

Romans 1_28-32_01.mp3

Todd Fletcher [00:00:05] "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 worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 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 death 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. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossip, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless and ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them." Thus reads the words of the Lord you may be seated.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:17] Dr. Lawson, in his sermon this last week, began with a bill that I was unaware of, and it's a bill that's passing right now in British Columbia. And I did some research on this bill, and it's called Bill C-6, C-6, if you want to look into it. And the bill is an anti-conversion therapy bill. What is conversion therapy, this is something that I've talked to with counselors at CCU, Colorado Christian University, that's a bill that it's a discussion in seminaries around the United States, this issue around conversion therapy is a very important issue for the church because it has huge ramifications for how we do counseling both as pastors and as parents. Let me tell you what is in this bill, Bill C-6 which is being currently discussed in Canadian parliament. But first, we need to understand what is the issue, what is conversion therapy, maybe some of you have heard that before and you think, well, that sounds bad, it's intended to sound bad. Forcing someone against their will to convert it brings up images of the inquisition of perhaps the Crusades. But let's just listen to what the parliament of Canada says of conversion therapy, what is conversion therapy? By their definition in the bill, it says conversion therapy is any practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity, to CIS gender, or to repress or reduce non heterosexual attraction or sexual behavior, that is their definition of conversion therapy. Notice in that definition it's all one way you can force homosexual desires on a heterosexual child and they have no problem with that, you can force gender transgenderism on a CIS gender child they have no problem with that. But you can't go the other way, you cannot encourage a homosexual child back to heterosexual practices or to a CIS gender identity.

Todd Fletcher [00:03:34] Now, I'm going to define CIS gender later because I think a lot of us who are kind of new to that word might be surprised by its definition as well. But the issue here is there's huge ramifications in this. Essentially, they are outlawing the right for parents, pastors and counselors to encourage their child back to a biblical view of sexuality, and this will pass in Canada. And I have a lot of Canadian brothers and sisters and I talked to one of my brothers who's a pastor in Canada, not not James. This will pass and it will sweep through all of Canada and it will be illegal to counsel against homosexuality or against gender identity. The fact is, not only will it be illegal for pastors, it will be illegal for parents. So what they're doing is they're taking the right for parents to raise their children in the ways of the Lord, and they're making it illegal. Well, that will never pass here in America, will it? There's something called the Equality Act, perhaps you've heard of it that's very similar and it's a slippery slope to the exact same types of

penalties and punishments. And the fact is, is that we are forced as a church to answer the call, are we not? Throughout history, there has been issues that have been brought and raised in the church that have demanded an answer from Scripture. And the issue of our day, you've heard me say this in every sermon in Romans, the issue of our day is gender identity and sexuality. And we have to answer with the word of God, not just with politics, not just with opinions, but with thus sayth the Lord, that's all that matters. And so the ramifications are huge, as I said, it's going to affect biblical counseling, it's going to affect parents and what they're allowed to teach their children. It's going to affect homeschooling. It's going to affect charter schools.

Todd Fletcher [00:05:31] It's going to affect everything if these things pass. And the punishment to Bill C-6 is a heavy fine or up to five years in prison. They've also given the police the right to spy on parents and pastors and educators in the same way that they would spy on a child molester, on a sex trafficker, they have the exact same rights in spying against Christians as they do pedophiles. You may not want to hear this, but it's here, isn't it? And the church has to answer this. The church has to answer the call, and that's exactly what we're going to do today, is we're going to continue to answer the call. And as a church, we must accept the fact that there will be ramifications to these types of sermons. There will be ramifications to holding to the gospel. And Jesus says, count the cost, count the cost of following Me. It's not easy, it's not a walk in the park to follow Jesus Christ, it costs a lot. So today, we're going to look at the final digression and God's punishment against a wicked culture and we see a three step progress. But in this last step, what we see in this digression is three things, in verse 28 will see that we are given over to a worthless mind, that's verse 28, versus 29 to 31 to a wicked life, and then the verse 32 to woeful approval.

