

Creation, Fall, Redemption (part 2)

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[0:00] Since our study is homosexuality in the Bible, I thought from time to time I would bring a news brief, and especially as I was inundated this week with some articles from some of you that sent to me this week and last week.

The first had to do with those running the school system in Lincoln, Nebraska, being on a campaign to make the classrooms gender inclusive.

And a handout that was given to the teachers tells them not to use anymore the language of boys and girls. The documents that they gave to the teachers are chock full of all sorts of advice for teachers as they deconstruct and reconstruct the notion of what constitutes a boy and what constitutes a girl.

I'm quoting from one of those leaders in that movement. Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't.

Gender isn't binary. That means it's not either or. In many cases, it's both and. A bit of this and a dash of that.

[1:15] This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. And they tell you you can then go to their website and learn more about gender.

And I did. And I found what it says about gender fluidity. Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression.

Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression. Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression. Gender fluid children do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys.

In other words, a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others. Or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.

Now that was given to teachers in Lincoln, Nebraska. If that's not introducing confusion where there ought to be none.

[2:19] What does it lead to? This no girl boy distinction. Well, the second item, many of you saw it in the news this week, was Houston's new non-discrimination ordinance.

This ordinance, among other things, would allow men to use the ladies' room and vice versa. Now, can you see the continuity from the Lincoln, Nebraska? Don't use the terms boys and girls.

And if we don't use boys and girls to speak of the genders anymore, well, then how are we going to tell them which restroom to use? Well, they can use either. That's what Houston is saying.

And churches are fighting back with a petition with overwhelming support to put a referendum on the November ballot just a few weeks up and to let the people decide.

Well, the city threw the petition out for, quote, alleged irregularities. And the city of Houston then issued subpoenas demanding a group of pastors turn over any sermons dealing with homosexuality, gender identity, or a niece Parker, the city's first openly lesbian mayor.

[3:33] And those ministers who failed to comply were told they could be held in contempt of court, facing fines or imprisonment or both.

Now, it does seem that as the week wore on, they realized it was an obvious overreach, that this indeed violates the First Amendment and our freedom of religious speech.

But you can see how religious liberty may be taken away under the name of tolerance and diversity with regard to this whole area that we're studying.

Gender. What is gender? So are you awake? Now that we're awake, we're back into this study. And we are looking at what is being taught as the politically correct ideas of our day concerning gender. And we're comparing it to what the Bible has to say about three main stages of a man's existence, a woman's existence.

[4:41] Remember those three main doctrines of the scriptures that we're looking at? What are they? Where do we start? Creation. The fall? Redemption.

Creation. Okay. So when we went to creation, what did we see about gender? It is binary, isn't it? It is either or, contrary to the literature being given to teachers in Nebraska. He made them male and female, period. That's all. That's all there are. So that's God's design.

And he made the male and the female for each other. That by bringing them together, they might be better than what they were by themselves. And that by coming together in that one flesh union in marriage, they might fulfill their very purpose that God gave them to subdue the earth and to multiply and fill it.

So that's creation. This is the way God says, this is the way I want it to be. Then something happened. And it's no longer the way it was.

[5:53] And so we turn to our Bibles and we see, yes, Genesis 3 says that something happened. The man rebelled against his maker. Man turned his back on God and went his own way.

And when Adam did that as the representative head of all his people, all humanity, something happened to every one of us who were born after him.

Born of the seed of Adam. What did Adam's sin, what did his sin, how did his sin affect us?

Remember, we saw two things that we got from Adam.

What were they? Give me one. Sin. Sin. Can we be more definitive? Okay, sinful nature.

We got a sinful nature from Adam. There was something we got first, that we talked about first, before that. That's right. That's the second one. The first one. What did we get from him? Romans 5.

[6:55] By the disobedience of the one, the many. Death. Condemnation. Guilt. Guilt. We got condemnation from Adam's sin. He plunged the whole human race into his guilt and his sin, his condemnation.

So we come into the world already condemned. And then every decision that we make thereafter only confirms that, yes, we too are a part of this fallen human race that has gone our own way in rebellion.

But Romans 5 clearly says that we are condemned. And that's why everyone dies. Why does everybody die? Because we've all sinned.

And sin brought death into the world. So we inherited his condemnation and we inherited his sinful nature. When do we get this sinful nature?

What age? From birth. Remember David? I was conceived in iniquity. I was born in sin. And that's why Psalm 58 goes on to say that from birth the wicked go astray speaking lies.

