

Confronting the Sexual Chaos

2022 Truth Matters Conference

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I was assigned my topic upon which I'm speaking tonight. It's the broad topic of sexuality and gender. It would be easy to cite to you a number of depraved practices that are occurring today, and if I did that I would quickly win your sympathy to everything that I had to say, but that would be an unconscionable act of manipulation. It would also do no good to the church of Jesus Christ, and tonight I'm here and I propose to do good to the church of Christ tonight by saying things that I believe need to be said from the word of God.

Any basic treatment of the topic of sexuality and gender would require a minimum of 20 messages or more because you must start with the origins of marriage in Genesis 2; you would quickly need to go to the seventh commandment, "You shall not commit adultery," and exposit that for two or three messages; you would need to consider Jesus' explanation of the seventh commandment in Matthew 5 where he says that every one who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. I have many messages about those matters online but in a room like this, I have to mention those things so that you know to go and find them. Having said that about marriage and adultery and looking on a woman with lust, Evangelicals must start on the matters of sexuality and gender by confessing their own sins of pornography and infidelity and divorce if they are going to be earnest about living a biblical ethic on sexuality, but those things are not our focus for this evening. Let me go further to say that there are answers, good, solid, biblical answers to uphold our views on biblical morality over against our culture. If you will Google my name and the search term "homosexuality sermons," you'll find a five-part series on that topic. If you Google "Don Green transgenderism sermons," you'll find a seven-part series on that topic. And I mention that not only to point you to the material but just to give you a sense of the complexity of what needs to be addressed if these things are going to be handled in any reasonably thorough way. Let me say one other thing here: I highly recommend to you Carl Trueman's new book "Strange New World. Strange New World" by Carl Trueman. It will give the historical and philosophical basis for the rise of the sexual chaos that we see in our culture today; time only lets me hint at those important matters here this evening.

But having mentioned homosexuality and transgenderism, I want you to know that those things, per se, are not our focus here this evening and I want you to understand why because it relates to each one of you. The fact of the matter is that there are no LGBTQ

activists in the audience today but there are many professing Christians here, and because you're the audience that I have in front of me here today, I need to speak in a manner that addresses you and the spiritual realities that you and I need to confess and to face. And we must realize this as we approach the matter of sexuality and gender here this evening, we need to understand that the general acceptance of the cultural chaos and the sexual chaos in our culture is simply the fruit of something else, it is the fruit of an entire way of thinking. It reflects the outworking of an entire manner of thought that has permeated our culture and you must understand this, beloved, if we only address the behavior, if we only denounce homosexuality and transgenderism we have missed the point, we have lost the argument before it even begins, and let me just state to be clear about it: homosexuality unqualified is a sin; transgenderism is a sin against God who made male and female. So I want to be clear and definitive on that point lest I be misunderstood, but you must understand that these things are a reflection of something else, they are a fruit of a different root.

Let me also say this to warmhearted people: if we think that the matter of sexuality and gender in the world today is simply a matter of evangelism and that we need to bring the gospel to these people we have missed the point. Yes, we need to evangelize everywhere, we need to go out into all of the nations and proclaim what Jesus commanded us to teach, but that is not the point, that is not the root that we need to get to. If we think it's only a matter of evangelism we have lost the argument and we have lost the cause before it even begins. You see, beloved, we need to think in categories that some of us are not used to thinking in. We need to think about matters that we kind of assume and don't consciously think about a lot. You see, today's sexual chaos is a sign of our postmodern world in which we live. It is a sign of postmodernism. And to answer the question: what is postmodernism at a Grace to You Conference is probably a good idea to quote John MacArthur, right? I'll quote John MacArthur to define postmodernism. In his little book "Why One Way?" far more strategic than it's size would suggest, "To the postmodernist, reality is whatever the individual imagines it to be. That means what is true is determined subjectively by each person. There is no such thing as objective authoritative truth that governs or applies to all humanity universally." That is the philosophical environment in which we live today.

