

Sexuality and identity 3: Gender

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[0:00] This week, I don't know if I've just noticed these stories because I've been preparing this talk! or whether I would have paid attention to them anyway, but this week saw at least four news headlines.

Transgender women banned from competitive female cycling events. Women can clearly have male body parts, according to Ed Davey, the Liberal Democrat leader.

A teacher was sacked after refusing to use an eight-year-old's pronouns. A Christian teacher, I will add. And Oxford University have been really divided over this speaker called Kathleen Stock, who's been invited to come and speak at a debate.

It's divided because she's a feminist who says that trans women are not women. And so it's divided opinion at Oxford University.

We live in a world that has rejected the idea of male and female-only genders. Created a whole wealth of new genders.

[1:14] Created a way for us to be non-gender, non-binary. Known as they, them, rather than he or she. And when people do come out as different genders and things, they seem to be celebrated.

They're called brave. And if you reject these kind of ideas, like this speaker, Kathleen Stock, then you're kind of rejected by people in society.

Many of us will know about J.K. Rowling, the author of Harry Potter, who sent a tweet out saying that trans women are not women.

And kind of being cancelled. Don't mention her now. Confusing worlds. The Christian Institute reported a couple of weeks ago a survey done that says one in ten teenage pupils want to change gender.

I think we have to push in to kind of what are those teenagers saying. They will say different things. For some of them, that's real deep feelings that they have.

[2:26] For some, it's kind of jumping on the bandwagon kind of thing, I think. But certainly in my experience working in Bryson Hove schools last year, I think this is probably pretty accurate.

Coming across students all the time thinking, now be they and them changing their name and pronouns. Confusing. So what do we do when we face these issues?

Well, as Christians, we can look at the Bible. We can look and get God's wisdom on these matters. And we're going to do that this evening. We're going to think, firstly, what the Bible says to us about our bodies, our sex, our gender.

And I want to affirm with you this evening that our bodies are important. Our bodies are important. We see that in the Bible. That's really important for us to hear this evening.

Because, as we'll think a bit more about later, there are people who really don't feel at home in their bodies and are really struggling. But our bodies, no less, they are important.

[3:41] They are given to us. They are created by our Creator, God. Our good Creator, God. He's made us to be embodied people. We're not just souls floating about in the air, are we?

We have bodies. It's part of God's good design for the world. Turn to Genesis 1. As we see Genesis 1 play out, we see God create all sorts of things to create our world.

He created light, darkness, seas, land, plants, animals. And then you get to the sixth day. The sixth day of God's creation.

We'll read verse 26 to 31.

Would someone like to read that? I think if you can have the microphone when you read that. So would someone like to volunteer to read that? Aaron will pass you a microphone.

[4:49] Genesis 1, 26 to 31. Aaron. Our Sema will. Aaron's coming up behind you, just to warn you.

With a microphone. It's all okay. Thanks, our Sema. And God said, let us make man in our image, like us, and let him rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.

And over every living thing which goes flat on the earth. And God made man in his image. In the image of God, he made him. Male and female, he made them. And God gave them his blessing, and said to them, be fertile, and have increase, and make the earth full, and be masters of it.

Be rulers over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing moving on the earth. And God said, see, I have given you every plant producing seed in the face of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit producing seed, they will be for your food.

[6:09] More? To 31, please, thank you. And God saw, and God saw everything which he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thank you, our Sema. There are, I think, there are some unique things that happen on this sixth day. On no other day does God create a creature in his image.

Only on that day does he create a creature who will rule over his creation. And only on that day does he kind of stand back and look at his creation and say that it is very good.

Creating human beings are kind of the high point of his creation. As one writer puts it, our value and worth do not come from ourselves, it is God-given.

He says that we have value and worth as people created in God's image. We are images of God, and that means a number of things.

[7:22] And one of the things, it means that our bodies are created in God's image. So apparently, image in the Old Testament, the word for image in the Hebrew, is mainly used of idols.

Idols being a physical, carved statue or copy of something. And human beings are like this physical statue or copy of the non-physical being that is God's.

And so as images of God, as people in bodies, our bodies are important to show kind of visibility of what God is like.

It is all part of how we're created in God's image. It's an important thing. But we're not just our bodies. If we were just our bodies, we'd be standing fairly still.

And we'd be a bit boring, wouldn't we? In chapter 2 and verse 7, we see that the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

[8:37] And the man became a living being. God breathes in life to us. We are body and soul. Body and souls go together, don't they?

And if we remain true to our bodies that we're given by God, there's only two different types.

There's male and there's female. Both human, but male and female. Both equal. Both created in the image of God.

But different. But different. They're male and female. And that's important, especially important for us to obey what God says in verse 28.

God blessed them and said, be fruitful and increase in number. You need a male and you need a female to be able to increase in number. That's part of God's design for this world.

[9:39] I don't know if anybody's a Guardians of the Galaxy fan. I know Aaron is. In the latest film, I was quite intrigued by seeing this world that looks familiarly like our world, but isn't.

It's full of creatures who are a bit like us, but they're not. This guy has tried to make this perfect human race.

And he keeps trying and he keeps kind of rubbing out the one previous go and he creates a whole new batch and sends them to this world.

And he has to keep trying and trying because he can't really do it. But that's not how God's designed our world. That's not how he's designed the population of this world to grow.

He doesn't create a whole new batch somewhere in heaven and sends them to earth every few years. He's designed male and female bodies to be able to help the world be filled.