Todd Fletcher [00:07:13] It's sad because I think we are at the very bottom of verse 32, are we not, as a society right now? We're in the period at the very end of this. Downstairs, we're talking about how did we get here and we're going to discuss that briefly up here, but how did we get here to where the Equality Act is passing in America and Bill C-6 is passing in Canada? And pastors will be in prison, James is just the first, there's many, many more I know pastors in Victoria British Columbia, who are my cohort there in my cohort, they're my peers and they know they will go to prison the second they preach. Romans 1. Well, how did we get here? And the answer is we abandoned this book a long time ago, we abandoned the Bible a long time ago. And there is hope all you have to do is reverse engineer this, there's a lot of hope, but we have to deal with the reality of where we are now. That's why I've titled this. "Today is Evil Now Good?" The culture would say, yes, evil is now good and good is now evil. All the things that the Judeo-Christian ethic taught us that is now evil and everything that Satanism and and Nihilism and all these different things taught us that is now good and the world has flipped good and evil, has it not?

Todd Fletcher [00:08:36] This is where we are, so what do we do as Christians? We must reject evil and proclaim good. We must stand as purveyors of the truth, we must stand as those who proclaim light in a dark, dark world. So let's get to our text now. We see this first, a worthless mind, verse 28, "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." Let me reverse engineer this here real quick, we've got to understand the entire progression of how we got to this point. If you will look up to verse 24, "so therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of the bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." So where did this begin? And notice, that verse even begins with a 'therefore'

and that's because these people neither thanked God or glorified God. Therefore, God gave them up to a debased and futile mind in their thinking, verse 21. And verse 24 says, and God has unleashed the lusts that are found in their own hearts to impurity to dishonor their bodies because they exchanged, here's the great trade, actually, it's a terrible trade. It's a terrible deal worse deal I've ever seen, "they exchange the truth about God for a lie and they worshipped the creation rather than the Creator." When did this begin? At least for our nation, when did this first step happen? Was it a year ago? Was it two years ago that we started worshipping the creation rather than the Creator? I would say it goes all the way back to the Enlightenment, humanism, where we removed God from the center and we put humanity as that object which deserves worship.

Todd Fletcher [00:10:49] We took God off of his throne, not that that's possible, but in our own hearts and in our culture, we took God off the throne and we put humans right on the throne. And then we started questioning His word. You notice when the Enlightenment came, everyone started questioning the Bible, let's cast off tradition, let's cast off everything that came before us, as C.S. Lewis says, we became chronological snobs. That people who came before us are stupid and we are smart. And we started questioning, did Moses really write the first five books of the Bible? Did John really write Revelation? Can we really trust every single word in this Bible, is it not corrupted? And then the great intellect, Dan Brown with The Da Vinci Code summarized it, "we can't even trust this Bible because, look, it was put together by powerful men that just wanted to control the masses." Oh, by the way, I based this on fiction. But we've given up the Bible, we've questioned everything about it, we've ripped it apart and we started worshipping man rather than God. Worse yet, we started worshipping creatures that don't even bear the image of God rather than God. We substituted the truth for a lie and we embraced the lie. And then the digresses further in verse 26, "for this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions." Notice this is the second 'giving up,' this is God's great judgment, as He simply unleashes us in our sin, He gives us up to dishonorable passions. Now we have another bad deal, a bad trade, we exchange natural sexual functions for that which is unnatural. Well, how do we know that it's unnatural? Because God designed it that way. Let's turn, if we will, to Genesis Chapter 2, we need to see that the second step in this judgment goes very contrary to the very beginning, which is that God created us with specific natural functions. Genesis Chapter 2 we see here, actually go to Chapter 1 first, Genesis chapter 1 "so God created man in His own image in the image of God He created him, male and female, He created them."

Todd Fletcher [00:13:44] And then if you turn to chapter 2 verse 24 it says this, "therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh." So in Genesis chapter 1 we have in the very creation God creating us male and female, how many genders are there? Two. So God created two genders and then it says that those two genders come together as one flesh in marriage, and that's seen in the child that they produce. A man and a woman when they come together in marriage and they have sexual relations, produce a child that is half mom, half dad. That is the created order, that's the design, is it not? And so when you go back to Romans chapter 1 verse 26, it says that "they were given to dishonorable passions for their women, exchanged natural functions," natural sexual uses" and men likewise, being inflamed with passion for one another, exchanged" natural uses, "natural sexual functions." So the second step down here is not only are we now worshipping the creation, rather the Creator, we are distorting God's design we're flipping it on its head, notice it. So we're saying, well we're not worshipping our Creator anymore and we're not following His designs any more. And so because of that, God sees fit to essentially unleash our desires for homosexuality and it says that we will receive the penalty for that error in our bodies, in ourselves.

