

The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity #2

Antidote to Sexual Impurity

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Many of you will know that last Lord's Day evening I announced that I was beginning a brief series of studies on the subject "The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity," and I began that message by seeking to sketch in the cultural setting in which our New Testament documents were given to us, and attempted to show how relevant those New Testament documents are in the light of the present state of our own culture. In Romans 12:2, the people of God are commanded not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. As we are called to the life of a non-conformist, the Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul tells us that that non-conforming lifestyle has its taproots in the ongoing transformation of our minds. We must think aright if we are to walk aright, and therefore I am seeking to set this brief series of messages in a thoroughly biblical and theological framework by enunciating several basic propositions before moving on to a more direct dealing with some of the texts in 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Thessalonians 4 and possibly several texts out of Romans 6, but convinced that it's only as we think in terms of the broad biblical teaching about this matter of our sexuality that we will be enabled by the grace of God to have our minds transformed that our lives may be well-pleasing unto God.

So we considered two propositions last Lord's Day. Proposition 1: our sexuality, including our desire and capacity for sexual pleasure, originates with God and not with the devil, and we went right back to the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 to establish this proposition. Proposition 2 was this: the God who designed and created us with our sexuality is the only one who has the right to determine and to impose upon us its legitimate functions. Just as God designed man and created him with an appetite for food and had every right to proscribe the sphere within which man would satisfy that appetite, "Of all the trees you may freely eat but of that tree you may not eat," so God established in the garden the only legitimate framework for the physical sexual expression of the sexuality of a man and a woman when God brought Eve to Adam and God himself pronounces this fundamental structural truth about human sexuality, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they two," within the covenant of marriage, "they two," not three, not four, not outside that covenant but, "they two shall be one flesh."

We come now tonight to consider the third and final foundational proposition and it is this, here is proposition 3: the willfull impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or

in practice will bar a person from heaven and will certainly result in the damnation of hell. Now I know the words sound hard, almost caustic, but more gentle words will not do justice to the teaching of Holy Scripture, for when we turn to our Bibles, as I hope to demonstrate in a few moments, we are indeed driven to this proposition that the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and will certainly result in the damnation of hell. Now what I propose to do in our time together is, first of all, explain what I mean by the key words in this proposition; secondly, and this will take the bulk of our time, to demonstrate the biblical foundation for that proposition; and then thirdly, to make some necessary applications to the various categories of men and women, boys and girls, gathered in this place tonight.

First of all, then, an explanation of the key words. The proposition begins with this statement: the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin. Now what do I mean by sexual sins? Well, I do not mean what society at any given point in its experience will designate as sexual sin, nor do I mean what we as individuals might like to define as sexual sin, but what I mean by sexual sin is any indulgence of one's sexual desires contrary to the revealed will of God. Any indulgence of one's sexual desires contrary to the revealed will of God, and as we shall see in our study of the Scriptures, God has revealed his will in this matter of our sexuality in general revelation, there is that which God has revealed in what Paul calls in Romans 1 nature, but more particularly in his book of special revelation, the Bible. So when I state in this proposition the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice, by sexual sin I mean any indulgence of one's sexual desires contrary to the revealed will of God.

Now what do I mean by the words "willful impenitent indulgence"? I've chosen those words deliberately because there are few of God's children who do not struggle with the sins of sexual impurity. Impurity in the mind. Impurity in the memory banks of the mind. Impurity of inordinate and ungodly desires. Looks and even deeds that are displeasing to God. The Bible records the wretched tragic sins of incest among the godly. It records the sin of adultery in the life of that man after God's own heart. And so it would be wrong to say that the indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or practice will bar a person from heaven. I am not saying that. This is what I'm saying, this is what I mean: the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin.

What is "willful impenitent indulgence"? Well, it's indulgence that grows out of a Romans 8:7 heart. Look at that text. In Romans 8:7, the Apostle Paul writes the carnal mind, the prevailing disposition of heart and spirit in everyone devoid of the Holy Spirit, everyone who is only what he was in virtue of his natural conception and his natural birth, has never been born of the Spirit of God, united to Christ by faith, "the mind of the flesh," or the carnal mind, "is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." By the words "the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin," I mean to describe this disposition that says, "My body is my own. I don't care what God says. His thou shalt and shall not are of no account to me."