[10:50] To be increased in number. And that needs male and female. But there are no other options. There are no other genders mentioned here.

It's only male and female. And actually I think that gives us a really good, solid idea of who we are. We are male and we are female. And we are created in God's image. I think that gives us a really solid foundation for who we are as human beings.

And to muck that up makes things rather very unsolid. Like standing on sand. Sinking sand.

Thinking about what the rest of the Bible shows us about bodies.

I heard someone say over this last week that the greatest compliment to human beings is that we can read in the Bible that the word became flesh.

[11:58] Jesus entered into a human body. He was fully human. Fully God but fully human. He was flesh.

And he was born a male. A boy. His body died. And post-resurrection we see him in, I think, a new resurrection body.

Like the first. As people could say it was Jesus. But different too. It seems to be different. And in 1 Corinthians 15 we're not going to read it.

But we could read about a resurrection body. In heaven we're not just going to be souls floating around on a cloud playing a harp.

If we were, we'd need a body to be able to play a harp, wouldn't we? We're going to have new resurrection bodies. New perfect bodies. And so it's really important that we remember that our bodies are important.

[13:04] I want to take you to one more place in the Bible whilst we're thinking on this theme of bodies. In 1 Corinthians 6.

1 Corinthians 6. I've gone too far. 1 Corinthians 6. 1 Corinthians 6. Someone else be able to read verse 19 and 20.

Again, Aaron will probably shove a microphone in your face. Gently, of course. 1 Corinthians 6. Verse 19 to 20.

Thank you, Maria. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God?

You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body. Yeah.

Thanks, Maria. Paul is writing to the Corinthians and he was writing to people who at the time, apparently, in the culture they were living in, there were a lot of people who believed that the body and soul were very separate from one another.

[14:25] It didn't actually matter what you did with your body. It doesn't affect your inner being. But actually, Paul writes this and seems to say that our bodies are really important.

And who we are inside is really important. They matter. They are temples of the Holy Spirit. And actually, how we use our bodies are important too.

He mentions that in verse 18, using the example of someone who sins sexually. He says, all other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. They affect us. Our bodies are important. And our bodies, they're brought at a price. With Jesus' blood that was shed for us. Our bodies are important.

But many will say that our biological sex, whether we're male or female, doesn't affect what our gender is.

[15:32] People will say that gender is kind of psychological. It pertains to our inner sense of identity. And it's more defined in things like our behavior, our appearance, our clothing, our roles in life.

And they say that's different from our biological sex. It can be different. But I think the Bible is very clearly telling us otherwise.

That our biological sex goes hand in hand with our gender, male and female. We don't see it any different in the Bible.

A writer who is very helpful to read anything written by Kevin DeYoung is helpful. He says, We're equal to the image of God.

But we are different. We are male and we're female. But neither is more important than the other. Neither is more the image of God than the other.

[17:09] We're equal but different. And I think culture has had this idea of what is right and acceptable for a male and a female.

So, for instance, color. Nowadays, we might say pink is for girls, blue is for boys. A hundred years ago, this was written in the Ladies' Home Journal, 1918, whatever that is.

And it says this. Pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy. While blue, which is much more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl.

Isn't that interesting? A hundred years later, we'll probably say the other way around. It's a very cultural stereotype. If we look at the Bible, actually, I think it gives us a lot of freedom in how men and women can be.

Male and females can be. If you look at Jesus, he's the perfect man. And he does lots of things that we would consider macho.

[18:18] So, he drove people out of the temple with a whip. He had the power to stop storms. He cast out demons. He defeated death.

That seems all pretty macho. Strong. But he also tenderly and lovingly welcomed little children. He wept at the grave of Lazarus.

Men can cry. Didn't he say something like, Jerusalem, I long to gather you in like a hen gathers in her chicks.

Yeah, compassion and love. He cooked. He cooked breakfast on the beach for his disciples. He washed his disciples' feet. Men and women don't have to be these kind of set ideas.

And yet, there are definitely roles that men and women play. That are to be different from one another. So, God in the family and in the church life has different roles for men and women.

[19:32] Only a little bit. In terms of leadership, men are to take on the role of elders and pastors, teachers. And that's God's design that goes back to creation.

Men do have a responsibility to lead, but not in a domineering and strong way and greedy for power. But to lead like Jesus led.

To lead with love. To lead with sacrifice. To lay down our lives for others.

Not to be served, but to serve. And that's the same, I think, in the family with husbands and wives.

Men and women are equal. 100% equal. But they are different. I'm going to stop there.

[20:45] We're going to move on in a moment to think about transgender and gender dysphoria issues. It might be that you might have a burning question at this point.

If they're to do with some of the more practical issues like transgender, gender dysphoria, then we'll think about that in a bit. But if you have any questions, comments on what we've looked at so far, now's a good time to share.

Can I ask a question? Yeah. Can we get you a microphone? Sorry. We'll pass the microphone.

Very quick. More for the sake of the recording.

Yes. You mentioned last year you were in schools. You're doing school work. Yeah. Right. What was your opinion of these issues as you came through the school system?

You're obviously doing some work there. So what was your general opinion about what was going on in schools and the young people? Are they accepting all of this?

[21:53] Are they kicking up against it? What was your take on it? It seems to me that they're pretty accepting.

And I mean, in some ways, we as Christians, we want to be really loving and really welcoming.