Beloved, understand our sexual chaos today is based on a presupposition, it is based on a prior understanding of how reality is determined and it assumes that reality is determined by what I feel on the inside, the way that I think, what my opinions are, what my deeply held feelings even from my early childhood are, that that determines what reality is. And if you just think about it in a simple, in just the most basic simplistic terms, you can see how that's true. Someone who is an open homosexual bases his identity on his sexual attraction and on his sexual activity. He is basing it on what drives him inside in his sexual or her sexual proclivities. The transgender person bases his or her identity on inward self-perception. "If I feel like I'm a girl in a boy's body, then I am a girl. The reality is based on what I feel to the exclusion of consideration of what my bodily anatomy is." And so desires and feelings become the basis for truth, they become the basis for identity; the very core of who I am in this mindset is determined by what I feel, what my attractions, what my desires are. It is all inwardly focused and that's very crucial

to understand. That is a philosophical matter of profound consequence and is the root of everything else.

Now when I say something is philosophical, I simply mean it in these easy to understand terms: when something is philosophical, it relates to the nature of knowledge and reality. How do we know what is true? How do we know what is real? How do we know what is true about identity and purpose? And I'm thankful to be in the position to say tonight that the church of Jesus Christ has to understand something fundamental: this is a battle over truth itself. It is a battle over the nature of truth itself, not simply the nature of the truth about sexuality. It is before that in order of thought. You must understand and we must define what the nature of truth is itself and how we know truth before we can apply those principles to the matter of sexuality. I'm not entirely convinced that everyone has recognized that up to this point. So please stay with me as I continue with what I'm about to say. You and I as Christians, we appeal to Scripture as truth, and well that we should, but the postmodern sexual chaos of our day denies that truth even exists. We preach biblical ethics, as well we should, but they deny the very concept of authority. They are authority unto themselves. "What I think determines what reality is and no one can contradict it." There is a reason that a biological male can compete in women's sports and win championships at a national level, it's because society has yielded to the individual the right to determine what reality is and no one had the guts to stand up and say no to it.

So understand that the culture does not even recognize or acknowledge our presuppositions. That alone would be a sufficient challenge to confront the sexual chaos of the day, that alone would make it a massive undertaking to confront the way an entire culture thinks with biblical truth, that alone would be challenge enough but remember I'm talking to the church of Christ tonight, not to the culture, per se, there's something closer to home that makes the challenge far more difficult, makes the challenge much worse, and shows and exposes the utter weakness with which we approach the opportunity that is before us. I take it as a matter of fact, I take it as something that cannot successfully be challenged, beloved, that the failures and the infidelity, the disloyalty of the church itself has contributed to the sexual and gender disorder that we see in society today, and it's not simply a matter of what we have taught on sexual ethics, friends, the church, broadly speaking, the church has undercut biblical truth, undercut biblical authority, has undercut biblical morality.

Let me just walk through some things with you that are a matter of easy public record and common knowledge. The Willow Creek, Rick Warren, Seeker Sensitive model of ministry has conditioned men to expect the church to provide a soothing place of inspirational messages with a healthy dose of lighthearted laughter along with state-of-the-art childcare and that has become the defining principle that guides Seeker Sensitive ministry. But go to other realms. What has the prosperity gospel done for us? It has conditioned people to be selfish and to consider what is in the gospel, what is in Christ for themselves, "How can I be healthy? How can I get my desires met? How can I be wealthy in the name of Jesus?" Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, I know that terms is unfamiliar to many of you but that's okay, has conditioned men to think that God simply wants to help them through their problems in life, really makes no serious demands on

their loyalty or behavior, and simply wants them to be nice to each other. So God is there to help you, God wants you to be nice to each other, and if we do that we've met our duty and fulfilled our responsibility before God. This underlies to the megachurches that aren't directly Seeker Sensitive, this underlies the philosophy of many others.

