

Responding to the LGBTQ+ Community

Matthew 19:1-12

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: We began a new series last week looking at “**Difficult Questions**”. We started with an overview of a culture shift that has taken place regarding Cultural Marxism.

In particular the number of groups that have formed independently of each other, but each of which seems to be working toward a common goal of cultural revolution.

Primary among these special interest groups is the coalition known as LGBTQ++

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer.. then the ++ that indicates the community is growing indefinitely to include any number of alternatives that may emerge in the coming days.

According to Dr. Al Mohler - The transgender revolution has now reached a critical stage, and it now touches virtually every dimension of society.

- The creators of entertainment are rushing to include transgender characters and actors in their productions.
- School systems in the US now feature “gender identity” as a part of the curriculum, premised on the claim that even young children can announce their trans identity.
- In Scotland, little boys and girls as young as 4 are now able to declare that they are a different gender, they can change their names and their personal pronouns without Parental consent and even without their parents being informed.¹

On top of this, practically every collegiate and pro sporting league is wrestling with how to approach trans athletes. Biological males who have undergone hormone therapy, now claiming to be women.

EX: Lia Thomas, who was born Will Thomas is the one we are all familiar with. Will went from ranking 554 in the men’s freestyle,... not great... to as Lia dominating the women’s division in every category. Not even a close second.

The American Medical Association has recently recommended that Hospitals no longer have a box for GENDER on a person’s birth certificate.

School are going to great lengths to avoid gender stereotyping of kids.

¹ Walker, Andrew T.. God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say about Gender Identity? (pp. 3-4). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

ILLUSTRATION: I heard about one school that noticed during recess all the little boys would go play with trucks and girls would play with the dolls. So they put all the little girls in a room and only gave them trucks to play with. 15 mins later they checked on the girls and one said, “Shss” the little trucks are sleeping.

ILLUSTRATION: Lest we think that this is some west coast issue...
UF HEALTH has recently hired Dr. Benny Tan as the Medical Director of the new Center for Transgender Health in Jacksonville, FL.

If a young person from 4 to 18 wishes to change genders, they have a pediatric endocrinologist who can administer drugs that will stop the natural process of maturity, suppress the onset of puberty, remove hair, and even perform gender reassignment surgery on these young kids. ²

FOLKS, HAVE WE LOST OUR MINDS?

The American ideal seems to be that we have to become what we feel. If we feel female, then it is considered a great virtue to have the courage to undergo surgery.

Legendary Football Coach John Wooden said, “being true to ourselves doesn't make us people of integrity. Charles Manson was true to himself and as a result he is rightly spending the rest of his life in prison, ultimately being true to our Creator gives us the purest form of integrity”

Dr. Paul McHugh the former psychiatrist in chief for Johns Hopkins Hospital and is the current distinguished service professor of psychiatry. He has written 7 books and 125 peer reviewed articles. Dr. McHugh says, *“transgenderism is a mental disorder that merits psychological treatment. Sex change is biologically impossible and people who promote sexual reassignment surgery are collaborating with and promoting a mental disorder.”*

He goes on to say that children who feel that they are transgender, 80 percent of the time they get over it and their feelings dissipate and they fall into the traditional role. While those who experience gender reassignment surgery are 20 times more likely to commit suicide.

But, today I want to address this subject on a more **personal level**. You see, as you know, this is not something that only effects Hollywood, or Times Square but this is a reality that practically every family is facing either directly or indirectly.

- Some of our families have kids who are struggling with gender identity or same sex attraction.

² <https://ufhealth.org/transgender-health-resources>

- Some have church family has sons or daughters who have embraced the lifestyle completely.
- Some of our own members have battled this temptation.
- And statistically it is very likely that some of you here today are struggling with your own gender identity or same sex attraction.

I hope that our time together as a congregation will allow you to trust me as I broach these challenging issues.

Before we jump into the text, there are a few **terms** we need to define:

- **Sex** - generally refers to one's biological sex as is signified on your birth certificate. This signifies the arrangement of your chromosomes and reproductive organs.
- **Gender** - typically refers to the culture specific, non scientific aspects of sex.

