

Christian Offense (part 2)

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Well, we're looking at the topic of homosexuality in the Bible. And just by way of review, what are the two postures of the Christian soldier that's faithful to Jesus in this area?

What were they? We need two things. What? Defense and offense. Can somebody just briefly tell us what does it mean to have a defensive posture in the battle?

To stand our ground. What else? What does that mean? All right.

For the truth of God. Thy truth unchanging. We just sang. And so we're standing up for God's unchanging truth. And we're not giving an inch on it. And we're going to see how all sorts of forces are twisting the scriptures to their own destruction.

And we're going to need, if we're faithful, to stand up for it. I've been looking for this quote and I found it this week. I meant to have it two weeks ago. It's by Martin Luther. And it's on that passage in 1 Timothy 4.

[1:11] But he says, as a minister of the gospel, what it means to be a faithful minister in times of battle. If I professed with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ.

However boldly I may be professing Christ. For where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is tested. So, we need to be equipped to make a defense for the truth of God.

And that's one of the aims of these messages and this series. That we might be thoroughly equipped with God's word to not budge an inch on his teaching regarding sexuality.

Now, can someone explain our duty offensively then? We shifted last week to the offensive. What is the offensive that the faithful soldier of Jesus is to take?

Good. With humility, wisdom, winsomeness, gentleness. To move toward the homosexual. Not to retreat from them.

[2:37] Not just to lob bombs at them. But to move toward them with the love and compassion of Christ. With the gospel that holds out forgiveness of sins for any who have strayed.

And we looked last week at those passages. One in the old and one in the new. Talk about winning souls. He that wins souls is wise. And how Paul over and over said, I do this in order that I might win some.

That I might win others. I might see them saved. So, to be winsome in our presentation. In our interaction with those that differ with us on this score.

Can you tell the difference? When someone's trying to put you down or lift you up. It may be the same words that they're speaking. But it's the way that they speak.

The look in their eye. The tone of their voice. Their body language. That they can say the same thing. And be putting you down. With a self-righteous judgmental attitude. Or they can be seeking to lift you up.

[3:45] That's what we need to distinguish in our own lives. And be sure that we're moving toward them to seek to lift them higher. We saw it in Paul's writings and labors.

We saw it in the Lord Jesus. Whose example Paul was imitating. And whom we are to imitate. What did the Pharisees and religious leaders often accuse Jesus of on this score?

What did they slander him with? A friend of sinners. And we looked at some of those passages last week. And we saw how Jesus wore that as a badge of honor.

Because that was precisely why he came. To save sinners. And so he befriended them. He who is wholly separate from sinners moved toward sinners. As a doctor coming into the emergency room. To help. To get close enough to help them. Not to become like them. But to bring them out of their sin sickness. Yes. And so he befriends them.

[4:47] That's why he's here. And will never understand the incarnation. Just as the Pharisees and the rulers never understood the fact that Jesus had come from heaven.

Unless we understand that he came to seek and to save that which was lost. You remember in those parables in Luke 15.

We have three of them. The lost sheep. The lost coin. And the lost son. And they all followed this introduction in Luke 15.

Now the tax collectors and sinners. And we saw that word sinners. Was a classification of all the low down immoral people of the day.

They were all gathering around to hear him. That in itself says something to us about our Savior doesn't it? That sinners gathered around to hear him.

[5:45] And the Pharisees and teachers of the law muttered. This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. Then Jesus tells these three stories. What are the lessons about homosexuality.

That we can learn from those three stories that Jesus taught that day. Any? This is kind of review. We spoke about it.

But we didn't. I didn't ask you that question. But I think you're familiar enough with the lost sheep. The lost coin. And the lost son. What are some lessons we can learn as we're talking about sinners. And the way that Jesus taught in those parables. Yes. Don't give up on them. Just keep looking. And keep looking. What else? It was concerned.

It was important. Exactly. In each case. The shepherd. The woman. And the father. Were seeking. Weren't they? They were seeking.

