Wise Sex — Delivery Transcript

Proverbs 5:15–19; 6:27–33 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, February 16, 2014 · *The Thing Most Needed*

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All right, well that pretty much sums up the sermon, so let's pray and have our invitation. Come to the Lord. Just kidding. It's kind of an interesting morning, you know, 8:25 service, predominantly older adults. It was kind of weird when my parents had to talk with me. It was actually really weird, but it was even weirder having to discuss this topic with people who could be my grandmas and grandpas. The 9:40 service, they were like, well, you don't know what you're talking about. And so here we are in the 11:00, and so hopefully the Lord will be with us as we dive into something that the Scripture does speak about.

And I thought it especially fitting since we're just on the heels of Valentine's Day. There are kind of ways of preaching where you kind of cherry-pick what you want to preach on, but we want to be a church that preaches through all the Scripture. Usually we do this expositionally, and so it's going to be a little bit of a different series, because we're going to be in the book of Proverbs, but it's almost a thematic selection of Proverbs. And the series that we're starting this morning is called The Thing Most Needed, and we're going to look at wisdom and the life of our sexuality, our finances, and then, of course, our workplace or our responsibilities.

It's a topic that no one likes to talk about. It's a sermon that nobody discusses after, during lunch. So it'll be good. But if you will take your Bibles, don't open it up to Proverbs yet. You can go ahead and open it up to chapter 5 of the book of Ephesians because the series is kind of rooted in that verse there, Ephesians 5:15. But just before you go there or as you're turning there, I just want to ask you, what if I was to tell you that if you would have asked just one simple powerful question, it could have prevented you from experiencing your greatest moral regrets?

What would you say to me? If I said, if you would have just asked one question, you could have avoided all of the pain and all of the misery and all the regret that you experienced in the area of your sexuality, your finances, or whatever it may be. Would you say there's no way there's a question that powerful? Or would you somewhat be interested? Because I never really thought about it until one day I was driving back and forth from Fort Worth. I went to seminary at Southwestern Seminary, and I don't know if it was around 2006, 2007, I'm not really sure, but I heard a sermon from a pastor in Alpharetta, Georgia.

He's Andy Stanley, North Point Ministries, huge church of like 25,000 people. But I was listening to one of his sermons because that's what I do when I'm in the car. I listen to sermons. It makes me one of the weirdest 1% of the population. I just like to listen to sermons. I don't know if some of it's trying to hone my craft and get better, so I listen to people who are better than I am doing it better than I'm doing it. But in this case, I was listening to Andy Stanley.

It was a sermon in a series that he was preaching called The Best Question Ever, and the series became a book. I bought the book; I recommend the book if you want to take this idea further. He does it better than I do. But the question that he asked—he called it the best question ever—the question is: What is the wise thing to do? And he kind of unpacked it even more than that. He said, in light of my past experiences, my current circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do?

And if we were to ask that question before we made any kind of decision, it's almost guaranteed that you would prevent yourself from experiencing your greatest moral regrets. The question is rooted in this passage in the book of Ephesians, Ephesians 5:15. For those of you who are Bible students, you know that the Apostle Paul lays the theological groundwork for the Christian life. And then later on, chapters 4, 5, and 6, he begins to show how the Christian theology applies to everyday life. And then I think he gives a blanket statement here in Ephesians 5:15 that kind of acts as a mode of operation for Christian living, not just knowing what is right and wrong, but also what is wise.

Ephesians 5:15. He says, "Look carefully then how you walk"—or how you live; that's what he means by that—"not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." So, in other words, being a Christian isn't just a matter of knowing the difference between right and wrong, or moral or immoral, or legal or illegal, or permissible or impermissible. There's something different, there's something else, maybe not something greater, but something different than just knowing right and wrong.

