

Christian Offense (part 1)

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[0:00] We welcome you who are visiting with us and we've begun a series in Sunday School last week on homosexuality and the Bible.!

But before we actually start and digging into what the Bible says about homosexuality, we've seen that this is a battle that we must face and we must fight.

God's own providence has brought us to it. We live in this place, in this time, when perhaps the most important social and moral issue of the nation is that of homosexuality, gender, marriage, those issues that cluster around it.

And part of our faithfulness as a disciple of Jesus will be proven then on whether or not we are faithful to Christ and His Word.

And we'll do that in two ways, with offense and defense. We started with the defense, the defensive posture of the Christian soldier in a day when truth is being under attack.

[1:32] And we saw it illustrated in David's mighty men that the thing that marked them out was that when the rest of the army was in retreat, as the attack of the Philistines was coming, these men stood their ground.

They planted their feet. They refused to run with the rest of the army. And they fought. And through that determination not to budge, God won a great victory.

And what we see in the physical realm is an illustration of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, the greater son of David, the King David and his kingdom.

How is his kingdom to be fought for? Well, one way is for us to stand our ground and that precisely where the truth of our king is being attacked.

So sometimes being faithful to our king is simply to plant our feet and stand our ground, to defend the truth.

[2:35] And so we saw that Jude calls us to earnestly contend for the faith because it's under attack. It's what he saw in his own day and we can see it in our day.

So we kind of concluded with that, our duty then of defending the truth. And we saw one reason why.

There's many motives, many reasons. Why should the Christian defend the truth of God on this topic of homosexuality? I was struck just with the testimonials from you folks as you shared where it is in your life that the opportunities are there for you to defend this truth of God.

Just how prevalent it is. And I think that's good for us. And many eyes and ears are better than these two. So as you see in the news and as you see issues in your workplace and families, yes, I would like to hear that.

It would be helpful for the class to hear it if it's something that's pertinent to what we're studying. But I want us to think a little bit more on why. We saw how hard it is to stand when everybody else is running.

[3:53] We need some strong motivation. And I think what we've seen so far is it's our duty.

It's commanded, isn't it? That we're to set ourselves for the defense of God's truth. So that's enough. If it was period, go, soldier.

Be faithful to your master. But then we saw another motive, didn't we? And I was fumbling for the reference. It wasn't Matthew 8.38. It's Mark 8.38. Where Jesus says, if anyone is ashamed of me and my words.

Not just me, but my words. Okay? This is Jesus' words. If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

We feel that, don't we? We don't want to have Jesus in the day of judgment be ashamed of us and say, I don't know this one. He's not mine. Depart from me.

[5:04] Never knew you. No, we want him to own us and say, Father, yeah, he wasn't perfect. He didn't stand up in every situation and defend me and my words.

But he did. He did. And he confessed his cowardice. And he prayed for boldness. And he's mine. I died for every one of his sins. Accept him. I paid the price his sins deserved. Well, that's a motive to stand up now in an evil day for our Lord and his word.

It's in the battle that the soldier is able to prove his love and devotion and loyalty to his master. Not sitting around the palace where there's no battle.

No, it's in the fight. And you know, the opposite is true then. Not only Jesus' threat that if you're ashamed of me and my words, I'll be ashamed. The opposite is true, isn't it?

[6:10] That if you're not ashamed of me and my words, I will not be ashamed of you. And if there's ever a time we don't want him ashamed, it's in that day of judgment. But that's the positive side of Jesus' words.

That God says, those who honor me, I will honor. What an honor to have Jesus own us in that day. So honor him.

Stand up for his truth. Now. And he will stand up for you and honor you. Remember, that was the little piece of paper that somebody slipped into Eric Little's hand as he came to run that last heat of the Olympics.

He had honored the Lord by honoring his day. And he'd given up his favored race, his favorite race that he was supposed to win. A shorter race. But because it was on the Sabbath, he would not violate his conscience against God's command.

And he honored the Lord. And so, the next day, he comes to run a longer race. And just before the race, the American slips into this Scottish man's hand, a little piece of paper.

[7:22] And it says, those who honor me, I will honor. And he put his head up. And he won and set a new Olympic record.

Well, now, it doesn't always happen that way, does it? But the verse was encouragement to him, wasn't it? And I trust that we'll be encouraged. Why should we defend the truth of God's word about homosexuality?