EX: A baby announce for a boy is what color in our culture? Blue. Nothing intrinsic about that, just cultural. **EX:** Watch Braveheart and you see William Wallace in a Kilt, that would be strange in downtown Fernandina, but not in 14th century Scotland.

- **Gender Identity** - Refers to a person's sense of one's own gender.
- **Gender Dysphoria** - Is a psychological condition when someone has a perceived misalignment between their gender identity and their biological sex. This is considered a Psychological malady.
- **Transgenderism** - Umbrella term for when a person's gender identity doesn't align with their biological sex and they seek to remedy that misalignment with external means. **EX:** Hormone therapy, surgery, etc.

Ok, with that in mind, what passage of scripture do we turn to where the scripture writers address transgender issues? It's not easy to answer is it?

I want to take you to one that may not address the issue head on, but it gives us a a paradigm for understanding what is happening and also a process for how to address the issue with people we love.

TEXT: Matthew 19:1–12 (ESV)

¹ Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

So the subject Jesus is addressing was a common controversy among religious leaders in first century Israel, the morality of Divorce.

According to the New American Commentary - Their question reflects the intra-Pharisaic debate between the “schools” of **Shammai** and **Hillel** concerning the correct interpretation of **Deut 24:1**.

In that passage God apparently permitted divorce for “*anything indecent*.”

- **Shammai**, placing the emphasis on “indecent,” took this to refer to sexual unfaithfulness;
- **Hillel**, placing the emphasis on “anything,” allowed divorce even for as trivial an offense as a wife burning her husband’s food (*m. Git. 9:10*).³

The two groups knew that if they could suck Jesus into their conflict, it would divide his followers and likely prove that Jesus was a simple sectarian pundit rather than a prophet or better yet, God’s Messiah.

But Jesus never fell into such traps. His response to this question can also speak into the complex issues we face regarding the LGBTQ+ community.

First of all Jesus provides...

1. A Doctrinal Foundation

Jesus responds to questions about divorce by taking them back to the beginning of Creation. That is a key first step, you see there are a couple of principles in biblical interpretation.

- **The Law of First Use** - That is God doesn’t grant revelation frivolously, the first things he gave us were first for a reason. They set the norm for what follows.

⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

Why is that significant? Because Jesus is pointing out the creator’s intention. Marriage and Gender were not necessary evils, but rather the very design of creation. And notice, implications are drawn from this design.

⁵and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

So the intention of the Creator was that marriage be between one man and one woman for life.

³ Craig Blomberg, [Matthew](#), vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 289.

⁷ They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” ⁸ He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

So the provision of divorce was an accommodation due to our sinful hard hearts, but it was not God’s original intent.

Now, Jesus as God in the flesh makes a comment that Moses never dared to make.

⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

So this is new authoritative revelation directly from Jesus. If the divorce is due to biblical reasons, the innocent person may remarry, but if they call for a divorce frivolously and remarry - they are guilty of adultery.

Not only a Doctrinal Foundation...

2. A Cultural Illustration

¹⁰ The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

This is where the argument shifts...

Now, in this context, there was really only one category of male who was single and celibate for a lifetime... the **Eunuch**.

Eunuch were typically slaves owned by Royalty. Typically, they were taken from among the conquered peoples and forced into the Kings service.

Remember, Kings in this day were typically polygamists, many wives and concubines.

The Eunuch was a position that would serve and protect the Haram without the danger of polluting the royal bloodline. Remember, Daniel in the OT was such a Eunuch.

Typically, boys were made to be Eunuch’s in their preteen or early teenage years. This process of emasculation had devastating effects on the young man’s physical and emotional development.

- The voice would typically not change at the onset of puberty.
- The boys physical development would be modified. Arms would grow far longer than typical. The ears and nose would typically become enlarged.

As a result, eunuchs were easy to identify. They were the closest thing to a different gender identity that people experienced in the first century.

Eunuchs did not marry, they did not procreate, they did not experience physical intimacy. So when the disciples mention -“If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” The only category where this existed was among the Eunuchs.