I think it is most tragically expressed in one of the bestsellers that came out of the intensification of the so-called feminist movement in the '70s, a book that was read by the

millions, "Our Bodies, Our Own," and the whole philosophy of that book was to try to tell women, "Your body is your own. No man, nobody in society and certainly nobody called God has a right to tell you what to do with your body, particularly as a sexual being." And I will not tell you what the substance of the book is about. It is shameful to speak about it but that's the disposition.

If you want a crass expression of it, turn with me to Revelation 2 for here we have a description of what I mean by "the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin." Revelation 2:20 as the Lord Jesus speaks to the angel of the messenger of the church in Thyatira he writes, "I have this against you, you suffer," you permit, "the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess; and she teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time that she should repent; and she wills not to repent of her fornication." God says, "I call her to face her sin, I call her to forsake her sin, but she wills not to forsake her sin." That is willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin.

We have another example of it in Revelation 9:20 and 21, and I take the time to do this because we are treading on a razor's edge in the conscience of men and women and boys and girls and we dare not be careless. Revelation 9:20 and 21, "And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." We want to murder, we shall murder. We want to steal, we shall steal. We want to indulge in sorcery, we'll indulge it. Our bodies are our own, our sexual standards are those which we make, and even the God in heaven who sends plagues upon us can be ignored. We have nothing to say to him.

That is what I mean by willful impenitent indulgence. I am not speaking of the true child of God who may struggle with impurity of mind. He doesn't need to pick up a pornographic magazine, he has got a file drawer of pornography in his own head from his own past or her own past, and may have to do as one man said in my presence on one occasion, "I have to go to the Lord Jesus a hundred times a day and say, 'Lord Jesus, cleanse my mind.'" I am not saying that the person who struggles continually and struggles intensely with the temptation to willfully indulge sexual impurity in the mind or in practice is barred from heaven. God forbid that I should say any such thing. I'm not talking about the person who as he or she began to develop into puberty, felt out of it, they were not normally and naturally drawn as others were with the same degree of desire to heterosexual interests and they find themselves tempted to homosexual or lesbian attractions, but with all of their might they fight against it and they cry out to Christ for help and grace. I'm not speaking of such. Please, please, I beg you listen to me: the proposition is the willful, the impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice. I'm not talking about the teenage boy or girl who struggles with indulging auto-eroticism, who struggles with making his or her own body to be the terminus of sexual pleasure and struggles and wrestles and stands and falls and stands in God's name

struggling, saint, don't let the devil lay a false guilt trip upon you. I begged God that I wouldn't be such an instrument.

Please listen. Here's the proposition: it is the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in the practice. What do I mean in the mind or in the practice? I mean in your heart or in your life. It's not enough that there's no man or woman who can point to you and say, "You have had illicit sexual contact with me in your body," you must be able to say, "By the grace of God, I am not indulging willful sexual contact in my mind with any living creature but my legitimate spouse," man or wife. It's not a matter of mere external conduct, it has to do with the heart as well as with the hands. It has to do with the inner man as well as with the outward man.

And by the term "will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell," those words need no explanation. They mean exactly what they say. Heaven will be barred and hell will be opened to anyone, anyone who willfully impenitently indulges sexual sin.

Now having stated the proposition, explained the key words, now secondly, let me set before you the biblical basis for this proposition and now we're going to look at seven texts in the New Testament.

We start with the words of our blessed Lord in Matthew 5 beginning at verse 27. Here our Lord is not changing the meaning of the law that he himself gave upon Sinai, what he's doing is he's stripping away all the veneer and all of the encrustments that the Pharisees had put around God's law, he's stripping it of all of the veneer and encrustments so that the true significance of the law will be known and understood by his hearers. So he says, "You have heard that it was said, You shalt not commit adultery," and those who said this and taught it were externalists, they were formalists, the heart did not matter, all that mattered was the hands and the bodily parts, "but I say unto you, that every one who looks on a woman to lust," every one that looks on a woman with an intent to lust, to desire her as a sexual partner, "has committed adultery with her already in his heart." If the heart goes out with the inordinate desire and the look feeds that desire, the only thing that keeps that man from actually physically committing adultery is circumstances and perhaps secondary motives, but if he indulges it in the heart, God reckons it as though it were the deed. He has committed adultery already in his heart.