But we need to go further, consider it further and getting closer to the root of how we determine what is true. What has the Charismatic Movement done for us over the past decades? It has deluded millions and told them to look inside for new revelation from God. Do you see the connection? Do you see the connection? Look inside to find what is true. Listen to God speaking to you in your heart and you will know what is true. And their pastors, of course, routinely cite their own visions, what God said to them in the privacy of their own bathroom or whatever. They cite their own visions as authority from God and dictate that and lay it upon the consciences of those that are under their supposed spiritual care.

More recently, the disastrous MLK50 Conference from the Gospel Coalition in 2018 blew open the door to race baiting and the social justice gospel in the church. Last year, the Southern Baptist Convention elected a sermon plagiarist as its president, and all of their leadership circled the wagons around him as many called for his resignation and he remains president to this day, though from what I understand he does not plan to run for reelection. But let's get even closer to home, assuming that many in here are sympathetic with everything I've said so far, let's not deny the fact that a steady stream of men have disqualified themselves from ministry for their own sexual misconduct, and even churches that affirm Scripture in their doctrinal statements deny it in practice by the way that they de-emphasize the role of the pulpit, and a pastor who has an excellent statement of faith on the authority of Scripture, who simply preaches his own personal stories to his congregation it a big part of the problem. And now, now the church wants to say that truth matters on matters of sexuality? Now the church says we need to get to what is true about sexual conduct and sexual identity? Why now? Why do we insist on the truth now if we haven't done it before? If all of these other accumulated monstrosities in the name of Christ and in the name of Scripture have been perpetrated, on what possible basis do we say that truth matters now? It hasn't mattered to your philosophy of ministry before now, I would say to those.

Years ago in Grace Life, Phil mentioned Grace Life, there was a dear woman named Frances Gregg who only recently went to be with the Lord. She was into her 90s, as I recall. She would often in a jovial way confront me after certain sermons that I preached and she'd say, "Don, you're getting into my kitchen. You're getting into my kitchen." She was an old-school lady who was just a doll, very sweet and I miss her dearly. I mention that because I'm going to get into some of your kitchens now.

This misguided approach to understanding truth, this inward approach of assessing what is true is something that I'm afraid that many of you, or some of you at least, you have also been part of the problem and it shows in the way that you talk about your daily decisions and the way that you exercise so-called discernment as you walk through life. How many of you have said things like this, "The Lord spoke to me and now I know

what to do," not talking about what he said in his word but something that arose in your mind or in your heart, in your feelings, and you say, "Well, the Lord spoke to me. I just know it." Or, "It's God's will because I have peace about it," speaking of these things but not being able to articulate biblical principles of wisdom to support what you're saying. Or here's one that I added just this afternoon, any small church pastor's favorite, get an email that says, "After much prayer, I've decided to leave the church." In every case, beloved, in everything that I have shown to you so far, the person's feelings place the matter beyond challenge or beyond accountability. People who talk like that, people who live like that are saying that what you feel determines what is true, and there is no external authority that can be brought to bear to contradict it. "The Lord spoke to me. It doesn't matter what my pastor said. I have peace about it. It doesn't matter that you're confronting me with biblical principles that would contradict what I am saying. And it doesn't matter what kind of public commitment I made to my local church, I prayed about it and so it's time for me to go." In every case – I repeat myself – the person's feelings place the matter beyond challenge or accountability. They cannot be corrected when they talk that way.

This is a crucial pivot point in tonight's message, what I am about to say. Do you see in light of the monstrosities of the church at large, do you see in light of the individual examples that I have given you here today, that the church of Jesus Christ is using the same principle, the same philosophical approach to truth as any transgender man or any transgender woman? Listen, the appeal to determine truth, the appeal that decides what is true in all of these instances is subjective. It is based on what I feel and what I think, and if I think it, if I feel it sincerely and deeply enough, no one can contradict it. God has spoken by what is taking place inside me.

