

# Idolatry & Immorality

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Okay, so we are in the book of Romans, Romans chapter 1, and we are going to start in verse 18 this morning.
- Okay, just a quick question, Pastor David. When do we close? Because I actually don't know when the service closes. Five minutes? In five minutes? Okay, great.
- So, I'm just getting used to this double service thing. So, okay. Verse 18, it says this, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
- So, this is really interesting because, you know, Pastor David was speaking earlier about, you know, verse 17 and verse 16, where Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- It's a very famous verse. Right out of the gate, he says, hey, this is the gospel. I'm not ashamed of it. It is the righteousness of God for salvation to those who believe.
- [ 1 : 17 ]     And then Paul makes this very quick switch into the wrath of God. And I don't think that's an accident.
- I think that there is something to be connected between Paul saying, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, and I'm also not ashamed of this very uncomfortable truth about the gospel.
- And the uncomfortable truth about the gospel is that the gospel is preceded by bad news.
- The Greek word for gospel is evangelion, which means good news. But the good news cannot be communicated without first talking about the bad news.
- Or else there's no contrast. There's no understanding of what is, I mean, what's so good about the good news? And so, in order to talk about the gospel, we have to actually start where Paul starts his gospel.
- [ 2 : 32 ]     And what I believe is that Paul in Romans 1, 2, and 3 is actually laying out for us the groundwork of what the gospel is.
- How many people have tried to witness to people about the gospel and failed miserably? I'm the first one to put up my hand there. Or how many people just don't really know how to communicate the gospel to a friend?
- I find that the Holy Spirit really likes to annoy me by putting me in positions where I am next to someone on a plane or a train or in conversation at a store or whatever.
- Or I'm out at dinner with Derek, and Derek is witnessing to our waitress or waiter. And I'm in a situation where I have to explain the gospel to someone.
- And this is, I believe, one of the missing ingredients in the evangelism of the church. You know, I've said this before, and I'll say it again.
- [ 3 : 40 ]     I don't believe people should bring their friends to church, their unsaved friends. I don't believe that. The Bible doesn't say bring your unsaved friend to church.
- The mission of the Christian is to bring our unsaved friends to Jesus. Your mission is to bring the people who do not know Christ to Christ.

It is not the purpose of the church to turn Sunday mornings into an evangelistic experience. And I believe that part of the reason why our churches have become so milk toast is because we're serving milk for babies.

Because we're trying to, you know, reach babies. Instead of trying to cook a good, well-rounded meal and give people great theology that is going to help them mature and grow, we're giving people milk every Sunday.

And it's a steady diet of milk. And these churches get really, really big. And they're just big play pens. If we take evangelism on our shoulders, and we accept the responsibility of leading our friends to Jesus, seriously, how many friends do you have where you've never talked to them about the gospel?

[ 4 : 58 ] But I want you to know something. The Bible says that the gospel is simple. Paul says, I don't want you to forget the simplicity that is found in the gospel. And so I believe that Romans 1, 2, and 3, as we get into it, is going to help you understand that simplicity.

But we've got to have a starting point. So Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Now let's get into the gospel. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.

He starts, before he gets to the good news, he starts with the bad news. And we need to familiarize ourselves with this bad news. And so he says, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

So this phrase, the wrath of God, this is what is called, it's a big word, here we go, anthropopathism. It's an anthropopathism.

And what it means is it's a metaphorical description of God as though he had human emotions. God, properly speaking, the divine nature, the Godhead, does not have human emotions because the Godhead is not human.

[ 6 : 19 ] God is utterly transcendent. He transcends the human experience. Now some people would say, well, what about Jesus? Did you know that Jesus was not always human?

First, or John, the gospel of John chapter one says, the word was, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. And then in verse 16, it says, the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The word, which is the eternal name for Christ, the word was not always flesh. So Jesus, there was a time when he wasn't human in that sense, but he's composed of two natures in one person and there's a divine nature that where he is fully God.

