

Importance of Terms

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[0:00] Well, this is our last session on our study of homosexuality in the Bible. I've saved to this last session two important things to address.

The one that I've hinted at all along is the question of what are we to think of those who profess to be gay Christians. And secondly, to come to what is my favorite scripture passage on the topic of homosexuality or same-sex.

Behavior. So let's start with the first. Is it possible to be both gay and Christian? Matthew Vines, the Harvard student in his early 20s, recently authored a book called *God and the Gay Christian*.

He takes it for granted that, yes, you can see in that title of the book that obviously there are such things as gay Christians. He says in that book, it isn't gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous loving relationships.

It is the church that is sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships. So that's one voice. And it's having its way in many evangelical churches.

[1:17] This is a young man that grew up in a very conservative Christian home and still professes to hold to many of the same doctrines that we know and love. Vicki Beeching is a popular British author and performer of many praise and worship songs.

Vicki Beeching is a popular Christian.

Vicki Beeching is a popular Christian.

University that told her that since God made her a lesbian, she could have both Jesus and her lesbian lover. Well, these are just a few of the voices that are filling the airwaves of churches, and there are many churches and denominations that as well answer in the affirmative.

Yes, it is possible to be both gay and Christian, by which they mean to be a born-again Christian, a true believer whose sins are forgiven by God, who will be in heaven forever, even while they are living the homosexual lifestyle.

[3:17] Now, what do you say to that? No. No. Okay. Well, why no?

Why is that not possible? The future is fine, which talks about walking in the light, and it talks about getting rid of all sexual immorality, so that right there is black and white.

Okay. If you're producing fruits, you're connected to the source. If you're not producing fruits, and you're going to be below, giving it to your flesh, you're going to be not standing up against what's right.

Okay. The idea of fruit showing what we are at the very core of our being. Yes, Mickey? Well, God made man, and then he made a woman for the man.

He did not make another man. So if, indeed, God made us that way. And I do think that God made us so that we would reproduce.

[4:23] Mm-hmm. I mean, we are physically made so that we do that, and that God made it so perfectly, physically, so that we will have children, and that we will continue as he said, multiply.

Okay. Okay. It's part of our creation mandate. Chuck? Well, I'm constantly in battle with my own sin, and I hate my sin, but I still have sin.

That's what sanctification is. It means I'm supposed to grow in my holiness, which also means there still is sin. And so I'm still a hater.

Mm-hmm. And how do you relate that to the question, is it possible to be gay and Christian? I think it is, but I think that the gay Christian would battle with that.

Okay. That's a good distinction that we need to make. Did you hear it in the back? We'll get to that distinction. For now, I'm talking about those like the folks that I've quoted who are claiming not only to be gay and Christian, but pursuing it as a God-honoring lifestyle.

[5:46] That's different from those like that it's possible for someone to be gay in the sense of having desires for same-sex behavior, and yet to be fighting against it, to be declaring war against it.

And that's a different animal, we say, a different situation, isn't it, altogether? Right now I'm asking, is it possible for someone to say, I'm a Christian, and I'm pursuing the gay lifestyle, and God's all right with that.

All right? Let me turn you to my favorite passage. 1 Corinthians 6, 9 through 11.

We looked at the Old Testament passages that speak directly to this topic. We've looked at the New Testament passages, and this is the last of them that we're going to consider.

1 Corinthians 6, verses 9 through 11. Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?

[7:03] Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

And that is what some of you were. 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.

Let's draw out several lessons from this text. First of all, and the one that stands most clearly, perhaps, upon the face of the passage, is that those living a homosexual lifestyle will not inherit the kingdom of God.

It's stated twice, isn't it? Once generally, when he says in verse 9a, Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?

And then he gives specific examples of the wicked. Who are these wicked that will not inherit the kingdom of God? Well, neither the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

[8:24] You see the parallelism. First, the general statement, the wicked. Then they're spelled out. And both times it's said that they will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, there's two different words here for the sin of homosexuality. What the NIV calls homosexual, or calls male prostitutes, and then homosexual offenders.

