

SEXUAL RIGHTS AND WRONGS

This was preached at Horizon Church as part of a series on Sunday, June 9, 2019

Genesis 1:1-2:25

INTRODUCTION

ANCIENT QUESTIONS

Jesus was in Judea, large crowds were following him, and he was in the process of teaching them God's truths.ⁱ It was during one such assembly that a group of Pharisees gathered to throw questions at him, and their questions regarded masculinity, femininity, marriage, and sex. They really did not do so because they desired to have their minds enlightened. No, they were much more duplicitous and sinister than this. What they hoped to do was put unanswerable questions before Jesus that would confuse, embarrass, and marginalize him. They hoped to stymie him by their questions and then go about their own merry ways doing exactly as they pleased.

Jesus was game. He would answer their questions. However, the way in which Jesus addressed their questions should be very interesting to us. He did not base his answers upon civil legislation, human traditions, academic writings, or public opinion. And he certainly did not encourage his audience to follow their own hearts, do that which was right in their own eyes, and figure out what was "true to you." So what did Jesus do? Jesus paid less attention to personal inclinations, and less attention to personal nurture, and less attention to personal nature, and gave all attention to supernatural scripture. Specifically, Jesus took his questioners back to Genesis, for there one could find the intention of the Divine Architect, the Sacred Social Worker, and the Wonderful Counselor would answer all their questions about masculinity, femininity, marriage, and sex.

MODERN QUESTIONS

Today, people within and without this room are asking a host of questions. They are good, deep, relevant and important, and they are not going away. For example:

What is the difference between gender and sex?

What is the difference between sexual identity and sexual attraction?

How does one determine their sexual identity?

What exactly is masculinity?

What exactly is femininity?

What is toxic or abusive masculinity?

What is toxic or radical femininity?

Are gender traits socially constructed?

Are gender traits personal preferences?

Is there a problem with an effeminate man, and what exactly are these “effeminate” traits?

Is there a problem with a masculine woman, and what exactly are these “masculine” traits?”

Are gender traits divinely authored, and are they found in God’s book of scripture or God’s book of science?

Is there really such a thing as male-headship?

Is there really such a thing as female-followership?

And do these two things – male-headship and female-followership -- apply to the home, church, state, all of life?

What would God say regarding patriarchal abuse found in the Bible, throughout history, and in our day?

What would God say to women -- put in their place and instructed to be repressed, servile, doormats?

Does Christianity repress or liberate women?

Can one be a biblically-instructed individual and be a godly feminist?

Do spiritual gifts come with an assigned gender?

What is marriage – a civil classification, a human tradition, an outdated tool of oppression, or a divine institution?

What about all that polygamy and our biblical patriarchs?

What about divorce and remarriage?

And then there are all those questions about sex. Don't worry moms and dads, I will be gentle and very prudent here, but questions abound such as:

Why is sex such a big deal in Genesis, throughout the Bible, throughout history, and in our modern culture?

Why does it have such a hold on men and women?

Why are people willing to sacrifice careers, families, and health for orgasmic delight?

Yes, why do people worship sex?

And today, what exactly do all those initials mean? (LGBTQQIAAP)ⁱⁱ And no, I did not make some of those up.

Are some sins worse than others? What sins are found in God's lists of abominations? Do you know? Selective much?

Are some sins more unnatural than others?

Are some sins more dangerous than others?

Are some sins more fixed and untreatable than others?

Can people really change? How do people change? How quickly do they change? And how thoroughly in this life?

How quickly can one expect such possible change to occur?

How ought we respond to someone who calls themselves a "gay Christian?" Is gay a verb, adjective, or noun?

Why do we view some biblical teachings as fixed and applicable while viewing others as cultural and expired?

Are people the way they are because of personal inclinations?

Are people the way they are because of parental and societal nurture?

Are people the way they are because of born-nature?

Are people the way they are because of their Creator?

Yes, we are asking questions, our neighbors are asking questions, and our children are and will ask questions. And these questions are not to be feared, avoided, disregarded, or trivialized.

No, questions are to be taken very seriously and lovingly, for behind every question is a questioner made in the image of God, and with every question is an opportunity to share more truth from God and his Word.

And if we will not address people and their questions, other people will, and quite often they will do so in the name of God. If you remember, a few months ago, Mayor and presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg said,

“If me being gay was a choice, it was a choice made far, far above my pay grade, and that’s the thing I wish the Mike Pences of the world would understand. That if you got a problem with who I am, your problem is not with me – your quarrel, sir, is with my creator.”

Now, I might surprise you, but I would say that Mr. Buttigieg is partially right and partially wrong. He does have some good doctrine and theology to go along with his error.