And the fully God part, the divine part, has no body, which is where we get our senses from. Right? How do you feel today?

Oh, I feel great. Because my senses, right? I'm feels, I'm all in my feels. God isn't all in his feels. He has no senses.

[ 7 : 32 ] And so even when the Bible describes, you know, the Lord's arm is not too short that he cannot save. The Lord doesn't have an arm. It's using a human example, what is known to explain the unknown.

Okay? So sometimes that messes with us. But we do have to understand that the wrath of God is not describing God as someone who loses his temper.

Some of you need to hear that. Because some of you had fathers who lost their temper. And you need to know that your heavenly father is not like your earthly father.

Your heavenly father is perfect. And he does everything in a spirit of tranquility. I remember, you know, I got spanked probably five times a day growing up in the concentration camp that was the Finocchio home.

I was like Steve McQueen, you know, throwing that ball against the wall. My brother and I would communicate through Morse code on the wall.

[ 8 : 38 ] Dinner's at what time? I loved growing up, but I was over spanked. And my parents will tell you that.

Because I'm still going to therapy. Because of it. And, but the idea here is that, what was my point?

Oh yeah. My dad, I didn't share this in the first service. Pastor David's like, what are you talking about? This isn't in my notes. But my dad, when he would spank me, learned this trick.

And it really helped the situation. When I would do something horrible, which was regular, regular occurrence, it would make, it would probably infuriate him.

You know, dads don't want to deal with all the drama, right? They're tired. They get home from work. They're just like, please, really? And so I would just aggravate and aggravate. And much like I'm doing this morning.

[ 9 : 40 ] And what happened is my dad would say, all right, go upstairs and wait for me in my room. And that's how I knew it was coming. Pain was coming.

But this is an interesting thing that I didn't realize and pick up until I was older. My dad would send me up to his room and tell me to wait, not because he wanted to torture me, but because he needed to cool down.

He needed to cool down. And so he realized that this was an issue in his own life that he needed to deal with. And so he was working on himself while he was working on me.

But anyway, the Lord is, the Lord never lacks self-control. The Lord is in perfect control of his emotions, if you will, for lack of a better word, of himself at all times.

So even when the Lord doles out punishment, which is his wrath, even when that takes place, he does so in a spirit of tranquility.

[ 10 : 42 ] And for some of us, it's difficult for us to understand, but it's true. And so when the scripture talks about the wrath of God, specifically, what it means here is this. God is totally holy, and he loves holiness.

And so he is totally righteous, and he has to exact vengeance upon unrighteousness. Because he is just, he is the avenger of injustice.

And so God, in his holiness, responds with vengeance. And that is the wrath of God. So, Paul is moving along here really quickly to verse 19, and he switches gears.

Typically, you'd think, okay, we're going to get into the wrath of God. This is going to get, you know, interesting. And then Paul, immediately in verse 19, switches again, and says, for what can be known about God is plain to them, them being the Gentile world, the non-Jewish world, because God has shown it to them.

For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made, so that they, the Gentile world, are without excuse.

[ 12 : 03 ] So here, Paul, bringing up the word God, is now explaining what he means there. And this is called, what we call natural theology.

Natural theology is learning to know about God's existence from the world around us. In Psalm chapter 19, verses 1 to 5, it says, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In them, God has set a tent for the sun. So that verse is confirming what Paul is saying here, that the heavens declare that there is a God.

God exists and can be understood by nature itself. You don't need Jesus to know that there is a God.

[ 13 : 17 ] In fact, you should know that there is a God, and then, that way, you'll understand more about who Jesus is. In many ways, atheism has truncated the conversation and prevented us, in many ways, from talking about Jesus, because people don't even have a first base of understanding that God exists.

And so, atheism has really cut our legs from out, from under us, even in evangelism. And this is what Paul is, this is the point that Paul is making. So, Paul is first establishing that the belief in God is not a matter of faith.

