

Thinking Biblically About Gender

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, I think I've mentioned it before that I'm somewhat of an old-time Western fan and watching Western series.
- And if you watch any Western series, at some point you'll see the main character having to cross a desert. And he starts out crossing the desert, making good time.
- But yeah, of course, the conditions catch up to him. And he goes for his canteen, goes for a drink. Canteen is empty. And, of course, usually he throws it down, which I could never make sense of that.
- But that's in the script. And so he goes on for a time further. Next thing is his horse is going to give out. Down goes the horse. And so still has a lot of desert to cross.
- So onward he goes, trudging on and on, the heat catching up to him more and more. Finally gets to the place where he drops to his knees, falls on his face, and there he stops.
- [1 : 0 5] Well, he's the main character of the series, so he can't stay there and can't die in the desert. So someone comes along and finds him, picks him up, and takes them to the lodging. And after, and usually it's two or three days, something like that, laying there on his back, eyes open up, and looks around.
- And someone there, his rescuer there, usually with a wet cloth or something to put on his forehead. And he asks the question, where am I? And of course his rescuer tells him where he's at.
- You're at my lodging. His next question is, how did I get here? He explains, well, I found you in the desert and brought you here. And then usually he makes a comment as he's trying to get up.
- He says, well, I've got to get out of here. I've got to go do this or warn the settlers or something of danger that's coming. So those kind of questions that he asks.
- Well, this morning we're going to continue our study on another biblical worldview topic, gender and sexual identity. And I want to answer what I'll call those cowboy questions as they relate to the topic we want to cover this morning.
- [2 : 2 2] Where are we right now in regard to what is called the sexual revolution in our country? Next question, how did we get here?
- And then the third question, well, how do we respond? Kind of where do we go from here as God's chosen people in the world today? So number one, where are we?
- Where are we in regard to this whole matter that we're facing in regard to this sexual revolution? We're certainly in a very far different place than what I would have thought 30 years ago.
- And I suppose you could even narrow that down even further within the last 20 or even 10 years. The change that has come upon us so quickly.
- We just passed through a month that many call the Pride Month here in the U.S., a month where many individuals celebrate the advancement of the LGBTQAI+.

[3 : 26] It's getting longer and longer. That lifestyle, and it's not just individuals. It's the government and various corporations promoting and sponsoring and celebrating the advancement of this agenda and acceptance of it.

There's even a protected national monument like we have Mount Rushmore National Monument. And whether it's even a protected national monument to the new sexual revolution, the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village in New York City.

Homosexuality has been decriminalized nationwide. Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals are able to serve openly in the military. Same-sex marriage is protected.

Many schools have policies now that allow students to use the bathroom of their choice depending on how they define their gender identity. And pronoun usage has changed.

And these things that I'm listing off, I'm sure many of you have bumped into in your daily lives and some of your jobs and some families. Some who don't identify with either sex want people to use a plural pronoun such as they or a completely different word that wasn't even in the dictionary.

[4 : 48] In some areas, boys can compete against girls, girls against guys on sporting teams, and those who consider themselves transgender can now compete against females on college teams.

You go to make an application at a place of employment. On that application now, you'll have additional choices to identify your sex, male, female, something other, non-binary, people no longer really depend upon what is objectively, biologically true about their bodies to determine their gender.

The decision is now based on subjective opinions and feelings. A quote by Don Green, if you're interested in listening, he's presented some lectures at the Truth Matters Conference 2022.

You can look that up. Does an excellent job on this topic. He's a great writer, and he has numerous other presentations on the topic, specifically transgenderism.

His quote is, Reality becomes whatever you want to make it. You can define your gender without reference to biology. The nature of transgenderism is such that the body is made to conform to what the mind thinks rather than having the mind conform to objective external reality of the body.

[6 : 20] So today people have that right, privilege, to establish their own identity and their moral code. No one has the right to question their decision.