And we want to be friends with people. We don't have to agree with everything. I think in schools specifically, yeah. I think certainly the schools I was in, they're pretty accepting of all things.

And there's some good in that. But also, yeah, it does feel like there's this. My opinion, there's this kind of almost indoctrination.

Like, you have all the freedom in the world to choose whether you're a boy, girl, something else. And that feels really dangerous and scary. Yeah.

[23:05] I know this is a big question, but just something I've been pondering in recent weeks was the place of kind of biological sex, malehood and womanhood in the new creation.

If you have any comments on, just reading Galatians 3.26-29. So in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith.

For all of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. You are all one in Christ. You belong to Christ, etc. I know there's a lot there, but I guess I just wondered, given that we know that there won't be marriage in heaven, if you've got any comments on what the purpose or picture of malehood and womanhood in the new creation might be.

Interesting. I was going to say about not being marriage in heaven. I think Jesus says that quite clearly.

[24:17] I'm not entirely sure. I look forward to finding out. I think we probably will still recognize each other as men and women, I imagine.

I don't think our bodies are going to look radically different in any way. I think as well, just kind of thinking off the top of my head, there's the sense that the church is the bride of Christ.

Christ is the head of the church. He's the groom. And so in that way, actually, Christ is going to be leading his people, not men.

I don't know. I don't know if that's going to affect things in any way. Yeah. That's probably not a very helpful answer. Galatians.

Galatians 3. One in Christ. Helpful thought.

[25:37] Interesting thought. In Christ, we are one in Christ. We are male and female. We are equally as loved in Christ, aren't we?

Interesting thought about how that goes on into the new creation. Yeah. Look forward to finding out. And I might think about that a bit more, actually. Maybe time for one more comment question.

Don't have to. Steve, can we have a... Mike, sorry. Just a comment. There's one thing you sort of touched on.

I think you're right in that the thinking behind modern gender ideology is thoroughly Gnostic. It's this view that bodies are unimportant and your spirit is somehow constrained by your body rather than actually being part of it.

It was exactly the problem that they had in Corinth. And it's very... There's nothing new under the sun, as Solomon said. Yeah. I don't think it's...

[26:54] As you say, it's not a new issue. I think people have been thinking about these things long before. Yeah. Cool. Let's move on to transgender and gender dysphoria.

So, transgender is quite an umbrella term and could mean all sorts of things. So, it could just mean that someone wants to...

They're a man and actually they feel a little bit more female and so they want to kind of be known as transgender female so that they can cut their hair short, maybe dye their hair pink and be called a woman.

It may mean something a lot deeper than that. Gender dysphoria is a real, from my understanding, a real medical issue, a real feelings of being trapped inside your own body, feeling like how you feel and what your body is saying are completely mismatched.

And you just don't feel at home at all in your own body. And so, we need to remember that there are real people who are really struggling with these thoughts and feelings.

[28:17] And we need to remember compassion. We need to remember that Jesus had compassion in all sorts of people. And we're going to turn to Romans 8, 18 to 25.

I'm going to let you, in a moment, do some discussion in the little circles you're in for a few minutes, in a moment. So, it's not all me talking.

Romans chapter 8, 18 to 25. I'll read this. Say one or two things and then we'll have a chat.

Paul writes, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it.

[29:21] In hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit grown inwardly as we await eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

So, as I've said, there are people who genuinely feel this kind of gender dysphoria, this feeling of being trapped in their own bodies. Andrew Walker, I've been reading a book of his on this subject. He says, These are authentic experiences where their heart's desire is telling them one thing about themselves, where their body is saying something else.

[30:36] And a question I'd love you to discuss in your groups, just for a few minutes, is how does this passage in Romans help us answer why people may have these issues?

I could add to that, how could this passage help us if we're talking to people who have gendered us for it?

And does the Bible offer us any hope? Chat about those things. Use this passage as a little base for you as you chat for about five minutes, no more than five minutes.

Maybe we could hear two thoughts from two of the groups.

Maybe we'll sneak a third in. That group at the back, glad you're having a good chat. Does anyone want to share one or two things from their little discussion?

[31:46] Shama? Go for it. Okay, I was just sharing that the passage talks about some kind of conflict going on that happens with us in the body as a result of the fall.

If you connect it to Genesis chapter 3. It comes with the fall. And in the package that the fall came with, it came with a lot of dysfunctional things and battles that go on inside us.

And these battles point us to the fact that there's something that is beyond us. There are things that we, there's a level, there's a realm that transcends who we are in this body, in this falling state.

And there's a level of dysfunctional things. And there's a perfection that we ascribe to. Now, this falling state, you know, comes with a lot of issues, including, yeah, what we are discussing right now.

Gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is among the issues. And what Paul is saying is that these groanings that go on, including these ones, it's common. The hope there is that it happens.

[33:07] And there's a time that will come where everything will be made clear in our glorification. a lot of all these things will be settled in a more permanent form, I think.

Something in that direction. Thanks, Shamar. Things about us being fallen worlds, fallen states.

Yes. Yeah. Great. Any further thoughts? Anything on the second? Maria, can we give you a mic?

In regard to what you said about gender dysphoria and the guy who was speaking about some people don't feel at home in their body.

Well, it's all to do with feelings, isn't it? Yeah. And how they feel about themselves. But as we know, we can't rely on our feelings.

[34:09] We rely on what you were saying was the benchmark of the Bible. That's what we should be relying on to tell us who we are.