[8:12] So nobody had to teach the child to deceive and to lie. From birth. That's the kind of heart he had.

He had a sinful heart. And so sinful hearts sin. And so he is no longer what he once was. As he came from the creator's hand. He was perfect.

He was upright. But now people enter the world guilty and with a sinful nature that's programmed to sin. Biased.

Curved toward sin. Not toward God. Now when our sins come from the heart, as Jesus says, all these things come from the heart.

Sexual immorality, evil thoughts, greed, lust. All of these things come from within, from the heart. How do they feel to the sinner? Like something strange or like something natural?

[9:13] They feel rather natural. Don't they? That's why the sinner, you know, we all have different sins that we've all gone astray.

We've each turned to his own way. And your way may be a little different from my way and the next person's way. But they're all the same in that they're not God's way. They're our own way.

We've all gone astray. But we've turned to each one to his own sin. And some of the sins that trouble me are not the same sins that trouble you. And so we're looking at this claim of the same-sex lobby group that would say that we were born this way.

That I never decided to have these desires and attractions for the same-sex. I just came into the world this way.

What do we do if we hold to the biblical view of sin? We don't gasp and say, oh no, this is threatening our view of sin. We say, if it can be proven, and it has not yet been proven, but even if it could be proven, that some elements of that same-sex desire was something they were born with,

that there's some connection to genetics and biology, it would not cause us to say, oh, we've got to throw out pages and chapters of our Bible.

[10 : 36] It would rather just tell us that's what we are made to expect, that kind of thing. From our Bibles that tell us that we're born with evil desires.

And those desires feel quite natural to us as a sinner. We don't remember ever choosing to become a liar. We just became one because we were one.

And so, even if we grant the homosexual population that is claiming this, you see, our view, the biblical view of sin, is such that that falls in with man's fallenness.

But the homosexual, and here we're going to use that term again, we're going to evaluate it someday, but the gay Christian especially will say, but you see, if I'm born this way, then God made me this way.

So, this is something to celebrate. This is something to be fulfilled. Not to hide under a bushel, not to hide in the closet, but something to bring out and to celebrate that this is how God made me.

[11 : 47] What does that miss, that argument? What about the Bible does that miss? The fall. The fall. That's right. That how we were created, how God created us is one thing.

How we are born now as fallen creatures is another. God created us upright. We are now born unrighteous with sinful desires.

So, we have to say, you're not going back far enough, friend. We don't just go back to how we were born. We've got to go back to the beginning as Jesus does in Matthew chapter 19.

It was not this way from the beginning. Let's go back there. How was it then? Here is God's design. Two genders, male, female, made for each other in the embrace of covenant marriage.

So, we've seen creation. We've seen the fall. And that's why we have to say to those with same-sex desires that just because you have these desires and they come from inside and feel natural and you never remember choosing them doesn't make them right.

[13 : 01] Because we all have such desires, don't we? I'm not going to ask you to name them, but I'm going to ask you to raise your hand if you have sinful desires that you can't remember choosing for yourself.

All right? All right. So, what we're seeing is that just because we have those sinful desires, even from birth, they don't make them right.

It's part of our fallenness for which Christ has come to redeem us, not part of what we are meant to celebrate and to express as the way to glorify God.

So, all of that by way of review. We've seen creation. We've seen the fall and what the Bible teaches about the fall makes sense of the data that we have concerning same-sex attraction and desires.

Now we come to redemption. Redemption. And I guess the main point that I want us to see here is that just as the Bible takes very seriously the fall and its effects upon humanity, so the Bible takes very seriously the redemption that is found in Christ.

[14 : 35] that saving grace doesn't leave us as it finds us. So, we're not the way we once were, upright in creation.

We're all fallen with twisted sinful desires, every one of us. When Christ comes in saving grace, he changes that. And his blessings flow as far as the curse is found.

So, here we were in creation, upright. Then the fall and the curse ruined us all. And we've got all kinds of sinful desires. How far does Jesus' redemption reach into our lives?

Just as far as the fall reaches. The goal of redemption is restoration. Have you ever restored a house?

Maybe a historical house? Or a vintage car? An old car? What's the aim in restoration? To get it back to its original condition, right?

[15 : 47] That's why Jesus came to save sinners. To get us back into the original condition.

We were born in the image of God, upright, perfect, righteous. And we've fallen. And that image is marred. And all things are twisted.

And Jesus comes to restore us back to the original. The created design. Now, can you see what that says for those with same-sex attraction?