Because our God is worthy of it. Why else? Why should we defend the truth? What are some other motives and reasons why this is something we can't just be silent and give up, ground on?

Dare? It's the loving thing to do. It's the loving thing to do. For who? For all involved.

For all involved. Okay? Why else? Why should we stand when it's so hard?

[8:29] Do you have any reasons that would push you? Open your mouth. Yes? Okay. What is being attacked?

What part of God's glory is being attacked today on the issue of homosexuality? Because let's think about that. Whatever we do or to do for the glory of God, we want to see him held up and exalted. Well, what is it about this whole matter of homosexuality that's attacking his glory? Yes? His holiness. His holiness. Does God have a right over my body to tell me how I am to express myself sexually?

Is that his right? Is he the holy God who can make holy commands and bind me? And am I duty-bound and responsible to live in a manner that is in line with his holiness?

Yeah. But they're challenging that, aren't they? The very holiness of God. So, again, we're dealing with the very creation. The glory of God in creation.

[9:33] Did God create all things good or didn't he? If he's being blamed as creating something evil, then it's an aim against his glory as the creator, isn't it?

Again, we'll be getting into more in depth with all of these, but what is being attacked in God's glory? Is designed for what? Okay. Okay.

And that reaches into the whole issue of gender and who am I as a human being? Have I accepted God's design that he made me a male?

Have I accepted God's design that he made me a female? You see, that's part of it. But what other? His design for marriage as well, right?

Isn't that under attack? Am I willing to accept God's design for marriage that a man should be married to one woman and that union for life till death do them part?

[10 : 34] Because that's the arena in which God's glory is to be displayed as to the relationship of Jesus to his church.

You see, this is striking at the root of some very important things. It's not a minor thing that's being challenged today. It's the glory of God in marriage that is being attacked.

So, excellent. That's at the very root of all of our motivation, isn't it? That our God and his glory is being attacked. Anything else on that point before we go on to other things?

All right? Yeah, Mike? Right. And that's where it starts. Have I accepted the fact that the image of God for mankind is expressed in maleness and expressed in femaleness?

And that's God's decision as to which he made me. All right. What other motivations? We're moved by the glory of God, the honor of God.

[11 : 41] Anything else? Okay. So, if that's a block, if that is the dominant life sin of the person, it's keeping them from Christ.

Is that not motivation enough to stir our hearts with compassion to want to remove that obstacle?

And we've got to start by pointing out that there is such an obstacle.

It gets back to what Deir said. That is the loving thing to do. And they can't be saved as long as they're hanging on to a lie. It's the truth that will set them free. And so, for the sake of their own salvation, for the sake of their eternal souls, we go to them.

Okay. So, if the ball is rolling down the hill, if we do nothing, it'll keep rolling. So, we need to stand into the battle and stop.

What other motives, though, for doing so? Motives. Yes. Okay. There's the concern for our children. And not just our own children, but the children of our nation.

[12 : 52] Do you realize the confusion that is being instilled into adolescents who are at an age where they don't know who they are, what they are? They're going through such change and feelings.

And if at that point in their life they're being told, well, you know, there's more than two genders. You may be a woman in a man's body.

Or you may be a man in a woman's body. Have you ever considered that that may be your gender? That you're a homosexual or you're a lesbian? You're introducing such thoughts and lies of the devil at a critical time in their development.

And so, for the sake of our children, our own children, but the children of our land as well, we ought to speak up and defend the truth.

What else? Excellent. So, again, we're back to the glory of God. Is he the unchanging, eternal mind whose morals are unchanging?

[14 : 00] Or does he just change his mind with the day and age? That's right. Our God is different and we need to stand up for him. What about our nation? We are to care about our nation, aren't we?

Pray for the good. Even when the Israelites went up to Babylon and were there for 70 years in captivity, settle down, build your house, plant your garden, and pray for the prosperity of Babylon. Because that's where you live. Are we concerned about our nation? I was thinking of that this morning. It was a historian gibbon that I remember as a teenage boy hearing quoted in sermons about our country.

And his observation on the Roman Empire was that it was eaten up from within. Didn't need an army to come in more powerful from without. But it was just that there was such deadness and corruption within.

Like one of those huge oak trees that seemed so unmovable and will stand there forever. But what you don't see is that ants have been eating out the inside and it's hollow.