Yes, beloved, yes, homosexuality and transgenderism violate biblical truth but how can the church, the professing broad church speaking, how can the church confront it if it is not clear itself on what the seat of authority is in assessing truth claims? In a different context, Martyn Lloyd-Jones said this, he said, "I argue that in many ways it is the departure of the church from preaching that is responsible in a large measure for the state of modern society." In his day he said this, "The church has been preaching morality without godliness and it simply does not work, and the result is that the church having abandoned her real task, has left humanity more or less to its own devices." Because the church wasn't out front asserting truth and teaching truth and teaching people how to think about truth, the church has its own responsibility to play and left society to its own devices, and if nothing else, the restraining influence of grace being mediated through the serious proclamation of biblical truth has been removed from society as the church has chased after making unregenerate people feel comfortable in their services. It reminds me of what Pastor John said this morning about trying to ally the forces of Christ with the forces of Satan. This is what you get when you do that. Another author said this, and I quote, "To be blunt, the church has become a laughingstock with no moral authority to stand before the world and confront sin, declare Christ's Lordship, and speak with any credibility about sin, righteousness or judgment." "Ashamed of the Gospel (3rd Edition).

Let it all sink in, beloved. Let it all sink in. I understand that you've been outraged as you've seen the rapid progression of sin in our culture. I have been also. But it's time for us to buck-up and take our own responsibility. This is a most serious matter. This is a watershed matter for the church of Jesus Christ and we all need to understand it and embrace it as such.

1 Peter 4:17 says, "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" We should not congratulate ourselves on our sexual ethics tonight. We need a sweeping revival in how we ourselves think and how we ourselves practice ministry, how we ourselves articulate the philosophy of why the church exists. Scripture can help us on all of these things as I intend to show you in a moment, but we need to remember the very purpose of the church. Of the church. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:15, "the church of the living God is the pillar and support of the truth." And here we stand looking back on decades of wreckage as if a massive hurricane has blown through our spiritual midst and left nothing but hundreds of miles of destruction in its wake. You look at it and you see all of the destruction and you say, "Where do I even begin? Where do we even begin to pick up the first misplaced rock to start to deal with this?" Or to use a different biblical metaphor, the walls of our Jerusalem of truth are broken and they are consumed by fire.

Beloved, we must rebuild them. We must rebuild those walls and what I want to say here is no easy fix. What lies before the church of Jesus Christ whether or not she undertakes it, is a long and painful task. It has taken decades to reach this pathetic point and we have reached a tipping point that is obvious around us, but the collective failures of the church are so broad and they are so deeply ingrained in the way that we even think about ministry, that frankly there is no human solution to it. There is nothing that we can do tonight to fix this at all. The starting point is the church itself, the church itself, we ourselves must repent of what we have done with the Lord's truth and what we have done to his church, and ask the Lord for mercy. And frankly, tonight I call for mass resignations by pastors who have built their ministry on telling personal stories from the pulpit at the expense of teaching their congregations biblical truth.

But while we wait for that sign of revival, here's what we need to do. I'm going to give you three quick principles here, three things that are just the start, each point being the subject matter of multiple messages, and understanding that this is beyond what any one pastor can do, this is beyond what any one book can do, it's far beyond what any one conference can do, especially for, and God bless the people that are like this, that just live from conference to conference to conference, going to Florida, going to Louisville, going to different places and just going from conference to conference. This is not the answer long-term. This takes sustained biblical instruction by hundreds and thousands of biblical pastors over years and years in order to begin to undo the damage that our forefathers and many of us have inflicted upon the church.

So point number 1, the first thing that we must do, the starting point is that the church must return to truth. The church must return to truth. I'm using the term "church" very

broadly here, speaking broadly. I'm grateful to have brothers in ministry who have exemplified for me a pattern to follow in the things that I'm saying here tonight. The church must return to truth, truth itself. We must take the time to explain principles of objective truth to our people. And so there's a positive and a negative aspect to this as we help people understand where truth is found and where it is not found.