Al Mohler wrote a book within the last couple of years titled *The Gathering Storm, Secularism, Culture, and the Church*, and a quote from his book in regard to the time when people are, the time that we're living in, he says, People are questioning the fundamental grounding of what it means to be human, to be male and female.

The gay rights movement continues to reorient the moral fabric of Western civilizations. The LGBTQ revolution demands not only equality, but also the suppression of the divergent worldviews, namely the Christian worldview.

Any moral code that denies the new sexual rights must be silenced. An additional quote from Nathaniel Frank, he's a gay writer, wrote the book *Awakening, How Gays and Lesbians Brought Marriage Equality to America*.

This article he presented in the Washington Post to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots that took place in 1969 in Greenwich in New York City.

[7 : 50] He says their revolution goes beyond equality. He says, Do we seek belonging in the world as it is, or the chance to transform the world by throwing off repressive norms into a place where all of us, queer and non-queer alike, can be more free?

He also stated that the activist's goal is a comprehensive upending of the entire moral system of sexuality. It isn't about making queer people look more like everyone else.

It's about making everyone else look a bit more queer. So there's been a total rejection, certainly, of the revelation of God and his creational order and his design for sex, maleness and femaleness.

People replace God with themselves. They're the ones who are the determiners of their own personal identity. It's called expressive individualism.

People determine their own identity based on their desires and then express it as they determine is best. And again, other people have no right to challenge their conclusions or their actions.

[9 : 09] Your responsibility is to affirm the person in their decision as to who they are and how they want to live. I mean, it goes beyond just some of these things that I listed here, especially within the transgender activist activities.

I mean, as I read various information, listened to various podcasts, interviews, I mean, on and on it went, even beyond what I thought it would have been at this point.

But so that's a little slice of where we are right now. And so the question is, well, how did we get here where we're at?

Certainly the rejection of God and his wise counsel for life, the repositioning of people as being their own sovereign and determiner of truth and moral right and wrong.

In my first lesson, I covered both of these points. So I won't repeat what I presented then, although it's foundational, again, to where we're at.

[10 : 26] But in this lesson, I want us to look at and be alerted to another, an additional biblical reality that helps us to understand the question of how did we get here?

So let me just read some verses here that, just sections of certain verses that you'll see and pick up a theme in these verses.

Romans 12, 2, Don't be conformed to this world. 1 John 2, 15, Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that's in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Then James 4, 4, You adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

[11 : 29] Then Ephesians 2, 1 and 2, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that's now at work in the sons of disobedience.

My point in reading these verses is really to remind us that the environment in which we live today is a world system that is in opposition to God.

The world system is not energized merely by those within the human sphere. You know, we can become so involved in the world, which we all have to be, and see what's going on through people and lose focus inside of what's the force behind these people in what's being presented through their lives and the agendas in which they're establishing.

As much as they would deny any unseen influence in their decision-making and agendas, God's word identifies for us that the world system is directed by the prince of the power of the air, Satan, and that he is now at work in the sons of disobedience, unbelievers, of which we all were at one point in our lives, part of that world system, influence, energized, empowered, slaves to that prince of the power of the air, the one who is continuing to work in the lives, through the lives, of the sons of disobedience, those who are of his children at this point.

So how does this all relate to answering the question, how did we get here? Well, Carol and I have discussed at times how interesting it is, how much, how such a change in our society and sexual morality has happened in the U.S.

[13 : 37] at such a rapid pace. I know these are not new sins that have just come to pass in our day. Leviticus 18.22, God's instruction to the men of Israel was, you shall not lie with a male as with a woman.

It is an abomination. In Deuteronomy 22.5, before the children of Israel went into the promised land, God gave them specific instructions as to how they, as his people, were to conduct themselves.

They would be distinct from the ungodly nations that they would battle with initially and eventually live among. And his instruction was, a woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak.

For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God. And then 1 Corinthians 11, 1 through 16, won't take time to read all those verses, but God through the Apostle Paul.

Again, coming to the believers there in the city of Corinth about the influence of the world on them, the world in which they lived, the world systems message and the voices of the world system that they would be hearing on a regular basis, that they were saved out of.