Yeah. because, you know, our feelings, our feelings go up and down almost daily. And not only that, they go up and down as we age.

And, you know, you can't rely on them because they're not constant. Yeah. They can be. They can be. And they can be contradictory. Yeah, one moment you can feel like this, the next moment you can feel like this.

Yeah. Yeah. Both at once. Both, yes. Both at once. Yeah. Yeah. So you can't rely on them. Yeah.

So even that guy, Walker, was saying, our feelings are going to, are telling us, their heart's desire is telling them things about themselves while their body is saying something else.

We know that our heart and our sort of insides tell us all sorts of funny things almost daily, but we can't rely on that, can we?

[35:23] And our hearts are deceitful, aren't they? Our hearts are deceitful. Yeah. Exactly. That's okay. Maybe we'll make this the last one

for now.

For now. It's just that, what Maria said, I agree with her, but, she said, you know, our benchmark is the Bible, and yes it is, because we are Christians, but for the world out there, what is their benchmark?

Mark? So, I think, two thoughts that come to my mind is, first of all, God has created this world, whether we're Christians or not, God has created this world, designed it, in the way that he has chosen, so that, that there is, particularly, so, so, kind of, putting gender dysphoria to one side, because that, that is a, a complex mental health thing, in terms of people, identifying as transgender, and whatever way that looks like, that's, a rejection of the truth, rejection of the creator, a rejection of how we're created to be, people that say, to someone with gender dysphoria, it's okay, you can, you can be a, a woman instead of a man, let's, let's work on, treating you to, so you, that you can become, as such, that's again, a rejection of the truth, rejection of, of the creator, and, acting on, on feelings, rather than truth, yeah.

Can I, can I just have to, the point I made about, yeah, yeah, please do, yeah, yeah, I mean, in what kind of crazy world, is it the case, that if people are anorexic, don't want to eat, because they feel, that their body is gross, and, somebody goes on the internet, and says, oh, it's all right, to starve yourself to death, they're rejected, as, you know, as, as harmful, it's, it's stuff that people, try and get banned, and rightly so, I guess, and yet, if you say, you want to change, your sex, or your gender, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's harmful, to say, that you can't do it, and yet, there are very, there are very, similar mental conditions, it's, it's just, what's happened, is that, ideology, has got mixed in, with medicine, yeah, and, and the result is, you know, is not surprisingly chaotic, thanks Steve, can we, just one more comment, from, from Rosemary, thank you,

I just wanted to say, that, okay, pretend it's an African, and, largely, these days, people are, ignorant, of the Bible, it's not being taught, I mean, 50 years ago, people went, to Sunday school, children went, to Sunday school, and they were taught, in schools, and that is, not the case now, and so, they haven't got, a basis, of truth, yeah, like we were saying, this morning, really, in Samuel's day, where the word, wasn't, God's word, was rare, and it was leading, to all sorts of chaos, wasn't it, people do what is right, in their own lives, yeah, um, let's move on, a few other things, before, I think we'll, we'll, we'll sing, and then we'll, move to, kind of, other issues, and questions, um, so, uh, in terms of, um, change,

[39:09] I'll, I'll share that, quite a moment, in terms of changing, kind of, sex, um, so, saying to, someone, trans, uh, gender dysphoria, um, that, that's okay, those, those feelings, are legitimate, and so, we can give you, kind of, medication, and things, to change your gender, um, or, to help you become, a bit more like, another gender, um, all sorts of research, and stuff, has been done, and it says, that chromosomes, cannot be re-engineered, uh, removed, or scrubbed, from the software, of our bodies, a trans woman, can grow his hair long, and wear high heels, and pump estrogen, into his body, and a trans man, can cut their hair short, and force testosterone, into her body, all of this, is an active, pushing against, the body's internal software, unable to decode ourselves, from the genetics, of our physical becoming, we are left to rearrange, anatomical aesthetics, and coerce ourselves, in the direction, that runs against nature, in other words, you cannot, change someone, for being male, or female, um, you can do all you can, to try, but actually, as this, uh, writer says, all of this, is an active, pushing against, the body's internal software, and I'll add to that, an active, pushing against, the creator's, designed, for it, um, it's damaging, and it's harmful, and it doesn't offer, the hope, and the satisfaction, that they're looking for, this is true, but we need to remember, grace as well, need to remember, to listen, to people, and have compassion, and we need to remember, the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus, who has experienced, brokenness of body, to such an extreme, on the cross, he, the perfect, son of God, he entered into, a human body, he experienced temptations, he experienced living, in a fallen, and a broken world, experienced all, sorts of temptations, experienced, brokenness of body, on a cross, and

it's him, that people can find, their true, hope, in isn't it, not in, medication, not in, trying to change, gender, they can find, hope, in the Lord Jesus, and they can find, comfort, that even though, they may not feel right, in their own, bodies now, that they can look forward, to the resurrection, bodies that will get, bodies that won't be broken, bodies where they will, fill at home, just, yeah, some hopefully, helpful thoughts, there, just to say as well, on gender dysphoria, there will be some, and maybe you've experienced, this is for the children, grandchildren, there will be some children, who might have, have thoughts, when they're quite young, thinking, oh I think I'm, actually a bit, bit more like a girl, or actually like a boy, certainly nowadays, now hearing, just in their face, all the time, and some of those, some of those thoughts, and feelings, or maybe last, a few days, a few weeks, a few months, but some of those, will carry on, into puberty, but sometimes, once puberty kicks, those kind of, go away, things are kind of, okay, and normal for them, yeah, just, just a, just a thought, from some of the reading, and stuff, that I've been doing,