[6:42] They were longing. To see that which was lost. Recovered. So we're seeing something of the heart of God.

And the perfect God man. Jesus. In those parables. That if we would understand Jesus. We must see that when he looks at the homosexual. He is seeking. There is this brokenness. There is this longing to see him saved from that sin. And brought home to God. And that's to be our attitude.

What else do we see? Was it a fruitless thing? Was it for naught? That he went seeking? Or did we not find that in every case. The lost was found. And brought back. That tells us something. That God is in the business of saving the worst of sinners.

[7:37] But what do we learn about what happened after that? After the lost was found.

Do you remember those stories? What do we learn from that? Okay. And again we're talking about the worst of sinners. Okay. And what's the attitude of heaven. When one of those.

And we're talking about homosexuals now. So when a homosexual is saved. And brought home. To relationship with God through Jesus Christ. What happens in heaven?

There is joy. There is celebration. And you see. These stories have two prongs of application. One for the sinner. Sinner.

You can be saved. Whoever you are. You can come to know the deliverance and freedom of the gospel. And the forgiveness of the gospel. But there's another prong of application in that setting.

[8:37] In those three parables. And it's for the church. Do we rejoice? Do we long for? Do we seek the salvation of the down and out sinner?

When one is saved. What is our attitude? Do we have more joy? Over someone in the congregation that's converted? Some one of our children?

Or do we enter into the joy of heaven? You see. So again. Jesus is teaching us these things. We then came to John 4.

And that's where we dropped off. And I left you with that assignment. To just read through. That conversation of Jesus with the woman.

At the well of Sychar. Now she's a Samaritan. And she's immoral. And so she fits this category of sinners. That indeed homosexuals would be classified into in our own day.

[9:40] As to the word as Jesus is applying it. And so. Tell me. How did Jesus express kindness and grace in dealing with this woman?

All right? In a way that really disarms her. And the reason it disarms her is because she's not used to being treated this way. What were some of those ways?

Yes. Yes. Becky. Yeah. Yeah. Do you have any homosexuals in your life?

Do you speak to them? Do you move toward them? Or do you just retreat? And I've got to stay away from him or her. Jesus moves toward her.

By talking to her. Excellent. What else does he do? And why else? Why is that so radical? Why was that so radical? What did?

[10:47] What all was stacked against Jesus talking to this woman? Good. The social courtesies and rules and mores just said you don't do that sort of thing.

And Jesus broke them when the gospel was at stake. He didn't act right as to the politically correct way to act if God's cause was at stake.

And so here's this woman. And there's even the thought that the reason she comes at noon and the heat of the day to get water is because all the other respectable women in town would come in the morning when it was cool.

And she had learned that she wasn't welcome there. And so she comes at noon. And lo and behold there's a Jew sitting on the well and she's got to get water out of it.

And as she's sheepishly throwing her bucket down the well, he asks her for a drink. That's almost to put himself under her in one sense, isn't it?

[11:56] Would you do me a favor? He's asking. And put that into your mind and think about it. The son of God asking this woman for a drink.

There's something of humility even in asking for a favor from her. And just in speaking to her, she's taken aback, isn't she? Men don't speak with women, immoral ones especially.

Jews don't speak with Americans. She's used to hearing hateful words, hateful looks coming out from the moral and from the Jews toward a Samaritan.

And so he's taken an interest in her. And he's talking with her. And he's carrying on a respectful conversation. He's talking to her in a way that she's probably not used to being talked to.

And that kindness arrested her. And it disarmed her and impressed her all at once. And at the end of the day, what's she doing?

[13:02] She's forgotten the very reason she came outside the city. Leaves her water pot. Runs back into town and says, I've got to tell you about the guy I just met. He knew everything about me.

Could he not be the Messiah? And they all came out of the city. Just because of her, the way she spoke about him and what she told them. She was so enthusiastic about this person that she met.

Now let me ask you. Do you think that, did Jesus only speak things to her that she liked to hear?

