



Center City Church

Gender and Sexuality Seminar: From Creation and Consummation to Current Application

1. Biblical Authority and Our Bodies

"Forward then, dear brothers, and lose not your grips. Hold fast to the truth; for the world sells not one dram-weight of God's truth." -Samuel Rutherford

1. The Bible alone is our authority and interpreter of all truth.
2. Key Affirmations for study:
 - a. If we want to study the Bible *seriously* we must take the Bible at its word.

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:19-21,
 - b. If we want to study the Bible *seriously* and *sincerely* then we must realize that what the Bible says is true and therefore meant to be obeyed and applied.
 - c. "Scripture is clear to us but not without our willingness to obey it." -Stephen Wellum
"Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart." Psalm 119:34

2. Gender and Sexuality In Creation: Who We Are

Three Biblical Affirmations of Humanity (Genesis 1:24-31)

1. Humanity was **created**: "So God created..." (Gen. 1:27)
 - a. There is a creator, and we are not him
2. Humanity was **created and it was good**: "God saw everything he had made, and behold it was very good." (Gen. 1:31)
 - a. Christianity alone starts with a good and perfect humanity because it was made by a good and perfect God.
3. Humanity was **created and it was very good, and it was created male and female**: "Male and female he created them..." (Gen. 1:27)
 - a. To be human is to be made either male or female



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Created Complementarity

Key Definitions: **Complementarity** is an essential human reality that male and female, being equal in dignity and worth, display both the part and the whole of humanity through distinct and complementary natures. Or to put it simply: Complementarity expresses unity in diversity.

Because God created humanity with complementarity it means:

1. We cannot understand humanity in full without understanding our counterpart of the opposite gender.

But

2. Because male and female are both distinct we can understand what a male is and what a female is on their own as well.

Summary:

Think of complementary genders in relationship to humanity like someone viewing the moon through a telescope. We can zoom in and examine a specific crater or feature (masculinity and femininity) but we need to realize that we can only understand them in light of the whole moon itself (humanity). The moon is not less than its craters and features, but a specific crater is not the whole moon and must be understood in light of what the whole is.

Why Male and Female?

- 1) The Divine God (Genesis 1:27):

- a) We are made in the image of a Triune God who is distinct and yet united.

- 2) The Divine Goal: (Gen. 1:28, 2:5-8, 15, 18)

- a) God gave male and female for the purpose of divine work. The work was twofold: Fill the Earth and Subdue it.

- b) By what means do we fill and subdue?

- i) Boundaries: Expand the garden as the sphere of God's presence

- ii) Babies: Fill the earth with people who enjoy God's presence

- c) What role does gender have in the divine goal?

- i) Gender is essential to both, in different ways.

- ii) Marriage is helpful but not necessary for the first, but it is essential for the second.

- 3) The Divine Gift: (Gen. 2:20-23)

- a) Gender is a gift to humanity in both a general sense (the joy of distinction) and in an exclusive sense (the joy of sexual union).



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3. Gender and Sexuality in the Final Consummation: Where We Are Going

Key Text: Luke 20:27–44

27 There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, 28 and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the second 31 and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. 32 Afterward the woman also died. 33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.” 34 And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, 36 for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.” 39 Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” 40 For they no longer dared to ask him any question. 41 But he said to them, “How can they say that the Christ is David’s son? 42 For David himself says in the Book of Psalms,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
43 until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’

44 David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?”

Heaven in Submission to Marriage? Or Marriage in Submission to Heaven?

Gender and sexuality must be understood in light of God’s **goals** and God’s **character**. To assume our sexuality and our marriage relationships are ultimate, and not God’s goals and character, is to make the same mistake (and to look as foolish) as the Sadducees.

What does Luke 20 reveal about God’s goal for humanity and his character?

1. Jesus assumes that resurrection hope is **happy hope**.
 - a. “Considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead” (Luke 20:35)
 - b. To not see the joy of what he’s saying is to miss the greater joy of the gospel. c. This happy hope is for those who are “Sons of God” and therefore “sons of the resurrection.” It is for the believer. To belong to God is to belong to the hope of this coming age.



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2. Jesus shows us marriage is **progressive (teleological)** and **prophetic (typological)**
 - a. Marriage was designed with its end in mind: “[they] neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” (Luke 20:35-36)
 - i. Marriage and sexual union are to be understood in light of humanity not vice versa.
 - b. Marriage’s Designed Limits
 - i. Its internal designed purpose will be fulfilled. This is the *progressive* role of marriage. Marriage is fulfilled in its own right.
 1. Illustration: Wet concrete—You can play in it for a bit but it was designed to dry. The nature of concrete is not to be wet forever.
 - ii. Its external relationship will be fulfilled. This is the *prophetic* or *typological* role of marriage. Marriage is fulfilled in relationship to Christ and the church.
 1. Illustration: Scaffolding—We can get used to seeing scaffolding in a new building in our neighborhood, and we can walk and move upon it, but scaffolding was meant to be removed when the building for which it was intended is completed.
 - c. How is marriage surpassed?
 - i. In the resurrection God’s **Divine Goals** are fulfilled.
 1. Marriage was designed in part to create people—but in heaven God has his forever people.
 2. “For there shall be no generation in that place to which regeneration shall have brought us.” Augustine
 - ii. In the resurrection God’s **Divine Gift** is finally present.
 1. Marriage was a temporary means and a prophetic shadow for the greater gift of the church’s union with her husband, Jesus.
 2. Ephesians 5:25-27, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”
 - a. Those who are sons of God

So...bummer?

No! “Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.”