let's pause, let's sing, Phil introduces, to a song, sing of that, wonderful hope, the wonderful hope, that we can hold out, to others, to others, who are experiencing, the pains, of trouble, and life, in this, in this world, in these, bodies, that are, subject to decay, I want to move, to questions, you, I'm sure you, have questions, just a couple, of things, that I think, have come up, over these last, few weeks, that I thought, we'll address now, and then, we'll hear from, any questions, from the rest of us, so things about, kind of, intersex issues, so people, born with, not, complicated, gender, stuff, maybe a mix, of male, female, not very clear, on, which they are, what about them, what about, intersex issues, okay, so there, there are a number, quite a lot of conditions, known as, intersex, it is where, some kind of difference, with a person, that there's some kind of difference, with a person's, male, or female, chromosomes, 99% of cases, intersex cases, there, there is actually, apparently, little difference, for people's lives, some people, will go through, much of their lives, without, ever really knowing, that they have them, so, there's this quote, from, someone, in Poland, who said, most people, born with intersex conditions, do view themselves, as belonging to one, binary sex, or another, they simply, see themselves, as a man, or a woman, with a birth condition, like any other, but you then, do get onto, the 1%, a very complex issues, where it's really, quite sad, and quite unclear, there's the names, of these, on the screen, congenital, and adrenal, hyperlasia, complete androgen, insensitivity syndrome, partial androgen, insensitivity syndrome, and over, testes, so, you can see the numbers, one in 13,000, one in 131,000, one in 80,000, and yet, for each case, it's sad, and it's going to be hard, for the parents, hard for the individual, but I want to say, that, that, there's still, that there isn't, some kind of, third gender, male and female, might be very intertwined, and it might not be, very clear, but there isn't, some sort of, third gender, because some, transgender people, argue, well, this happens, and so it's okay, if I change my gender, but these conditions, they remind us, that we, we are, in a world, that is broken, and fallen, we've been reminded, of that, from God's word, this evening, and yet, those people, are no less, born in God's image, those people, can be, still be so, such a blessing, to people, such a blessing, to a church, if they come, to know the Lord Jesus, which they can, they, they equally, have hope, in the gospel, each one, can be told, of the intimacy, that they can have, with the Lord Jesus, and the other, big question, that I think, people have had, over these last few weeks, a few people, have mentioned to me, is what about pronouns, is it okay, to call a, a boy, who wants to be known, as a girl, is it okay, to refer to them, as a she, I personally, think, that we need, to be very careful, about doing that, I don't think, we don't want to, be lying, to someone, and yet, we may feel, that actually, saying she, referring to them, as their, the name, that they've chosen, a girl, actually, we may feel, actually, that's the best way, to relate to them, and, I, I don't think, it's wrong, for us, to do that, but, I think, we're probably, safer, to actually, refer to them, by the name, that they want, to be known as, whether it's, their original name, or another name, to say the name, rather than, she or he, and, kind of feeling like, we're kind of, lying, really, to them, that's my own, personal view, which he may not share, and,

I think that's okay, the Bible's not descriptive, on that, you may have questions, you may have comments, now is the time, for them, any questions, not Mark, Aaron, will come round, with a

microphone, don't, don't think, your mic's on actually, yeah, no, don't worry, I don't think it's on, now it is, there we go, go for it, earlier on, you said something, about, male, and female, and, they were created, to, produce, and, and that's the way, the Lord created them, now we have a lot, of medical, intervention, where, you don't need, the male, the woman,

I mean, you do need the male, in a way, but, not, in the, known way, yeah, and I just wonder, what you think, about that, yeah, I, I, I'm wondering, about, yeah, what, what, is there another question, behind your question, no, okay, I, I think, I think there is a sense, that, in lots of cases, kind of, maybe trying to play, play God, in, in some, situations, others, I think actually, there, there are, interesting, and amazing, medical ways, in which parents, who, who can't, have children, naturally, in the normal way, can have them, and I think, that, those are amazing, amazing, helps to people, people, but I think, in some situations, like, one I read of, the other week, where, a baby, has been created, with three, parents, stuff,

[50:43] I, can't remember, exactly how it worked, but, I'm like, that, that's going, far too far, going, yeah, to try and prevent, medical conditions, which, apparently, may not actually, work, anyway, more questions, Steve, oh, you get, sorry, Brenda, this was just, a comment, I do, actually, know of somebody, who, who, was born, with, Kleiner-Felter's, syndrome, which, has an extra, X, chromosome, XXY, and he, was an adult, he, he, it wasn't known, wasn't known, until, after he'd been married, hmm, um, and there were other, health issues, which, which meant, they, they looked, at this, um, and he's a Christian, um, but, in one sense, the, the way God has made him, has enabled him,

I think, to be a very, um, compassionate teacher, he's been, been a teacher, um, but, it has meant, that, he and his wife, have not been able, to have children, yeah, um, but, you know, he, he's, he's, living, uh, a life, of loving the Lord, hmm, which is, brilliant, as someone, who's created, in his image, and, yeah, thank you.

There is, of course, a biblical precedent, in the sense, that in Leviticus, if a man, dialled childless, his, his, what his brother, could give a child, to his wife. Thanks, Steve.

