

## **THE TRIUMPH OF GOD OVER THE SIN OF MAN**

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

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**January 16, 2022**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This month a new law (C-4) went into effect in Canada outlawing conversion therapy for anyone under the age of 18. What do they mean by conversion therapy? Any assistance given to someone to help them overcome unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusion. Let's say a 15-year-old boy is a Christian, and he is struggling with same-sex attraction. He knows that is against God's will, and he wants live a holy life. Or let's say there is a thirteen-year-old girl who feels like she is a boy trapped in a girl's body. She knows these feelings are wrong, that God made her a girl, and He wants her to live as a girl. She wants to live a holy, obedient life. Under this new law, kids like these cannot find the help they need. It is against the law for a pastor, and teacher, a therapist, or a parent to help them change, even if this help only consists of speech – not drugs, or any kind of physical abuse – only speech. It is criminal for a parent to send their kids to conversion therapy; it is criminal to conduct conversion therapy; and it is even a criminal offense to promote conversion therapy. Great Britain and other Western nations will soon follow suit.
2. In case you think this is just crazy Canada, and it is not a threat in the USA, in 2017 a similar law was passed in Boca Raton, Florida. A couple of therapists sued, and in November 20 they won. The ban against conversion therapy was overruled by the 11<sup>th</sup> circuit court of appeals, allowing clients with unwanted same-sex attraction to pursue change. However, this decision will be appealed by the city of Boca Raton.

### **II. WHY THIS SERMON?**

1. This morning I want to talk about the biblical view of homosexuality. Why?
2. I want to preach in support of our Christian family in Canada who are now being persecuted by their own government. This law (C-4) is a terrible violation of religious liberty. Young people should have the right to seek help with their problems. Parents and churches and therapists should have the right to provide help for these young people. Religious liberty is not a privilege granted by the government; it is an essential human right that the government exists to protect. A government that tramples on religious liberty, rather than protects us, has forgotten why it exists. Rather than protecting human rights, it tramples human rights. A government that can tell therapists, and parents, and pastors, what advice they can give to young people, is no longer good, or legitimate, because it has assumed the position of God. As Christians in America, strongly condemn this new law and stand with the church in Canada as they seek its reversal.
3. The Canadian government is on very dangerous ground. Any government that calls good evil, and evil good, that punishes good people and rewards evil people, will destroy itself. God will not be mocked. You reap what you sow. A nation cannot abandon God's will and

wisdom without suffering severe consequences. The United States must not follow their example.

### III. TEXTUAL BACKGROUND

1. We are going to take a look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.
2. While I have preached on the topic of homosexuality before, I have never preached specifically on this text.
3. 1 Corinthians was written by the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth.
4. The city of Corinth was notorious for its sexual immorality (Kostenberger).
  - i. Certain words and phrases were used in Greco-Roman culture based on the reputation of Corinth:
    1. "To Corinthianize" was used as a short-handed way of referring to engage in sexual sin.
    2. A "Corinthian girl" referred to a prostitute.
5. This immorality had infiltrated the church.
  - i. Paul had previously written a letter to them to not associate with professing Christians who were sexually immoral. 1 Cor 5:9-11
  - ii. Such people were to be excommunicated. 1 Cor 5:13
  - iii. A main reason Paul wrote 1 Corinthians was because there was a church member who was carrying on a sexual relationship with his step-mother, and the church was tolerating it. And they seemed to be proud of their "tolerance." 1 Cor 5:1-3
  - iv. In 1 Cor 6:12-20, Paul condemns those Christians who were having sex with prostitutes.
  - v. That is the context of the following passage – a church that struggled with sin, especially sexual sin.

### IV. TEXT: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

1. *9 Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males,, 10 no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. 11 And some of you used to be like this. 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.*
  - i. Paul provides a list of the common sins of the unbelievers in that culture, which are still prevalent today. This are nine vices. This is a representative list, not a comprehensive list -- the prevalent sins representing all sin.
  - ii. Nine Vices Mentioned:
    1. Sexual immorality: The Greek word is *proneia*, from which we get our English word pornography. But it is not talking about pornography, even though that is a sin that would fall under the category of lust. *Porneia* refers to unmarried people engaging in sexual activity. The Bible teaches that all sexual activity is to be reserved for the marriage bed – mental, emotional, visual, or physical.
      - a. 1 Cor 6:18 "Flee sexual immorality...."