[15 : 00] The city of Corinth was an immoral city. As such, God's people were constantly exposed to these contrary views of how they should live.

One such contrary view related to distinctions between maleness and femaleness and roles in the family and the church. And they needed to be reminded that God made male and female distinct from each other.

And their appearances and roles were to reflect God's design. I mean, this is God in his love for his people sending his writers, the apostles, with the truth, the message that his people needed to hear as they were living out and pursuing godliness and holiness in the culture in which they live.

It was gracious for God to do that, to give us this message that we need to hear. And this is the message that we need to declare. And such has been Satan's activity in the world system throughout the ages and his influence in and through the sons of disobedience disobedience is why we are where we are today in sexual immorality in our country and really throughout the world.

As again, I read the material and listened to different interviews, the extent and the severity of the perversion as exists today goes really beyond the time I have discussed, have to discuss, discuss this topic today.

[16 : 40] If you want some of the resources that I heard, listened to, and read, I can pass those on to you. But in some of those cases, you have to be ready to hear some things that you never would have thought would have been existing today and that are being promoted.

It's, again, beyond what I thought. But I do want to identify five ways in which this deception, the progressive agenda, as Nathaniel Frank wrote, to transform the world has been really successfully carried out in recent years.

And I'm taking these points from Al Mohler's book on the gathering storm. The first significant event, as I've referred to already, is the Stonewall Riots.

June 28, 1969, the police raided a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village. And riots followed the police raid.

It really became a major turning point for the gay rights movement in our country. Another gay writer, Moses Kaufman, in the New York Times, wrote, one of the most important achievements of the Stonewall uprising was that it began a radical redefinition of the character of the LGBTQ person in the popular imagination.

[18 : 10] In 1969, homosexuality was still defined as a mental illness by the medical profession. And same-sex relations were a crime in 49 states.

The uprising showed the world a new image of our community. We were no longer willing to hide in closets in silence and shame. We would take to the streets and demand to be full citizens.

Well, just a year after those Stonewall riots, their efforts, the success of their efforts was seen as in New York City, they had their first gay pride parade.

And of course, we see that almost as a regular routine these days in many places. Next was the change in how the mental community looked at homosexuality.

The American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association changed their position on homosexuality as it was listed at that time as a mental illness.

[19 : 18] It needed to be viewed as a norm in human sexual activity instead of a mental illness. And so a focused group of homosexual activists pressured Robert Spitzer, the head of the Nomenclature Committee.

His committee, he and his committee were responsible for determining the language used in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders.

And the listing of mental illness for homosexuals was eliminated in 1973. Even beyond that, the opposite, those who object to it now are considered to have a mental illness of homophobia.

So, they were taken out, we were put in. The next obstacle to remove was the designation of homosexuality as sinful.

There had to be a change in the religious field as well, and this change has really taken place in many mainline denominations, many of which had already moved away from the belief in divine inspiration of the Word of God and the authority of the Word of God.

[20 : 41] Quote in Moeller's book in regard to another writer, lesbian, who wrote a book, Victory, The Triumphant Gay Revolution, explaining her position.

He says, the overwhelming victory of the homosexual movement in the last several decades could not have happened had it not been aided and abetted by liberal religious leaders, theologians, and church officials who are ready to declare that they have evolved on the question of homosexuality and were ready to lead the church in a bold new direction.

And even since that time, in 2018, there was what's called the Revoice Conference, Conference for Gay Christians, terminology that really shouldn't go together, and it was advertised as supporting, encouraging, and empowering gay, lesbian, same-sex attracted, and other LGBT Christians so they can flourish while observing the historic Christian doctrine of marriage and sexuality.

So the changes that are taking place within not just liberal churches, but many so-called evangelical churches in regard to their thoughts and stance on homosexuality and the terminology that they would use as gay Christians.

But then there also had to be a change in the legal field. Homosexual acts and behaviors needed to be decriminalized. Walter Frank, again, that gay writer, wrote Law and the Gay Rights Story.