- There is a Creator.
- The Creator does have a sovereign will regarding masculinity, femininity, marriage, and sex.
- The Creator and his will have more sway than Mr. Pence or Mr. Buttigieg.

However, here is where our potential future president goes awry – he needs to go further than his personal inclinations, further than his societal nurture, further than his personal nature, and go all the way back to the Creator and Genesis. Rightly, Mr. Buttigieg looked up, and he looked back, but he did not look up and back far and fervently enough. And as one who desires to see him thrive in the grace and truth of God, I trust he will do so soon.

So, with our questions in hand, we are going back to Genesis. And seeing we have already read Genesis 1ⁱⁱⁱ, let’s pick up the teaching of the Divine Architect, Sacred Social Worker, and Wonderful Counselor in Genesis 2:5.

SCRIPTURE READING

When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers ...¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:5-25)

Therefore, putting the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 together, what do we see?

I. GOD CREATED EVERYTHING GOOD

Before the beginning, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit communed as the happy family enjoying perfect communion. They needed nothing to satisfy them. However, they longed to share the love they experienced with others created in their image.

Therefore, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. However, he chose not to do so beautifully and orderly at first. God originally created the universe in a formless, void, unorganized, vain, and empty manner. I imagine a confused and muddled mass of water, land, and gas intermingled together with the Spirit hovering over the dark and chaotic creation.

Then, God easily created a perfect environment over the course of six days. Out of the chaos, God brought forth light, darkness, planets, stars, sun, moon, earth's atmosphere, the seas, land, bushes, trees, fish, birds, and animals. God did everything decently and in order, and he declared it "good."

But then, according to the inspired Genesis narrative, there was a pause in the action. God seemed to hold a high-level, trinitarian, cabinet meeting, and the three persons of the Godhead agreed upon and decreed certain things.

First, they would create a species called "adam" or "man"; it would be entirely different than the other created living creatures. Man, mankind, or humans would be created in God's own image and likeness. God would share certain attributes with them such as a non-material soul, an intellectual rationality, creative abilities, a moral sense, relational drives, regal lordship, and a free will. They would not be gods, but they would be godlike and godly.

Second, those created in the image and likeness would be divided into two mutually exclusive genders. They would be equal in dignity and calling, but they would be different.

Men would have X-Y chromosomes, would have unique body parts, would find themselves attracted to the opposite gender, would have unique characteristics needed by women, and would desperately be in need of the unique characteristics held by women.

Women would have X-X chromosomes, would have unique physical parts, would find themselves attracted to the opposite gender, would have unique characteristics needed by men, and would desperately need those unique characteristics held by men. This would not merely be a social construct; this would be a creation construct.

Third, they would be blessed with opportunities to worship. God would give them his expectations, duties, or laws. Therefore, as we put Genesis 1 and 2 together, a partial list of requirements included:

Work and tend the garden

Protect and keep the garden

Name and organize the animals

Exercise dominion, govern, rule, and subdue the earth^{iv}

Enjoy the fruits and vegetables of their labor

Obey the Lord's command and abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

Leave one's parents and cleave to one's spouse

Become one flesh

Have sex

Be fruitful and multiply

Expand and fill the earth with worshipers

But they should know they would reap that which they sowed. Upon good and perfect performance, they would continue to enjoy the blessing of God graciously poured out upon them. However, if they rebelled and disobeyed, as in eating of the forbidden tree, in that day they would surely die. This was called the Adamic Covenant.^y

Therefore, the council meeting being brought to an end, God went back to work. He custom-crafted Adam from the dust of the ground, and with tenderness breathed soul-life into the man designed to bear his image.

It was at this point that God communicated to Adam his expectations and the accompanying blessings and curses.

Then, God addressed the "not good" situation he had temporarily left be. I think, even before Adam realized it, God knew he was not sufficient for the labors assigned to him; he needed an "ezer" or "helper." Yes, it was "not good" that Adam was alone, and God was sending Eve to the rescue. Therefore, the Master-Craftsman went back to work; he custom-created and custom-filled Eve.

Then, like a father at a wedding, God brought Eve and gifted her to Adam. And in doing so, God ordained marriage. This was to be the fantastic relationship that trumped the parent-child relationship. Now, in this marriage, God willed that the husband should serve and lead. Adam was called to name his bride – this is a Hebraic metaphor for responsibility.

Then, as already mentioned, he was the one given the divine responsibility to inform his bride of God's good laws and resulting ramifications.