And as if someone was to say, "But Lord Jesus, if that's what that law requires, heart purity, then we have to gouge our eyes out not to look in lust." He says, "Very well, then gouge your eyes." Look at the next verse, "And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from you." Why? This is a matter of heaven or hell, "it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be cast into hell." Cast into hell for what? For going out and actually spending a weekend in the motel with a woman other than your husband or your wife? No, looking with an intent to lust. The hands may never touch, the mouth may never touch, other bodily parts may never touch but hell will be your portion if the mind has consented to the same.

That's what Jesus said. Do you see it with your own eyes in your own Bible? What this generation says are innocent fantasies, that's what they call them, helpful fantasies, fantasies fed by the hours Monday to Friday with the soap operas when frustrated young and middle-aged women vicariously enter into the heavy-breathing scenes on their favorite soaps and sublimate all of the frustrations of their real relationship into this fantasy world, when men ogle their Playboys and their Penthouses and their Ouis and all of the other slick, vile, filthy, girlie magazines, and they indulge willfully and deliberately adultery of the mind, Jesus said the punishment is hell. That's what Jesus said and he doesn't mean that we can deal with this sin by literally plucking out the eye because blind men can lust as well as sighted men. If you will to lust in your heart, you don't need two eyes to do it, you can conjure up the images with this amazing faculty called the human mind and imagination. Jesus is using this as a figure of speech saying, "At any cost stop it or you'll burn in hell."

Now I said the language is going to be blunt. You young men listen to me, I beg you in Christ's name, you young women whose souls are being bartered by the glut of filthy magazines and filthy programs, filthy television, filthy, filthy everywhere you turn, here's the issue: heaven or hell. The willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell.

Jesus goes on to use a second figure, "If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body go into hell." The man who says, "My body is my playground, mind and members to use as I please," will find that God doesn't conform to his judgment in the day of the great judgment. Jesus is dead in earnest. This proposition is borne out by the words of the Son of God.

Now turn, please, to Romans 1. Because this passage has been preached on in recent years by one or two visiting pastors, I will only remind you of the leading lines of thought and urge you to reflect upon it at your own leisure. As Paul is demonstrating the universal need for that gospel which is the power of God to salvation, he begins in chapter 1 in verse 18 with these words, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder," suppress, hold down, "the truth in unrighteousness," and then he goes on to say what is known of God in general revelation, they will not embrace but they reject what is know of God in general revelation, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," and what they know of God and what they see of God's works would never lead them to represent him in an image of man, of beast, of creeping things and of birds. They would know this great God who made all that is about me and all that is within me, this God cannot be rightly represented by something that I make with my hands.

And so they make themselves fools and become idolaters, and what does God do? Verse 24, "Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts," now notice, "of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored." From the heart to the body, do you see the connection? God gave them up in the lust of their hearts unto uncleanness that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves. Why? "For that they exchanged the

truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." For this cause God gave them up to coming of age where they no longer are in bondage to Puritanic and Victorian morality, that's what we're being told. That's not what the Holy Ghost says. "For this cause God gave them up to vile passions," passions that are dishonorable. And what is brought into sharp focus? "Their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due." And what is the sum statement of all of this? Verse 32, "who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them." They gain full acceptance for their deviant sexual behavior but it doesn't change the mind of God.

His wrath is still being revealed and when you hear of evangelical homosexuals and evangelical lesbians, you must rear back on your hind legs and say, "No! No, there is no such character of beast on God's earth." The evangel delivers homosexuals and delivers lesbians and delivers adulterers and fornicators but it does not cause them to go on in their deviant sexual behavior saying, "God smiles because God understands. God made me the way I am." Yes, he did, he made you male or female and the natural use of the man must never be exchanged in the natural use of the woman. God holds men culpable for what is obvious just from nature with no special revelation. A man need never hear the words, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," to know. And this is why in many pagan cultures that don't even frown upon fornication, yet frown upon adultery. The very essence of the "two one flesh" relationship is such that when a covenant of marriage has been made, men regard it an unnatural and culpable intrusion into that sacred sanctuary when someone dabbles with another's husband or another's wife.