It's a matter of reason. Belief in Christ is a matter of faith. But it's not, but the belief in God does not come from, from the area of faith.

It comes from reason. And that's many times how faith and reason interact with one another. But, in the Middle Ages, this famous theologian, who happens to be one of my favorite theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas, he formulated what's called the five ways to know God's existence.

So, I'm going to give them to you this morning. They are also subtitled Why Atheism is for Irrational Idiots. Okay? So, here they are.

[ 14 : 46 ] The first argument that St. Thomas really synthesized, and that, now, I will say this, three of these five arguments are actually in the text right here.

And I'll show you. First, the argument from motion. This is when Paul the Apostle talks about the invisible attributes. He's talking about the argument from motion.

And, it means this, that there, there must be a first mover, or unmoved mover, or an ultimate source of change in things.

And so, we understand that things are constantly changing. Things are constantly in flux. And even modern physics tells us that the universe is in a constant state of expansion.

So, there's, there's things that are constantly changing. Well, here, the point is simply that there has to be, there can't be this infinite regress of change.

[ 15 : 47 ] There has to be one thing that is unchanged in, in a, in an ever-expanding universe. There has to be a starting point where it began to expand.

So, God is the unmoved mover. God is the unchanging one. And so, this is also tied to Exodus, his revelation of himself in Exodus chapter 3, verse 14, where Moses is saying, okay, well, who are you?

What, what, what name will you go by? Explain yourself. And God's like, okay, I'll explain myself. It's going to make it really clear. Are you ready? I am that I am.

Oh, that, oh, that clears everything up. Thank you. It's, that's wonderful. Thank you for telling me that you're the unmoved mover. Okay. Well, it's, it is, it's, God is the starting point.

You know, in, in logic, Euclidean mathematical logic, you, you start from a first principle and that first principle is unprovable because it's your first.

[ 16 : 54 ] If it was provable, it wouldn't be your first. And so God is literally this first principle of the universe. So that's the argument from motion. Now, it's interesting.

Paul says they're without excuse, right? That these arguments here are self-evident. And Aristotle was the, was, was the guy who really formulated this argument from motion.

And so even the pagan world understood that God was the unmoved mover. Number two, the argument from causation. This means that in order for there to be causes at work, there must be a first cause or uncaused cause.

And again, because there is no infinite regress of causes, everything depends upon something else. and so this first cause or uncaused cause is what we call God.

And so Paul points to that when he talks about the eternal power of God in verse 20. And so how do we know that the, you know, God exists from causation?

[ 18 : 05 ] Well, again, you know, everything is connected to everything else. Right? We know this about ecosystems, that if you take something out of an ecosystem, that ecosystem is affected because it's total, it's a system that is entirely interdependent.

Animals depend on other animals for their life. And we, you know, the earth depends upon the sun for its existence. And so there's causes, and really what you do to find these causes is ask the question why until you can't ask the question why anymore.

And it simply points you right back to the first cause. So number three is the argument from contingency. Contingency.

So this means that things exist that don't necessarily need to exist and there must be a source of the contingent beings that cannot exist. The source simply is.

And so a familiar example of this would be a painting. Okay? In order to have a painting you have to at least have a couple things.

[ 19 : 16 ] You have to have a canvas of some sort. For Michelangelo it was the Sistine Chapel wall. But you have to have something to paint on.

And number two to have a painting you need paint. So those are not contingent. those things have to exist.

Those necessarily have to exist. But everything else doesn't necessarily have to exist. And so what that means is that this argument answers the question of why there is something rather than nothing.

So if you're wondering why do we exist? God is the answer of why you exist. You are contingent. He is not. He is the only thing that is not contingent in this universe.

And so that fact that he is not contingent proves that he exists. And that everything around him is contingent. Number four is the argument from degrees or degrees of perfection.