That second word, homosexual offenders, is the word that we looked at last time, that Paul coined. He made up a new word, something that he did something like over 170 times in the New Testament.

And this word is found in Leviticus chapter 20, that compound word where the law of God says that it's an abomination to God.

The man, to lie with a man as a man lies with a woman. So he's speaking clearly of same-sex sex when he uses this word, homosexual, translated homosexual offenders.

[9:33] The other word is a word that means soft and yielding. In other translations, it's been translated as effeminate. Our translation says male prostitute.

This was a Greek word that was used for the passive partner and same-sex sex. And so many believe that what we have here from Paul is a word taken from both partners in the homosexual act are here condemned.

Both the receptive, passive partner and the active partner in the act. It is clearly same-sex behavior that's being condemned.

And so we're told that such ones will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now these vice lists are talking about those whose lives are characterized by these sins.

They're life-dominating sins. These sins are so marked and described their behavior that they're called by them. Is the drunkard the guy that one time at a party had too much alcohol to drink?

[10:48] Would you refer to him as a drunkard? Or would it be the guy that often, by his behavior, shows that he drinks too much alcohol? Or would it be the guy that he drinks?

And so they're identified by it. And such people whose lives are dominated by sin show by that that they do not partake of the Holy Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit doesn't live in them. He's not producing the fruit of righteousness in them. Their lifestyle is still the natural man, the unregenerate man, the sinner that we all came in the world as when we were born.

And unless they change, unless they are converted, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. There are other instances in the Bible of these lists, these vice lists.

And you're familiar with Revelation 21.8. That no liar will inherit the kingdom of God. But his place, all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

[12 : 33] Again, a liar is not someone who tells a lie once. But a liar is someone whose life is dominated by, characterized by, defined by, lying.

That's their behavior. And so they're called liars. Well, that's how 1 Corinthians 6 deals with sin-dominated lives. And that has much to say about the question, can a person be a Christian and a practicing homosexual?

But I trust that you also see in this passage that it addresses a much broader issue than the homosexual issue. It's really addressing the issue, can anyone be a Christian and live a life dominated by sin?

Can anyone inherit the kingdom of God whose life is dominated by sin? There are other sins on this list besides homosexuality.

And the conclusion is the same. They will not inherit the kingdom of God. So they're not, the homosexual is not being treated differently from the heterosexual.

[13 : 43] And their sins are not being treated differently from heterosexual sins and immorality. This is one of those texts.

This is one of the reasons, I should say, why this is my favorite text. It shows how we all need Jesus to save us from our sins if we're ever to enter the kingdom of God.

That's why Jesus will say to Nicodemus, a religious man, you must be born again or you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. So that's the first point.

And it should be clear on the face of it that no matter how many of these pro-gay Christian interpreters want to twist the words and make them say something else, that those who follow a life of same-sex behavior will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The second point is that this is a point that many are easily deceived about. Now where do we see that in our text?

[14 : 49] Well, the command, do not be deceived. Don't you know? It's Paul's way of saying you ought to know this, but you're acting like you don't. Do not be deceived.

Those words aren't wasted filler. It's not just that Paul needed something to say, so he put that in. No, they're needed. If there's a warning, do not be deceived. It's because there is a prevalent danger of being deceived on this very point.

And that is building upon the chapter that goes before, that there was actually a man in the church at Corinth who called himself a brother who was living with his father's wife.

Sin that even the pagans did not commit. And yet he calls himself a brother, verse 11. That's the danger, you see, that I can be characterized by sin and live in sin and still be a brother in Christ and inherit the kingdom.

It was prevalent. It is prevalent. There is a danger due to the deceitfulness of our own flesh and the false teaching in the church and conformity to the ideas of the world.

[16 : 03] It can all make it very easy for us to be deceived on this very point. So there are many people today who would say to us, well, if I've asked Jesus to save me, then all is okay.