So positively, we assert the very principle of objective truth. We look at our postmodern society and in a head-on collision we say, "You are wrong about truth. There is objective truth that is external to you that was true before you were born, that is true now, and will be true after you are gone. Truth is not resident in your heart, it is resident externally and it applies to everyone." We have to start there and that is a cultural collision of massive proportions. Psalm 119:142 says, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth." Verse 160 says, "The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting." John 17:17, "Your word is truth."

And take a moment in order to drive this in just a little bit further. Turn in your Bibles to 1 John 4. I mean, I think that many Christians are not even clear on this point and don't realize that if you sacrifice the principle of absolute final truth, you have undermined the entire Bible and rendered it as a senseless document. How could it be any other way? Look at 1 John 4:1-6. It says, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them." Watch this in verse 6, "We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." The call to biblical discernment presupposes that there is absolute truth to be known. The principle of objective truth, we cannot sacrifice that. That is a hill that we must die on, if we must. We cannot abandon that ground. We must go to our graves asserting the very principle of objective truth. Truth is objective. It is external to us. It transcends us. And truth is revealed in God's word, the 66, and no more, books of the Bible. And truth is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we make that positive assertion as we return to truth. We must teach our people diligently about these things but further, we need to go further and make denials. We have to make a very clear denial that is even a more direct assault on the postmodern spirit of our age, we have to deny the possibility, we have to assert that it is utterly impossible for man to find truth within himself. You do not search your heart for truth. The answers are not found within. Psalm 36:1 says, "Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes." The famous passage in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" Sin and deceit dwell in the heart of man and so to say that I'm going to find truth subjectively by looking inside, what my opinions are, what my feelings are,

is to enter into the realm of sinful satanic deception, and that explains how we end up with the sexual chaos of our day. The mind and feelings of man are utterly defiled, they are completely deceiving, there is no truth to be found in them, they do not and cannot guide us into truth. They lie. Your heart is not your ally in finding the truth, it is the enemy of you finding the truth if you are relying on it to determine what is true.

If we believe the Lordship of Jesus Christ, if we believe the Lord Jesus, what other conclusion could we draw from his own words? In Matthew 15:19 and 20 where he says, "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man." And indeed we go even further, the present wrath of God rests on the modern mind. In Romans 1:28 we read, "just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper." Beloved, this is basic biblical truth. This is basic theology as we describe the affects of the total depravity of man. The heart of man is corrupt. It is evil. It is full of falsehood. And we must go to people who love themselves, who are wrapped up in their internal psychology, and we must tell them and we must insist to them that their feelings are irrelevant to determining what is true. Indeed, their feelings lead them away from truth. And they're not going to like that because, to them, that is an assault on their very identity. "What I think is what I am. What I feel is who I am." But we can't back down from that confrontation. We could sum it up this way from Proverbs 28:26, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered."

We must insist on this. Do you know what the beauty of doing it this way is? The beauty of insisting on truth? As you trace truth through the Scriptures, it all leads you to Christ himself. Christ of whom the Bible says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." As we insist on the principle, the philosophical principle of objective truth, of truth revealed in the word of God, it leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. As we honor his truth, as we honor the word of God, the word of God leads people to the Lord Jesus Christ which is where they need to be in the end. It's where the church needs to be at the end, Christ-filled, Christ-centered, Christ-glorifying. Forget what the seekers want. Isn't it time to embrace what Christ wants for the church, what Christ thinks about truth, what Christ says about it all, and honor him vertically regardless of what men think about us. It leads us to Christ.