[22 : 34] In his book, he makes the point for the gay rights movement to gain traction in American society. Arguments had to be won in the courts so that changes could be forced in the law.

And so many laws since have been passed. 1996, Romer versus Evans, the Supreme Court decisions.

no state law targeting those with the same sexual orientation could be constitutional. A state cannot amend its constitution to deny homosexuals the same basic legal protections that heterosexuals receive.

And then June 26, 2003, Lawrence versus Texas, another Supreme Court decision ruled that all laws criminalizing sodomy violated the United States Constitution.

And then of course in 2013, Windsor versus the United States, the Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act that Congress had passed in 1998 and that opened the way for legalization of same-sex marriage.

[23 : 45] So many more laws have been put forth in states. Some have been denied, others still in process, and even beyond federal and state laws, there are schools, corporations, businesses that are enacting their own policies that, again, many of you had to face and deal with that push the LGBTQ AI plus agenda and want to move that forward.

Well, the last area of change is action to normalize this agenda, this behavior. and the nation's social media and entertainment industry has really provided the platform for this.

The best summary for this agenda comes from another gay publication titled Christopher Street, Marshall Kirk, and Erastus Pill, which was a pseudonym for Hunter Madsen, wrote this article, Waging Peace, a gay battle plan to persuade straight America.

He says, where we talk is important. The visual media, film, and television are plainly the most powerful image makers in Western civilization.

The average American household watches over seven hours of television daily. Those hours have opened up a gateway into the private world of straights through which a Trojan horse might be passed.

[25 : 24] As far as desensitization is concerned, the medium is the message of normalcy. So far, gay Hollywood has provided our best cover weapon in the battle to desensitize the mainstream.

Bit by bit over the past ten years, gay characters and gay themes have been introduced into TV programs and films. On the whole, the movement has been encouraging.

I mean, again, I'm not talking about anything you have not seen, whether it's on the TV or films, and trying to just present it just as normal life that people bump into day by day.

When we go back to our verse in Ephesians 2.2, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

I mean, this is what is behind all that I've read and that is going on in our country today. We need to know the truth.

[26 : 35] We need God's perspective concerning this issue and this matter, and we can give thanks that God has provided us truth that we need to live in our world today.

We need to speak the truth, certainly the gospel, that needs to be proclaimed. But we also need to speak the truth about the issue at hand.

So the third cowboy question is, I've got to do something. Where do I go from here? Well, Peter wrote to a persecuted church, believers, scattered in different areas, living in an ungodly society, and so this is what he wrote.

1 Peter 1, 13-16, Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, don't be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as he who called you is holy, so also be holy in all your conduct.

[27 : 49] Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. He carries that same theme through in chapter 4, verse 1. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.

Then he continued in verses 2 and 3, and wrote for them to live no longer for human passions, but for the will of God.

For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

So, of course, in order to live for the will of God, we need to know the will of God. And our children need to know the will of God.

Our grandchildren need to know the will of God. Everyone needs to know the good, the very good will of God for life today and life throughout eternity.

[28 : 57] He's really reminding them to set the course of their thinking and their living, their activities in the direction of holiness. Why?

In order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. There's our main purpose. Everything comes under that umbrella, that purpose statement of living for the glory of God.

So what does that look like in regard to this sexual revolution that is going on? Well, again, just picking out some points that I could share with you, that you could go beyond this and your reading and study of the word of God.

What is God's counsel? And what is that counsel that he gives us for a biblical worldview? First of all, know the truth. Know that God is sovereign over all.

That's where memory verses has been taking us. He is God. God. First Timothy 6.15, speaking of Jesus, he who is blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

[30 : 18] To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. In Ezekiel 23, it says, the Son of Man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, thus says the Lord God, the sovereign God.

And numerous times throughout the scriptures, when the prophets were bringing a message from God to the people, the message was preceded by this declaration that God is sovereign, the sovereign Lord, sovereign God.