A third passage and you just pray that God will hold up my throat. It's not hurting, it's just going. 1 Corinthians 6. You remember as we've been reading through 1 Corinthians, Paul has had to take up a number of practical concerns with the church at Corinth and here he's beginning to address the problem of believers going into heathen law courts against one another. Verse 1, "Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law," now notice how he describes the unconverted, the non-churched, the non-Christians, "go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" Now keep that in mind. He describes the unconverted, the non-Christians, as the unrighteous.

Now come down to verse 9. "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" He says, "You Corinthians in the light of what I'm having to deal with, maybe you've forgotten something, that if your lifestyle, if the pattern of your life is like that of the Gentiles, the unconverted, if you professing Christians enter into a pattern of behavior that is decidedly non-Christian, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Well, "But wait a minute, Paul, we're Christians. We've made professions of faith. We've been baptized. You baptized us. You were the preacher that led us to Christ." Paul says, "Don't you know the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

Now look at the next three words, "Don't be deceived." Don't be deceived. Let no one tell you that a willful impenitent pattern of unrighteousness that parallels the lifestyle of the worldling is consistent with ultimate entrance to the kingdom of God at the end of the age. Don't let anyone deceive you. Then he's going to be specific. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Write it down, let it be indelibly stamped upon the chambers of your mind and the walls of your heart, the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell.

Look at the ones that he names. "Don't be deceived: neither fornicators," the broadest term for the sexually impure. The family of words *porneo*, there is a family of words and it's the generic term for all forms of sexual impurity, every expression of deviation from God's sacred law concerning sexual practice and thought and disposition. Don't be deceived, one whose lifestyle is that of a fornicator is not going to have any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Period. No discussion. No talk about, "Well, aren't there carnal Christians and won't there be some who just lose a few rewards?" No, he says if you're fornicating you'll go to hell. That's what you need to know.

"Neither fornicators," now look, "nor adulterers," now the term, that's the term that means a violation of the marriage covenant, a violation of the sanctity of that sanctuary of marital intimacy, and that can be violated in a number of ways, and any willful pattern of violating that sacred sanctuary, don't be deceived, such shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Then there are two more terms, "nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men." It's difficult to ascertain precisely the meaning of these two words but the general field among lexicographers and linguists is agreed that it refers to male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, some say in one case it's the broader term of someone who prostitutes himself as a homosexual prostitute, and the other being the more aggressive homosexual, but the words are unmistakably clear hence the American Standard renders it "nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men." Write it down, be determined in your mind not to budge that anyone who willfully impenitently practices homosexuality, male or female, in the mind or in the body shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now Paul did not say those who struggle with homosexual or lesbian tendencies, those who sign no peace treaty with those tendencies, those who with all of their heart long to be kept from the indulgence of those tendencies in mind and in spirit, God does not bar them from the kingdom any more than he bars the person who struggles daily with a quick temper, and someone else who struggles with a hypersensitive or hypercritical spirit or someone else who struggles with covetousness or someone else who struggles with tithe. Don't for a moment anyone sitting here who feels inwardly red in the face at the mention of homosexual and lesbian, my friend, God does not exclude you from the kingdom if you are trusting in Christ and wrestling with your temptations in the strength of Christ and with gospel motives drawn from the cross and the power of the Spirit of

Christ. It is those who willfully impenitently indulge in these sins that have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Now Ephesians 5. Let God be true and every man a liar. The apostle in these last three chapters of Ephesians is giving practical application to these Christians as to how they are to live an alternate lifestyle in the fellowship of the church and in the face of a watching world and he says in chapter 5, verse 1, "Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love," there's the central command, walk in love, do that in the context of being imitators of God and the God whom you imitate is described this way, as the God who in Christ "also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell." We are to walk in love as Christ loved us, gave himself for us.