- b. 1 Thess 4:3-5 “3 For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality, 4 that each of you knows how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not with lustful passions, like the Gentiles, who don’t know God.”
- 2. Idolatry: Worshiping an image or object – whether representing false gods or the true God. This brings to mind the second commandment.
  - a. Ex 20:4-5 “4 Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. 5 Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God”
- 3. Adultery: A married person engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage.
  - a. Heb 13:4 “Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.”
- 4. Homosexuality: Engaging in sexual activity with a person of the same sex.
  - a. The Bible’s stance on sexual morality is clear: Never before marriage, never outside of marriage, and never with the same sex.
  - b. J.D. Greear, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that the Bible whispers about sexual sin but shouts about materialism and religious pride. Really? In this list of vices, three of the nine, or 30% have to do with sexual sin! And again, sexual sin is one of the main reasons for the writing of 1 Corinthians.
- 5. Theft: Taking something that doesn’t belong to you.
  - a. Eph 4:28 “Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.”
- 6. Greed: The love of money. The pursuit of money and materia things regardless of how it hurts others.
  - a. Hebrews 13:5 “Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, I will never leave you or abandon you.”
- 7. Drunkenness: Drinking too much alcohol.
  - a. Eph 5:18 “And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit”
- 8. Verbal abuse: Any language that offends God and people.
  - a. Eph 4:29 “No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.”
- 9. Swindling: Utilizing violence and deception to steal from others.
  - a. Ex 20:15 “Do not steal.”

- iii. With the remainder of our time, I want to focus on the fourth vice in this list – homosexuality.
- iv. Why pick on homosexuality? Wherever the culture most departs from the word of God, the preacher must speak the most and the loudest. Currently this applies to homosexuality. Not only has our culture decided that homosexuality is an acceptable alternative lifestyle, but that anyone who disagrees is evil, and parents who try to help their kids overcome homosexuality are abusive. So, this is really where we need to spend a lot of time.
- v. Paul makes three points about homosexuality.

## V. THREE POINTS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

### 1. Condemnation.

- a. Homosexuality is named among of list of nine vices under the label “unrighteous.” “Unrighteous” literally means “wrongdoers.”
- b. Homosexuality was very common in the Greco-Roman world. Socrates practiced it. Plato’s famous book *The Symposium* celebrates it. Fourteen of the first fifteen Roman emperors practiced it. At the very time of this writing, the emperor was Nero. He had taken a boy named Sporus, had him castrated, and then married him with a full marriage ceremony. Nero had also married a man called Pythagorus and called him his husband.
- c. Since homosexuality is placed in the middle of a vice list, does that mean that all of these sins are equally bad, or destructive? No. All sin is terrible in the eyes of God, but some sins are more hurtful and destructive.
  - a. **Mark Driscoll** “All sin is equally damning, but not all sin is equally devastating.”
- d. What are the actual words used? “Males who have sex with males” is a combination of two Greek words.
  - a. *Malakos*: Means “soft.” Refers to the effeminate, passive partner in a sexual relationship.
  - b. *Arsenokoites*: Refers to active role in the sexual relationship.
    - i. This term is also found in 1 Tim 1:9-10.
    - ii. This is actually a term that seems to have been coined by Paul. It appears that Paul took two words from the OT prohibition against homosexuality to make a new word. In both Lev 28:22 and 20:13, in the LXX, the words *arsenos* (man) and *koiten* (bed) are used. Paul joined these words to make arsenokoites – those who take men to bed, or bedders of men.
    - iii. It was very common and acceptable for Greek and Roman men to have sex with their wives, as well as with male and female prostitutes, and male and female slaves. However, it was unacceptable for a man to the effeminate, passive partner in a homosexual relationship. But Paul goes against the grain and condemns both the passive and active participants in a homosexual relationship.
- e. Objections Answered:

- a. Now, in parts of 1 Corinthians Paul tells women to keep their heads covered when they pray, and men to keep their hair short and uncovered when they pray. Most scholars agree that those were not universal commands, but had to do with the first century culture. So, some people say the same thing about Paul's condemnation of homosexuality – it only applied to that culture, and not to the 21st century. However, homosexuality is not mentioned alone. It is placed in the middle of a vice list, and nobody would claim that the other vices are no longer bad.
- b. Some argue that Paul is only condemning certain types of homosexual behavior, such as pederasty (man with a young boy), homosexual prostitution, or homosexual relations outside of marriage.
  - i. However, if Paul wanted to condemn only pederasty, there was a very clear Greek word for that practice, *paiderastes*.
  - ii. As well, if Paul wanted to make a distinction between evil and good forms of homosexuality, he could have. Instead, he condemns all forms of homosexual practice.
  - iii. Even the best homosexual bible scholars agree that the Bible condemns all forms of homosexuality:
    1. **Bernadette Brooten** (a lesbian who has written the most important book on lesbianism in antiquity and is herself a lesbian) “I see Paul as condemning all forms of homoeroticism as the unnatural acts of people who had turned away from God.”
    2. **Louis Crompton** (a gay man and pioneer in queer studies, author of the massive book *Homosexuality and Civilization*), “Nowhere does Paul or any other Jewish writer of this period imply the least acceptance of same-sex relations under any circumstances. The idea that homosexuals might be redeemed by mutual devotion would have been wholly foreign to Paul or any Jew or early Christian.”
- c. What about the argument that Christians are not supposed to judge in Mt 7:1? In his book, *Christian Ethics* (p. 297), Norman Geisler answers this objection with three points:
  - i. Christ was condemning hypocritical judging, not the act of judging as such. This is evident since much of the Sermon on the Mount is intended to overcome the hypocritical righteousness of the Pharisees.
  - ii. The context of this passage clearly does not condemn all judging. This is clear from the fact that 7:5 says, “Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” It's not that you aren't supposed to judge, but that you aren't supposed to judge hypocritically.