Even if I continue living my own chosen way as I did before I was saved. As if Christ ever justifies people without sanctifying them.

As if grace that makes us righteous before God on our record in heaven doesn't also powerfully rearrange our lives here on earth so that they line up with God's standard of righteousness.

As if God's grace doesn't give us new desires. New things that we love and hate and produces good fruit. So the dangers of this deception are so real that we find the warning not only here in 1 Corinthians 6, 9, but we find it also in Galatians 5.

You remember verses 19 through 21 where Paul tells us the works of the flesh. What do they look like? What does a life dominated by the flesh look like?

[17 : 16] And Paul just starts listing again. It's one of those lists of behaviors.

The acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred and discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

I warn you as I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do you see Paul's burden?

He's warning who? He's talking to the churches of Galatia. He's talking to professing Christians, those who call themselves brethren. And he said I'm going to warn you again even as I did before. You need to know that if you live like that you will not inherit the kingdom of God. Evidently it's a danger that many fall into.

[18:19] Galatians 6 verses 6 and 7 or 7 and 8. Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. But many people are being deceived on that point.

They think they can sow to please their flesh and reap everlasting life. I can go on living the way I want to and in the end God will give me everlasting life.

Because I've walked an aisle, I've prayed a prayer, I've been baptized, or whatever the reason is, they think they can fool God. Do not be deceived. God can't be mocked.

A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction. The one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap everlasting life.

Similar warning in chapter 5 of Ephesians to the church at Ephesus, chapter 5 and verses 5 and 6. For this you can be sure, no immoral, impure, or greedy person, such a man as an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

[19:28] Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. You can see the same in Jesus' letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, where he's calling out those who are living in sexual immorality and idolatry and saying, they have no part in me.

So, this was prevalent in the first century church. It's prevalent in our days as well. The need to not be deceived.

And it needs to be sounded on this issue then as well of same-sex sex. Be careful. Beware. If you are living that lifestyle, do not think that you can inherit the kingdom.

Did you have a point to make? Yeah. Yeah. I think it's very similar. You've just identified that one of the prevalent teachings today in the church that is causing many to be deceived on this very point is that there are such things as carnal Christians.

Just as there are gay Christians, there can be carnal Christians. And by that they have said in their materials that that means that they live just as they did before conversion.

[20:46] Their life hasn't changed. They've just asked Jesus to forgive them and then they go on living as they did before. That's the carnal Christian. Going to make it to heaven. Going to inherit the kingdom of God.

Just not as many rewards. And that's a very prevalent teaching and has been in the church. And it's very similar to what Paul was talking about here. Isn't it? Exactly.

Yeah. They would deny that it's carnal, but everything that we've seen is referring it to that. All right. Any other questions? Those are the first two lessons then.

First, those who live a lifestyle of homosexuality cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Secondly, many are deceived on this very point of can a person be a Christian and live a lifestyle of sin?

The third point. Same-sex sex is not the unpardonable sin. God has not irrevocably given over all practicing homosexuals to their sin, leaving them beyond recovery.

[21:54] That is not the teaching of Romans chapter 1. We saw that when we studied Romans 1, that God gives people over to their desires. But that is in no way teaching that homosexuality is therefore the unpardonable sin and that God gives everyone over irrevocably to that sin.

Now, many have been saved from this sin. Again, we encouraged you to read, and it's there in the library. Pick it up. You can read it in just a few hours, Rosaria Butterfield's testimony.

Many online testimonies of those who were living this lifestyle for years and years, and then God saved them from this very sin.

One of the most important words, I think, in these verses is the word were. Did it ever carry more freight and importance than in these verses?

The word were. Having described some of the specific kinds of wicked people who are unfit for the kingdom of God, Paul then says in verse 11, and that is what some of you were.

[23:07] That means there were members in the church of God at Corinth who used to be practicing homosexuals, and that was their lifestyle. And that's why they were called by that sin, because it defined them.