Was that it? That he was just such a pushover that he just, oh, everything about you. You're wonderful. You're okay just as you are. God accepts you as you are.

What did he say that was truth with an edge on it? Go get your husband. And then when she says, I have no husband, his follow-up.

[14:07] You've spoken the truth. The truth is you've had five and the one you now have is not your husband. What else did he say that was a truth with an edge on it?

In other words, sin matters to God. That's what Jesus is saying. And don't think that you can sweep your sin under the rug and come to me, Messiah, for salvation, for the living water of eternal life.

You've got to deal with your sin. Go call your husband. What else did he say to her? Remember?

Jason? Yeah, your religion is all wrong. Your religion is wrong. Well, that cuts deep, doesn't it?

It was a cultural thing. She's a Samaritan and they worshipped on Mount Gerizim. And the Jews said to worship. And he says, you don't even know what you're worshipping. Salvation is of the Jews.

Wow. That's like a slap in the face. But it was truth. And yet, in the end, she runs into town saying, come on, come and hear him for yourself.

[15:20] So, it tells me that there was something in the way he even said those truths with an edge that she didn't shut down.

That perhaps he had already shown enough love and compassion to her that had built enough capital so that she was willing to hear a little thing, something that was hard.

So, let's learn from our Savior. Here's the ultimate winner of souls. And she herself is converted and many in that town.

Samaritans embraced a Jewish Messiah. Now, we too will need to speak of sin to the homosexual. We'll need to speak of judgment of God, of hell, for all who do not repent and believe.

But we need to do it as Jesus did. Sometimes with tears streaming down his faces, sobbing.

[16:29] That's the picture we see of the disciples when Jesus says, oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered you, but you were not willing.

It was with tears that he spoke about the coming judgment that was coming, that his heart was broken. Not rejoicing with some devilish glee that, well, you rejected me, but your time's coming. No, you don't get that. And I wonder if homosexuals get that from us. Do they get the sense that though we have to speak of sin and its consequences of hell, that it hurts us to see them remaining in their sin and not coming to Christ?

The Lord Jesus says, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. I take no pleasure. This is Ezekiel. The Lord's speaking back in Ezekiel 33, 11.

And this is our Lord Jesus. I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways.

[17:41] Why will you die, O house of Israel? I wonder if homosexuals sense that our hearts are broken, that they're lost, and that we're really wanting to see them turn.

We're wanting to see them live, to really enjoy forgiveness, salvation, relationship with Christ. Now, I think the testimony of Rosaria Butterfield can encourage us here.

And I've shared this before from the pulpit. I want to go into a little bit more detail this morning. She wrote a book called *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*.

Rosaria was a radical lesbian feminist professor at Syracuse University in the English department and teaching in the Center for Women's Studies.

Her English studies were in the 19th century literature rooted in ideas of Freud and Marx and Darwin. Her primary field of study was postmodernism.

[18:47] Her specialty was queer theory, a postmodern form of gay and lesbian studies. She was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church and the coordinator of the welcoming committee, which was the gay and lesbian advocacy group, making sure that they felt accepted just as they were, that there was nothing wrong with them.

And having just read a few pages into the book, I was convinced that it had the right title, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*.

If there was ever anyone that was the least likely to be saved, it was Rosaria. I wonder if you had known her, if she would have been on your prayer list, or if you would have just thought, I've got other people to pray for, not her.

Well, she was studying and writing against the religious right, and she published a critique in the local newspaper about the promise keepers for their conservative views on gender. And in response, she received a huge batch of mail, and she sorted it into two big paper boxes, one labeled hate mail and the other labeled fan mail.

But she received a letter from a pastor, Ken Smith, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in town, and she writes, Yes, it was the kindest letter of opposition that I had ever received.

[20:21] It challenged her position, clearly opposing her views, but there was also a kindness toward her that even came through the printed page.