- iii. If one is not supposed to judge, then why are homosexual activists and many others judging those who stand in opposition to homosexuality?
  - d. What about the argument that people are born gay, so it is wrong to condemn their behavior?
    - i. **Norma Geisler** (*Christian Ethics*, 288) “There is no undisputed scientific evidence to support the contention that homosexual tendencies are genetic. It shows every evidence of being a learned behavior. People are recruited into the movement and taught to perform homosexual acts. Even if there were an inherited tendency toward a homosexual attitude, this would not justify homosexual acts. Some people seem to inherit a tendency toward violence, but this does not justify violent acts. Some people are said to have an inherited tendency toward alcohol abuse, but this does not justify drunkenness... The Bible teaches that we all inherit a tendency to sin, but we are still responsible for sinning.”
- f. This is not the only place where Scripture condemns homosexuality.
  - a. **Leviticus 18:22** “You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable.”
  - b. Jesus also addressed homosexuality implicitly when he defined marriage.
    - i. **Matthew 19:4-6, 9** “4 Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female,, 5 and he also said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?, 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate... 9 I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”
    - ii. There are many truths found in this passage:
      1. Human beings are created by God, not the product of evolution. “... He who created them in the beginning.” They have inherent meaning and purpose given to them by God.
      2. There are only two genders. God “made them male and female.”
      3. Marriage is your top priority -- "leave his father and mother."
      4. Marriage is between a man and a woman. “Male and female”; “man... wife”; “father and mother”.
      5. Marriage is between one man and one woman. “the two will become one.”
      6. Sex is only for the marriage. First the two were “joined,” which is marriage; and then they became “one flesh,” which is sex.
      7. Sex is only for a man and wife. “man...wife.”
      8. Marriage is instituted by God. “What God has joined together...”

9. Marriage is to be permanent. "Whoever divorces his wife... commits adultery." Divorce is not an option, except in the case of prolonged, unrepentant sexual sin.

## 2. Caution.

- a. There are many reasons why those who are tempted by homosexuality should turn away from that lifestyle.
- b. It was only in 1973 that the American Psychological Association voted to declassify it as a mental disorder. It had been classified as such in all its editions of the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) since its inception in 1952. It wasn't until the sixth printing of the second edition of the DSM in 1973 that was reclassified as acceptable behavior, and this decision was based not on science, but on intense political activism from gay rights organizations.
- c. It's no surprise that it was classified as a mental disorder. Norman Geisler noted the following (*Christian Ethics*, 293-296):
  - a. Psychological studies show that there is a disproportionately high degree of egocentricity, superciliousness, narcissism, masochism, and hostility associated with homosexuality.
  - b. Child molestation cases involve three times as many homosexuals as the general population.
  - c. Homosexual crimes, some against other homosexuals, are among the most violent committed...
  - d. One study reveals that male homosexuals live on the average about thirty years less than do heterosexuals. Statistics on homosexual deaths show that the average male homosexual lives to about age 40, but the average male heterosexual lives to about 75. Even chain smoking is not that lethal.
  - e. Homosexuals tend to die earlier, have higher cases of HIV and AIDS, colon and rectal cancer, and hepatitis. In fact, according to the CDC, more than 82 percent of all known sexually-transmitted AIDS cases in 2006 were the result of male-to-male contact. Moreover, gay and bisexual men account for more than 60 percent of all syphilis cases."
- d. Anytime we stray from God's wisdom and will, we will only hurt ourselves and one another.
- e. But Paul gives an even more serious reason for repenting from homosexuality: Unrepentant homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is mentioned twice in this passage.
- f. **1 Corinthians 6:9** "Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom?"
- g. What is the kingdom of God?
  - a. The kingdom of God is used in two ways in the NT.
  - b. It refers to the current reign of God in the hearts of His people. God's kingdom is wherever God is in charge, and for now that only includes the hearts of His

people. You become a citizen of the kingdom of God when you become a Christian. Paul is saying that you cannot become a citizen of God's kingdom if you are homosexual.