You're not doomed to this. You are not somehow the die is struck and you are irreversibly now set on your course. You cannot change.

No, the gospel is the most hope-giving thing to any sinner. With any set of sinful desires. It says, Jesus has come to save his people from their sins.

[16:49] To restore them to the original design. So let's think together. How does the redemption that's found in Christ, how does it answer the fall in Adam?

Remember the two things in our fall? The first was guilt and condemnation. Somebody tell me how Jesus answers our problem of being guilty, condemned sinners.

He was condemned in our place and took on the punishment. And we gained his righteousness. Amen. Did you hear that back there?

Good. Hallelujah. The problem that Adam sunk us all in, guilt and condemnation, hell forever, has been suffered by our Lord Jesus in our place.

So his saving grace reaches as far as the curse is found. It took care of our guilt and condemnation. But that wasn't our only problem. What was another problem we got from Adam?

[17:54] Sinful nature. Death was with the condemnation and guilt. That's what the condemnation is, is death. But we received a sinful nature. So Jesus died the death, the penalty, the condemnation for our guilt.

Now, what does Jesus do? How does he save us from our second problem that we got from Adam? Our sinful nature that has evil desires. He lived perfectly, but that's more, well, okay.

He lived perfectly. But how does that help my sinful desires today and my struggle with sin? Okay. He changed our heart.

He gave us a new heart. What's the theological term? Jesus uses it, or the Bible uses it. To be reborn. Regeneration. John 3.

That's why in order to enter the kingdom of God, you've got to be born again. You've got to have a supernatural birth because you came into the world dead in sin, in love with transgression. You will never come to Christ and embrace Him as your Savior unless something happens to your heart.

[19:01] You've got to be born again. And you see, that's part of this great salvation. We're birthed. We're made alive unto God.

Whereas once, we were dead to Him. It was as if He didn't even need to exist. We lived our own way. But now we've been born again.

We've been given a new heart. Indeed, turn to Ezekiel 36, 26 and 27, where we see in even the Old Testament, this was promised. This great salvation that Jesus would bring is promised in just these terms of a new heart.

And so, Ezekiel 36, 26, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. So, the heart of stone is unimpressionable.

[20:05] So, God comes with His commands and our heart of stone refused to yield. We went our own way. And so, part of the redemption of Jesus is to take out that stony heart that refuses to bow and to put in a soft, fleshy heart that receives the impressions of God's commands and of His Spirit.

It's a heart transplant. We illustrate it with the children that a hog has a nature that loves to wallow in the filth.

And indeed, Peter, in 2 Peter chapter 2, uses that very image to show what the sinful nature is like. Its sinful desires is it wants to wallow in filth, not in holiness.

That's its nature. That's its heart. But then you have the barnyard cat. And if it happens to step in a mud puddle, what's it doing there as it lays on the front porch?

It's preening itself. It's licking itself. It's cleansing itself. It has a whole different nature from the hog. Instead of reveling in sins, ah, this is it.

[21:19] This is what I was made for. No, it's got a nature to cleanse itself. And that's what God does. He finds us wallowing in our sins, saying, this is what we want.

This is what we like. And he takes that heart out, and he puts a new nature in that says, oh, I still get dirty. I still sin, but I don't want to stay here. I want to be clean.

And we come to the Lord Jesus, whose blood cleanses from every sin. And we keep coming. We keep washing in that fountain, open for sin and uncleanness. And we keep cleansing ourselves.

And our conscience is cleansed from acts that lead to death. You see, there's a new heart. The Bible refers to it as resurrection from the dead. We were dead in sin, and then God made us alive.

So in all these ways, what the Bible is saying is that the redemption in Christ is more than taking care of our guilt problem, our condemnation problem, our death problem, that we owe God to suffer

in hell forever.

[22:26] Yes, praise God, that was taken care of. But that's not all of salvation in Christ. Salvation goes on to renovate the human heart, to change it, to bring it back into its original condition.

And if you're still there in Ezekiel 36, notice verse 27. And not only will I give you this heart transplant, and I will put my spirit in you, and I will put my spirit in you, and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

So you see how God deals with these sinful desires. He not only changes our hearts, but he puts his spirit inside us to move us, to actually move us away from sin and toward those things that God has commanded.

So this salvation that Jesus has brought, you see, it does indeed reach further than just our condemnation problem.

It does deal as well with our problem in Adam of a sinful nature. Now I think that the church of today has sometimes neglected one and the other.