[15 : 13] And the next storm that hits it brings it down. And then you see, ah, it was eaten up from within. And that's the reality that nations, civilizations have crumbled from within as well as being attacked from without.

Righteousness exalts a nation. But sin is a reproach, an embarrassment, something that drags down any people.

It's not just true of the Old Testament nation of Israel. It's true of any people. Every nation, righteousness exalts them. Sin pulls them down.

So, for the sake of our nation, this sin is harmful to our nation. It's harmful to marriage, which is a great gift to society and civilization.

And you start unraveling that foundational institution of marriage. And you have fiddled with something that the good of the nation is built upon.

[16 : 23] The moral conscience of a nation. Of what is right and wrong. And you start misinforming conscience. You are robbing a nation of a voice of God within.

The rulership of our nation. The freedoms in our nation. The education of our children. Even the weakening of our positive influence internationally can be done through what's happening with homosexuality.

So, for the good of the nation, we ought to stand up and do what's best for our nation. All right, I think we need to move on.

Many different motives. Again, just showing us that this is not a minor issue. Just a blip on the radar. And we get over this and we'll just cruise right on down the road happily ever after.

Not so. But now this leads us to the other part. We said that the battle against homosexuality for the Christian needs to be fought in two ways. Defensively.

[17 : 32] And we've done that. Now, offensively. And the offensive posture of the Christian in this battle is to lovingly and humbly pursue, pursue the salvation of homosexuals with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All right? We're to defend the truth. We're to take our stand. We're not to give up an inch. And yet, at the same time, we are to offensively, humbly, lovingly pursue the salvation of homosexuals.

It's already been referred to. It's a damning lie that you can be a Christian and a homosexual. That you can just feed and follow your lust for same sex and still be a Christian.

And there's churches aplenty where you can join the church and even be a pastor in it if you're practicing homosexual. But it's a lie from hell, as we'll see when we come to those texts in the Bible. And so, again, it is out of concern that if they're holding on to a lie that will damn them, we must bring the truth of Christ and his gospel to them.

[18 : 52] It demands that they repent and believe and be forgiven their sin and come to know the Lord Jesus and eternal life in him. That is the most loving thing to do.

Not to coddle them saying, you're okay and I'm okay. You're just a little different from me, but we're all okay and God accepts us all just as the way we are. No. We must positively pursue their salvation.

Now, let's consider today how to take this offense, this offensive in the battle. Turn to Proverbs 11 and verse 30. A verse from the Old Testament and then several from the New.

Proverbs 11 and verse 30. Someone read that loudly, please, for us. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.

He who wins souls is wise. Charles Bridges in his commentary on Proverbs says, We win them by the patient energy of faith and love.

[20 : 07] We win souls by the patient energy of faith and love. By showing that same kindness and love of God our Savior that was shown to us in our sin.

He says, We should be like magnets for our attractive power in winning souls. Winning souls.

Notice the New Testament counterpart in 1 Corinthians chapter 9. The Apostle Paul was one of these wise men who was winning souls.

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 9. And verses 9 through 22. 1 Corinthians 9.

19 through 22. And I want you to notice how often he uses this word win, gain. Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible.

[21 : 18] To the Jews, I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law. Though I myself am not under the law.

So as to win those under the law. To those not having the law, I became like one not having the law. Though I am not free from God's law, but am under Christ's law.

So as to win those not having the law. To the weak, I became weak to win the weak. I become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessing. To win them. To win them. You notice it's parallel with to save them.

We seek the salvation of sinners by winning them. And in order to do so, Paul was willing to sacrifice the expression of some of his liberties in Christ.

[22 : 26] Now, we would do wrong if we said by this that Paul means then, in order to reach this homosexuals, we become like the homosexual. That's not what he's talking about. He did not

violate any command of God.

He talks about that. I'm still under the law of God and the law of Christ. But in those things that were indifferent and in those freedoms that he had, whether he would eat pork or not, when he's with a Jew, he'll refrain from pork.

Why? Because he wants to win the Jew. And when he's talking with a pagan, there are certain things that he will do differently there.

Because he wants to win them. Again, people are meant to be one to Christ. One to Christ.

Have we thought about that? How do you win someone? By being winsome, right? Isn't that where we get that? We win them with winsomeness, right?

[23 : 27] Waving placards and chanting, God hates fags is unlikely to win anyone to Christ. You say, but I'm defending the truth.

You may be doing more harm to the truth because you are not aggressively seeking the salvation of the sinner with love and humility.