I don't know, what to do with that, to be honest with you. I'll get back, on my hobby horse again, he said, chromosome, um, we talked about, Tony, he wrote, said, um, chromosomes, cannot be re-engineered, uh, removed, or scrubbed away, from the software, well, fair enough, well, there are, lots of, chromosome, mix, mismatches, when kids are born, when, when, Down syndrome, kids, 20, 30, and others, lots of children, and others are born, the way they are.

People can be, as you mentioned, the congenital stuff, differently made, and some people, are born, with, alternative, sexual leanings, um, some people are born, without, enough, chromosomes, to give them enough, sex drive, in one direction, or another, some people are born, to be, differently orientated, and, that isn't by choice, that's by creation, and I do believe, that, sad though it is, people, live their lives, struggling with that, or else, they find, gratification, by people, with their own gender, and, and it's very sad, but, that's, unavoidable, it's, as if they're born, you know, to be blonde, or to be, tall, or to be short, that's the way, they have been made, I know, people shouldn't, we've all got, different temptations, and we shouldn't be, given into them, and all those people, have got those temptations, they know what the rules are, but, that is the way, they've been constructed, attracted, so,

[54:51] I think, for a few people, as in, not all, same-sex attracted people, I don't think, that's the case at all, no, I'm not suggesting, that all, same-sex attracted people, but, for some, I think, the easiest way, to get sexual gratification, is go with someone, of their own gender, because they, they can't make, the effort, to go and find, someone else, of the opposite gender, but there are, those who have no, option, but to be attracted, to those, of their own gender, it's not their choice, it's the way, they've been created, and that's part of being, in a created world, and that's where, we have to submit, to our creator's good design, I think, that's, that's where we're, we're born, people are born, into a fallen world, and we, need to, recognize, that there is a creator, we are just creatures, and we need to, submit to his good design, for this world, and for our lives, and if they're

Christians, then, we take up our cross, and we follow, don't we, and that, that's not an easy thing, and for some, it's particularly, going to be that, but if, it's difficult, when people are, a sinner, well we're all sinners, obviously, we're going to be a sinner, we're going to be a sinner, but if, if, if they act, on their temptations, if they act, in their temptations, then they're, they're sinning, aren't they, if they sin, in their, their, their thought, the, the, in, in their desire, but, the,

God, God doesn't tempt us, beyond what we can bear, and he can help us, can't he, oh sorry, I was just going to say, that we're all born in sin, we are, and, we all have, various different temptations, that, we have to resist, I mean like, you know, I might want to go, and rob a bank, or, I might want to, have all the clothes, in, in next, but, I'm not going to, I have to resist, that temptation, some people, want, a lot of things, but, they can't have everything, so you have to resist, a lot of things, everybody does, there is such a thing, as celibacy, actually, yeah, absolutely, yeah, the other thing, I was actually, can I just say, one more thing, one more, there's a couple of hands, at the back, sorry, I was having this, very conversation, with my son, this morning, that's why I wasn't here, and, he was saying, there are,

I can't remember, what I was going to say, sorry, if the thought, comes back to you, please share, Catherine, yeah, we, we could be praying, with, people with the, body, what was it, transgender, dysphoria, dysphoria, yeah, and people, with same-sex attraction, like pray for healing, pray for God, to, reverse, to give them, the, the, normal feelings, of, to the opposite sex, and, to, heal them, and, so that they'd be okay, in their own, in their own gender, and sex, I, I think that's, I think that's a prayer, that is okay to pray, but, I think, I think we need to be, really careful, particularly, if we're, talking and praying, with them, that actually, those feelings, might never go away, um, yeah, maybe they won't, but, there is a, chance that like, because it could be, something demonic, that's causing them, to, to be like that, and that could be, cast out, by prayer, that, no, that, yeah, that,

I think there are certainly, people in situations, where, where, they, they have found, a freedom, um, from those, I, I think, generally, uh, from what I, I, I read, and from what I've heard, from people, I don't, I don't think that generally, happens, um, and that, that might feel quite hard, um, well, I disagree with that, yeah, I disagree with that, I think it, um, it can be a mental illness, it, um, it, it could, it could be, psychological issues, to do with how, they're brought up, maybe, all sorts of different things, abuse, sexual abuse, when they were young, can make them like, the opposite sex, um, the same sex, and don't want to be in their body, um, certainly, with the gender dysphoria, we want to, pray and help walk people, and hope that, particularly if they turn to Christ, that, they'll be able to be comfortable, and, and be able to live, in their own bodies, like,

I think all of us, probably in different ways, aren't that comfortable in our bodies, like, I remember having all sorts of body image issues, when I was a teenager, um, those feelings, thankfully, aren't, aren't really there now, but, um, yeah, I think we can walk with people, through them, those pains, uh, we can pray, God, please, please change, but, they might not, um, and that might be something, we have to, help people live through, um, yeah, um, um, also, I, I saw one more thing, yeah, I read, um, some research, research done on, um, people that have transitioned, that have gone through operations, and hormones, and it, in general, it hasn't made them happier, yeah, um, um, they've gone on, some have gone on, to commit suicide, yeah, and some of them, have gone to transition back, yeah, to their, so generally, which can be even more damaging, apparently, and just, so generally, it doesn't make someone happier, in the long term, yeah, yeah,