But now look at the next words, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becomes saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of thanks. For this know of a surety," if you know anything beyond your own name, Paul says, know this, "that no fornicator, nor unclean person," as well as, "nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." Could words be plainer? Can imagine how everything in me wanted to wretch and to vomit on the very paper on which the print was found when someone has the audacity to say, "I've come to such a discovery of the love of God and the love of Christ that I can now embrace my homosexuality with thankfulness and pride and Christ has never been more precious to me since I moved in with my homosexual lover." I've seen the words with my own eyes. With my own eyes. I wanted to puke on the paper. This letter sent to a whole spate of friends shamelessly, shamelessly. That preacher in England a few months ago, "Two greatest mistakes," he said, "I made were getting married and going into the ministry." Leaves a wife and three grown children to live with his homosexual lover. Shameless. Why? Somebody has deceived them. "This is love. God's love accepts me for who I am. And if you love, you'll accept me for who I am."

"Be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love." What kind of God? The God whose wrath falls upon the sons of disobedience. That's the God whom we're to imitate in a love that is not mushy and unprincipled and caves in to the latest pronouncements of sociologists and psychologists and psychiatrists and medical doctors. As I've told people, it wouldn't bother me one bit if it can be unmistakably proven that most homosexuals have some genetic predisposition to homosexuality. It won't bother me at all, any more than if they discover some people have a predisposition to addiction to alcohol, others may have a genetic predisposition to punch everything that moves in the face, and others have the predisposition to be unusually passionate, some men have high levels of testosterone than others. Should we say if your level is above this fornication and adultery aren't sin? Nonsense! In God's name, people, pray in these passages, memorize them, load your conscience with them, be prepared to do what the apostle says we are to do. Fornication, uncleanness, let it not be named among you as becomes saints. If you've been set apart from sin unto God, you've left these things as the pattern of your life and

you are, in the language of verse 11 to, "have no fellowship," no koinonia, no participation, "with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of."

And I've cried to God and one of my fellow elders cried to God before this meeting that I would be chaste and discreet in what I said. It's shameful to even speak of some of these things but the world is not silent, it's speaking to you all the time. It's speaking to you in Ally McBeal plots where everybody is neighing after someone else's woman, and every woman is neighing after someone else's man. In the spate of teenage sitcoms that have hit the major networks in the past several years, always giving the impression that fornication is nothing to be concerned about, it's like scratching your ear when it itches and blowing your nose when it's running, a very natural, normal, acceptable physical reaction to certain urges. No, my friend, the proposition is true: the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and will certainly result in the damnation of hell.

There's a parallel passage in Colossians 3. I pass over it and I want you to turn with me now to Jude 1:7. The epistle of Jude, verse 7. There are some so-called evangelicals who try to say, "Well, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality. That wasn't its crowning sin because through one of the prophets God speaks of Sodom's great sin being self-indulgence and inhospitableness and totally ignoring the context in which God is addressing not literal Sodom and Gomorrah but addressing his own nation." They conveniently overlook passages like this that confirm that Genesis means exactly what Genesis says and that God sent hell out of heaven upon a society that had become so obsessed with what Jude calls sarkos heteros, strange flesh. Heteros, flesh. Other kinds of flesh, no longer satisfied with the flesh of a man and a woman in the sanctity of marriage. Men with men. Women with women. Bestiality. Vile filthy sins. Listen to the word of God, Jude 1:7, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh." Look at that language, given themselves over to fornication, they have gone after, fallen in and arranged themselves behind every path to strange flesh, "are set forth as an example," or what a society is like when it gets rid of its Puritanic morality.

That's what we're being told. We are to be proud as Americans, we have shed the shackles of Puritanic morality. Lift your head high as an American. No, as Pastor Smith said tonight, we hang our heads and we blush. Why? We are a nation given over to strange flesh and to fornication. Sexual impurity is part of the American way of life. Talk to anyone who goes to a third world country where they export American television and it's one huge river of moral pollution. I understand that 80 channels of that pollution funnel down into Trinidad. That's what my son-in-law told me, just visited there. I've seen it in the Philippines and I almost want to put on a foreign accent and change my passport. Dear precious young people, listen, listen, it is not a sign of maturity and advanced moral sensitivity and awareness to call it anything other than what God does, fornication and strange flesh.

And what has God done in sending hell out of heaven upon the cities of the plagues? They "are set forth as an example suffering the punishment of eternal fire." Sodom and Gomorrah are a preview of hell that awaits people who go after strange flesh and who give themselves over to fornication. Not speaking about those who fight against it, who mourn and grieve the tendencies toward it, who apply every gospel principle to mortify it. No, Jude is not speaking of you, my dear brother, my dear sister, young man, young woman, older man, or older woman, he's speaking of those who in the language of our text give themselves and go after, the willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or practiced will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell.