Todd Fletcher [00:15:27] So that's the second step down is not only do we worship creation, now we're giving up the way that God designed sex and sexuality, all sex outside of marriage between one man and one woman is distorted, it's sin. But that's not it, and then we get to the final digression, "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." Here's the final step, they rejected their creator and they worshipped the creation, they exchanged natural designed functions for what is unnatural and undesigned, and finally they don't even see fit to acknowledge God anymore. Is that where we are right now? Yeah, we see the sexual revolution in the 60s where we sought to throw off designed sexual functions, tradition, the things that have been handed down all the way from God Himself. And we decided to overthrow sexual oppression, we decided to overthrow our Creator, and now we no longer acknowledge God's existence in the public forum, do we? Well, we started removing the Bible from schools, remember that? It's not going to be that big of an issue to take the Bible out of schools, it's not going to have that big of repercussions, but it did. Because in taking the Bible out of schools, which was a giant move, you were saying that the Bible is not a real book, it's not a real historical book, it's not worth studying. It's just myth, it's just religion, religion is worthless, God is worthless. And that's exactly what this word means in verse 28, they did not see fit to even think that God was worth it, that's what the Greek is.

Todd Fletcher [00:17:14] To see something that's worthwhile is to test it and see that it's worth teaching and to see that God is not worth it, that God should not be acknowledged is to say we've tested God and we've determined that God is just not worth teaching anymore. That's why we don't talk about God in school anymore. That's why we don't talk about God in colleges anymore. That's why if you bring up God in the House of Representatives, you get mocked and made fun of because God is not worth it in the secular mind. He's not even worth talking about, He's not even worth considering, or as a current politician said, "she" would not do that, "she" would not care. Now changing God's gender. So not only do we mock God, not only are we rejecting God, we're saying that He is no longer worth even discussing in the public forum. Job 21:14, and there's many verses that say this is, it says, "they say to God, depart from us, we do not desire knowledge of your ways." Depart from us, get away from us God, we don't even want to consider Your word anymore because we prefer our word, we prefer our ways. That's where we are. And let me ask you a question, do you acknowledge God in your life? Is He even worth the consideration?

Todd Fletcher [00:18:38] I hope for every one of us, we say yes, but maybe there's some of us who don't even acknowledge God, that God exists. When we're talking about our future plans, maybe we don't even pray about them. Maybe we don't even address His word when we're talking about our desires and the things that we want to accomplish, that we don't think that God is even worth consideration anymore. I think some of us need to remember that God is the One that we need to consider, that His word is where we go when we're having problems. And we see here that the punishment of this, of giving up God, the punishment of not even seeing fit to acknowledge God anymore is this, "God gives them up to a debased mind." What's a debased mind, you can translate this as worthless, a vain mind, a broken mind, a depraved mind. Let me tell you something that's terrifying about sin, and you know this if you've ever studied neurology, is the more you sin the more you begin to break your own mind, your mind begins to form new pathways, it begins to actually change the more you commit sin, endorphins begin to determine chemical dependance, begins to increase the dependance on experience, various things.

Todd Fletcher [00:19:58] And so when God gives them over to a broken mind, what's happening is God is just allowing your sin to rewire your mind and it becomes worthless and you can no longer think logically. Have you noticed that in our world today that logic has fallen on hard times? Logic and reason. I was listening to an interview with Ben Shapiro and Gina Correa, and Gina was on the *Mandalorian*, she worked for Disney Plus, and the *Mandalorian* was the largest show last year during 2020 when everyone was stuck at home with Disney Plus. And Gina began just tweeting things that were conservative just from a conservative opinion, and Disney sent a social media counselor or advisor to her house to help her correct her use of the social media. And Gina Correa was saying things that were logical, they were she was saying things that were reasonable, that made sense. But this social media person came to her and said this, Gina, you're answering these people incorrectly, you're giving logical and reasonable reasons for why you're saying what you're saying, but that's not what's called for in today's society. She says logic and reason are not what's important what they want from you is an emotional response. We just want your emotions and all we want here at Disney is for you to come out and say that you're so sorry that you hurt people and offended people, even if what you said is logical and reasonable.