That was their identity. And yet, Paul is not saying that this is what they are. They left that life behind, and so left behind their former identity.

And so it's a world of difference between what they were and what they now are. And Paul's language reflects that. Something happened that left them different from what they were.

And Paul tells us, this is what some of you were, but you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified. In the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. So, this is another reason I love this text.

Is that it offers hope in Jesus Christ to all kinds of sinners. Homosexual sinners included. It calls us all to become through Christ what we are not by nature.

[24 : 22] And it promises us the power to do so. That's the gospel. Change is possible for homosexuals, despite the politically correct teaching that this is their unalterable orientation, their hard wiring that is impossible to change.

We all were hardwired for sin in one way or another. And we're walking testaments that grace can do the impossible.

With man, this is impossible. But not with God. So do you see the hope that we have to offer? You were this without Christ, but with Christ and by Him, you are no longer that.

It's brimming with hope for every sinner who comes to Jesus Christ to be saved from their sins. Freedom from enslaving sinful desires is possible in Christ.

And so, it's a needed wake-up call for us to realize that homosexuals are not fundamentally different than any of us. Another reason I love this passage.

[25 : 36] They have the same need for the same gospel, the same Savior and Holy Spirit by which we were and are being saved from our sins and made new creatures. They need the same justification, the same sanctification, the same washing as we do.

And by the way, according to Jesus, homosexuality is not the worst sin. Do you remember it's going to be harder for some in the day of judgment than for Sodom and Gomorrah?

That's, in essence, saying some are going to receive greater judgment than the homosexuals of Sodom and Gomorrah. Tell me, who are they? Matthew 11.

Yeah. Rejectors of Jesus who heard and saw the miracles that he did and heard him were there. They were in the towns that Jesus visited.

They had great light, far more light than the Sodomites did. And yet, they rejected him. According to Jesus, that's a worse sin than homosexuality.

[26 : 48] So, that's the third lesson. Homosexuality is not the unpardonable sin. Christ has saved many.

And then last, the fourth lesson. All believers have a new identity in Christ. This is what you were. But you're not that anymore.

No, you've got a new identity. You're now justified. You now have the righteousness of Jesus put to your account. It's a new status.

You're declared righteous. You're adopted as sons of God. You belong to Him. You're joined to Christ. And furthermore, you're washed.

That's the inward work of the Holy Spirit. Cleansing us from our filthy lifestyles that every one of us once lived as we live for ourselves and our sins.

[27 : 49] We're washed. Our very natures have been changed. As Titus says, He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

It's a new life. A new birth. It's a new reality. You were justified. You were washed. You were sanctified. Now this isn't referring to the present work of ongoing sanctification.

You notice it's past tense. There was an initial sanctification that took place at our conversion, at our new birth. And you were sanctified, He's able to say to these previous homosexuals.

The word sanctified in its basic sense means to be set apart for God's service. It was true of the vessels that were used in the sanctuary worship. They were set apart from normal use to be used only in the worship and service of God.

And that's you. You once served yourself in sin and Satan, but you were sanctified. You were set apart to God. You're now His, and you are specially set apart that you might serve Him the rest of your days.

[29:04] So again, these are all realities. These mark out our new identity in Christ. There's been a clear break with our past, and now we are new creatures.

Isn't that what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, 17? Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. He's not the old guy that he used to be. He's a new creature.

The old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new. So in Christ, every believer has a new identity. We're no longer a slave to sin.

We're now a slave to God and righteousness. We have a new master and a new power, the Holy Spirit indwelling us, so that sin will not rule over us.

That's the reality, the new reality of every believer. Doesn't mean that we'll live without temptation. Doesn't mean the converted homosexual will not have to struggle and fight against his sinful desires, just as every one of us have to fight against our sinful desires.

[30:13] But it does mean that that sinful desire will not reign over you. Why? Because the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, lives in you and will create holy desires, new desires.

You're not the same person that you used to be. You will not bear the same fruit that you used to bear. This is one of the reasons, one of the objections I have with the AA program.