God then smiled with delight as Adam and Eve smiled with delight. How perfectly pleasant it was to see the man and woman live together in naked bliss. Yes, with marriage came intimacy, and with intimacy came sex. It was not dirty. It was not carnal. Sex was holy. Sex was worship. It was to be done to the glory of God, and it was a fantastic blessing from the Lord.

That was the sixth day. And on the seventh day, after the consummation night, God gathered with his friends as they enjoyed him, glorified him, rested with him, and holidayed with him and each other on this weekly holy day.

Oh friends, doesn't this warm your soul? Come on, don't you have any romanticism left in you? This is awesome! Look at what the Heavenly Father did for his son and daughter. God created the perfect environment, for the perfect man, and the perfect woman, who enjoyed the perfect marriage, and received the perfect calling, to have perfect sex. This was God's intention. This is what was natural and normative. This was the will of the Divine Architect, the Sacred Social Worker, and the Wonderful Counselor. This was living large; it was the "high life," and it was all very, very good.

But oh, how far from paradise have we travelled. Today, masculinity, femininity, marriage, and sex has gotten all askew. What has happened? How did we get ourselves to where we are today? What happened? Well, chapter three happened.^{vi}

II. MAN FELL, BECAME BROKEN, AND CONTINUALLY DISTORTED EVERYTHING GOOD.

Adam and Eve came into contact with Satan. He was the greatest enemy of God who had failed miserably in his attempt to lead a heavenly coup. Therefore, because he could not touch God, he turned his attention to those dearest to God – those created in the image and likeness of God.

Adam and Eve were tempted to doubt the teaching, truthfulness, and tenderness of God.

Adam and Eve bought that which Satan was selling. They were tempted, they gave in, and they committed a host of sins. Adam should have safeguarded Eve. Eve should have safeguarded Adam. They should not have entertained any thoughts contrary to those of their Heavenly Father. They should have been like the elect angels in heaven who refused to ally themselves with the devil. They should not have doubted God's love, and they definitely should not have eaten from the one forbidden tree in the entire garden. But they committed sins of omission followed by sins of commission. They broke the covenant, betrayed their Creator, and joined ranks with Lucifer. They fell, and the fallout was horrible.

SPIRITUAL DEATH

Adam and Eve suffered spiritual death. The Spirit evacuated. They were excommunicated. The sacred light within them was snuffed out. They were dead in their souls and totally separated from God.

PHYSICAL DEATH

They began to suffer the pangs of physical death. Physical deterioration began. Mothers would have pain in childbirth. All would suffer disease, illness, depreciation, and death. They were dead-people walking.

EMOTIONAL DEATH

Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve enjoyed naked, intimate, transparent, comfort with God. Their emotional state would have been characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, and contentment. However, following the fall, they first couple found themselves consumed with confusion, guilt, shame, fear, and hiding. Emotional death was a consequence and curse of the fall.

RELATIONAL DEATH

Then came relational death. We have already pointed out how Adam harmed his wife with his apathy. Eve then harmed her husband with her curiosity. At God's upcoming interview with his distorted image-bearers, Adam would prove to throw his wife under the bus. And God promised this was only the beginning. Perverted masculinity and bitter feminism was right around the corner. Yes, as a result of their rebellion, perfect communal shalom was a thing of the past.

GLOBAL DEATH

In addition, planet earth was cursed. The Second Law of Thermodynamics was brought into effect. Thorns, thistles, wild animals, natural disasters would buffet men and women.

That being said, we have still not exhausted the horrible ramifications of our first parents rebellion.

INTELLECTUAL DEATH

Adam and Eve developed a warped intellect. No longer were they encyclopedias of God's truth. They became vulnerable to being conformed to this world. Therefore, left to themselves, they would invent all sorts of ways to transgress the holy ways of their Creator.

ETERNAL DEATH

Then hell would come. Adam and Eve, if left to themselves, were convicts on death row. Eternal death was their just paycheck based upon their sinful performance.

GENERATIONAL DEATH

Then came the brutal truth – their sin would affect 100% of their descendants. No longer were they able to reproduce and multiply worshipers on the earth. Instead, all their sons and daughters would be born scarred, before being more scarred by the world and the devil.

SOCIETAL DEATH

Cain would kill Abel. Men would seek to kill Cain. Lamech would brag about his vengeful killing of his enemies. And it only takes a few more chapters for one to read,

“Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” Also, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”

(Genesis 6:11-12, 5-6)

MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, MARRIAGE, AND SEX

Absolutely everything was affected, and this included masculinity, femininity, marriage, and sex.

No one was the holy masculine man. Instead, men became arrogant, disrespectful, abusive, and apathetic. They became effeminate. They wore women's cultural clothing and adorned themselves in women's cultural hairstyles.^{vi} And

some mutilated their male appendages. This is toxic masculinity.