Todd Fletcher [00:21:36] See, what's happened is as we've substituted logic and reason for emotion. And the heart is desperately wicked above all things, and who can know it? And so God is giving us over to this. Our culture is headed down this road where our brains will be broken and more broken and become just absolutely worthless, as this passage says. If you ever ask the question why, why can't people see what's happening right in front of them? It's because God has judged their brain, the Scripture says He's blinded their eyes. 2 Thessalonians, 2, verses 10 through 12, let's turn there, we need to see this judgment that is coming on this world. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 we see that before the Antichrist comes that this is a judgment that God brings on the world, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 starting in verse 10. I'll start in verse 9 just for some context, it says, "the coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders," this is what we understand to be the Antichrist, "and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing because they refuse to love the truth and to be saved." Here's the judgment, "therefore God sends them a strong delusion so that they may believe what is," what, "false. In order that all may be condemned who do not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Todd Fletcher [00:23:31] Does God ever give the judgment of delusion? Yes, says it right there. That He has brought blindness on these people so that they will be condemned because they did not love the truth. And so what we see here in Romans, chapter 1 verse twenty eight is the same exact punishment, because they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, because they ignored His principles, because they ignored His word, it says He gives them over to a broken mind, a worthless mind, a mind that is no longer profitable and as I said, these minds are now scarred by sin. I have a scar on my forehead from growing up and I used to wrestle with my brothers and we are at my grandparents cabin up in northern Arizona and we're two and a half hours away from the closest hospital, and I am younger than my brothers by quite a bit, my oldest brother is nine years older than me and my other one seven years older than me. And we were wrestling, and what happened is, I said, something that, you know I could only hurt them with words, not with my my body, because I wasn't strong enough. I wasn't big enough. And I said something to my oldest brother that made him angry. And he picked me up and he threw me into the corner of a coffee table and I was bleeding. You can still see the scar today, I was bleeding everywhere and I was two and a half hours from the closest emergency room. And as I got there, I found out they didn't have any antiseptic, they didn't have any

pain, numbing things. And I got, you know what, as eight to 10 stitches in my head. And I remembered I remember that all the time because I can see the scar there.

Todd Fletcher [00:25:05] Right. And if you've ever been caught in sin, you see the scars of sin in your life, don't you? But you know what's amazing is that God can heal even those scars. That God can rewire your mind back to the truth. That God can take out a dead, cold, sinful heart and replace it with the heart of flesh, just total heart surgery. And in the Jewish understanding, that's that includes your mind, that includes your thinking, the heart. What we see here is that sin breaks the hearts, sin breaks the mind, sin distorts the way you think if you've ever been caught and sin, haven't you ever asked yourself the question, why am I doing this? Paul even says all the things I want to do, I'm not doing and the things I want to do, I just don't do, he said who will set me free from this body of sin and death. Christ Jesus is the one. What we see here is this is the first step in judgment and that sin numbs the conscience, that sin breaks the mind. That's what you're seeing around you right now, we're seeing it everywhere. And then it leads to a wicked life, look at verses 29 through 31, "they will be filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice, they are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossip's slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless."

Todd Fletcher [00:26:47] Don't we just get it, why does Paul have to just pile on? Have you ever asked yourself, reading that passage, why 21 vices, doesn't that seem like overkill? It's like a machine gunned us with sin. We see this list, Paul does this over and over four times, he provides vice lists, 1 Corinthians 6, 9 through 10, he provides a vice list, Colossians 3 verse 5 he provides a vice list, Galatians 5, 19 through 21. What is Paul's deal? Does he just want to make us feel bad? You know, there's a there's a random movement today that maybe some of you have heard of or seen, and it's an anti Pauline movement in the church, we just don't like Paul. They call it a a Pauline Christianity, we want to Jesus Christianity, not a Paul Christianity. This is a huge movement in seminaries today. They're ignoring Paul, they're saying that Paul corrupted Christianity and that you have to go back to Jesus because that's where true Christianity is found only in the gospels. So there it is again, let's just rip pages out of your Bible. Paul wrote the majority of your New Testament. Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit. So we can't just say, well, Paul just was having bad days or Paul was just a mean guy, Paul had very important reasons for these vice lists and that's because he wanted you to see that all sin is equally offensive to God and that when you're handed over to sin, it just leads to a sin after a sin after a sin. Sin comes in groups. Sin is pervasive. You give in to one and it starts to affect every area of your life, you give in to envy and you become foolish, you hate God, you become a slanderer, you become boastful, you become an inventor of evil.