Now, as Jesus addresses this divergent identity... he gives us categories that are helpful in our approach to the LGBTQ+ culture in which we find ourselves.

¹¹ But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.”¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

a. The Predisposed

² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth,

Here Jesus simply points out that there are some people who from birth have had a different experience than the majority of people. They have been Eunuch’s since birth.

But, wait I thought you said God created male and female and those two genders were to marry and procreate? Yes, that’s right, but Jesus recognizes that the fall into sin has had some deep lasting effects on people.

Here is a question to consider, “Is it possible that due to the fall and the curse of sin, that some people may be born with a predisposed struggle in the area of sexuality and identity?”

I would answer it by saying, “Yes, and I’ll take it a step further... everyone is broken in this area to some degree”. Others may be far further down the spectrum than you are, but if you are honest there is much healing and growth needed in these areas.

Well, if someone is predisposed toward same sex attraction does that make it ok? No, you see most of us who are heterosexual may find more than one person attractive, but what do we do? We develop sexual discipline and we don’t become adulterers.

ILLUSTRATION: We have all known people who have always felt like they were different, or they struggled with things that are unnatural.

That doesn’t mean that we need to categorize them and assign them over to a sin pattern for life, it means that they will need extra discipleship, accountability, and direction in order to develop a normal sexual experience.

b. The Groomed

2b. and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men,

That is, something has happened to them to cause them to experience a divergent experience of gender and sexuality.

It is not uncommon that a person who identifies as LGBTQ+ to have experienced a traumatic encounter early in life like abuse or some sort. That can have a massive impact on one's normal development.

- **Abuse** - According to one study 1 in 9 girls boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault at the hands of an adult. ⁴
- **Pornography** - We are in a day when kids are exposed to pornography younger than ever before. This inevitably shapes their views of gender and sexuality.
- **Schools** - Florida Citizens alliance has identified 44 books found in Florida Public schools that indoctrinate kids according to the transgender agenda.
- **Culture** - Everywhere you look people are stumbling over themselves trying to find the perfect non binary personal pronouns, so that they seem a little more progressive than the next company. Pride month...
- **The LGBTQ Community** - I spoke with one gentlemen who identified as a homosexual. He was an AIDS patient and was celibate. However, he could not bring himself to leave the LGBTQ community. From my observation this is perhaps the greatest factor that keeps people from seeking freedom. Frankly, the LGBTQ community is very accepting and highly affirming of one another and let's be honest, the church isn't always known for being accepting.

All of these things work together to groom a person toward an identity.

c. The Intentional

2c. and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs...

Romans 1:18–25 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ **Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,**

⁴ David Finkelhor, Anne Shattuck, Heather A. Turner, & Sherry L. Hamby, The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence, 55 Journal of Adolescent Health 329, 329-333 (2014)

It is a perversion of sin until it takes more and more perversion to give you the same thrill... until ultimately you are enslaved to a very un-natural way of living.

Now, the fact is likely some combination of those three were likely involved.

Now, what is the path forward?

3. A Path Forward

12b. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.

Three things stand out from this passage -

- 1, there are some strange things that have happened as a result of the fall.
- 2, God's intention and design are the goals we are moving toward,
3. Not everyone is able to receive this... for those who can let me encourage you to remember three things when approaching friends with these struggles.

a. Love

Remember that a person is more than their sexual identity... far more. Approach them with the understanding that their main problem is not that they are gay, or trans, it's that they are separated from Jesus.

Love is patient, it understands that these things are deeply rooted and will not be easy to forsake.

b. Listen

People who have found themselves in the LGBTQ community have gotten there somehow. Typically, they are hurt.

You've heard the saying, "Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care".

c. Lead

Speak the truth in love and gently help them find freedom. It is not loving to accommodate an illusion. Listen, Bruce Jenner, is a man... and no amount of name changes, makeup, or hormone therapy, will change that fact.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: You cannot afford to be an absentee parent in the lives of your kids. It is vitally important that you have open, honest, regular conversations about these things. If you are not willing to, someone else is.... And they may not have your child's best interest at heart.