It's instead knowing what is the wise thing to do: the question of wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to foresee the future consequences of your actions and to choose the right path. I got that definition from Clyde Berkeley when we were over there in India. I was kind of tossing

this series out to him, see what he thought. You always test your sermons on someone else before you preach them. That's why most of my sermons don't make it to the pulpit. Audra's just like, nope, not that one. But he gave me that definition: Wisdom is the ability to foresee the future consequences of your actions and to choose the right path.

I think that's a good definition. Wisdom isn't just knowing what's legal or illegal; it's not just knowing the right thing but doing the right thing at the right time, with the right people, in the right way, through the right methods. It's a question of not just knowledge but the application of that knowledge so that it makes the maximum impact. It's not just knowing the theology but applying the theology. It's not just being able to recite a sermon that you just heard, but being able to take that sermon and apply it to your everyday life for maximum impact.

It's knowing the future consequences of your actions and choosing the right path. And wisdom is all throughout the Scriptures. It is a huge theme in the book of Proverbs. James chapter 1, verse 5 says, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him what? Let him ask. Let him ask, and God will give generously without reproach. And so what we're going to do is apply this question of wisdom to three different areas, and the areas come from what I think our culture and really any culture has been pushing us toward ever since the beginning of time.

What is it that everybody wants? I think of three things everybody wants, and I guess you could make more categories, but it basically boils down to sex, money, and power. You say, no, it's sex, drugs, and rock and roll, brother. That's where it's at, but mostly sex, money, and power. These are the things that everybody wants. At least these are the things that our culture is telling us that we must have if we're going to be happy. But what if in pursuing the things that we most want, we miss out on the things that we most need?

Or miss out on the thing that we most need? What if in that tunnel vision and that intensity that we're pursuing power and we're pursuing that career and we're pursuing the millions of dollars and that 401k and we're pursuing this relationship or that relationship and we're pursuing this in our sexuality, what if in pursuing the things most wanted, we miss out on the thing that is most needed? What if we miss out on wisdom? What if we don't stop and ask the question, what is the wise thing to do? And as a result of not asking that question, we begin to suffer deep moral regrets in the area of our sexuality and our finances and our responsibilities.

And so what we want to do is to stop for just a moment and ask. Just ask. In light of my past experiences, in light of my current circumstances, and in light of my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do? Because most people, we don't plan on screwing up our lives. But far too few of us plan not to. Nobody gets married and decides the day after their marriage, I want to screw up my marriage. But not enough couples plan not to. Nobody

makes $110,000 a year and intentionally plans to screw up their life financially, but far too few people put in a plan not to.

And so what wisdom does is it puts up a guardrail. It's saying, before I go over the edge, let me ask myself the question, what is the wise thing to do? It's not just asking the question, how close can I get to sin without sinning? Anyone ask that question? I certainly did as a teenager. You say, well, I'm not technically sinning unless I do this, and so you just get right up close to the edge, especially in the area of sexuality. I didn't have any older brothers, and so I didn't do this very annoying thing, but I had two younger brothers, and they used to just poke you like this, poke you, and I'd say, "Stop touching me."

And you know what they would do? They would take their finger and get as close as they could to me, and they would say, "Not touching you, not touching you, not touching you." Anyone ever do that? And then boom! I'd touch them. Because they're my brothers. That's what we do with our moral decision-making. Sometimes we say how close can I get to sin? You shouldn't do that unless you're counting calories. If you're counting calories, I recommend getting as close or even a little bit beyond. But when it comes to your moral decision-making, it's not how close can I get to sin without sinning.

It's not how close can I get to sin without suffering the consequences. It's stopping and asking the question, when it comes to my sexuality, in light of my past experiences, my current circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do? And I think those three aspects are important. And of course, that is from Andy Stanley's, I don't know if it was in his sermon or in his book, but the reason you ask about your past experience is because your past experience isn't my past experience. You may have a longer past experience.

You may not have grown up in a small town where if you did anything wrong, everyone knew about it, especially because your grandma was a beautician. So you were not only coffee shop talk but beauty shop talk—double whammy. Your past wasn't my past. There may be people that you can be in a relationship with that I can't be in a relationship with. There may be places that you can go that I don't go because of my past experiences. So in light of your past experiences, what is the wise thing to do?