[ 20 : 25 ] So this means that there are differing grades of perfection of being which lead to the conclusion that there must be a perfect being, the source of being in everything else.

And so what this means is that for an example, you have like an apple that is like the picture-perfect apple, and then you could have another apple that's like got spots on it.

It's the organic apple, which I actually like the organic apples, okay? Give me spots on my apples. Leave me the birds and the bees, you know? And you don't know what you got until it's gone.

And so the organic apple is not as perfect as that perfect, picture-perfect apple, because it's got spots and things. And then you have another apple that's got maybe, you know, bruises, and then you've got another apple that's got worms.

And so you have these, you know, varying, the worm apples are all in New York City. And so you have these grades of perfection in apples.

[ 21 : 27 ] Well, you've got grades of perfection in everything. There's a spectrum in everything which you have, you know, good, better, and best. Well, God is the best. He is the perfect.

And so that argument from degrees, I think Paul points to that when he talks about the divine nature. The divine nature is the perfection of all natures.

So God is the perfect nature. He is the perfect being. And then fifth, we have the teleological argument. And that is pointing at the fact that things without intelligence cannot act for the sake of an end unless a higher intelligence is directing them.

An example there would be the fact that bees don't have intelligence. Bees are acting on pure instinct. Well, we know that things can act with a mind, with an intellect and a will, but bees don't have an intellect and a will.

So what is moving those bees? What is directing those bees to be bees if they don't have a proper intelligence? Because we have a proper intelligence and we know what we do, but they don't even have a brain.

[ 22 : 45 ] They just act in pure instinct and things are moving along. So there has to be a higher intelligence that is moving all of these things to act in a way that is consonant with their nature.

And that higher intelligence, which is the highest intelligence we call God, which has the ultimate mind of the universe, which has, you know, because some people are like, well, it's the universe.

It's the force. And it's like, okay, well, the universe doesn't have consciousness. You know, you have to talk about, like, things are moved by intelligence, which is an attribute of consciousness, an intellect and a will.

And so that is why the teleological argument is a proof of the existence of God. Okay, so St. Thomas Aquinas formulates these, and Paul incorporates three of these points in his main point here.

But the conclusion that Paul brings to this matter is that people are without excuse for the belief in God.

[ 23 : 51 ] They're without excuse. Now, check this out. This isn't my opinion because I'm a great debater, right? This isn't me standing up at a university campus and saying, I'm going to have a debate on the existence of God.

This is sacred scripture. This is the infallible, inerrant, and inspired word of God that is telling us that people will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and they can't make an excuse that God does not exist.

God will say, dude, I know you, and I know every thought you've ever thought. Think. And I know that you knew that this was real, and you suppressed it.

You suppressed the truth by your unrighteousness and you, sir, are without excuse. So that's the first point that Paul is saying, this is self-evident truth.

Just as Thomas Jefferson said, we hold these truths to be self-evident and those self-evident truths founded this nation and founded this country.

[ 25 : 11 ] And yet we find today in 2022, 250 years later, that those truths aren't so self-evident anymore. It's not so self-evident.

In fact, it's not so self-evident even that men are men. Forget about God being God. That's how low we've sunk. Think about that.

And we're making progress. if we had another opportunity to found this nation, I don't think we would be able to because we don't have the philosophical first principles as the founding fathers once did.

We're worse than our forefathers. If you want to make progress, you have to be better than your forefathers. Their ceiling has to be your floor.

more. We're in the basement. But the point that Paul, I think, is also making is that people can suppress the truth and unrighteousness.

[ 26 : 13 ] That you have a free will and that God has given you that free will to be able to suppress the truth. And so really his point ultimately is that people have chosen not to see the self-evident truth in front of them.

And in verse 21 it goes on and says, 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 resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator who is forever blessed.

Amen. Paul here is tackling the theologies of the Gentile world. First, he deals with the civil theology which had to do with the priests and the temple worship.