[23:47] We've not taught clearly enough how it's the full obedience of Jesus Christ and him as the righteous substitute laying down his life, how that has fully taken care of our guilt problem.

It's over. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ. Why? Because he was condemned in our stead. And that needs to be pounded and preached because human nature would like to think that we've got to do a little something to contribute to this salvation.

But I think there's also another error among us today, and that's to say that we don't preach this other aspect of Christ's salvation. We speak as if this is all the salvation there is.

Because has Christ suffered your hell for you? You're saved. Period. That's it. Not so. I think it's reflected in that bumper sticker.

How many of you have seen the bumper sticker, Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven? Anybody? Okay. It's out there, isn't it? Now there's an element of truth in the bumper sticker.

[25:07] We aren't perfect. We aren't perfect. And we are forgiven. But there is a dangerous error in the bumper sticker. Do you know what it is?

We're just forgiven. There is no such thing as a Christian who is just forgiven. That's half of salvation.

And Jesus has a full gospel. He has a full salvation. He not only saves us from the guilt and condemnation and penalty of sin, but he saves us from our sinful nature and its power and its reign over us.

You see, it sends the wrong message to the world. That we're no different from you. We're just as sinful as you. The only difference between you and me is that we're just forgiven.

So you're a sinner, I'm a sinner, you're not forgiven, and I'm just forgiven. No. No, that's the wrong message to send.

[26:16] As if being united to Christ could ever leave us in our sins as just forgiven. As if his redemption only forgives the guilt and condemnation of sin, but leaves us slaves of sin without transforming our natures.

That's only half of salvation, and it does not save. No one can be in Christ and be just forgiven, only justified.

Being in Christ also guarantees that we are regenerated and sanctified and will be glorified.

And that's good news, you see. That's good news. Not only for those with same-sex attraction, it's good news for me. With my sinful desires.

And good news for you to know that not only can my sinful desires and my expressions of them be forgiven, but I can be delivered from their power over me in life.

[27:21] And I can begin to taste right now that new life, that resurrection life, that newness of life that is in Christ. Because I am being made into the likeness, into the image of him who created me.

He's taken me back to that original condition when we came from his hand upright, with all of our desires set on what he wanted and not on sin.

So a better bumper sticker would say, Christians aren't perfect, but we are forgiven and transformed in Christ.

And one day, thanks to him, we will be perfect. That'll take a long bumper. But that's better theology.

And it doesn't deceive people into thinking, well, then I can be a Christian and still live with the same sinful desires, unchecked, undealt with. No.

[28:23] The Bible says don't deceive yourself. If you haven't been changed at the core of who you are, in your sinful desires, changed not perfectly, but radically, you'll not see.

you'll not enter the kingdom of heaven. Because that's what Jesus does when he saves us. He begins the work of restoration.

And one day, he will complete it. And the hymns that we sing from a better day understood this. Cecil Alexander's hymn, There is a green hill far away, outside a city wall where Christ, our Lord, was crucified.

He died. He died that we might be forgiven. He died to make us good. That we might go at last to heaven, saved by his precious blood.

Well, which was it, Mr. Alexander? Did he die to forgive us? Or to make us good? Yes, he says. Blessed be God. He did both. His salvation is a full salvation.

[29:33] And top lady says, Be of sin the double cure. Safe from wrath. And make me pure. God's work for us in Christ.

God's work in us. In the new birth and in sanctification ongoingly. What? He breaks the power of reigning sin.

You see? He deals with this problem of reigning sin. He breaks the power of reigning sin. He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean. His blood availed for me.

So be sure to tell the sinner that as well. That we're not just forgiven. Never just forgiven. But also transformed. Sanctification. Begun.

New heart given. Spirit of God indwelt. Sinful nature. Radically changed with the directional arrow now pointing toward what the spirit desires. And not just and only for what sin desires.

[30:35] His saving grace. His redemption. Never leaves us. As it finds us. And it's this serious air of half of the salvation that causes people struggling with same-sex attractions to think that all they can hope for in this life is for their sins to be forgiven.

But that there's no such thing as freedom from the reigning power of sinful desires. That cuts off the hope. It lowers the expectation and the pursuit of holiness.

forgiveness. All I can expect in this life is forgiveness. I don't mean to belittle that. It's not a small thing that Jesus was damned in my place. But it leaves me a slave of sin.

Is that all I can expect in this life is to go with my chains all the way to heaven serving sin, going my own way just like I was when I was born?