Your current circumstances. My current circumstances are different than yours. You may be single, you may be widowed, you may be 55, you may be 18. I'm 29 years old, young, newly married, got a child on the way. In light of my current circumstances, what's the wise thing for me to do in the area of my sexuality? Maybe there's a relationship I should never form. There's a place that I should never go that you could go. And then lastly, in light of your future hopes and dreams, if wisdom is the ability to foresee the future consequences and to choose the right path, in light of those future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do?

And so let's apply it this morning to our sexuality. What does the Bible have to say about wise sex? And to do that I want to go to the book of Proverbs. It's all over the book of Proverbs. It's just a long list of verses in Proverbs about sexuality and wisdom in our sex lives. But I want to look specifically at two chapters of the book of Proverbs, and that's chapters 5 and 7.[1] And I just want to look at a couple of verses within chapter 5 and within chapter 6.

But just to kind of set it up, when the book of Proverbs, and really when the Bible talks about sex, it always uses metaphors. And the book of Proverbs that we're going to look at this morning puts it in terms of fire and water. And fire and water are both wonderful things, so long as they're controlled. But if you have water that's out of control, like a dam that's busted, it brings destruction. You have fire in a fireplace and the fire is a good thing. It keeps the house warm, but if the fire is in a wheat field and it catches the whole field on fire, then it brings massive destruction.

And what the Bible says about sex is that it has a form, but it also has a function. We want to be focused on this form. It has this context in which it resides in, and it doesn't reside anywhere else, but within this focus, it can be fully expressed. It's like fire. It's like water. If it's unfocused, it brings damage. But if it's focused, it brings something that is good. And really, if you think about the biblical teaching on sex, it's a two-fer. It's a both-and. It's both very conservative, but it's also very progressive.

It's conservative in that the Bible teaches that sex is only meant to be experienced within the exclusive, lifelong covenant of one man and one woman in marriage. It's very focused. But within that context of the covenant of marriage, it basically says, enjoy yourself as much as you can. Fully unleash your sexual passions in the context of that marriage experience. If you want to use the analogy of fire, fire that isn't in the fireplace brings destruction. So what the book of Proverbs is saying is keep the fire in the marital fireplace and stoke that fire as hot as you can get it.

For men, keep your hands off of other women, keep your hands on your wife. There's a context, there's a form, there's a focusedness to it, but within that focusedness there can be full expression. You can satisfy those longings. And so let's read the text, Proverbs chapter 5, starting in verse 15 and going to verse 19. I want you to notice how honest the Bible is about sexual passion. It puts it in terms of satisfying a thirst. And so the Lord knows kind of how the human body works. He knows how men are.

He knows how women are. And so He says drink water. This is a father speaking to his son. "Drink water from your own cistern." In other words, keep it in your pants. "Drink water from your own cistern, and flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for

strangers with you." And then here's a prayer in verse 18: "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe.

Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love." So basically, you think about sex as it comes to the book of Proverbs: any kind of promotion of sexual intimacy that takes place within the confines of an exclusive, permanent, lifelong commitment between one man and one woman in marriage. Anything that promotes intimacy in that context is wisdom, it's wise. Any decision that takes you towards that end is good. And any decision that promotes any kind of sexual intimacy outside of that context is foolish. And so this includes pornography, premarital sex, good old-fashioned adultery.

You shouldn't call it good. Old-fashioned, bad adultery, anything like that, even lust of the heart. You remember from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "If you look at a woman lustfully, you've already committed adultery in your heart." And so those emotional investments that you make, especially if you're the kind of person who's more emotionally attracted than you are physically attracted, those emotional investments that you make that are promoting sexual intimacy or emotional intimacy outside the context of marriage, all of that is foolish. And it's not a matter of asking, how close can I get to sinning without sinning?