And so she was torn which box to put it in. It wasn't fan mail, but neither was it hate mail. And so it sat on her desk, and she threw it in the wastebasket several times that week, but each time went and dug it back out and put it back on the desk.

There was something haunting her about the letter. And attached to the letter was an invitation to call and to discuss more in depth these matters. Well, after a week, she called, And she was invited to his home for supper along with his wife.

Well, she said, I was excited to meet a real, live, born-again Christian. I mean, she'd been reading about them, studying the religious rites, and now she would be able to meet one and to see how they lived and to find out why he believed such silly ideas.

She talks about pulling into the driveway and how self-conscious she felt about her pro-abortion, I'm sorry, yes, pro-choice and gay bumper stickers.

[21:46] But she found Pastor Ken and his wife to be in their 70s. And they at once set her at ease with their kindness, their easy style, their openness, and their sincerity.

They didn't fit the stereotypes she had of Christians, like those Westboro Baptist church people that wave their signs that God hates fags.

He didn't fit that mold. She thought they were all like that. Nor did his prayers, his prayer before supper, fit the stereotype.

She'd heard Christians pray at abortion clinics and gay parades, more like harangues. But Ken's prayer before the meal was sincere. It was as if God was in the room and he was talking to him.

It was personal. It was humble. It included the confession of his sins. And she found herself enjoying her time and conversation with him that evening. Was not Ken and his wife following the example of that great winner of souls who ate and drank with sinners, going among them as a doctor, concerned for their well-being?

[22 : 59] They had invited her into their home. They'd fed her, listened to her, dialogued, spoke truth, but all in love, kindness.

Treating her with dignity. The kind of dignity that anyone created in the image of God deserves. And she found it alluring, attractive, winsome, and she kept going back to discuss the Bible.

Not just to get the food. No, she wanted to talk further about the scriptures. She was reading and rereading the Bible five hours a day and was eventually converted.

They're speaking the truth in love and with respect was used by God to win her to Christ. They did not bash her to Christ. They did not yell and harangue and argue her to Christ.

They won her to Christ. I'm not diminishing in any bit the fact that God, the Holy Spirit, had to invade her heart and give her a new heart.

[24 : 13] Or even the love and kindness with which they presented the truth would have been rejected to her dying day. But I am saying that God used their winsomeness to win her to Christ.

And as she began to attend the church in that period of time, they too were tested by her presence with them. A lesbian and her friends then later that also joined her.

But they loved on her. They moved towards her in kindness. They welcomed her and her friends and ministered to them with both words and deeds.

And I tell you in reading that I just had to go right to Grace Fellowship Church and say what would happen if we had a lesbian couple visit us today?

I know what would happen. I know that many of you would move toward them in love. and I trust that God will so work in our hearts that that will be all of us.

[25 : 21] And that folks coming in to Grace Fellowship that tell us you're such a welcoming congregation. That that same sense would be felt by lesbians and homosexuals and every other style of sinner.

You won't believe that place on South Berkey Street. I've tasted love, respect, dignity there that I've not found anywhere in the world.

And that itself could be the lure on the hook that keeps bringing them back even as it was with Rosaria. we need to be ready to share with any slave of any sin with humility and love the offer of forgiveness and freedom in Jesus' name.

To be against the sin of homosexuality and against the social agenda of homosexuals but to be for the sinner.

In the words of our grace hymn O Church Arise our call to war to love the captive soul and to rage against the captor.

[26 : 44] Love the captive save your rage for the captor pity the slave hate the master. That's the call to war.

And this will try us as a church will test us. And so we need a good defense because we're not talking about just telling them everything that they want to hear.

No, we're talking about sin, judgment, hell. We're talking about the need to repent in order to be forgiven.

But we're doing it with love and we need a good defense and we need a good offense and we need them working together. And that I say will try us and test us as individuals and as a church to the max.

Sadly, much of the church of Jesus Christ is caving in and accepting the new homosexual hermeneutic, letting the truth go. Well, I guess if God made you that way, then God must be okay with it all.