Their dogma is that once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. And though they have many positive things to say, our text says that is not the case.

It's not once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. Drunkard, yes. Life dominated by this sin with too much alcohol, yes, that is what some of you were.

But that's not what you are anymore. You've been washed, sanctified, justified. A new identity. So to say, I'm a gay Christian, by which we mean pursuing that lifestyle and still going to inherit the kingdom of God, that's joining two words that are diametrically opposed to each other, isn't it?

[31:29] Two words that don't belong to each other. We call them oxymorons, don't we? Like bright darkness or like dry rain or cold heat.

Gay Christian. These two words don't belong together. They're totally incompatible with each other. And in fact, if we just use our text here in 1 Corinthians 6, to say I'm a gay Christian is like saying I'm an alcoholic Christian.

I'm an adulterous Christian. I'm a sexually immoral Christian. I'm a thieving Christian. I'm a greedy Christian. I'm a slanderous Christian.

I'm a murderous Christian. But John says we know that no murder has eternal life dwelling in him. You can't put these words together.

If this defines you, you can't put Christian beside it. If that's what you are, then you're not a Christian. So it's impossible to be a practicing homosexual, pursuing that as your lifestyle, and to be inheriting the kingdom of God at the same time.

[32:40] No, there must be repentance for there to be eternal life. Now this is where we go back to what Chuck brought up. There are some who are genuine Christians who have same-sex attractions that they're fighting against and are living a celibate life.

Some of these have chosen to call themselves gay Christian. Now that's a different matter from what we've been talking about up to this point.

Why would they call themselves gay Christians if they're truly Christians? Is it right? Three months ago, Wheaton College hired a female counselor who openly identifies herself as a gay Christian. The position of the school and of her is that homosexual behavior is wrong. Her job is to counsel students who have these same-sex attractions.

And so this young lady regards homosexual behavior as sin, and so she refers to herself as a gay Christian who is celibate, who does not act on her same-sex desires.

[33:50] And I've heard of others who like her, who I have no reason to believe they're not true Christians, nevertheless have chosen to call themselves gay Christians, simply meaning that the sin I struggle with is same-sex desires.

So again, this is a different question than the one we have been taken up so far. Why would they do that? Well, they're wanting to say to others with the same struggles that I'm in the trenches with you.

I, too, am a Christian who struggles with this form of sinful desire. And I would say, though the motive is commendable, I think calling themselves gay Christians is misguided and ill-advised for at least two reasons.

First of all, because words carry freight. Words carry meaning. And the reality is that most people today who call themselves gay Christians mean this is an irrevocable, irreversible orientation that I was born with and that God approves of such desires and behavior since he made me that way. So to refer to I'm a gay Christian, in the main today it means I affirm, I promote gay sex as normal and good, that is its predominant use in our culture.

[35 : 20] We've just seen that there are many today even as there were in Paul's day who are deceived on this very point. Who think that it's possible to be practicing gay and to be a Christian at the same time.

If there's a great danger of being deceived on that point, is it wise for a true Christian to call themselves a gay Christian? Or is that not playing right into the hand of the devil's lie? that it's okay just to pursue your desires all the way and still be a Christian. For that reason I think it's misguided though the motive is right.

They play into a damning deception that others could stumble over that normalizes homosexual behavior. There are other ways to communicate that you're a true Christian who struggles with same-sex desires.

You could just say it in that way, couldn't you? I'm a Christian. I'm not what I once was. Jesus washed me. He saved me. He's changed me. But I still struggle.

[36 : 29] And I'm fighting by the grace of God. And I'll help you fight. And we'll pray together. And we'll watch over each other together. You see, that's a better strategy that does not play into the delusion of the normal meaning of affirming this lifestyle by using the term gay Christian.

In other words, you don't have to be a lying Christian to help Christians struggling with lying. You don't have to be known as an adulterous Christian to help others struggling with temptations to adultery.