Instead, it's a question of asking, what is the wise thing to do? If this decision is going to take me further down that road, I don't want to go. But if this decision is going to take me further down wise sex, then I do want to go. But what happens to us is we rationalize, we justify ourselves, and because we don't ask this question, we don't have the clarity, and we don't have our motives uncovered, and we say things like, well, it's just lunch, you know. Everybody has lunch. It's just supper.

I mean, the whole office, we were all going to go out to dinner, seven of us. It's just that the other five didn't show up, so it's just me and her. I didn't want to be rude and make it awkward. I mean, it's just supper. It's just a conversation. I mean, it's okay for me to tell her about my problems in my marriage. I mean, I can either tell her or I can hire a counselor, which is bad stewardship, which is not God's will, so therefore I need to talk to her about the problems in my marriage.

It was just talking. It's just dropping by. I mean, my dad taught us to drop by. It's just dropping by. I'm just saying hello. It's just a hug. And we begin to rationalize it in here. One decision after another decision after another decision. You see foolishness in your life that is taking you towards a road, or taking you towards a destination in which there's going to be a promotion of sexual intimacy outside the confines of marriage. And the Bible's saying that's foolish. And if you would stop and ask yourself the question in light of my past experiences, my current circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams, when it comes to my sexuality, what is the wise thing to do, you wouldn't make those decisions.

It would bring clarity to your decision-making. It would be a lens through which you see your circumstances. And you would avoid your greatest moral regrets. And the reason why the Bible only promotes sex within the confines of marriage is because sex any other way isn't just morally wrong, it's actually damaging. It's damaging to the sex, it's damaging to the relationship, and it's damaging to you as a person. God designed sex to communicate from one person to another, I'm giving myself fully to you. I'm giving myself fully and completely, exclusively to you.

But when you have sex outside of the covenant of marriage, you can't say that. Basically what you're saying is, I want to make myself physically available to you, but not completely, not exclusively, not emotionally. I want to have you physically, but I don't want all the other things. I don't want the baggage. I don't want your past. I don't want your history. I don't want your financial problems. I don't want your relational problems. I don't want all that stuff. I just want you physically. And so what you're doing when you do that, when you have sex outside of marriage, whether it's premarital sex, pornography, or just adultery, you're using sex to communicate something that sex was never meant to communicate.

And when you do that over and over and over and over again, what it does is it begins to destroy the sex, it begins to destroy the relationship, and it destroys you. Sex is supposed to soften you. It's supposed to teach you to open up to this other person, and you begin to harden yourself against sex's softening influence, and it destroys you. You'll never be able to trust again. You'll never open yourself up again. And a whole lot of problems that happen in marriage are a result of that kind of destruction that sex had brought.

You don't have to be a Christian to see that. I read an article this week of a lady who was writing about interviews with college students at Penn—University, Penn State[2]—and basically they said, "We have chosen to avoid romantic relationships during college entirely in favor of hooking up, no strings attached." They still use that term. I didn't know that. Hooking up—that's what we used in high school. Of course, here I think it means something more than what we meant, but basically no-strings-attached kind of sexual activity. And this author says, "The sex described by the Penn undergrads in the story sounds sort of grim, less like sex and more like work."

One woman describes the man she regularly sleeps with this way: "We don't really like each other in person, sober. We literally can't sit down and have coffee." Talking about their hookup, she sounds bored: "We watched TV, had sex, and went to sleep." One woman said, "I have to be drunk in order to enjoy it." She continues, "Without love or friendship, we are left with the language of an economic exchange"—which is exactly what the video talked about—"the sexual partner as service provider." And then later on in the article, as she interviews these girls, she begins to uncover the intense loneliness that all of these girls are feeling, the joylessness of their lives.

Basically, when all you experience is cheap sex, you begin to see sex as something which is easily discarded, unmemorable, and the exact opposite of what God intended for you to experience when He designed sex. And so he says it's supposed to be experienced in the context of an eternal covenantal commitment between one man and one woman. Anything outside of that commitment is not only morally wrong, it's foolish because it is going to destroy you, it will destroy your relationships, and it will destroy the sex. One author said that sex is a commitment apparatus to every single relationship.