[27 : 50] other segments of the church are defending the truth, but they're doing it not with love. Brothers and sisters, we must do better.

Our Christ calls us to do better. The gospel that saved us from sin calls us to do better. The honor of Christ's church in a wicked age calls us to do better.

Let's not draw the wrong conclusion from all of this and think if only we were more winsome, homosexuals wouldn't hate us, neither would they think that we hate them, and warm relations would happen.

None were more winsome than Jesus, and John 4 is not the summation of Jesus' response from sinners, is it? none were more winsome than him.

was full of grace and truth, the scripture says. That means that when he spoke the truth, his mouth was dripping with grace. Psalm 45, to your lips have been anointed with grace.

[29:07] But still he was hated. Why? In John 4, turn over to chapter 7 and verse 7. What does it say? Someone read it for us. Why was he hated If he spoke the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.

Talking to his unconverted brothers, of course the world can hate you, you're one of them, but it hates me. And the reason it hates me is because what I keep testifying about them, present tense verb, is that what they're doing is evil.

Jesus wasn't going to give an inch on that. Well, you're okay, God really accepts what, no, go and sin no more, unless the worst thing happened to you.

And so we find that we need to be careful of thinking, you know, if we're just more winsome, there wouldn't be this huge divide between the church and the homosexual community.

Wouldn't be such hatred. We'd win them all. Most homosexuals will not be happy until and unless you will say that God approves of your behavior.

[30:25] They want more than tolerance. They want and demand acceptance. This is normal, this is healthy, this is right in the eyes of God.

I'm speaking especially of those that call themselves the gay Christian movement. Others don't care what God thinks, obviously, but the gay Christian, and we'll talk more about that term later, they will not be happy until you can say that God accepts their homosexuality.

So no matter how nicely you package the truth and how much love you express, we need to be ready to be hated because we testify that what they're doing is evil.

Rick Warren of the Saddleback Church in California is a case in point. There are many things about his preaching and methods of church growth that we would disagree with, but few pastors and churches have done as much as they have for homosexuals.

He and his wife have given millions of dollars to help HIV-positive homosexuals. They've worked with homosexual organizations all over the world to treat AIDS. They have an AIDS Awareness Week in their own church.

[31:38] The church visits homosexuals in the hospital that are dying of AIDS and seeks to show the love and kindness of Christ to them and that share the gospel. Loving in more than word, but in deed and in truth.

And you would think that that would be enough to win them, wouldn't you? Well, there's a winsome way. But when the proposition on marriage came to California, and Rick Warren stood as a leader and said, marriage is between one man and one woman in the covenant of marriage.

That's it. Well, you'd have thought he'd never done anything, never given a penny toward the movement the way they turned on him and devoured him and accused him. Again, I say, don't let us get our expectations up to think, you know, if we're just as winsome as Jesus, then maybe everyone would respond like the woman at the well.

She was not the rule, was she? They hated him because he testified that what they did was evil.

And so I say, that can discourage us.

And with the deck so stacked against us, why should we even bother trying to move toward them in love? Do you have an answer for that? What is it? I mean, if even after going to such ends, we see a man in a church just thrown under the bus and accused of bigotry and hatred of homosexuals, why should we even try and open our mouth with kindness and love?

[33:16] What's the answer to that? Yes. Okay. Christ commands us. Love your enemies. See, there's to be no one in the world that you don't show love to, even your enemies, and to go into all the world and preach the gospel with his compassion to every creature, and it doesn't accept homosexuals.

There's a command to do so, and there but for the grace of God go we. Steve. Amen. And we shouldn't lose hope. There are women at the well that are converted.

There are Rosaria Butterfields that are converted. And she's not alone. And there should be some individuals, there should be some fellas dying of AIDS and women dying of disease in hospitals in California that at least know that those Christians love me and that what all this homosexual machine is trashing is bigotry and hatred.