Do you ever struggle with unbelief? You don't need to call yourself an unbelieving believer. No, you're a believer, but I believe, but help my unbelief.

And so we need to be careful about words and labels that we put on ourselves or even others that send a wrong message. And that's the second reason I don't like this terminology for these folks. It does not show a proper appreciation for the new identity that all believers have in Jesus Christ. Paul is saying that true Christians leave behind their old manner of life, their old identity.

[37 : 50] That guy died and a new person lives. And we are to reflect that identity. We are to hang on to it. We are to glory in it that I'm not what I once was.

And so we need to appreciate and celebrate the past tense of our text and our new reality in Christ. I'm not defined anymore by what once defined me.

I'm not even defined by what still tempts me. I'm defined by my new identity. I am in Christ. And I have been remade into His image and that's what I am being made after.

That image of Christ. So that is to be front and center with us, every Christian. According to Romans 6, that old you died and was buried with Christ and a new you is risen and now lives with Him.

You're not the same person you used to be. You're a new version of you and you need to show that even in the way that you identify yourself. Celebrate your new identity.

[39 : 03] Praise God for it. Tell others about it. In fact, it's the high ground from which we're supposed to fight the old ways. Romans 6 would remind us that we need to consider ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.

That means the way you think about yourself, you need to continually think, I'm not what I used to be. I used to be a slave to that lust, to that desire, but I'm not anymore.

And that gives me strength that when it comes knocking and wants to reign in my life, I don't have to obey. No, you do not reign over me. I have a new master. So consider yourself to be dead unto sin, to have this new identity in Christ.

It's fighting from the high ground and it's important if we would not give in to those old ways that once ruled us. We have died with Christ.

We've been raised with Christ. Christ is now your life. And that is our new identity. It's possible to do the wrong thing from a good motive and I think that's what some of these dear Christians are doing when they call themselves gay Christians.

[40 : 15] Well, let me close by the concluding words of one of the books that I've read, The Crisis of Homosexuality, a collection of addresses by different men and the concluding chapter was given

to Dr. Stanton Jones, a professor in the Department of Psychology at Wheaton College and he is given the last word in a book that he participated in writing.

I think his closing chapter is the best one in the book. He ends the book with this statement and I think it's fitting for us as it takes us back to where we began. He simply says this, Homosexuality is one of the major battlefronts on which the church will either shame our Lord by our lack of courage, insight, and compassion or reflect God's character and heart.

Homosexuality is one of the major battlefronts on which the church will do one of two things. She will either shame her Lord by a lack of what? Courage, insight, understanding, compassion or we will reflect God's character and God's heart as we defend the truth and move with compassion towards those who are slaves to this sin.

may we be a stage on which God himself is made known both in his truth and for his grace. I was struck by a statistic that said only 1% of Americans pray for homosexuals.

I trust that's not you. I trust it won't be me. I trust we will be praying to see trophies of grace brought out of this binding sin that is front and center in our day.

[42:27] Let's pray for God to glorify himself today. Let's pray together, shall we? We thank you, our Lord, for light from heaven.

We would be groping in the darkness of what to think about ourselves, who we are, our very identity, our gender, what we're supposed to be doing.

Thank you for your word. The entrance of your word does give light and we thank you for all that we have seen in your word that again holds before us what you have made us to be, what we have become by the fall into sin and what you are remaking us into by your saving grace.

Thank you for this passage and its clarity and in warning against any who think they can continue in sin and still inherit the kingdom of God.

Thank you that you've also said this is what some of you were and so you've taught us that there is salvation for every kind of sinner that we've met in these studies.

[43:40] Thank you for the new identity that marks us as your people. Help us to live up to that. Help us to be what we are and Lord set forth your truth and your grace in our hearts.

There are people that need to hear the light of your truth and need to see the love and compassion of your heart. So work upon us we pray.

Don't be done with us as we finish this study but use us to draw all kinds of sinners to our Savior we pray in his name. Amen.