No one was the holy feminine female. They too became arrogant, disrespectful, abusive, and apathetic. They gloried in looking manly or butch^{viii}, and in environments where they promised to submit to husbands or elders, they found themselves consistently seeking to cut the knees out from under their male leaders.

No one practiced holy matrimony. Polygamy and concubinage became the norm. Some discounted marriage. Some forbade marriage. Some forced marriage. Some engaged in same-sex marriage. And all who entered into marriage consistently broke the vows, covenants, and commitments made. No one loved their spouse like the Trinity loved one another. No one had proper *agape*, *phileo*, and *eros* love. No one loved like Jesus Christ loved the church.

No one practiced holy sex. There was improper sex before marriage. There was improper sex in marriage. There was improper sex outside one's marriage. Some sins were heterosexual, some homosexual, and all called forth the wrath of God. Sins of omission and sins of commission were worthy of hell-fire. And throughout the pages of scripture sex sins are everywhere – harems, sodomites, prostitution, incest, relations with animals, rape, pornography, lust, immodesty, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, orgies, selfishness. Sex became a tool. It became a weapon. It was forbidden by some and worshiped by others, but no one was righteous.

Paul summarized the history of man well. In Romans 1:18-32 he writes,

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth ... For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images ... Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity ... dishonoring of their bodies among themselves ... God gave them up to dishonorable passions ... women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature ... men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another ... God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done ... all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice ... envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

THIS IS OUR STORY

Friends, this is not the story of “some people,” or “other people,” or “those people.” This is our story. This is our track record. This is our resume. None are righteous. None are holy. None are law-keepers. None can stand before God based upon their own level of performance. We are all warped by nature and nurture. The only reason we are not worse off than we are is because of the restraining grace of God. But for grace, there is no stoop of depravity where you could not have been found. And but for grace, there is no stoop of depravity where you still cannot be found.

Would we really be arrogant and pompous like Judah who found himself greatly offended by Tamar – the prostitute whom he had personally impregnated?

Would we really be arrogant and pompous like David who found himself greatly offended by the man who stole his neighbors lamb, meanwhile he had stolen his neighbor's wife and then put him to death?

Would we really be arrogant and pompous like the elder son who could only see his brother's sin and could not see that he was the unrepentant prodigal son sinning in the face of his father?^{ix}

Would we really be arrogant and pompous like the Pharisee who said, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get?"^x

Would we really be arrogant and pompous like the Pharisees who focused on the woman caught in adultery but forgot their own sins?^{xi}

Would we really be arrogant and pompous like the Pharisees, who desire to get Jesus down off the cross to keep the holy day, while being guilty of murder?

I am not asking you not to believe in truth.

I am not asking you not to debunk error.

I am not asking you not to make good judgments.

I am not asking you not to understand there are different levels of consequence for different levels of perversity.

But I am asking you, "Who are you to judge? For even Jesus did not come into the world to judge the world, for the world was condemned already.

No one is the perfectly holy masculine man.

No one is the perfectly holy feminine woman.

No one practices perfect holy marriage.

No one practices perfect sex. No one is all that. No one is righteous. Not even you and me. No friends, our story is summarized by the following – we are fallen, broken, and continually distorting everything good.

All deserve condemnation, damnation, death, and hell.

But there is hope. There is hope for you. There is hope for your children. There is hope for your neighbors. There is even hope for this land.

Yes, whether or not one is an immoral, disrespectful, pagan sinner, or whether one is a moral, respectable, religious sinner, there is hope for you. And this hope comes not in re-education. This hope comes not in politics and legislation. This hope comes not in "making America great again." It does not come in isolation, and it surely not found in subjective relativism. So what have I to offer you?

III. GOD LOVES FALLEN AND BROKEN SINNERS WITH GRACE AND TRUTH

COMMON GRACE IS OFFERED THROUGH GOD'S TRUTH

God is the good and wise Architect and Creator. He is the Owner, who has written his owner's manual, and he knows what is best.

God's law would have been best for Adam and Eve even if he had never intervened to save their souls.

God's law would have been best for Freddy Mercury even if he never submitted his life to Jesus Christ.

God's law is still best for Mormon's who have no saving relationship with Jesus.

God's law is still best for all men and women, even for those who are not elect.

Therefore, we graciously communicate and seek to practice God's truth regarding masculinity.

Therefore, we graciously communicate and seek to practice God's truth regarding femininity.

Therefore, we graciously communicate and seek to practice God's truth regarding marriage.

Therefore, we graciously communicate and seek to practice God's truth regarding sex.