It's not true. We've experienced it. We've looked into their eyes. We've seen them week after week coming to see us. So we shouldn't give up. We shouldn't just think, well, what's the use?

It's worth the effort for the sake of Christ who sends us, for the sake of his grace that has saved us from our sin, and for the testimony in their conscience of those who experience it from us.

[34 : 46] Well, how then? How do we maintain this proper compassion, this heart, without which we will not have the offense that we must have?

How do we maintain that? What can we do to be grace-permeated disciples of Jesus? Well, surely we must daily take our place at the feet of Jesus as sinners and confess our sins to him.

We must come with nothing to claim for ourselves, but Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner. If you're having trouble finding sins to confess, pray through the Ten Commandments, pray through the Sermon on the Mount, read the Psalms, pray and hear the psalmist confessing his sins.

The greatness of our sins is not only measured by the kind of sin, but also by the kind of privileges we've sinned against. And I know one thing, I know this sinner has sinned against far more grace and light and love from God than any homosexual out there.

And so that will take us with a different attitude if we've been to the cross ourselves. And let me push it a step further.

[36 : 11] Confess your sexual sins. You see, sometimes we're saying, but John, the sin is so heinous, the sin is so, I can't even. Okay, they have sinned in the area of human sexuality and God's law regarding sexuality.

You, without fault, cast the first stone. Confess your sexual sins to the Lord regularly if you would have a burden for others who are under the bondage of such.

Sins with your eyes. Sins with your mind, your fantasies. Sins with your lust. Sins of finding delight in reading things on the news about other people's detailed sins.

sins with sins. When there's not to be even a hint of sexual immorality among us who know Christ. You see, we'll go back to that homosexuality different if we've been at the foot of the cross confessing our sexual sins.

sins. We don't have to have the exact same kind of sin of them to have a sense of standing alongside them.

[37 : 35] I've sinned against the same law giver and against the same area of human sexuality and what that God says about my sexual, I have broken those laws too.

And we stand as a sinner and we say, let me tell you where there's forgiveness and freedom in Jesus. I don't know about you, but I find I can sing with gusto on Sunday, wonderful grace of Jesus that found out even me.

As we did last Sunday. We sing amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. And then Monday morning comes and I'm watching the news or reading it and I see some new laws being pushed by the homosexual lobbies and I start getting riled up and I start thinking there's no wretches on the earth but them.

How quickly I move from grace to a condemning spirit. Yes, there is a part of justice and we're going to talk about that but there's something in the heart that goes amiss if we lose the sense that I stand condemned with these people before a holy God.

So let's pray. Let's pray for a heart that's humble. You know, it was built into the very old fabric of the old covenant for the priest that ministered.

[39 : 16] in Hebrews 5 it says of the high priest that he's able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and going astray. Why? Because he himself is subject to weakness and that's why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people.

Now we live in the new covenant and we are all priests of God and we don't have burnt offerings and sacrifices to bring, bloody sacrifices. But the same principle is there.

You see, before the priest ever dealt with the sins of the people who were ignorant and going astray, he'd already been to the altar, he had blood on his garments from his sacrifice and so he had to stand beside them and deal gently with them.

Now we're in the new covenant and before I talk to the homosexual I need to talk to Jesus about my sins and that'll change the way I can go gently with those who are ignorant and going astray astray.

May the Lord help us brothers and sisters. I am encouraged. Let me say that. I've said a lot because I think if we err one side or another I think there's that in us that wants to be hard and pound the truth and we need the heart of Jesus as well as the mind of Jesus.

[40:38] We need both and so we've spent two weeks on the offense of moving toward them. Maybe that's just because of my own proclivities. But I am encouraged with what I see happening in the body of Christ at Grace Fellowship in terms of moving toward sinners.

And I'm just wanting to throw fuel on that fire. Let's move toward them as sinners ourselves who've tasted the wonderful grace of Jesus and offer it to them. That's the privilege of this day, worshiping the God of all grace.

We're dismissed. Thank you.