[61:28] I, I've read some, um, particularly, in the 10 year mark, 10 years after surgery, um, that's when really horrible thoughts, of suicide, go, like, go, yeah, um, and things like that, and it's, it's horrible, so it's not, it's not the answer, is it, that, yeah, we find, find our hope, and identity, in Jesus, that's, that's really the answer, that we, we want to give to people, um, Ruth, and then Corin, or, yeah, thank you so much, um, I just, just wanted to, to mention a few things, very briefly, um, the first, I thought was, and you touched on this earlier, Daniel, that, how important, for, the family of God, for the church, to be a place, where we, um, we are a people, who listen well, to people, that, that we, that, you know, there's all sorts of, names,

labels that can be, banded out, but, but to, to see, each individual person, who walks through our doors, as an individual, with a story, and different things, that are weighing on their shoulders, and to, and to come without, kind of assumptions, but with a kind of, an openness, that, you know, wow, you know, that,

I don't, I've never, grappled with, or struggled with, what you are, tell me about that, tell me how that is for you, and being really, kind of, careful to, to be seeking, to listen well to people, with the Lord's help, and grace, and, and, and love, and that are, where, where we are here, should be a place of, open conversations, about these matters, because I remember, I work with students, and, and there was one dear student, struggling with, with gender issues, and, and she said to me, nobody has ever told me, what it is to be a woman, and I thought to myself, wow, there's so much, that we kind of, just by default, kind of explore, and express, and, and, in the, in the family of God, and as we open the word, second thing, which you mentioned, a couple weeks ago, was just about, the, trusting the power of the gospel, and just like, actually this is good news, of great joy, to all people, and that, you know, that the idea of, that the, like kind of, the passages, that we were reading, say even in Romans 8, is just amazing, at just pointing to, actually when we, kind of hold out, the glorious truth, of the gospel to people, it's not kind of like, let me tell you, what it is to be, a man or a woman, but let me invite you, to have your sins, cleansed completely, and come into the family, of God, and that like, actually our identity, becomes, that kind of, being children of God, is what, you know, that is what we are, and you know, what behold, what manner of love, the father has lavished on us, so I'm struck by,

I think there is something central, about the identity, of a believer, that even though, there can be a long process, of you know, repentance, and grappling with, all sorts of feelings, and thoughts, that's a journey, of sanctification, but that, from day one, when we have the spirit, of God in us, then with our spirit, we can know, yes, I'm a child of God, and that, even someone, with whatever thoughts, about, you know, gender stuff, can know that, when they've got, the spirit of God in them, and then that journey, I feel like we can trust, that God, if he started a work, in any of us, he will carry it, on to completion, so yeah, I feel, we can be real, really confident, and hopeful, in the gospel, that we share, with anyone, thank you, thank you, did, Corinne, did you, are you sure, okay, anyone else, hang on, can we, have Shama, as the microphone, is near a Shama, and then Steve, and then we'll, we'll stop, okay,

I think for me, when I look at, the issues generally, I go back to, Genesis, I think Phil took us, through that, a couple of weeks ago, and when I was, meditating around that, essentially, human beings, we are spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body, that is how God, created us, and the designer, who has created us, in that particular way, creating our identities, knows the bodies, we can realize, that one best in, does the, sorry, I'm running out of breath, my voice is kind of, having a cold, I think Rick Warren, in his book, Purpose Driven Life, captures the words, of the Samus, that says, you created me, together, in my almost being, you, so it's like, he paints the picture, of before anyone, comes into this world, there's like, a meeting in heaven, and God determines, like in Corinthians, he said, he determines the places, he determines, who we are, and the exact places, we should be, and the times, when we exist, so all these details, are in God's design, what it means for me, is that,

God knows, the best, the best, body, that I will come in, to fulfill his purposes, in his own way, at his own time, yeah, he determines my race, he determines, God is very deliberate, about how he has created us, he has not left anything, to chance, and this tells us, that, there are, there are things, we should be mindful of, in doing that, I mean, for me, dealing with, any kind of person, who has any kind of, gender dysphoria, or, I mean, human beings generally, just like we've been talking, people are made, in the image of God, and we look at them, with love, and then, I see, that, what I should do, is to, just, listen to them, understand their story, I mean, nothing makes me, so different, from any other person, there's, but a step between me, and doing what, any other person is doing, as, as a child of God, you know, the things that God, tells me not to do, if I, could by God's grace, have happened to grow, in my faith, and I don't do them, it's, it's not necessarily, a function of, that I'm super, but it's the grace of God, that has kept me, because,

[68:16] I know, we know the thoughts, that we, we think, we know, the weaknesses, that we have, and there's every tendency, there's every tendency, we have, to go off, it doesn't take much, to sin as a child of

God, I mean, Paul was talking, about the fact that, we have, I mean, the three, we have been saved, we, are being saved, and we shall be saved, we have been saved, our justification, by our faith in Christ, we have been saved, you know, our sanctification, when we sin against God, each time, then we have our glorification, when we leave this body, so, we have been, we have been, we have been delivered, from the, present, the power of sin, as Christians, right, but, one thing that, still stands, is the presence of sin, around us, we still have the presence of sin, and we have the tendency, to fall in various ways, and God looks at that, in the same way, right, but what, helps us, is to trust God, for grace, to keep us, in the race, right, so, even in those, inner feelings we have, someone's inner feelings, maybe to have a same sex attraction, someone's inner feelings, towards sin, maybe to steal, someone's inner feelings, maybe adultery, fornication, and that, but what helps us, is to trust in God's grace, to restrain the power of Christ, and the love of Christ, compels us, and constrains us, to live lives, that glorify him, yeah, because at the end of the day, we, his divine power, has given us, everything we need, for life and godliness, and the grace of God, that brings salvation, has appeared to all men, and he teaches us, to say no, right, and,