Secondly, the church must preach biblical creation. The church must preach biblical creation and I can only touch this ever so, so briefly. The church must preach truth. The church must preach biblical creation, and you'll see why this is important. The LGBTQ Movement seeks identity and meaning from their psychological feelings and their sexual self-perception. We need to help them, we need to help them understand that they're looking for identity in all of the wrong places. They find identity in being authentic to their inner man. "I had to let it out." You know, fathers that leave their adult families in order to pursue, "Because I've always felt like I was a woman and I've got to be true to my inner identity now. I haven't been true. I've been living a lie." We need to confront

that mindset and reject a sexually-based identity, not just an identity based on feelings but one that is sexually-based. You know, as Carl Trueman said in his book, sex used to be something that you do, now it's what people are, it's how they define themselves, everything has been sexualized and that partially explains the mindset as they groom children with sexually explicit material at such a tender, young, innocent age. From their mindset they're just helping them find what the truth is because the truth is found in sexual identity. We have to confront that and reject it. True identity is vertical. Man is created in the image of God and for his glory, created by God, created in the image of God and for the glory of God.

You know the passage but let me just remind you of it quickly, Genesis 1:26 and 27. We have to go back to these kinds of fundamental things, and as you are going back there, understand that the supposedly science-based rejection of Genesis 1 and a literal six day, 24 hour creation, a young earth, understand that that is also part of the problem because it undermines the foundational authority of these basic things from Genesis. God said in verse 26, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Binary gender, that's it, two and no more. And understanding that God not only made humanity male and female, not only created humanity in his image in Adam, but understand that even for the individual, for each one of you there is a precious truth and reality about the way that God made you that we see in Psalm 139, if you want to turn there. Psalm 139:13-16, again this emphasis of the vertical aspect, biblical creation in God making humanity and in God giving life to individuals in their mother's womb.

Verse 13 of Psalm 139, "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them." David says, "You, O Yahweh, You formed my inward parts. You wove me in my mother's womb." God made the man, God made the woman as he wanted and as he intended in the mother's womb, and we know that by the objective, external, observable reality of physical anatomy. Now as I heard someone say recently, if somebody has a baby, you really don't even know whether it's a boy or girl until they're kindergarten teacher weighs in on the matter. This is insanity. This is insanity but how well and how clearly and how often has the church emphasized the truth that would contradict it, the truth that would stand up for these principles? How often? How often have you heard sermons on marriage or been to marriage conferences and it's all about how you can have a better relationship with your spouse, how you can get along and communication difficulties and all of that? I don't mind that kind of pastoral stuff when a pastor is teaching it especially, but we can't neglect the foundation upon which it all rests. We can't simply be so preoccupied with our little horizontal relational concerns that we forget to teach people the foundational aspects of what humanity is, why it exists, and how it is to be lived out. You have to go

back to these great fundamental principles and I understand perfectly that they don't lend themselves easily to warm lighthearted application in a pastor's sermons. I get that but, look, far too many pastors have been trained to think that they've just got to use illustrations and they've got to speak in a way that the audience immediately connects to, and if they don't like it, then you've got to think another way, you've got to preach in a way that immediately connects. I reject that whole model because that model leads you away from the desire and the importance of teaching these fundamental, invisible, so to speak, truths of Scripture that form our understanding of reality. And the problem is we've lost touch with reality.

Do you know what the beauty of the teaching the principle of creation is if you trace it all the way through Scripture? That, too, is going to lead you to the Lord Jesus Christ. Colossians 1 says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation," meaning he's of the highest rank. "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created through Him and for Him." And so understand that as we emphasize truth and as we emphasize creation, that is going to lead us directly to holding forth the Lord Jesus Christ, to his people first and foremost and then to the world as they go out into the world.