Oh, after all, we're human. Never heard that? To sin is human.

[31:51] It's another untruth. Look at the first human as he came from the hand of God. To be human is to be upright.

To be human is to be in the image of God. To be human is to be like Jesus. Look at the second, the last human, Jesus, the second man, the last man. To be human is to sin, not in your life.

To be human is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. That's what it means to be human. Look at the first human. Look at Jesus, the true man from heaven.

Sin is an abstraction. Sin is an interruption. Sin is an intrusion. Sin is insanity. Sin doesn't belong. It's part of our fallenness, not part of our humanness. And Jesus is redeeming us from our fallenness, taking us back to what he made human beings to be in the first place, image of God reflecting his moral righteousness.

[33:05] so I guess the point of what I'm wanting to make this morning is that we don't treat same sex desires differently, essentially differently than we treat our own sinful desires and so once we get that once we see that we all are suffering from the fall and that means have sinful desires we can't start carving out certain of those with sinful desires and say well that's different that's not like the rest of us that's not fair to them and it's not true about you we stand together in our fallenness we're all broken ruined by the fall and if we are different it's because the Lord has made us different and that's what hope we have to offer those struggling with same sex attraction and desires so we don't allow this politically correct view to come in and say well you know this is different and so all of your verses in the Bible about what the Bible says that in Christ how do we handle these sinful desires you know there is a redemptive view of sinful desires

I'll just leave you with the homework assignment to read Romans 6, 7 and 8 and you'll see what the Bible has to say now Christ has come to redeem us from our fallenness part of that is dealing with our own sinful desires how do we deal with them?

read Romans 6, 7 and 8 you don't celebrate them, you mortify them you're no longer slave to them you've been set free, you've got a different master so therefore don't let them master you reject them because you can reject them they don't have that reigning power over you anymore and so read Romans 6, 7 and 8 it shows us what we all must do with our sinful desires and here's the beauty if you know how to deal with sinful desires for yourself then you know how to help someone with same sex desires deal with theirs it was a heartbreaking thing to read the story of a of a lesbian who was repenting a young lady repenting of her lesbian lifestyle and wanting to break free from it knew she'd need much prayer she found a Bible believing evangelical church she submitted to Christ she read the scriptures aloud trying to reprogram her mind and then she asked for a meeting with the pastor she confessed her lesbianism and longing to be free from same sex desires I asked for special prayer that God would remove these feelings the pastor's response was one I would hear from others over the next 15 years I don't know how to help you but I will pray for you I've never yet seen a homosexual change for any length of time so I don't give you much hope that's buying into the world's lie that this is irreversible the die is struck at creation this is who you are you can't change that anymore and you can change being left-handed it's like you have to to change the leper spots and don't we have one who does just that changes the leper spots and melts the heart of stone and teaches us to love what we once hated and to hate what we once loved and to desire what is on the mind of the spirit instead of what is on the mind of the flesh whose spirit comes within us to help us mortify those misdeeds of the body those sinful desires that are forever crying follow me follow me and the spirit dwells in us to help us stomp on them to murder them to starve them what a salvation we have in Christ it's a full salvation and that gives us hope in dealing with our sins and it gives us hope to hand out to those who are trapped in their sinful desires but now listen it will also demand something else of us it will demand of us that we have patience toward those who are still struggling with their sinful desires even as you are having patience with me in my struggles with my sinful desires you see it's a two-edged sword when we say that their struggle with sinful desires is no different really in essence than our struggle with sinful desires that brings us all under this canopy of hope there's hope for us in Christ but it also demands of us a recognition that we are no better that we are we are in the same category of fallen and and twisted and sinful desires even after we've been born again placed in union with Christ we still struggle you'll find it in Romans 7 and so it will demand of us that we have patience even with those that have same-sex attractions sinful desires that may be obnoxious to us let's just remember how obnoxious our sinful desires are to Christ and how patient he is with us and so you see we've got this offense and defense ever operating don't we we're not ready to give our children over to teachers that say there's no difference between boys and girls you might be a boy today and a girl tomorrow and but neither are we ready just to stand back and blast them we're ready to stand beside them and say you know

I too have sinful desires and Jesus has come and set me free and he is helping me more and more to mortify my sinful desires and he's making me more and more like himself restoring the original design that he established from creation can I tell you about my Jesus and what he can do for you we're looking this morning at redemption the difference it makes in the level of sinful desires well we're dismissed