And he deals with this when he says that they exchanged the glory of the immortal God. The second theology he criticizes is the theology of fables when he says they exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

[ 27 : 41 ] And this is Greek mythology and things like that. And then third, their natural theology, which the philosophers observed in the world, Paul criticizes when he says they worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.

But the point that I think is ultimately being made here is that there is a progress in this passage from idolatry to immorality.

And it's an important point because many times we think that the opposite of theism is atheism. And it's not. The opposite of theism is idolatry.

Because when you do not worship God and you reject him, you simply go about setting up other false gods. That's really what ends up happening with yourself being the chief god.

And I believe that we live in an age of idolatry and therefore we live in an age of immorality. But let's talk about idolatry for a quick second.

[ 28 : 53 ] Tim Keller, Dr. Tim Keller, writes in his book Counterfeit Gods, which is an excellent book. He says this, what is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God.

Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Anything you seek to give you what only God can give.

An idol is whatever you look at and say in your heart of hearts, if I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning. Then I'll know that I have value.

Then I'll feel significant and secure. There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship. You see, idols give us identity.

They motivate and they inspire us to live. But really, they inspire us to live for them. And that is why every single God in human history has always required sacrifice.

[ 29 : 57 ] And so I say that if you want to find, if you're saying, okay, well, Gabe, how do I find the idols in my life? I'll tell you how, really quickly. Follow your sacrifices.

Follow the things that you're sacrificing. For example, do you sacrifice church on the altar of the family?

You're sacrificing God on the altar of the family. Do you say, hey, Pastor David, I would really love to do the right thing here, but I would really love to marry a Christian, but she's just not a Christian, and I love her, and I'm just going to marry her anyway.

You're sacrificing your faith for a relationship. Hey, Pastor David, I'd really love to get married and stuff, but I'm just living with her because why buy the cow when the milk's free?

Which is a great point. we should consider that. The idea here is that you're sacrificing fidelity to Scripture and fidelity to the Lord for the sake of sex.

[ 31 : 30 ] Your God is sex. Or it could be money. Pastor David, I'd love to tithe. I'd love to tithe, but it's not in my budget.

You're sacrificing an obligation that is biblical and spiritual, which is to give to the house of the Lord, to sustain the work of the Lord, the ministry of the Lord, because you're in love with money.

That's your God. God, follow your sacrifices. But ultimately, the greatest idol is not a false God around us, but the false God within us.

And we live in an age of narcissism, and an age of the glory of self, and self-love, and self-esteem, and self-everything, self-selfishness, self-centeredness, self-absorption, where everything is centered around us.

And this points to the fact that the ultimate idolatry isn't merely the worship of a false God, it's the worship of ourselves as God. And that's why we find in the deconstruction movement, you know, when people are saying, I'm just deconstructing my faith right now, I'm just deconstructing, okay?

[ 32 : 53 ] Putting into the bio, deconstructing. What that means is that they are destroying their faith in Christ, and deconstructing and destroying their faith in God, and their belief in God, and they are constructing a religion of their own making.

If you get into a conversation with someone who is in deconstruction mode, they have come to conclusions that are entirely idiosyncratic, entirely based upon their own personal opinion about what the truth really is.

And so what they have, what they've done is they've destroyed what they think is religion, only to build up their own. Instead of believing in what the Bible says and what God has said historically, they have simply chosen to be their own arbiter and God and church.

And so verse 26 goes on and says, for this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

[ 34 : 19 ] They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They were full of 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.

In 1983, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Russian writer, looked back on the devastation of communist Russia. And he said in a speech that more than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia.

Men have forgotten God. That's why all this has happened, is what they said. He says, since then, I have spent well nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution.



In the process, I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval.

[ 35 : 47 ] But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat, men have forgotten God.

That's why all this has happened. Godlessness. Godlessness. G.K.