Then in the book of the Revelation, our final witness, text again that I would urge you to memorize. In the book of the Revelation 21:8, beautiful description starting in verse 1 of the redeemed earth after the coming of our Lord Jesus and that mighty conflagration described in 2 Peter 3:10 when the elements shall melt with fervent heat and the Lord will renovate this old earth and bring in the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness, and John is describing that in chapter 21, and after this glorious description, he then says in verse 7 as if someone asked and said, "But John, who will be there?" And he says, "He that overcomes shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Well, John, will that mean that God who made all men will eventually be the loving Father of all men and confer upon all men the blessings of this new heaven and new earth? John says, "No, but, but, but, for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators," and fornicators, and fornicators, and the sexually impure, the sexually licentious, those who will not have God's restraint placed upon their sexual passions and appetite in mind or in body, such fornicators, "and sorcerers, and idolaters," and children, listen, "and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." When the devil stokes the fires of your sexual appetites, young people, and you're tempted to indulge, remember this, no matter how difficult it may be to mortify the fires of passion stoked by a wicked devil, they are nothing compared to the fires of hell that will consume your body and soul if you give yourself to the life of a fornicator and do not repent.

Ask yourself: will I bear the tension of unquenched fire passion now in the grace and strength of Christ or will I give myself to those fires to be thrown into the eternal fire? You need to tell yourself that. People mock at the day when young people used to think, "Well, I must not indulge in personal sexual sin and fantasies and personal sexual gratification and adultery and fornication. I must not do that because I'll burn in hell." That's laughed at now as a silly old grandma's notion. God's no silly old grandma God and he hasn't changed his word, and God says that no fornicators as well as no murderers, none who are fearful, those who make an idol of their friends and an idol of their associations and will not openly be identified with Christ and bear his reproach, the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, the sorcerers, the idolaters, the liars and fornicators so that their part in the lake of fire.

The final witness from the book of the Revelation 22:15. Back up to verse 14, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and

may enter in by the gates into the city." There are those who will be washed and made clean, who will have a God-conferred right of entrance into that blessed city. "Without are the dogs." What a wretched description. To someone in that culture, the dog was the essence of the unclean beasts, the scavenging, ravaging, unclean beast. "Without are the dogs and the sorcerers, and the fornicators," and the fornicators, they are without. Ask yourself the next time your passions rage within you, is it worth this momentary gratification to be put without with the dogs. You need to ask yourself that because that's what the Scripture says. "And every one that loves and makes a lie."

We could bring in other texts, marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled but whore-mongers and adulterers God will judge. No unclean thing shall enter that city. The whole term "uncleanness" found in the epistles, we haven't even begun to touch it. But my dear listener tonight, if these seven texts do not persuade you that this proposition is drenched in biblical perspectives, I don't know what will. The willful impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell.

Now I've stated and sought to explain the key words in the proposition, I've given you this survey of these seven basic biblical texts, now I come to my final application and the first application is this: knowing and believing this proposition that I've laid out before you supported from the Scriptures, applied to your conscience, knowing this and even believing this will not change if you are presently indulging in sexual sin. It won't change. There isn't enough in the Bible about the terrors of hell to scare a man away from his sin unless the grace of God through the gospel works in him. You see, what I've been doing basically is preaching the law and the Scripture says what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Knowing this will not change you if you're indulging in sexual sin. The law has no such power, but I hope it has done this to you, that it's awakened you to realize what you are trying to believe from the din of societies message in your ear is but a loud echo from the pit of hell spawned by that one whom Jesus described as a murderer and a liar. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth and he's seeking to damn some of you with the lie that what mom and dad taught you and what your conscience instinctively tells you to this hour, that your personal sexual fantasies are sin, that your personal sexual gratification is sin because it's outside the bounds that God has established and that actual physical relationship you sustain to that woman or those women, that man, those men, is sin, what I'm simply trying to do by opening up the Scripture is to persuade you that the voice of God that's been thundering within your own breast that you've been seeking to spite, you ought to listen to it because that voice has been answered by the voice of God speaking in his word and the voice within and the voice that's come without is the voice you'll hear in the day of judgment. It's not the voice that your own indwelling vicious corruption is mouthing, it's not the devil's voice that will be the arbiter of your destiny in the day of judgment, it's the voice of God that's been speaking in your conscience and has spoken in the word of God to you tonight. And though that voice exposing you, letting

you see you stand naked and exposed before God, that exposure doesn't save. You'll never be saved until you are exposed.