Titus, right, Titus 3:11, teaches us to say no, to every form of ungodliness, but what helps us, and what helps us, manifest that power, is Christ in us, and that is Christ, that helps us defeat, every kind of feeling, we have, right, so, even as we walk through, these kinds of feelings, and, not limiting it to, just, the issues, we are discussing now, but any other challenge, anyone has, you know, in whatever forms, we should know, that God's grace is there, and his power is there, to help us, if we depend on him, you know, and, you know, with fellowship like this, we are able to help each other grow, the church is like a hospital, like someone says, we come with different ailments, and all that, and, by God's grace, we find strength, to move on, we find grace, and power, to keep saying no, and denying the flesh, all the time, I think that's for me, that's what guides, and, the heart of the matter, in this for me, thank you.

Thank you, Shama, thank you, final comment, or question from Steve, and then, can we read another passage of scripture? Yeah, of course you can. Daniel, chapter 1, verse 18, which may not seem, immediately relevant, but I think it is, Daniel 1, 18 to 21, says, at the end of the time, set by the king, to bring them into his service, the chief official, presented them to Nebuchadnezzar, the king talked with them, and he found none equal, to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, so they entered the king's service, in every matter of wisdom, and understanding, about which the king questioned them, he found them 10 times better, than all the magicians, and enchanters, in his whole kingdom, and Daniel remained there, until the first year, of King Cyrus, I think to, to quote, Kathleen, Kathleen Stock, isn't it her name, I think you, the feminist, you quoted earlier, you can't change the mind, of a fanatic, and I think we need, realistically, we need to, understand, that we are, the people we're confronting, if we get into arguments, of this, are not rational, they're fanatics, and on the other hand, equally, we mustn't become fanatics, ourselves, the point Ruth was making, that, you know,

I mean, Daniel, out wisdom, the wisdom of Babylon, on their own game, as it were, it did, and I think we have to be, able to do that, yeah, and, and not become fanatics, and not just start, resort to shouting, at other people, but say that, you know, actually point out, much of what they're saying, doesn't actually, doesn't work, and that, we, you know, that, if we believe that, Christ is the wisdom of God, then we should be able, to prove it, yeah, uh, Phil, final, final comment, and then we'll, then we'll end in prayer, when we started this, I, I think, I, I tried to make a helpful distinction, in the world of ideas, we need to oppose, with wisdom, in the world of, uh, of practicalities, we need to navigate, what, what, you know, how we do things at work, I think in the, in the realm of relationships, we need to win people, so I'm just thinking, of the council officer, many of you will know, that I, I have, every month or so, a meeting with the council officer, who used to be known as a man, is now known as a woman, uh, I really, would like to have, a proper conversation, with this person, like Ruth said, to understand, where they're coming from, um, and you may or may not know, uh, the, in the recent elections, the, ward councillor, for this particular ward, when we're just on the boundary,

of this ward, is Pete West, who, who's come and spoken to the men's breakfast, and Raphael Hill, who we're told, is the, first openly transgender, councillor, to be elected, um, that's, uh, and, uh, and this person, did the washing up actually, at the last lap meeting, so, I, I'm really looking for wisdom, to know how to, work through all this, with some very real people, that I, I hope, I, I'd like to invite them, to the meal with a meaning, so, if, if somebody comes to the meal, with a meaning, please, be winsome, to that person, and not, not just to try, and sort of, first thing, bash them over the head, or, whatever.

[74:41] It's like, we, do, do, if you haven't heard the other, talks, uh, from Phil and I, uh, previous weeks, do, do listen to them, because I think they all work together, as a whole, uh, as just thinking about the last one, where we thought about Jesus, came into the world, full of grace and truth, and we want to show both, whereas, I think we, probably have a tendency, to be one or the other, to bash people head, over the heads with truth, or to welcome people, with open arms, and don't share any truth, and we need both, um, let's end in prayer, um, because it's, it's gone way past time, um, let's end in prayer, for you created, my inmost being, you knit me together, in my mother's womb, I praise you, because I am fearfully, and wonderfully made, your works are, too, uh, wonderful, I know that for, well, oh, Father God, we thank you, that, we are created, by you, you are good, and great creator, that we find, in your word, that we are fearfully, and wonderfully made, that we are, made in your image, we are precious, uh, people, and Father, thank you, that even more, as we, uh, know the Lord Jesus, as our saviour, thank you, that even more, we are children, of yours, precious sons, and daughters, and so,

Father, we thank you, for that identity, which you give us, and we pray, Father, that we would trust you, the God, who has, uh, created, this world, created us, and we pray, that you would help, give us, a great help, and compassion, and wisdom, as we, uh, relate to others, maybe people, who, uh, may identify, as transgender, struggle, with, uh, gender dysphoria, or other, issues, which are, part of being, in a broken, and fallen world, and we pray, that you'd give us, such great compassion, knowing, that the Lord Jesus, has, had compassion, on us, sinners, who, who don't deserve, any of it, and yet, are loved, by you, we thank you, help us, as we go from here, help us, as we serve ye, in this, world we pray, help us, we ask, in Jesus name,
Amen, Amen, thanks everyone, thank you, thank you, thank you, Thank you.