Chesterton said, the first effect of not believing in God is that you lose your common sense. The effect of worshipping a false God is that you must obey that false God, and therefore, you begin to live in a false reality.

And when you rebel against God's authority, you rebel against moral authority. Remember, idolatry leads to immorality. And so here, Paul makes homosexuality his centerpiece among the litany of other sins.

But I believe there's a reason why Paul makes homosexuality the centerpiece of his point. And let me just say this.

[ 37 : 06 ] There are a lot of people with PhDs in biblical studies who would stand before you today and try to explain the text away.

And that is not what I'm going to do. The text means what it says. But there are sins with nature, and there are sins against nature.

And Paul is talking here about sins against nature. And I believe that he is parking on that point because he knows that the worst sins are the sins against nature.

And homosexuality is a sin against nature. Now why? Why is homosexuality a sin against nature?

sex is an animal function. Sex is like eating. Right? Animals eat food. Okay?

[ 38 : 12 ] And we eat food. Do you know why we eat food? Because we're part animal. We have an animal body with senses like animals.

But we're not totally animals. You see? So we eat food for the purpose of nutrition. Now even the animals eat food for the purpose of nutrition.

But sex is like that animal function ordered to a purpose. And that purpose isn't nutrition like food, but it is called procreation.

nutrition. In the animal kingdom, when animals copulate, when they have sex, they have babies. Yeah, that's what happens.

I saw it online. I had to stop watching. Somebody told me to stop watching because I was enjoying it. No. Hey, we already cracked the thing open, right?

[ 39 : 20 ] Pandora's box is open now. Now. You know, it's actually interesting that farmers will sometimes explain sexuality to their children by showing, you know, the children see the animals and they say, that's sex.

And that's not pornographic. It's very natural to see animals and then you're like, okay, well, that's what humans do. But the point is simply this.

When animals have sex, they have sex to make more animals. Okay? That's called going with nature. That's what nature does.

Okay? Paul is making a point here about homosexuality. And the point is that homosexuality can never generate life.

It can never create life. It is a use of sexuality that is an abuse of sexuality. And that's why we live in a world that is sexually abusive.

[ 40 : 33 ] And Thomas Aquinas says this, the essential and primary end of marriage is the good of children. This is a point that we have totally and completely abandoned.

And I want to offend everybody here. Okay? Some of you are thinking, well, Gabe's just picking on the gay people. I'm not.

I'm actually picking on all of you. I'm picking on this entire culture that we live in. Because I believe that birth control is functional homosexuality.

I believe that birth control began and started the sexual revolution that has devastated our society. Why? Because birth control prevents the purpose of sex.

The primary purpose of sex isn't pleasure. I'm sorry to burst your bubble. Your school has told you that. Propaganda propagandized you into believing that.

[ 41 : 37 ] Your professors have probably told you that too. It's all about you. It's all about pleasure. No, it's all about primarily life.

God loves life. And he hates things that get in the way of life. And Paul is saying this behavior is self-destructive behavior. And guess what?

It is self-destructive behavior because we've been living in a sexualized culture for 75 years and now the birth rate is below the replacement rate. People aren't having babies.

I'm saying that probably to a room full of people without babies. It's still true. I'm an equal opportunity offender.

I'm talking about the contraceptive mindset. I'm talking about the spirit that treats children like diseases instead of treating children as they are which are a reflection of the glory of God.

[ 42 : 41 ] which are a gift from God. Which are new free wills added to the free wills of the world. Endowed by their creator with his image stamped upon them.

Children are not a disease. They are a wonderful glory. But yet we have treated them as something to be totally and completely avoided for the purpose of pleasure.

For the purpose of selfishness. And let me tell you married folks you can't build a marriage on selfishness. Sex is meant to be in marriage in the context of true love but it is an act of mutual self-giving.

And out of that mutual self-sacrifice new life is born. And Paul is parking on this point because he's saying that it is self-destructive behavior.