The second thing I want to say is however knowing this should drive you to Christ who can forgive, who can cleanse, and blessed be God who can empower you so that you will no longer be a slave to those sins. He can cleanse. You shall call his name Jesus. Matthew 1:21, "For he it is that shall save," rescue, deliver, "his people," out of, "from," away from, away, "from their sins." Christ can deliver. He says in John 8:36, "whom the Son sets free is free indeed." And when Paul wrote to the Corinthians after that description of the lifestyles that are inconsistent with being in a state of grace, he said in verse 11, "Such were some of you but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God." He said, "You were washed," that may be a reference to the external symbolic washing of baptism. I won't go into the debate but the next two things are clear. You are washed, you were sanctified, you were justified. You were set apart from that realm in which your sins were your master, in which you were bound by the cords of your own iniquity. You were taken and set apart from that realm unto God in Jesus Christ. You were sanctified, you were justified, declared righteous as though you'd never broken any of the 10 Commandments, let alone as though you never broke the seventh, and more than that, as though you had perfectly kept it all of your life. And how did this happen? He says this happened in the realm of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the realm of the Spirit of our God. The revelation of God's grace and mercy in the person and work of the Lord Jesus and the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit, he said, this is what effected the change. And my dear friend young or old, you may be held with cords of sexual sin that you've despaired could ever be broken, I have good news. If you're sitting here convinced they must be broken or I'll be damned, go to the Christ who can break the chains, can wash and cleanse you, sanctify you by his almighty Spirit, justify you on the grounds of his own perfect obedience to the law and his death under the curse of the law.

I love the text in Matthew 12:31 and my mind was drawn to it in my preparation for tonight. So often the text is used to debate what is the unpardonable sin when in the midst of Jesus dealing with that subject there is one of the most precious gospel promises. Matthew 12:31, "Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," every sin. Am I speaking to some tonight who've descended even into bestiality? Perhaps you've indulged in homosexual fantasies, practices, you have defiled your body and the bodies of others and you say, "How can God take a filthy wretch like me?" Listen to Jesus, "I say unto you," Jesus is speaking now, "Every sin shall be forgiven unto men." "Oh but, pastor,...." Yeah, I know, I don't know and I don't want to know but even to tell Jesus he didn't know those sins when he dared to make this promise and have Matthew put it in the word of God? He knew all about your sin. Don't argue with him. Every sin. Every sin. Every sin shall be forgiven. Go to the place where forgiveness is found. It's not in you, it's not in me, it's not in this church, any other church, no sacraments, no rituals, it's in a person, his name is Jesus and he is the mighty Deliverer. You go to him and going to him he says, "Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Knowing what we've preached tonight will not change you if you're indulging sexual sin, secondly, knowing this should drive you out of yourself to the Christ who can forgive, cleanse and empower you, and my final word of application is this: knowing this, that is, this truth we've considered embodied in this proposition resting down upon these texts of Scripture, knowing this with God's blessing can be a means to keep you from the erosion of your conscience in this sex-soaked generation. I'm particularly burdened for you dear young men and women. I look out into the world in which you've been reared and it's not right for people to say, "Oh, things are always the same. The older people always think...." You face issues that I never faced. You face a glut of them. Think of the shameful shameful mess of our President when words that I never even heard used until I was a grown adult were on the news every night, and little children asking mommies and daddies, "What does this mean? What does that mean? Who's Monica Lewinsky?" There were no Playboy magazines and all the other stuff that makes Playboy be considered soft, soft, soft pornography. That wasn't around. I've told God more than once I fear to think where I'd be if I faced the temptations some of you face. There's no hope for you if you don't get these texts into your soul and pray God that this stuff will become part of the very fabric of your being and let the tidal waves of the ungodliness and the impurity and the foul uncleanness beat upon you and you'll stand firm in Jesus Christ, in the strength of his Spirit like a Daniel refusing to bend no matter what the pressure.