So as that truth about God was declared, in recognition really of God's sovereignty, the hearer was to position himself or herself properly under God's sovereignty and prepare himself to hear and do what God said.

I mean, that is why I say the foundation block for the pursuit of holiness, that understanding that God is sovereign.

When we recognize that in times of temptation, what is really being questioned in our minds? Who's going to be God here in this situation? me or God? Desire of my flesh or the written revealed will of God in his word?

[31 : 36] So at those times of temptation, it wouldn't hurt or would be helpful for us to remember who is sovereign here? Who is sovereign God at this time?

God is, not me. God is not God. God is not God. No debating about who is in charge.

What he says, I accept as authoritative. I am not God. Simple statement like that in those times of temptation. I am not God.

What he says, I accept as authoritative. The mindset provides me a firm foundation really for all of life. Because he is sovereign God as he is, then I need to pursue and understand what sovereign God says.

Remember the prophets introduced what they were going to say from God with this introduction of God as sovereign God, the Lord God.

[32 : 45] When the individual person sets himself or herself up as sovereign, life stability really is sacrificed. Because there's no real firm foundation for her to stand on.

There's no perfect, all-wise, sovereign like God to listen to and follow. So that's why the rest of life, as it says about the foolish man who built his house on the sand, it's just a matter of time before his house, his life collapses.

I mean, even if it looks like it's stable here in this world at this time, there will come a time when the big collapse will come, when he does truly have to stand before the sovereign God and he realizes I'm not sovereign.

Every knee shall bow at that time. God is sovereign God, but he is also all-wise creator of maleness and femaleness.

It's God's design. Genesis 1:27, so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.

[34 : 00] There are designers and engineers today of all kind of products, yep, they make mistakes, and we wonder at times why in the world would they have made it this way? I can't fix it or repair it.

They aren't perfect. God is perfect. His design, as it says in the scriptures, verse 31, chapter 1, God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good.

What God thought about doing, what God talked about doing, those God fashioned from the dust of the ground or from a rib, those he gave life to, were just as he wanted them to be.

And he declared what he had made to be very good. Of course, what did he design that was very good? Well, in relation to our topic, he made them male and female.

There was no deficiency in God's design. There was nothing lacking in God's design. There was no need for a third option beyond male and female.

[35 : 09] Each one was made in the image of God and uniquely designed, one to complement the other and really to show forth the wisdom and creativity of God.

Their sexual identity was fixed and it was very good. Both their outer and their inner biological features testified to who each one of them was.

there was objective biological truth testifying Adam was a male and Eve was female. Maleness and femaleness are a result of the all-wise, powerful, sovereign God's design and making.

And Jesus confirmed this in Matthew 19, 3-6. He answered those that were questioning him, have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?

And said, therefore man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. So Jesus does speak to this whole issue and this matter.

[36 : 13] Only his design makes it possible for man and woman to fill the creation mandate. God blessed them and he said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

In order to fill his creation mandate, God made Eve, she would be the complementary partner Adam needed. He couldn't accomplish the creation mandate by himself and he couldn't do it with another one like himself, another man.

For males to pursue biological medical procedures to become like women destroys their God-designed role in the creation mandate. Men and women need each other in God's designed way to fulfill that creation mandate.

As husband and wife, their bodies were designed perfectly to accomplish that purpose. I mean, this is where you're lifting people beyond just the narrow focus of self.

There's a bigger issue, bigger plan in maleness and femaleness that God has set for his glory and for their good and enjoyment in the world.

[37 : 32] Each one also had a role to fill. Eve didn't need to sacrifice her femininity to become like Adam for a fulfilling life. She didn't need to look like him and take over his role in order to be fulfilled.

The same is true with Adam. Each one would enjoy life and glorify God, the sovereign creator, as each one accepted God's very good design as good.

And when about daily life, living out their God-given roles as man and woman, that is what is good. That is where the flourishing life is, knowing God's design, accepting it as from a sovereign creator, loving, and living that out.

And so it is for people today, men and women today, God's design for male and female is very good. But we not only need to know the truth, we also need to speak the truth.