God, not sex, is our joy.



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C.S. Lewis once described it this way: "I think our present outlook might be like that of a small boy who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure should immediately ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer 'No,' he might regard the absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain you would tell him that the reason why lovers in their carnal raptures don't bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of. The boy knows chocolate: he does not know the positive thing that excludes it. We are in the same position. We know the sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the other thing which, in Heaven, will leave no room for it. Hence where fullness awaits us we anticipate fasting."

Application: To view our lives through the category of sexual preference and identity is to ground ourselves in something not essential to human nature. Instead we ought to view our gender, our sexuality, and our friendships with both genders as tools which will one day be swallowed up by the greater joy of glory.

"In truth, we will be uninterested in sexuality in Heaven not because it is 'atrophied,' but because it is 'engulfed'" (Martindale)

4. Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Application: How We Live

Jesus reminds us that we are "between ages." We belong not to the age to come, but the age to come is not here. So tension, pressure points, and sin are part of our reality.

Contemporary Applications:

1. **Gender in the World:** Maintaining Biblical distinctions in an age of disillusionment
 - a. The Bible presents:
 - i. Singleness as a gift
 - ii. Marriage as a gift
 - iii. Distinctions as a gift
 - b. While there are culturally driven distinctions regarding gender, there are also created distinctions. These are evangelistic, sanctifying, and doxological.
2. **Gender in the Church:** Declaring the creator-creation distinction as the people of God
 - a. The church lives out kingdom ideals: It lives between Eden and Eternity
 - i. "Married people are necessary because the church is still part of the current age, but single people remind it that the spiritual age has already been



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inaugurated in Christ and awaits imminent consummation." (Kostenberger/Jones)

- ii. We are all called to make disciples and we are all called to intimate love.
- iii. Some of us are called to make physical people and sexual love.
- b. The church's offices and gender:
 - i. 1 Timothy 2:8-15 grounds gender distinctions in creation not culture "Adam was formed first, then Eve."
 - ii. As a representation of the distinction between Christ and her church, and between the husband and his wife, the church is led by men who meet the qualifications of biblical elders. (See 1 Timothy 2:12, Titus 1:5-6, 1 Cor. 14:33-35).
 - iii. While the church only has male elders, the church is not male led. The church is led by Jesus. Any elder who acts outside of that authority and oversight is to be rebuked and called to repentance.

3. Gender in the Home:

- a. On Authority and Submission—Affirmations and Denials:
 - i. The Bible *does not* call women to submit to men.
 - ii. The Bible *does call* children to submit to their parents (Eph. 6:1, 1 Tim. 3:4).
 - iii. The Bible *does call* wives to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22, 24, Col. 3:18).
 - iv. The Bible *does call* church members to submit to their elders (Heb. 13:17)
 - v. The Bible *does call* Christians to submit to each other (Eph. 5:21)
 - vi. The Bible *does call* Christians to submit to God (James 4:7)
 - 1. Summary: Biblical submission is a reality for everyone and this submission looks different in different contexts. For the Christian, everyone is both in authority (creation mandate) and under it.
 - vii. Biblical submission is not denigration, nor subjugation (Romans 12:1).
 - viii. Biblical submission requires humility, but it never erases personhood or dignity (1 Peter 5:6).
 - ix. Any Biblical submission is ultimately a trust in God not the human representative (see Romans 13:1, Acts 5:29).
- b. On Headship and Helper—Affirmations and Denials
 - i. Marriage was created with the innate realities of headship and helper (Gen. 2:20).
 - ii. The task for which Eve was given was not essentially Adam's task, but God's task (Gen. 1:28).
 - iii. Husbands, while assumed to be worthy of respect, are never called to exact or extract respect or service from their wives (1 Peter 3:7).
 - iv. As Christ and his undershepherds are responsible for the church, as parents are responsible for their children, and believer's for their own conduct—so a husband's headship is most clearly a responsibility to care for his home over himself and in submission to God (Eph. 5:25ff, 1 Tim. 3:4, 1 Peter 3:7, Phil. 2:3, 1 Cor. 14:35).



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- v. Neither submission nor headship are meant to be understood in reciprocity with their corresponding partner (Eph. 5:22-25, 1 Peter 3:1-7, Prov. 31:11)--the telescopic principle.
- c. On Gender Roles Inside of Marriage--Affirmations and Denials
 - i. The Bible assumes that roles that fall in line with redemption will often seem out of line to our hearts--husbands may want to be passive and irresponsible, wives may want to be responsible and domineering (Gen. 3:16)
 - ii. The Christ/Church relationship, not culture, is the only normative standard for what gender roles look like (Eph. 5:24, 28-29).
 - iii. It is possible to mistake cultural expressions of husband/wife relationships and accidentally make them biblical requirements.
 - iv. In submission to God as the ultimate provider, husbands have been designed with unique capacity and responsibility work and to provide (Gen. 2:15, 1 Tim. 5:8), to lead in discipline (1 Tim. 3:4-5, Heb. 12:7), discipleship (Eph. 5:25-26), and by holding his wife's honor in the home that she might be able to participate in discipline and discipleship (Deut. 21:18, Prov. 1:8).
 - v. In submission to God as the ultimate give of life, wives have been designed with unique capacity and responsibility to nurture relationally (Gen.) and by caring for the home in such a way that her husband is not prohibited from being "in the field" (Prov. 31:23) while also participating in discipline and discipleship (Deut. 21:18, Prov. 1:8).
 - vi. Freedom and flexibility abounds (Proverbs 31) so long as husbands and wives are aware of and operating faithfully in light of their responsibilities.