And that is entirely what we are engaged in today. In Jude chapter 7 verse 7 it says just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire serve serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

[ 44 : 11 ] We live in a world that is trying to normalize the abnormal. The gay marriage bill just passed recently within the last week.

It's normal trying to normalize homosexuality in our society. Balenciaga tried to normalize pedophilia.

Why are we even talking about that? How is that even a thing now? 25 years ago none of this was a thing.

But it's a slow boiling. It's a slow caving. A slow degeneracy. Pastor David wrote in his book on good kills he wrote a chapter a wonderful chapter that you all need to read and you all need to buy the book and it's available in the lobby.

And it's called a chapter called sexual anarchy. But I believe this that sexual anarchy turns into sexual tyranny as soon as everyone is forced to accept it.

[ 45 : 24 ] And that is exactly what's happening. Just let everybody be themselves. Why do you care what other people do? It's beyond that bro. It's beyond that.

Now they're making me care. Now they're forcing it in my face every June where every single company every single bank every single corporation makes you wear the badge around your you know like we're in the Hitler thing you know it's it's Nazism it's just with a rainbow it's rainbow fascism where you're forcing me to agree with you and if I don't agree with you then I'm canceled.

Sexual anarchy is turning into sexual tyranny and that's why we have to get involved in politics because a church that does not get involved with the state will soon find that the state will get involved with it.

We have to take our society seriously and become salt and light and we if it doesn't if we don't do it the secularists and the godlessness around us will do it.

But the point is simply this that when men are not inspired to act in a way that is higher than them they will inevitably act in a way that is lower than them. But Paul doesn't stop at the LGBTQ community.

[ 46 : 57 ] He goes on and talks about every sin imaginable which is really his point that all these Gentiles have sinned. And he's building this case primarily upon the moral order and saying the moral order has been violated in every angle and under every circumstance the ten commandments have been violated.

And so three things are true here. That sin is sin. All sin separates us from God. I totally agree with that. Because some people are listening to me and they're saying, well all sin is sin, Gabe.

All sin is sin. Yes, all sin is sin. But not every sin is the same. And number three, some sins are worse than others. Just as some crimes are worse than others.

And so when we look around us in this moral wasteland in 2022, we can ask ourselves, why are we here?

I believe this. We are here because modern Western man, as Solzhenitsyn said, has forgotten God. And more than that, we have not just forgotten God, we have hated God.

[ 48 : 09 ] We have not just hated God, we have rebelled against God, and we have by our unrighteousness suppressed the truth. Worship team can come on up.

You'll hear the phrase culture wars a lot. I want you to know something really important about the culture wars. They're cult wars.

At their root, they're religious wars. They are wars between the gods. They are wars no different than the war between Elijah and the false prophets of Baal.

Between Yahweh and Baal. That is what we are fighting. That is the war we are fighting. It is a religious war. And Paul the apostle says in Ephesians chapter 6, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

That is what we are engaged in. We are engaged in a battle against the demonic. One more point about that. American freedom is demonic.

[ 49 : 38 ] as it is currently understood. Not as it was formerly understood by the founding fathers. No. True freedom is not do what thou wilt.

That is Satanism. Straight up. True freedom is not the ability to do whatever you want. True freedom is the ability to do what you ought.

I have a license to drive a car. But that is not a license to kill. Even though I sometimes tell the police officers that when they pull me over.

That was supposed to be a joke. Just trying to lighten the mood here. Okay. I have a license to drive a car.

But I do not have a license to drive the car into oncoming traffic. I cannot do whatever I want with that car. I have a freedom but I must use that right with responsibility.

[ 50 : 43 ] I have a duty to do the right thing. And American freedom must be recovered as it's properly understood through the scriptures.

And so what is the word to the world this morning? We'll find out when we hit chapter three. We're not there yet. Pastor David will take us there. But I believe there's a word to the church this morning.

And the word to you is this. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day having done all to stand firm.

Let's stand together.