Speak the truth of the gospel. Jesus came to sinners with a gospel that brings true liberty over and over again. You'll hear in many of these quotes about how their pursuit and their path leads to true liberty.

[38 : 44] That is the distortion. Another quote from Al Mohler's book, Christians must do at least two things. Preach true gospel liberty in the face of erotic liberty and stand ready to receive the refugees of the sexual revolution.

James 1.25, the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he'll be blessed in his doing.

I mean, this is the message that we're bringing people. Their concept is it's repressive. It's one of those repressive norms that have been brought into the lives of people, men and women.

The reality is that it is a message that sets people free and at liberty to live out their true humanity as men and women.

This is the message we need to communicate. Jesus spoke in Luke 4, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

[39 : 48] He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

A quote from Jackie Hill Perry who wrote a book. She's a converted lesbian and has written a book recently, Gay Girl, Good God.

And her testimony is when salvation has taken place in the life of someone under the sovereign hand of God, they are set free from the penalty of sin and its power.

In a body without the spirit, sin is an unshakable king under whose dominion no man can flee. The entire body with its members, affections, and mind, all willfully submit themselves to sin's rule.

But when the spirit of God takes back the body that he created for himself, he sets it free from the pathetic master that once held it captive and releases it into the marvelous light of its savior.

[40 : 56] It's then able to not only want God, but it is actually able to obey God. And isn't that what freedom is supposed to be?

Here's a woman who truly knows what freedom is as a woman, as a female. Jesus told his disciples before his ascension that they would be his witnesses in Acts 1-8.

And because they and many after them were faithful and true witnesses, that witness has come down to us. And many have believed and are now the witnesses to those who also need to hear that gospel.

It's been entrusted to us now. This gospel message that people in our culture need to hear. We're not drawing back from them. As Jesus, we're moving in the direction of them.

He prayed that the Father wouldn't take us out of the world, but keep us from the world, this world system. And as such, we can move in the direction with the gospel and help them establish their identity in their union with Christ.

[42 : 05] The most important way to be recreated is through faith in Jesus Christ and in one's union with him. New identity is established.

No longer is the individual identified by sinful desires and actions. He and she is not a gay Christian, but a child of God.

The identity of the past is gone, as Paul wrote to the believers in the church at Corinth. After listing all the sins they were really named by and characterized by, he says, And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Speak the truth. Speak the gospel. But then also we need to speak the truth about his design for maleness and femaleness throughout the scriptures.

Again, we see God speaking through the writers of what his design is. I mean, in the world in which all that was questioned and distorted, the truth had to come out.

[43 : 15] And God, in his compassion and love for people to hear the truth, has that in his word and has his word preserved so that we could hear the truth, not just of the gospel, but what his design is supposed to be.

So we are bearers and witnesses of the gospel, what his design is for life. We can provide people with a message of hope of what true maleness and femaleness is.

This is God's plan for reaching out to those who are exposed to really contrary worldviews. God communicating to people so they know the true design of his creation, that design that is very good.

Those who are his witnesses of the true gospel can be witnesses of the whole counsel of God. But we need to be ready with God's counsel on sexuality.

Be ready. We need to be discerning how to approach people with his truth. But we also need to be courageous to speak the truth in love.

[44 : 22] Well, this is where we are today. We can go forth as God's witnesses, God's messengers, confidently, compassionately to a world who needs Christ and the truth.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, this morning we do give thanks. Thank you for who you are. Thank you that you are the all-wise God.

And in your great wisdom, you designed the world the way it should be. Certainly distorted now through sin. But Father, you have made us new creations in Christ Jesus.

Have opened our minds to the truth. And our minds are being renewed more and more unto that which is true and that which sets us free to live lives of true liberty.

Help us to continue to pursue Christ and the truth and to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ as we're transformed more and more into his likeness that we would be lights in the world as he was light that came into the darkness.

[45 : 32] May we do it joyfully, discerningly, compassionately, and all for your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you. You're dismissed.