Homosexuals are hated by a significant part of our population. You say, oh, all I ever see is everybody standing up for the homosexual. No, they are hated by no small part of our population. It's seen in the queer jokes, the poking fun at them, calling them derogatory names. Now the PC police are calling them out on this, but it's still there, isn't it? There's that undercurrent in it, bubbles over, and somebody gets lambasted for derogatory names.

But in meeting a Christian, a homosexual should find something refreshingly different, that this person loves me in a unique way, in a way that's different from the world.

[24 : 39] Seeking to win them, you see, means we will be winsome in our way of speaking to them, about them. Now that doesn't mean that we can only say things they want to hear.

No, we'll say some hard things, things they don't want to hear. But it does mean that when we have hard things to say to them, we will say them in as winsome a way as we can in still being faithful to their souls.

They must see us and hear us and sense that we are coming toward them with good news to help them rather than to smash them.

Sadly, some within the church have given all Christians a bad name by the proud, self-righteous, unloving, judgmental attitudes, yelling at them, unkind, offensive language.

Phil Robinson had great courage to stand up against the prevailing tide of pro-homosexuality, but I could have wished that he would have used less uncouth and offensive language.

[26 : 01] You see, we fight on two fronts, defense, but also the offensive, the offense, the love and kindness of our Savior to win the sinner.

Colossians 4, 5. Turn over. It's just a few letters later. Colossians 4, chapter 4, and verses 5 and 6. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders.

Remember, he who winneth souls is wise. It takes wisdom to win souls. So be wise in the way that you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity.

Let your conversation be always full of what? grace. Full of grace. Seasoned with salt so that you may know how, know how to answer everyone.

Not only know what to answer everyone, but know how to answer them in a gracious way. How we say things is often as important as what we say.

[27 : 23] Are you more likely to be convinced of something that you're doing wrong if it's spoken to you in love and respect rather than in an arrogant, judgmental fashion?

Which are you more likely to receive and consider and say, you know, he's right. You know, she's right there. Often, we react against the judgmental, self-righteous, condescending attitude.

And we never really consider the element of truth in their mouths. And the same thing can happen with homosexuals. We may say, well, I'm speaking the truth. I'm speaking the truth.

It's often how we say it that is important. Over to Ephesians chapter four, a verse that tells us both what to say and how to say it. Ephesians 4 and verse 15.

What are we to speak in this verse? Ephesians 4, 15. What are we to speak? The truth. How are we to speak it? In love.

[28 : 31] 1 Timothy, or 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 17. Show proper respect to everyone. Did you know that everyone includes homosexuals?

We need to say that because we're to show them proper respect. You say, they don't show us any respect. It doesn't say that. Show proper respect for everyone.

1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 15. We're to be ready at all times to give an answer for the hope that we have within us. Here's part of our witness and our seeking to win others. And how are we to be giving this witness? With gentleness and respect. It's no easy thing to, on the one hand, contend for the faith, and yet to do it in a way that is not contentious, but winsome. to take a firm stand against their positions, their practices, their teachings, and yet to do so with love and humility, respect, and kindness. [29 : 49] We find that many within the homosexual community are so in your face, down your throat with their agenda. it makes it so hard to respond with respect and love and gentleness and kindness.

I say, this will try us to the bone. This will try us as a soldier of Christ, as a church of Christ, whether we will love our enemies or treat them as they have treated us.

When they speak that way to us, it presents another opportunity for us to demonstrate something that's not human. with that love of our Savior. So, it's hard to battle with them.

We're battling against them in one sense, aren't we? That's part of the defense. We've got to fight against what they're believing and holding on to, the lie, and yet, we're battling for them.

Do you sense that tension? I find it hard. How do you fight against them and for them at the same time? It's kind of like football, and there's the defensive cornerback, and some halfbacks made his way through the line around the end, and he's gained 10 yards, and you've got to take him down, and so you put your shoulder down, and you push as hard as you can, and you put your shoulder in his bread basket, you cough up the ball, and all the air in his lungs, and he's laying there flat on his face, and you don't do one of those jigs of, hey, look at me, but you go over and you pick him up, and you pat him on the rump, and you say, good run.

[31 : 25] You flatten him, and then you say something kind to him. I don't know if that's what it looks like in football, but there's got to be something of that in dealing with the homosexual.