And in a statement that I know, having taught on transgenderism, I know how they react to these things, they get really angry really quick when you say things like what I'm about to say but true identity is not found in those feelings inside no matter how strong they are. Transgression speaks to the ungodly in their heart. Your heart is desperately wicked. I speak as a friend to transgender people even though I know they throw this back in my face. True identity is not found in the way that you think that it is, and you can't alter your identity with hormones and surgical mutilation. You cannot do it. True identity is found in understanding that a wise God sovereignly made you in your mother's womb and made you precisely as he intended you to be, and that is reflected by what you observe on your body, not by what you feel in your heart. True identity is found in saying, "I am made in the image of God and I am made for His glory, not my identity is rooted in what I feel about myself and what my perception of gender is in modern society and what I want to align myself with. Image of God, that's true identity. That's lasting. It's permanent. It's transcendent. It gives hope. It gives actual eternal meaning. True identity, going further, is found being in Christ and being the object of his saving and eternal love.

And so as we preach biblical creation, we point to Christ. We point to the image of God and that man is made in the image and that defines who you are. That is why you exist. That is why you exist we say to all. God made you in his image. God made you in your mother's womb. And God made you to live for his glory and that glory can only be expressed as you come to faith in Christ. And so we must insist on a God-centered approach to the very nature of self. We do that by insisting on truth, insisting on biblical creation, third, the church must preach the moral law. The church must preach the moral law. In an understandable and important desire to preach on the lovingkindness and the mercy and grace of God, I fear that the church has overlooked what it is that makes the gospel necessary.

How many Christians even know where the 10 Commandments are in the Bible, let alone being able to recite them in any reasonable order, or being able to name five or six out of the 10? How many even know that they're found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5? How many know about the two tables of the law? The first four commandments relating to our duties to God, the last six relating to our duties to man which are a reflection of our duties to God? Absent the moral law, men simply do what is right in their own eyes but God's word in the moral law speaks definitively about sexual sin. The seventh commandment in Exodus 20:14 says, "You shall not commit adultery," and understand that in the nature of the 10 Commandments, the 10 Commandments are brief statements of categories of sin. It's not only the sin of adultery of a married man with another man's wife but it's expressing a prohibition against all of sexual immorality as Jesus makes clear in Matthew 5, and it's even a positive call to fidelity in marriage and other matters of righteousness. We must preach these things and understand that the moral law, especially expressed in the seventh commandment, has direct application to the sexual chaos in our society. But if we neglect that, we're being silent on a point that we most need to emphasize. You know 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 10, "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God."

We must preach these things. We must preach them, beloved, even if people leave our churches as we do so. That is so important to understand. There is more at stake. It is a higher matter of principle to be faithful to the truth, to be faithful to the God who saved us in Christ, to be faithful to the God who has given his word to us. It is more important to be faithful to him than it is to keep people together at the expense of truth. Jesus said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." There are some things that are more important than human relationships and this is it.

As you preach the moral law, you know what the beauty of it is? It leads you to Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 5, "Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." And in Galatians 3:24 it says, "the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith." For those of us that care about the souls of the lost, we must understand what God uses in order to lead them to himself. It is not your relational skill. It is not your testimony that's going to save a man. It is not your so-called godly life or you living out Christ in front of them and being missional and all of that other nonsense. Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God. This is everything to us. This is essential. This is the sine qua non of the church, the thing without which it does not exist.

And beloved, as we point men to Christ in this way that I'm describing here tonight, you know what will happen? The Holy Spirit will honor the truth that he himself inspired. Christ said this, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth for He will not speak on His own initiative but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will disclose to you what is to come," preeminently a promise to the original apostles as they wrote out the New Testament. "The Spirit will glorify Me for He will take of Mine and

will disclose it to you." The Spirit of God will honor this. It's his word. He saved us for this.

And beloved, understand this: whatever we may think of wishing that we lived in a prior generation when these matters of sexual chaos were not so front and center and in our face, the truth of the matter is God has appointed us for exactly this hour. We are in this hour by his providence. Charles Spurgeon said speaking about men who want to go into ministry and are delayed in it, he said, "As surely as the man wants his hour, so surely the hour wants its man." And the hour of today calls for Christians who will meet this challenge of preaching this kind of truth without shame, without fear, and without apology. Pastors must train their churches in this. Parents must train their children in this. In that brief window of time in which those little lives are given to you, you must be teaching them these things when you stand up, when you sit down, when you lie down, when you walk along the way.