Another author said that every time a married couple engages in sexual intimacy, it's a recommitment ceremony. It once again opens you up to that other person. It enables you to trust again. It enables you to be exposed again. That's what sex was designed to do. But any time you experience sex outside of that context, you harden yourself against its softening influence. Instead of trusting that other person, you say, I can't trust you, because you don't want all of me; you just want the physical me. And it destroys your view of sex, and it destroys your very sexuality.

And so, over and over and over again, the Bible says, sex in marriage. "Drink water from your own cistern, and flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you." But then, I think, in order to not just show the exclusive nature of sex but also show this freedom of sexual expression, in verse 18 the father is praying for the son. And this is—I've never gotten over this—I can't imagine my dad praying this kind of prayer, but he's saying, "Son, may your fountain be blessed."

In other words, I'm praying that you would experience exquisite sexual happiness. And that word blessing, shalom,[3] means complete, total fulfillment in every single way. There would be intense sexual satisfaction. "And rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe." I've got to be honest, it doesn't really connect with me. I hunt deer, okay? So I don't know. You're probably thinking—if you're in the Middle East—how many deer hunters are in here? It's not connecting with you, is it? Put yourself in the Middle East. You're not a deer hunter; you're thinking of the big black eyes, long silky hair, graceful limbs.

He says, "Be intoxicated always in her love." Verse 19 is just explicit. Needs no comment. "Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight." Basically, what the Bible is teaching is that it's not just a matter of being conservative and here are all the rules. Within the context of marriage, there can be full sexual expression, and so I'm praying that the quality of your lovemaking would be great, and that the quantity of your lovemaking would be great. Great quality and great quantity. He uses the terms intoxicated, that you would be filled at all times with delight, but he also uses terms like always and at all times.

And so it's just a matter of quantity and quality, that both of them would be great. If you want to simplify it, sex should both be fun and frequent in marriage. In marriage, it's both

fun and frequent. And that term, intoxicated, this is radical stuff. If you were reading the book of Proverbs in the original audience, most of your marriages would have been arranged. But even in this arranged marriage climate, the book of Proverbs is saying, I want you to be madly in love with your spouse, head over heels, crazy in love.

That word, intoxicated, is used in the book of Isaiah of a man staggering down the street drunk, and that's the kind of image: that there would be this true, intense, passionate love between you and your spouse, and that in the context of that lifelong commitment of marriage, there would be both great quantity and great quality. And so if that's where Proverbs is taking us, and that's what the Bible says wise sex is, then we step back and ask the question, in light of the decisions that we have to make. And in light of our past experiences, our current circumstances, and our future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do with my sexuality?

Is this a relationship that I need to end? Is this a relationship that I need to begin? Do I need to put some protection around this area of my life? Do I need to have a conversation with my spouse? I know I don't have a problem, but should I put a filter on the internet? Should I cancel the cable? These are not questions of what is right and wrong, moral or immoral. These are not moral questions. These are questions of wisdom. And when you step back for just a minute, instead of just pursuing everything that you want when it comes to your sex life, ask yourself the question, what's the wise thing to do?

And the reason we make foolish decisions is because we think our situation is unique. Don't we do this? We'll say things like, well, I would never. And, you know, I can't help that this person works with me. I can't help that he was the only person available to be the trainer. He would never come on to me. He would never do anything. Because of my job, I have to. We somehow think our situation is unique, therefore we're immune from making decisions that would prevent us from sexual foolishness. And because we think our situation is unique, we may not get right up to the edge and sin immediately, but we will make 150 foolish decisions on the way up to the edge because we never stop and ask the question, what's the wise thing to do?

And then eventually, we do something that we regret. And you may think your situation's unique and you may think your circumstances separate you, but I tell you what isn't unique. The consequences of sexual folly isn't unique. Loneliness is loneliness no matter what you drive. Divorce is divorce no matter where you go to work or who your co-workers are. Misery is misery. It doesn't matter where you go to church or how much money you give. It doesn't matter how unique you think your situation is. The consequences are the same. And so Proverbs is saying to us, ask yourself the question, what is the wise thing to do?