Todd Fletcher [00:28:32] All these things are tied together because sin has a common root, and that is pride, love of self over love of God. That's what John Calvin once said is at the root of every sin is pride, saying, I am God and He is not, I follow my own way, not His way. That's what we see in the Garden of Eden. And let's come back to this CIS gender issue, I'm going to define this and I'm going to show you how pervasive this is in our culture today. So we saw in Genesis 1 that in the beginning, God created them male and female, that's what Genesis 1 says. Genesis two, that a male and a woman, or man and a woman come together in holy matrimony and become one flesh in the act of sexual union and that's God's design. But let's look at CIS gender and the current definition of CIS gender. A CIS gender person is anyone who identifies of the gender that was assigned to them at birth, anyone else is transgender. So they're saying that a CIS gender person is

the person who claims the identity of the gender they were assigned at birth. Let me ask you the question, assigned by who?

Todd Fletcher [00:29:49] Well, this world would say assigned by their parents. This is why we're having issues with gender reveal parties, right? You have a pregnant mom and they find out that they're having a boy or a girl and they have a cake with pink or blue icing in it or a balloon that blows up or, you know, there's a lot of bad things that happen from those that seems like a lot of forest fires and deaths might come from those gender reveal things. But there's a big issue with gender reveal parties because they're saying you parents do not have the right to assign a gender to your child. The fact is, is the parents are not assigning a gender to their child, they're recognizing the gender that God assigned to their child. And do you know that you can tell whether or not you're having a boy or a girl in the womb? Because they can look at the parts. I remember when we found out we were having a girl, both Kinsley and I turned white, because we were ready for boys, we were not ready for girls. And then I'm so thankful that I have two daughters, but she even...even my wife was saying, I don't know if I can put up with the emotions, I don't know if I can put up with teenage years. But when we saw that my son had one part and my daughter's had another part, that God had assigned a daughter to me. That God had assigned a son to me, I didn't choose that, God did.

Todd Fletcher [00:31:19] And so we come back to this list and we see that all of this is a rebellion against what God has determined, what God has written down, what God has commanded. And that those who have broken and worthless minds are those who reject the very rules and the very operations that God has assigned. This is what a broken and worthless mind looks like, and they live a wicked, wicked life. So I'm going to give you some kind of nerdy things here to help you with this 21 word list. You'll notice, and this is something just for your Bible studies that you can pay attention to, notice how each section begins, first says, "they were filled" and then it gives you four vices. And then it says "they are full of" and then it gives you another, I believe it's five and then it gives you 12 identifiers, 12 characteristics of the wicked person. So the verse says, "they are filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness and malice." So we see here that this is, it's a middle passage verb, which means that they fill themselves, they are being filled with, but they're active in their own filling. So God is not forcing evil on these people, God is not making them, you know, unrighteous, God is not making them evil. God is not making them greedy. Where is this coming from? They're heart, they're broken and depraved heart, God is not making them evil, God is unleashing their evil. They're being filled with these things, they're becoming more and more like these things. As you give in to sin you just go deeper and deeper into sin, you become more and more like that sin. The things that used to satisfy your sinful desires no longer satisfy, so you go deeper and deeper into those sins, don't you?

Todd Fletcher [00:33:16] So he says the first step is that they are filled with all manner of unrighteousness. This is wickedness, evil, that which is contrary to God's word, greed, covetousness, desiring more. They want more, and their mouths, their mean. Sound like our world? They don't care what God says. They're evil. And they just want more they want more power, they want more money. And then they're mean, they're malicious, they're not kind people, these are four general categories of what a wicked world looks like, and I think we can all look around and say, yeah, we're here. It's I just think about taking one of our grandparents or our great grandparents and dropping them into today and having them watch our House of Representatives and our Senate and our Congress and how they treat one another. I think they would be just dumbfounded at how our leaders in this nation treat one another. There's no love, there's no grace, there's no

respect. The way they treat our President, the way they treat our representatives, the way they retreat, or they treat our authorities, I think our great grandparents and our great great grandparents and the people who founded this country would just be dumbfounded at the evil they see. But we've just gotten so used to this that this is just how life is, but it goes on, it says not only are they filled with these things that says now they are full. So they were being filled and now they're full. They're full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips. So envy, desire, and here's the greed, here's the covetousness, just that they want more, they want what you have. This is a big issue today, isn't it? We need equity. Everyone needs to have the same things, so that way we'll solve greed.