And look, beloved, I'm under no delusions here. I know that what I'm describing does not happen quickly and it will not happen quickly. One conference, even one put on by my dear and close friends at Grace to You doesn't make a dent in this problem. We all forget things too quickly. By Friday, most of you are going to have forgotten what I've said here tonight. I realize that, and that's why we must teach these things repeatedly and consistently, teach them in small groups, ultimately small church pastors are going to be the front line of defense in this. The pastors like John MacArthur who pastor large churches and are faithful to this kind of ministry, they're the exception, the blessed exception. Many of you are pastors in here, like me pastors of small churches, it depends upon us to be faithful to this and to take this up as our burden and our life mission. We face a long-term, multigenerational task that aims at no less than changing the very fundamental way that people think and the way that their minds operate. Anything else in this sexual chaos is not worth pursuing as a goal.

In 1886, a seminary professor at Princeton Seminary, when that was a noble institution, named Francis Patton gave a eulogy for his colleague, the Princeton theologian Archibald Alexander Hodge, in words that apply today, Dr. Patton said this, "We need a theological revival. We need an era of conviction. We need – if this appalling inertia and religious indifference is to be overcome – we need the outbreak of an epidemic of faith. We need a revolution of thought that shall reach the core of manhood and that shall make men see that they have forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out unto themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

I understand that this is no path to ease in ministry, it's no path to numerical church growth, it's not path to popularity in the world, frankly it's no path to popularity in the church at large. In the church, lukewarm church members will walk away. Pastors, let them go. They threaten our purpose if we let them. If we must cater to their desires and itching ears in order to keep them, that's a price too high to pay. [applause] We cannot cater to men who do not seek and love sound doctrine. We must feed the sheep, not pet the goats. We must develop men who want to know how to think and are committed to the long-term effort that it takes. I'm grateful to have men like that at Truth Community

Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, just up the road an hour or so from here. We understand that the world will mock us and despise us as we set this chart, but we must confront their dysfunctional minds and we know that it will make them angry. So be it. So be it. As Pastor John said in that book "Why One Way," he said, "What really underlies the postmodernist belief system is an utter intolerance for every worldview that makes any universal truth claims, particularly biblical Christianity."

They will accuse us, they will accuse us of being a threat to human rights. So be it. This conversation comes up in our circles: what if they ban us on social media? Do you know what? Here's my answer to that, to me it's not complicated, it's not complicated at all, I don't worry about that at all. If they ban us on social media, we will teach from our pulpits. If they confiscate our pulpits, we will preach in the fields. If they arrest us in the fields, we will preach in prison. And if they threaten us with death, we will not recant. If they kill us, we will go to heaven while God uses our influence on a generation yet to be born. [applause]

This sexual chaos is the watershed issue facing us today and we must rise to the challenge. We must be faithful to the one who called us to his beloved Son. We must be faithful to the one who loved us and gave himself up for us. Let the world go. Let our friends go. Let our families leave us. Let our families reject us. We must be faithful to Christ. We must be faithful to this truth because this battle is fundamentally about the nature of truth itself. We cannot avoid this fight. We must be faithful. We must take up the cross and follow Christ.

Let's pray together.

Dear gracious Father, precious Lord Jesus, wise Holy Spirit, great Triune God, we honor Your ineffable essence and the majesty of Your holy name. The task that You have set before us in this world is massive, it is beyond human ability to meet but, Father, we know that Christ will build His church. And so grant us courage and wisdom to rise to the challenge of the hour and may You encourage these dear friends in this room tonight, those watching over the live stream, encourage them with these dear words by Your Spirit in their tender hearts, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen."

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