- c. It also refers to God's kingdom in heaven. Paul says that homosexuals will not go to heaven.
- h. When Paul says the "unrighteous" will not enter the kingdom of God, he isn't speaking about anyone who has ever committed a sin. If that were the case, nobody could go to heaven, because all have sinned. Paul is talking about people who refuse to repent of these sins. People who persist in these sinful lifestyles.
- i. Notice that Paul writes, "Do not be deceived," in verse 9. There has always been the threat of spiritual deception in the church on questions of morality.
  - a. There are professing Christians who practice homosexuality, refusing to believe that it is wrong, even though Scripture clearly condemns it. They say, "Surely that doesn't apply to us today."
  - b. There are professing Christians who believe that sin is no big deal. That as long as you "believe" in Jesus, God will forgive you and save you. Paul assures us that those who live in rebellion against God will go to hell.
    - i. James said, "Faith without works is dead (James 1:26)."
    - ii. John said, "This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commands (1 Jn 1:3).
    - iii. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven (Mt 7:21)."
2. Paul's message here is clearly that if a person refuses to repent of sin, he will go to hell, and that includes unrepentant homosexuals.
3. This is why religious liberty and freedom of speech are so important. If the government censors Christians from speaking the truth, homosexuals will go to hell.

### 3. Conversion.

- a. **1 Corinthians 6:11** "And some of you used to be like this. 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."
  - a. "And some of you used to be like this."
  - b. KJV: "And such were some of you."
- b. Paul concludes with the wonderful truth that Jesus Christ changes lives. Jesus saves – He radically changes lives.
- c. Here Paul mentions three truths about change (conversion/reparation):
  - a. The reality of conversion.
    - i. Some of the Corinthians had come out of a homosexual lifestyle.
    - ii. What happened to them?
      1. Washed: Regeneration (Titus 3:5). Given a new heart, with the desire, and power to please God. When God saves a person, He



actually changes a person's desires; He changes your "want to."  
The power of sin is broken in your life – you die with Christ and are raised with Christ – so that you are no longer a slave to sin.

2. Sanctified: They were called by God to serve Him, and to empowered to live in manner worthy of that calling. When God saves you, He places the Holy Spirit inside of you to empower and encourage you.
3. Justified: They were forgiven; placed in a right relationship with God; promised eternal life.

b. The possibility of conversion.

i. There are three indications of the possibility:

1. God wouldn't command us to repent if it weren't possible.
2. If it is possible to repent of the other vices in the list, then why isn't it possible to repent of homosexuality? Is it possible to repent of sexual immorality, and idolatry, and adultery, and theft, and greed, and drunkenness, and verbal abuse, and swindling?
3. If the Corinthian Christians can change, then you and I can. Or better yet, if God can change them, then God can change everyone.

ii. Our society believes and expects people to change in all sorts of ways: Eating disorders; anger problems; substance addiction; pedophilia; suicidal behavior; all criminal behavior – it is expected that after enough time spent behind bars, people will change, or at least learn to deny their criminal impulses. Of course homosexuals can change.

c. The power for conversion.

i. Where does the power come from?

ii. **1 Corinthians 6:11** "And some of you used to be like this. 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."

iii. The key phrase is "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." It means "in connection to," "in union with," "in relationship to."

iv. When you establish a relationship with Jesus Christ, God changes your life. I remember when I became a Christian; there was an immediate change that came over me. I changed in ways I wasn't even expecting to change, or in ways that I didn't want to change.

v. Jesus Christ came to earth to die for our sins and rose again. Now forgiveness, freedom, and eternal life are available to all who will repent (make a decision to live a life in submission to God), and trust in Jesus Christ (in His sacrifice alone for the forgiveness of our sins).

## VI. CONCLUSION

1. When we put these ideas together from 1 Cor 6:9-11 – condemnation, caution, and conversion, it is clear that the Canadian government is in the wrong.
2. These truths are not true for me, or just for those in Corinth, or just for Christians – they are true truths – true for all people, in all places, at all times.
3. Homosexuality is a sin, for which there are temporal and eternal consequences, but through a relationship with Jesus Christ, a person can be forgiven and changed.
4. We do not ask the government to force people to be Christians, or to punish people for not being Christians. We simply demand that the government protect the rights of Christians to preach salvation in Jesus, and the rights of young people to seek out and receive this salvation.