There was a poem that I made available to the men I think in a pastor's conference. I can't remember where but Pastor Smith reminded me of it and I want to close. It's very brief. The word mien, m-i-en, it's pronounced mean. I'm sorry not mane but mean. It means appearance. When you hear the word "appearance, mien," you'll know what "mien" means. "Sin is a monster." Don't you agree, sin is a monster, including sexual sins?

"Sin is a monster of such awful mein
That to be hated needs but to be seen."

Sin is so ugly that to hate it, you just need to see it. Ah, but listen to the poet.

"But seen to oft familiar of face
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Do you see what the poet understood? Sin is ugly. All you need do is see it for what it is and you know it's ugly. It's the ugly hell-creating, Christ-crucifying, devil-making moral reality. That's what sin is, ugly, ugly, ugly from head to toe and from side to side.

"Sin is a monster of such awful mein
That to be hated needs but to be seen [that is, to be seen for what it really is]
But seen to oft familiar with its face
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

And that's what you young people especially are facing. All of us face it but you especially. The fact that people say its face is tolerable, its face is half attractive, its face is beautiful, that doesn't make it any more beautiful than if I look in the mirror and say,

"You're as handsome as Clark Gable." It'll never come to pass. Saying it don't make it. Do you get the message? When we come, God willing, in our two subsequent messages to look at the principles by which Christians must furnish their minds and regulate their lives, to be kept sexually pure, never forget it, there's no such thing as an innocent exposure to a so-called rather good PG-13 movie with only four sex scenes, and only half a dozen... What in the world are you talking about? You are tolerating the blatant violation of God's law and saying, "Well, it wasn't too bad"? Do you see what's happening? When your defenses are weakened in your reaction to it out there, they are weakened to your indulgence to it in here. To react to it out there and not in here is the essence of hypocrisy but to fail to react to it out there while you think you can continue to react to it in here is the essence of self-deception.

Do you follow me? You think about it. Some of you may be watching things on your television now that when you first saw them five years ago, you were shocked and revolted and you clicked it off and now you're watching it and you call it Christian maturity? No, that's not maturity, that's backsliding in heart and it says the backslider in heart should be filled with his own ways. My friend, pray God will help us all to see this monstrous sin in its native ugliness and seeing it, turn from it, ever and continually run to Christ.

I've been here in this assembly for 37 years and while there have been some tragic personal lapses among various members, unless someone has covered it and it'll take the day of judgment to uncover it, I bless God that there's never been any fall into this kind of sin among the leadership, while in leadership. As far as I know, we've never had to discipline any internal involvement. We've had individuals who have fallen into gross sexual sin with someone outside the assembly and there's had to be discipline. God's been very gracious to us but I tell you, the pressures on this congregation in years to come are going to make the bygone years seem like kid's play and if we do not furnish ourselves with the word of God, we're done. May God help us.

Let us pray.

Our Father, we're so thankful that in the midst of all of the cacophony of the carnal wisdom of the world, we have a sure word from heaven. How we thank you for the Scriptures. And our Father, we pray that this night you would take your word and rivet it to our consciences. We pray for those who this very night are struggling in their souls, Lord, may they no longer cling to the darkness and to the evil of their hearts but may they up and away and run to Christ. And we pray for us as your people, that you will forgive us for our backsliding of heart where our toleration of that which ought to cause revulsion within our souls. Help us, O God our Father, that we may by your grace be monuments of your keeping power in this wicked and adulterous generation. Help our dear young men and women. O God, we beg of you, that you will keep them and make them living monuments of the power of your grace and may you use us to reach out into a community staggering with the heady wine of its own obsession with illicit sex and that we may see them liberated to love you and to love their fellow men with purity, and to know the blessedness of a Bible-framed relationship within the sanctity of marriage.

Lord, rescue men and women, boys and girls, we pray. Hear our cry. Thank you for your help and your presence. Thank you, Lord, for answering prayer and strengthening my voice that I might finish the message. Lord, you're good to us. We give you thanks. Accept our praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.