Todd Fletcher [00:35:16] They'll be no more envy, is that true? No. You know, you can give kids the exact same toys and guess what, they're going to want the other toy because they want that toy. Not I know I have this toy, it's the same color, it's everything but I want that toy. Why? Because I'm a sinner, like I just want that toy. They're full of this. They're full of murder, well we're not murderers, are we? Abortion, the largest genocide in human history is occurring right now to the most innocent population that has ever existed. Children who are supposed to be safe in their mother's wombs are being ripped apart for parts. Well, yeah, but strife, there's no strife today, we can move on from that one, no strife is the name of the game, is it not? Deceit, lying, see the politicians for that see even see pastors today who are lying to their congregations, they're saying that the Bible says one thing when clearly it says the other thing.

Todd Fletcher [00:36:23] Maliciousness, I love that it says it twice, malice and maliciousness, they're just mean, these people are mean, they're gossips. Now gets into the third digression, this is who they are, this is their characteristics. They're not being filled, they're not only being filled with these things, they're not only full of these things, this is who they've become. There's 12 characteristics here that they've become their gossips, they slander each other, they make up lies about each other. They're haters of God, they just hate God, they don't acknowledge Him, they don't want to talk about Him, they hate Him. They're insolent, they're haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, I think we could spend a whole sermon on that one. What ways can we invent evil? There's enough there's there's not enough evil in this world. What else can we do? What other evils can we invent? They're disobedient to parents, I mean, does not not define our generation? Parents don't listen, or kids don't listen to their parents as they're commanded in Scripture, parents are not leading their children as they're commanded in Scripture. They're foolish, faithless, heartless and ruthless, this is our world. This is, this is a depressing list, is it not?

Todd Fletcher [00:37:51] I could tell you about genocides that are happening with the Uyghur people over in China that no one wants to talk about. I tried to find estimates on how many Uyghurs have been murdered by the Chinese regime over the last couple of years, no one knows. Estimates are around three million, they don't know. No one's talking about it. I can talk to you about the abortion that's happening all around the world, how many people, how many children have been aborted? No one knows. Millions, we just don't know. See, there's so many evil things happening. The sex slave that's happening right now, all the all the sex, the children who are on the sexual slave trade right now, how many children are are owned and are sold for sex? We don't know. There's so much evil in this world as a Christian, it's so hard to just even know where to begin, isn't it? And if we dwell on the Uyghurs, if we dwell on abortion, if we dwell on the sex slave, sex trade, if we dwell on all these things, we just get so overwhelmed because who are we? What can I do? There's something we can do but we need to recognize that sin destroys society. Sin destroys life, and Jesus says in John chapter that He is light and when light came into the

world, men despised Him because they hated light and they loved darkness. They love their sin, they love all the evil that is in this world.

Todd Fletcher [00:39:26] And there's so much of it, again, how do we do, how do we handle this? And then finally, we go down just a little bit further and we move from not only a worthless mind to a wicked life and then finally to woeful approval. And I want to give you this word, woe because we need to understand it. Isaiah 5:20, we need to turn here and we need to understand that this verse is probably the most convicting verse, it's the most relevant verse in your entire Bible, Isaiah 5:20, and Isaiah 5:20 lays it all out for us, and this is where we are currently. Isaiah writes, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. Who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who were wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" Does this not sound like our culture today? Woe to those who call good evil and evil good. Well, what is it, what is woe mean? Woe is the worst word you could think of when you're talking about the utter, just amazing wickedness of sin? Woe to those who call good evil and evil good. This is a word of judgment, woe to you who practice and approve of these things. This is a word of warning woe to those who approve of these things because there is judgment coming. We see in Revelation the eagle crying out, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the Earth, there is judgment coming, God's wrath will be poured out. Woe to you who practice such things. And Isaiah says, woe to those who call good, evil and evil good. There is judgment coming for you who approve of evil. Well, can't you be a good Christian and approve of evil? Woe to you, who call good evil and evil good, woe judgment is coming. Well, can't I just approve of a little bit of evil, woe to, you get the point right? Woe to those who call good, evil and evil good. The church has major woes against it right now because the church largely is calling good evil and evil good around the world. And what we have to see is that this is a judgment from the Lord.