Look in chapter 6, verses 27 and following. He kind of says the same thing. "Can a man carry fire next to his chest and not be burned?" Of course not. "Or can one walk on hot coals and

his feet not be scorched?" Of course not. "So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished." In other words, don't even don't even go there. Don't even entertain the thought in your mind. Stay as far away as possible from that kind of decision. And the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 says, "Flee sexual immorality."

And in the Greek, that means flee. Sexual immorality. Stay as far away as possible. Don't even entertain the thought. It's not a matter of seeing how close you can get to sin without sinning. Not a matter of how close you can get without experiencing the consequences. It's a matter of putting a guardrail up, something where you're not even getting close to the edge because you're exercising wisdom in your life. The price is too high, the pain is too great, you'll only get burned. If you see a beautiful woman, men, here's the word from the Lord.

She should be beautiful and irrelevant. Don't go there in your head. And the minute you see yourself going there, you stop and you ask the question, is this wise? Should I take this any further? Look at verses 32 and 33. "He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away." Now I think a plain interpretation of that text, when it talks about the wounds—probably the wounds of the angry husband, because men don't take kindly to another man sleeping with their spouse, and so he's probably getting wounded by this man.

But it's also not just the physical wounds, but the emotional wounds and the wounds against your reputation that you carry for the rest of your life when you sin sexually. Sexual sin is a unique sin. I don't know quite how to put it. The apostle Paul, when he was talking about sexual sin, he said every other sin a man commits, he commits outside his body. But when a man sins sexually, he sins against himself. What he means by that, I think, is that you may be forgiven by your spouse and God may forgive you and be forgiven by your friends, but you will have a difficult time forgiving yourself.

Sexual sin follows you. It haunts you. The shame, the disgrace that comes along with it—the shame is so great, it's so hard to kick. So on the front end, before you even get close to making those kinds of decisions that you would regret, why not ask yourself the question, in light of my past experiences, my current circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do? I've never heard anybody say, I'm thankful I committed adultery, never. You say, well, you're only 29, just wait a few years.

I don't think I'll ever hear someone say, I'm thankful that I committed adultery. Even people who have gotten married as a result of their infidelity and they have wonderful marriages that God has restored, and I believe that's possible and that can happen. But even for those couples, they say of their past experiences, I wish I would have never done it. I wish I would have asked myself the question, what's the wise thing to do? I've never seen anyone say, you know, I'm thankful that I got right up to the edge.

But I've heard a lot of people say, you know what, I'm thankful, even though I didn't have a problem, I put a filter on the internet. Even though it was harmless, it was just lunch, I'm thankful that I made a decision to never be alone with another woman in a car. To never counsel a woman alone. I'm thankful that I put up guardrails. I'm thankful that I asked myself the question, what's the wise thing to do? Your greatest moral regrets when it comes to your sexuality can be avoided if you will just ask yourself the question, what is the wise thing to do?

So let me ask you the question, teenagers, grade school students, in light of your past experiences, your current circumstances and your future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do? Some of you are at such a beautiful time right now, you've got your innocence, you don't even have the temptations in front of you, and today you can make decisions that will prevent you from experiencing incredible moral regret when it comes to your sexuality because you're going to ask yourself, starting today, what's the wise thing to do? What's the wise thing to do?

For others of us, you may be married, newly married, I got a child on the way. In light of my current circumstances, my past experiences—where are some things you shouldn't go, some people you shouldn't talk to, some relationships you shouldn't make? You ask yourself the question. Senior adults, widows, ask yourself the question. Maybe it's not even a question of applying it to your own life as much as it is realizing that my situation isn't unique, my grandchildren are immune from the statistics, my children are immune from the statistics, and so in light of that, what's the wise thing for me to do?

