, not the human beings that are around and close to us. And that has to be clear in our minds. We start with this premise as we answer the question, how do we respond to transgender people, we start with this premise, loyalty to Christ may cost us personal relationships. Loyalty to Christ may cost us personal relationships and if it does, that's okay. That's okay. It hurts. It's not what we want, but it's okay. This is what Jesus told us in advance.

Look at Matthew chapter 10 verse 34. Matthew 10 verse 34, Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Christ says, "If you have me as Lord," then understand that as Lord, Christ is the first priority and anything that would be disobedient to him, that would subordinate him to something else, we have to lay that down. We have to reject that. And in this context that we're talking about today, what do we do if a friend or a loved one comes out as transgender? You know, and I was just speaking within the past couple of weeks or so, you know, a family dealing with a situation where their married son, probably with children, came to them and said, "Mom, Dad, I'm a girl now. I'm a woman now." And didn't see it coming. It's just shattering to everything that you've ever loved and worked for and assumed and presumed. They did not see it coming, and they're crushed in the midst of it. What do you do? What do you do when that happens?

Well, here's just some pastoral suggestions and counsel that I think is trustworthy. First of all, try to control your initial emotions and interact with them if you can. "When did you first start feeling this way? Have you spoken with anyone about this? What did they say? Who was it that put this out to you?" They may ask you to affirm them and to use their new identity and beloved, it's right here where you have to settle in your mind before it comes, before that event comes into your family and into your life, you have to settle right now, meaning at this station in life, what you have to do in order to maintain loyalty to Christ. If this happens in a relationship, your beginning principle is that you have to hold to truth above the relationship. In love, you tell them, "I do not accept the

transgender worldview. I cannot affirm this." You can ask them to listen to our transgender series before they go any further, say, "There's so much more than you may realize," and if they're not receptive to that, what happens so often is that they very well may tell you that you have to choose between your religion and your relationship with them and you need to know that there's only one answer to that. You will not choose them over Christ. You refuse the manipulation, in other words. You graciously, you lovingly tell them, "You need to repent." You warn them that they are moving into an unsafe realm and then tell them the truth. Tell them the truth, beloved. And this is really, really hard. I get it. But if the relationship ends over this matter, it's not you that walked away. You didn't change, you didn't put the threat, you didn't initiate the threat in the relationship. It's not that you rejected them, they are the ones ending the existing relationship you had by trying to, again, notice the theme, notice how this works, by trying to control you to accept something that is contrary to the word of God. They do not have that prerogative and they are not that important in the scheme of life to deny the truth of God, to deny the Lord who saved you for the sake of keeping their very conditional so-called love.

One of the books that I've read recently on this matter, just to give you a sense of how wicked and depraved this realm is of those who advocate it. I realize that there are spectrums of people who, you know, maybe they have a question about identity toward those that try to draw others into it, the doctors that give them hormones and do surgeries and all of that. You know, there's a whole spectrum here but one of the most appalling things that I read about what's done is that there's a social media influencer, I can't remember the name and I'm just as glad that I can't, but the approach that's used with young people, young girls, they Google, you know, "Am I transgender?" And these videos pop up and these very winsome people will reach out to you and one of the things that they will say, to just give you a sense of how demonic and depraved and perverted all of this is, one of the things that they will say to a person like that is if you're asking the question if you're transgender, you are transgender. If you ask the question, you are transgender and you see how wicked and how much it twists and perverts and is not designed to help anyone, but simply a target to bring them into the realm. This is like a black widow spider looking for someone to inject their poison into. "Oh, I touched the web." Yeah, let me tell you, in the guise of being a friend, they inject that poison and confuse a young mind in ways that are just utterly despicable.

Now it is often the nature of the LGBTQ community, don't like the term, but it communicates, I guess. It's often the nature of that realm to act like a cult and to isolate people away from those who have always loved them. You may not be able to stop that and if it happens, lean on Christ when it does but whatever you do, don't compromise your fidelity to Christ. No matter what. Leave the results and the outcomes to him and resolve to follow him no matter what. No matter what.