But God's law will always show us lawless, and this is why we glory in uncommon grace.

UNCOMMON GRACE IS EXPERIENCED THROUGH POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION

God reconciled himself to Adam and Eve.

God reconciled himself to Abraham and Sarah.

God reconciled himself to Lot and his daughters.

God reconciled himself to Rahab and her children.

God reconciled himself to David and his mistress.

God reconciled himself to the Samaritan woman and her city.

God reconciled himself to the Ethiopian eunuch and his royal court.

God reconciled himself to the Corinthians. Paul wrote,

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:9-12)

How did God reconcile himself to such spiritual prostitutes? Jesus lived a perfect life. He died a sacrificial death. He then sent his Holy Spirit to change our minds and hearts. He shared his promises with us, and caused us to believe in his work and begin the process of hating our sin. And we learned that regardless of the type, regardless of the degree, regardless of the consequences, regardless of the amount, regardless of the frequency, regardless of the date, all can be made right ...

Instantaneously.

Perfectly and without degree.

Immutably.

Freely and without works.

UNCOMMON GRACE IS EXPERIENCED THROUGH PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

God grants us enlightened minds.

God grants us faith and repentance.

God grants us renewed affections.

God grants us spiritual fruit. Some see fruit quickly. Some see fruit slowly. Some see fruit consistently. Some have thorns in the flesh and are forced to rely upon God's grace that is sufficient. But all are affected by God, and all are coached by the Holy Spirit to live in accordance with their new nature and way of thinking.

UNCOMMON GRACE IS EXPERIENCE THROUGH PERFECTED SANCTIFICATION

Someday, all will be made right, and all God's children will be only holy. One day, men will be men, women will be women, all will be married to Jesus Christ, and the intimacy of sex will be enjoyed by all who dwell in the Holy City.

CONCLUDING APPLICATION

Therefore, after this entire scriptural presentation, how ought we to respond? What is Christ calling us to do?

LEARNED

Let us be thoroughly instructed by God's Law. Then, let us be thoroughly humbled by God's Law.

GRACED

Let us run to Jesus Christ. Let us do it for salvation. Let us do it for sanctification. And let us run to the means of grace in the place of grace.

BENEFITED

Let us be thoroughly cognizant of the benefits of the Owner's Manual. Let us lust for these good gifts, and be wise in hearing and doing and enjoying. I ask you to be wise and benefited. Look how he has graced you with his Law. You do not get to invent your own truth. You do not get to change God's truth. God's ways are best. Don't fall for the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Hear what God says and believe it. God promises sweet benefits to those who walk after his leadership. He also warns of the peril of sin. Why would you harm yourself and yours?

TRUTHFUL

Let us never vacillate on the truth. I ask you to be loving. Why would you not share grace and truth with your neighbors. Why would you be silenced? Preach with words. Preach with your testimony. As politicians, politic for that which is best. As citizens, support politicians who politic for that which is best. As parents, pray for your leaders and ask God that the culture might be restrained for your children.^{xii}

GRACIOUS

Let us communicate graciously. Let us be like Hosea was to Gomer. Let us be like Jesus was to us. Let us be "friends of sinners" that introduce sinners to their Best Friend. As church missionaries, share truth, and do it always with grace and brokenness.

ⁱ Matthew 19:1-12

Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." ⁷ They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" ⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." ¹⁰ The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹ But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

ⁱⁱ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, allies, pansexual

ⁱⁱⁱ Genesis 1:1-2:3

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it

was so.⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so.¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.¹⁶ And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

^{iv} Created to be the Lord's lords

Psalm 8 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

^v Hosea 6:7

^{vi} Genesis 3

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to

make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

^{vii} Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 11:2

^{viii} Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 11:2

^{ix} Luke 15:25-32

Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.'²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.'³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.'³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.' "

^x Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

^{xi} John 8:2-7

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst⁴ they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.⁵ Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"⁶ This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.⁷ And as they continued to

ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

^{xii} Cultural oppression

The Equality Act, a bill just approved by the House of Representatives, would add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It regulates religious non-profits. Religious schools would be heavily regulated with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity ... even if they refuse all federal funding. "Schools would still have the ministerial exception, which is constitutional and beyond Congress's power to repeal. It should protect them with respect to teachers teaching a religion class, or leading chapel services, but courts have generally held that other teachers are not ministers for purposes of the exception," he adds. require almost all religious and public schools to give transgender students the right to compete on the sports teams of their preference and full access to bathrooms, showers, locker-rooms of their preference? Would prison inmates be granted the right to be jailed according to their gender identity? Would a religious doctor be required to perform gender-reassignment surgery or provide hormonal treatment?