We will not give in an inch to this teaching, and yet, we must pursue them in love.

Paul says in seeking to win souls for Christ that he was simply following the example of Christ. You see it there in 1 Corinthians. We were reading chapter 9.

You turn a page over to chapter 10, the end of chapter 10. I'm trying to please everybody in every way. Jews, Greeks, church of God, for I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many so that they may be saved.

Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ. And what do we see in Jesus, the greatest winner of souls to ever walk the planet?

[32 : 27] Look at Matthew chapter 9 and verse 10. The great winner of souls. Defense, offense, he had it both, didn't he?

We see him speaking the truth against the heirs and lies so pointedly and defending the truth, but we also see him aggressively seeking the salvation of those holding to lies.

Matthew 9 and verse 10. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners, you see it's in quotes, came and ate with him and his disciples.

It's in quotes for a reason. It's a technical term for people of low reputation, the dregs of society, the most scorned sinners. This can be seen in who they're lumped with.

They're lumped with who? Tax collectors, those scorned traitors that are ripping us off and giving our money to the Romans. Sinners.

[33 : 35] And Jesus is sitting down at table with them. And the Pharisees cannot stomach that. In verse 11, when the Pharisees saw this, notice they didn't come directly to Jesus.

They're going to beat up on his disciples. They asked the disciples, why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? Well, Jesus heard it and he answers them.

It's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I'm not here just to hobnob with these sinners in order to have a good old time with them.

just to be one of them, a companion in their evil. No, I'm here as a doctor. I'm stepping into this familial relationship.

I'm drawing near to them to win them. I'm here on a mission. I'm coming close like a doctor does. A doctor has to get close enough to the patient.

[34 : 34] He's not contaminating himself with their illness, but close enough to help them with a cure. Jesus says, that's why I'm coming this close to sinners.

But you go and learn what this means. I desire mercy, that is love, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

The other gospels tell us to repentance. You see, he's got teeth in his message. He's come to call them to what? To repent of their sinful way.

And yet, he draws near to them. Eats meal with them. Over in Luke chapter 15, the chapter starts, now the tax collectors and sinners.

There they are again, those down and outers, that hated group. They were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and teachers of the law muttered, this man welcomes sinners and eats with them.

[35:42] No wonder they crowded around to hear him. He welcomed them. They sensed that he was for them. Now he said some things that were against them, but they also sensed that he was for them.

He welcomed them. He welcomed them. Friend of sinners is a criticism that he wore like a badge. And he's still the friend of sinners.

And all of his faithful souls, soldiers, are friends of sinners. The one who is holy, blameless, and pure, set apart from sinners is also the friend of sinners.

You say, how can both of those be? How can you have defense and offense at the same time? You see it? Perfectly in our Lord Jesus. Befriending them not to become like them, but to win them.

Chapter 19 of Luke, he's seeking another one of these sinners, Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector.

And when he calls him down out of his tree, what do the people say?

[36:56] They mutter, he's gone to be the guest of a sinner. Jesus says, today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a son of Abraham.

For the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost. You see, I'm on an offensive mission. I'm here, yes, I'm defending the truth of my father, but I'm also here to save sinners who are under the lies of the devil.

And if you don't understand that, you will never understand why eat with sinners, why welcome sinners, why go to their homes. And there ought to be something that the world doesn't understand when they see Christians aggressively, lovingly, humbly, moving toward homosexuals for their salvation.

They ought to be saying, that doesn't make sense. I thought they were against them. Well, we are against what they hold, but we are for them in the sense that we want to see them saved.

We want them to know the forgiveness that we know. Go to John 4 and see Jesus' actions towards a sinner.

[38:14] She's a Samaritan, immoral woman who's had five husbands and is living with a man that's not her husband. And Jesus is tired. He's shot. The disciples go into town for lunch and Jesus sits on the well because he's worn out and here she comes.

Our assignment for next week, because our time is gone, is to find the ways that Jesus was winsome in this passage.

And as you do, also look for the ways that he spoke up for the truth. You see, Jesus did not just say things that that woman wanted to hear, did he?

I want you to identify what are some of the hard things that Jesus said to her that she wanted to hear. And yet, the ways that Jesus presented himself in a way that was winsome.

So that's your assignment. John 4, the great winner of souls, Jesus, added with an immoral Samaritan woman.

[39:22] We'll pick up there next week. We're dismissed. We're dismissed.