Fourthly, again, for Christians, how do we help the families of transgender people? How do we help the families of transgender people? And this is just going to become an increasing opportunity for the church. We may have opportunity, you may have opportunity to speak to people who have had loved ones, leave them for transgenderism. I

know I have. One of the things that you tell them, one of the first things you tell them, tell them, "You're not crazy for not going along with this. You're not crazy for saying that's not right. This is strange. This is not something that I want to go along with." Tell them they're not crazy. You may be the only voice that supports them in this. You know, one other thing that a family might need to do, sometimes a family may need to actually physically relocate into a different geographical area in order to remove their young ones from the influence if this happens. It's very, very difficult, I get that, but tell them they're not crazy not to go along with it. God made everyone man or woman, male or female, and you reassure them that it is not their responsibility to accept someone's rejection of what God made them to be. It's not their responsibility to accept that or to affirm it. You can affirm their grief, "I know this is hard." You can weep with them, and you should. Paul wept over the Jews in Romans 9 that were lost and unconverted. You can offer our series on transgenderism to strengthen them. You know, and beloved, it's just going to become more and more difficult to find even pastors that will stand and hold the line on this. I'm not building up my own ministry in saying that, it's just the truth. And so we're going to have a vital opportunity of strengthening people in some of the deepest sorrows in their lives if we just stay faithful ourselves. So we support them. We help them.

Fifthly, how do we respond to the pressure of a transgender world? How do we respond to the pressure of a transgender world? And here I have the ideas of not just family relationships, but employment consequences, policies. What do we do when people tell us to change the name and pronouns by which we call them? Look, this is a difficult question. We want to love people. We want to communicate the love of Christ to them. But beloved, beloved, we've got to think beyond a sentimental approach to love that just says, "I just need to love and affirm everybody no matter what they say to me." The way that you love people is by sharing truth with them, by being faithful to the truth with them. You are not loving people by enabling a deception that is in their mind. And I know that there are people who think you should play along and honor their wishes, "You know, after all, it's just a pronoun." But beloved, that pronoun isn't in isolation, that pronoun is in the context of coercion and threats.

And I won't presume to define the answer to this question for every person in every situation. I'll just deal with this in terms of my personal approach to it. I want to be the guy who told them the truth. I want to be the one who told them the truth and didn't facilitate the deception. "Tom, I can't call you Susan. Tom, I'm not going to call you she. You're a man. And I can't acquiesce to your desire for me to participate in the deception." Beloved, Scripture tells us, speak the truth in love. "Tom, I will treat you with love and respect, but I cannot let you put words in my mouth." And you urge them to come to Christ to find their true identity in him.

I realize having said this, this may cost relationships. It may cost someone their job. But, beloved, just a little bit of church history helps us understand this, how to approach, you know, I mean, look, we are Christians. We are part of a noble body of people that transcends time and the Christians that have gone before us lost far more than a job for the sake of fidelity to Christ. Some of them lost their heads for fidelity to Christ. Honestly, this is the way I look at it. What you do with this is up to you. May the Lord

help you. But honestly, I prefer to identify with the beheaded, burnt martyrs of the Reformation than I do to identify with this wicked age. Those are the people that I belong to. Those are the people that I want my life to reflect. I can live without the affirmation of a depraved, distorted world that has been handed over by God to a depraved mind.

And at some point we have to wrestle through that and those issues and if someone in our midst loses a job, we've got to support them, we've got to help them, we've got to walk through this with them. When people are under pressure from government agencies because they work for them and being pressured in this direction, we have to help them and talk through it and all of that. We have to stand together. You know, one of the things that I've taken to saying to like-minded pastors as I get together with them in ministry or just in private conversations and it's true for all of us as Christians, it's true for us as a body of believers, it's true in ministry, it's true for you with your Christian friends, we're at a point, look, we have to stay together. We have to stand together. We don't have the luxury of separating over secondary things and getting our noses out a joint because we didn't get something we want. We don't have that luxury anymore. We have to stand together on these things and our church is here to help you, but, you know, look, beloved, it goes both ways. It goes both ways.

That brings me to my final point. We've asked and answered, how do we trust God in a transgender world? We remember his providence. He protects his people. How do we raise children in a transgender world? In the love and instruction of the Lord. We have them with the people of God on a consistent basis. We guard and protect them. How do we respond to transgender people? We speak the truth in love. We refuse the manipulation, even the manipulation from doctors that say, "Well, do you want a live son or a dead daughter?" You know, it's unconscionable. It is utterly unconscionable the things that are said to parents who are just trying to do what's right and be faithful to the truth. And so, but, you know, we realize that loyalty to Christ may cost us a relationship. We asked and answered, how do we help the families of transgender people? We support them. We weep with them. We tell them they're not crazy. How do we respond to the pressure of a transgender world? We stand firm, realizing that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against the principalities and the powers of the air, Ephesians 6. And point number 6, how should the church respond to a transgender world? How should the church respond to a transgender world? And here, I suppose in one sense, I'm speaking specifically to the body of Truth Community Church. I would commend this to other churches, but, you know, I respect the independence of churches to make their own decisions. And in an hour, actually in a half hour or so, we're going to have another membership class and so this is timely to say these things as we introduce some of the details of our church to those that are interested in joining us. Within the walls of Truth Community Church, beloved, you need to understand that our position is clear. We have not hidden this from anyone. We've been outspoken on this. We've been clear and definitive about it. We believe that transgender ideology is opposed to the truth. It's opposed to the principle of absolute truth. For one thing, that it will undermine the gospel in time because of the way that it perceives reality. If a transgender person saw the sign, walked in, we would welcome them to come to learn as long as they're not being disruptive or trying to, you know, advance an agenda amongst our people. We would