Todd Fletcher [00:42:13] This is the bottom of the barrel, verse 32, though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to what? Die. Though they know these things, this is past tense, though, they know the decrees of God and the punishments of God, though they know it. Here's where it gets really bad, they not only do it themselves, they not only break God's law willfully, they applaud those who do it as well. They give their approval to it. This is the very bottom of the barrel when it comes to a society, this is as low as it goes. That people not only practice sin openly themselves and maybe struggle with it, knowing it's wrong and that they shouldn't do it, but they're just given to it, that they not only practice these things that I just went through, now they approve of others who do it as well. And as Christians, this is where it gets really real. Bill, C-6, as a parent, will you confront your child's sin, whatever it is with the word of God, and direct them back to truth, or won't you? And as a parent, if you look at your homosexual child and you applaud their sin, you are applauding their path to hell. Does that not wake you up, parents? That if you applaud your neighbors sin that you are plotting their way to hell. Doing the very opposite of what God has called Christians to do, which is to preach the gospel of eternal life, to save those who are lost, who are dying. Charles Spurgeon once says that you're going to have to jump over his body to to get to the pit of hell, that he will not let you jump into the pit of hell without a fight. Are you just not only letting go and letting people walk to hell or you greasing the runway? Saying, yeah, that way. Go, go, go. That's like my baseball coach, I just remember that. Go, go, come on, first base, second base. Do you see, how do you see how dangerous is? Because not only are we rejecting God's decrees, not only do we know that it deserves death, we are applauding people. On their way to destruction.

Todd Fletcher [00:44:48] Let's just call sin sin, let's call a spade a spade. Isn't it worth going to prison for five years, to show love to those who are perishing? Isn't it worth being fined heavily to see your kid be saved and go to heaven? To me, it's worth it. Absolutely, it's worth it. Bob Dylan, the quote, the great theologian in a song says, "times they are changing, come gather round people wherever you roam and admit that the waters around you have grown and accepted that you will be drenched to the bone with the times they are changing." They're changing. And what Jesus did when he was here is He called sin sin. Do you ever think they crucified Jesus because He was too nice? Do you think they crucified Jesus because they didn't like what He wore? Do you think they crucified Jesus because He had bad jokes? No, they crucified Jesus because of one thing He called sin sin. And they hated him for it and they crucified him, not only did they crucify him for calling sin sin, He was hated by the world because He showed light on sin. And they love darkness, and then finally He said that if they hated Me, guess what, they'll hate you. They will hate you because they hated Me. So what do we do with all this, I asked you, what do we do with all this? How do we respond knowing that we're at the bottom of the barrel? We reverse engineer it. So the bottom of the barrel is that we no longer acknowledge God, meaning we don't see God as worth it, so the very first thing we do is we begin to acknowledge God, we begin to insert God back into the public debate. We begin to insert God back into the forum of the world. We begin to take back of the culture for God. And then, we call sin sin. Step two, we confront sin, we call out sin with the gospel, we call people to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And then the final step is we take man off the throne and we put God back on the throne. You just reverse engineer it. It's that simple, acknowledge God, confront sin and worship Him and that's how we regain the world again.

Todd Fletcher [00:47:39] I'll end here one, I was reading an article by someone who grew up in communist Russia and they see what's happening in America today and they said, I can tell you that exactly what happened in Russia is happening here. And that socialism and communism, their main goal is to discourage you. To make you feel like you can't win, to make you feel like you should just give up and roll over. And he said the only way to fight socialism and communism is this, stand faithful, stand true, don't give up, have hope, proclaim the truth. A little church like this can have dramatic impacts by just holding to the gospel, holding the line, we're not giving up any more battleground. We're now going on the offensive, we're taking ground back for the gospel. That's how we get back. We hold true to God's word. And as John Bunyan once said, I will stay in prison until the moss grows on my eyes rather than disobeying my God. I will stay in prison as long as it takes before I ever disobey, my God.

Todd Fletcher [00:48:54] Let's pray. So, Father, we look at Romans 1, and it's a hard chapter there's probably no harder chapter for us to deal with in the entire Bible than this chapter. But, Lord, I pray that we would stand true to Your word, that we would hold the line, that we would love people who are perishing, Lord that we would preach the gospel to them, that we would seek for them to be saved, that we would not applaud their way to destruction, Lord but that we would grab on to them and force them to drag us if they're to jump into the pit of hell. Lord, I pray that this church would stand strong, that our nation would be recaptured by righteousness, that godly men and women around the world would stand up for truth, that our parents would defend their children from the enemy, that our churches would defend the sheep from the wicked one, Lord that we would stand strong, united in Jesus Christ, we pray this in His name. Amen.