Is there a conversation that I need to have? Is there something that I've been avoiding? Ask yourself the question, what is a wise thing to do? And the other thing is, on a topic like this, on a topic like this, I know that it brings up past memories. I've got to tell this joke. This is a total rabbit trail, so bear with me for a minute. The first time I preached on the topic of sex at Broadview, I told a joke. I couldn't believe I told it. But since I told it once, I could probably tell it again and get away with it.

The preacher was standing up in the front of the pulpit, and he was vocalizing hymns and said, every time I say a word, I want you to sing a hymn that reminds you of that word. And so he said, power, and the congregation said, power, power, power in the blood. He said, Victory. And the congregation began to sing, Victory in Jesus, my Savior. Then the pastor said, sex. And a 90-year-old woman in the very back stood up and sang, "Precious memories, how they linger." It has nothing to do with the sermon.

Look, I know when you take a topic like this, you need a little laughter, because for some of us we, as soon as the topic was breached, it's the shame. You feel the shame. The regret, the moral regret. You wish, I wish I would have never done that. I wish I never would have talked to that person if I could only, if I could only be healed from my sexual pollution. And

the word from the Lord this morning for you is that if you will turn to Christ, you will find in Him the healing that you need as a sexual fool.

He is the wisdom for sexual fools. And look, we're all sexual fools. Some of us have done more things that we've regretted than others. Some of us just got caught doing. But all of us carry this pollution to our Savior and our Lord. And facing Him, we say, here I am in my filthy rags. And He says to you're loved. You're forgiven. Put your faith in Christ. And the beautiful thing is that for Christian people, well, what sex gives to us is a parable of the gospel. What sex in a married couple having sex is basically saying, I'm completely vulnerable, I'm completely exposed, I'm naked physically and spiritually and emotionally, and yet I'm accepted, I'm received, I'm loved.

That's what sex does. And what Christianity teaches us, what the gospel says of us, when we stand before our Lord in that final day, we will be laid bare, naked, physically, emotionally, spiritually, spiritually, and Jesus will say of us, you're beautiful, you're clean, you're cleansed, you're loved. That's the Gospel. It's the Gospel for sexual sinners. And so if you're here this morning and you're carrying that shame and that guilt, then come to put your faith in Christ. Turn to Christ. Even as a Christian person, I know it's hard to get rid of the guilt and it's hard to kick off the shame.

And when a person sins sexually, they sin against themselves. I know the trauma of that. And so turn to Christ. And keep turning and keep looking. And gaze upon Him and the things of this earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace because your Lord says of you, even it doesn't matter what your past was, it doesn't matter how foolish you were, you're cleansed. You're clean. He said of the woman at the well,[4] "I know your sexual past. You're forgiven. Go and sin no more." Start today asking yourself the question, what is the wise thing to do?

Let's pray together.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "chapters 5 and 7"; the two chapters actually read are Proverbs 5 (vv. 15–19) and Proverbs 6 (vv. 27–33), as the next sentence ("within chapter 6") and the reading confirm. Source: ESV, Proverbs 5–7. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "Penn… University, Penn State"; the story described (and the quotations that follow) concern undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania ("Penn"), not Penn State. The quotations come from an America magazine essay (Oct. 16, 2013) discussing Kate Taylor's New York Times article "Sex on Campus: She Can Play That Game, Too" (July 12, 2013). Source: americamagazine.org, "Paradise Lost: What happens when we disassociate love and sex?"; The New York Times. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "that word blessing, shalom"; the Hebrew word translated "blessed" in Proverbs 5:18 is *barukh* (from *barak*), not *shalom* (peace, wholeness). Source: Proverbs 5:18, Hebrew text (BHS/Sefaria); ESV. ↩

4. Transcript note: spoken as "the woman at the well" with "Go and sin no more." Jesus' words about her "sexual past" are from John 4:16–18 (the Samaritan woman at the well); "Go, and from now on sin no more" was said to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:11). Source: ESV, John 4 and John 8. ↩