make the gospel the priority with them. We would give them time but understand that a practicing transgender person would never be eligible for membership at Truth Community Church. We would never affirm them in their active practice of that lifestyle as a Christian because it's so contrary to the word of God. We wouldn't do that. But furthermore, and this is really important, an important reminder. I think I did this series in 2019 on Tuesday, so a lot of people didn't hear me say this but we would say in advance to our members that the members of Truth Community Church are not at liberty to defend transgender identity in others, particularly in their family members. Let me say that again: a member of Truth Community Church is not at liberty to defend transgender identity in others because transgenderism is an assault on truth itself. It is far greater than that individual personal relationship. And so, listen to me carefully, I say it in love, members who affirm transgender identity may be subject to church discipline because our preeminent responsibility as a church is to be faithful to the truth. Our preeminent priority over time is to defend the gospel from every assault that comes against it. And part of our responsibility, this is subsidiary, but knowing that we have loved ones in our church that have taken this stand and lost family relationships over transgender matters, we have a responsibility to defend them with a consistency of what we've taught.

And beloved, beloved, it is just as immoral for a professing Christian to betray the truth as it is for them to betray a spouse in adultery, for example. And I go back to what I said when I opened. I get the fact that this is probably shocking to some of you to hear it stated so clearly and firmly but understand this, beloved, even if you don't see it right now, as elders, we'd be happy to walk you through so you can see it, the church of Jesus Christ will lose the gospel itself if we do not stand firm on this issue. That's the difference between eternal bliss in heaven and eternal damnation in hell, the gospel that delivers sinners and promises them eternal life based on the objective word of God outside the feelings of man. We must defend that objective truth no matter what and if that stance troubles you, please seek out an elder to discuss it. Please don't just give in to gossip and without talking to an elder so that you can understand why this principle is so vital in the day and age in which we live. I'm going to paraphrase what Martin Luther said. It's a famous quote but he said, "If I'm faithful to Christ in every area of life and truth, except in the one that's actually at stake in the day in which I live, then I'm not being faithful to the gospel at all." Faithfulness is found when the battle is engaged. The soldier proves his faithfulness not when he's on leave, he doesn't prove his faithfulness in times of peace, he doesn't prove his courage when the enemy has left. A soldier proves his faithfulness when the battle is engaged, when the shots are coming in, when the rockets are coming in, and there's an effort to kill that which he's sworn to protect.

Well, beloved, this whole LGBTQ thing is an incoming rocket on the church of Jesus Christ and we have to be strong. We have to be courageous. We have no choice. We have no alternative. And so we say these things now so there won't be any surprises if it comes up later, and we say these things confident in the ability of God and the commitment of God to protect his people that seek to honor him with their faithfulness and we close simply by saying, may God help us navigate these issues to his glory and to our eternal good.

Let's pray together.

Father, we by nature long to be peaceable, peacemaking people. That's inherent to being a Christian, to want to be a peacemaker. But we realize that there are some issues that are so vital that we have to contend for the truth. In the words of Jude, there are times where we have to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Help us to contend for the faith in the age in which we live in private individual things within our families, in public ways in the church of Jesus Christ. Help us to stand firm. Father, help us to stand firm even if others won't stand with us. Help us to stand firm even if it costs us because, Father, at the end of the day, all that we want, all that we want is to go through the short decades of this life and then stand before you when all of the world has passed away, to see your face look at us with approval, and say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master." Father, nothing that men could do to us or for us is worthy to be compared to the great majesty of that moment of receiving the approval of our Master. Help us to be faithful. Protect us as we seek to do that. Help us to speak the truth in love until you give us the joy of looking back and seeing that Jesus led us all the way. "All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask beside? Can I doubt his tender mercy, who through life has been my guide." And so, Lord, we look to you and pray that you would bless us. In Jesus' name. Amen.