

Evangelism and Its Hurdles
Class 6: Sexuality and Evangelism
TPC CE, Spring 2024
May 12, 2024

I. Recap from Previous Classes

- Foundations for the Class

Why a class on Evangelism?

- Because we have misconceptions about it
- Because it's not something we have always done well
- Because God commands it
- Because we love people who are not Christians

Basic Convictions

- Ever since the fall, people are born dead in sin
- If they stay dead in sin, they will spend eternity in Hell
- Jesus Christ came to save sinners by dying on the cross and rising from the dead
- We are saved by faith in Jesus
- Faith comes by hearing the message of the gospel

- Class 1 – The Evangel

- Evangelism is gospel conversations aimed at conversion
- Every Christian is called to evangelism
- The content of evangelism is the gospel

Creation -> Fall -> Redemption -> Consummation

We must know the whole story of the gospel well to be able to engage those we love with the good news

- Class 2 – Conversion

Conversion is a person changing from being dead in sin to alive in Christ.

Conversion is a work of God by the means of proclaiming his word where the result is faith and repentance in the hearer.

- Class 3 – Methods

Gospel conversations

- Class 4 – Apologetics and Evangelism

- Class 5 – Science and Evangelism

II. Apologetics

Christianity is a worldview that tells the true story. The Christian story is the fullness of goodness, beauty, and truth.

Augustine of Hippo: “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.” (*Confessions*, 1.1.1)

Isaiah 55:1-3, “Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live.”

Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The Christian Story is the better story, in every aspect. It is the only story that can truly give hope, comfort, purpose, rest, forgiveness, satisfaction, and eternal joy.

III. Natural Law

Natural law is simply acknowledging that God has “two books”—the book of nature and the book of Scripture, and that those books will never contradict. And so, natural law specifically shows the ways that the natural world (and study of the natural world) supports the truth of God’s word.

Especially helpful in moral questions and issues.

Sin is not just wrong, it is bad; and righteousness is not just right, it is good. God’s law isn’t arbitrary, but it is actually our Creator and the Creator of the world telling us how things work best.

IV. The Temptation to Be Embarrassed by the Christian Sex Ethic

“Christians are homophobic... The Christian sex ethic is repressive, patriarchal, etc... I believe a person should be able to love whoever they want... I could never believe in a God who would condemn my friend for following their heart.”

The Christian Story is the better story, in every aspect.

- What do you think the right ethics of sex are?
- What is sex for? What is its purpose?
- Why? Why do you believe that?
- What do you think Christians believe about sex?

V. Understand the Christian Sex Ethic (see the end for more resources)

It is not just true; it is also good and beautiful. If we only bear witness to its truth, then we aren't trying to persuade.

We tend to think that the unique part of Christian teaching is that it has restrictions. But we need to dig deeper and gain more understanding to see the freedom and protection and wisdom that is found in Christianity.

1. The Roman World

Bodies of honor and bodies of shame

Highborn men and women flipped to honor; slaves flipped to shame

Kyle Harper: "In the sexual life of the Roman empire, it would be impossible to overstate the decisive influence of social position in the determination of sexual boundaries."
(*Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* [Harvard University Press, 2016])

Women – practice *chastity*

Men – practice *moderation* (eventually)

Adultery – sex with a freeborn virgin or freeborn man's wife

Adolescent men and married men were perfectly free to have sex with slaves, prostitutes, and children

Tom Holland: "In Rome, men no more hesitated to use slaves and prostitutes to relieve themselves of their sexual needs than they did to use the side of a road as a toilet."
(*Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* [Brown, 2019])

2. The Christian Revolution

Corinth (all over the map)

5:1-2, It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

6:12-20,¹² "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything.¹³ "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

7:4, The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

- Not different rules for different people
- Absolute chastity
- Forgiveness and cleansing (as opposed to permanent shame)
- Protection and safety for the weak

Glen Scrivener: "In the ancient world, the gods were violent rapists, sexual agency was solely in the hands of powerful men, and sexual misbehavior consisted in the violation of reputations, not of bodies or wills. Into this world came the Christian revolution, where sex is painted on the canvas of divine romance [see Eph. 5:22-33] and where two equals unite in a sacred and unbreakable bond." (*The Air We Breathe* (Good Book, 2022))

VI. How do we bear witness to this?

Not being embarrassed of the truth; don't dodge questions about sexuality

Bearing witness to beauty and goodness as well as truth; sometimes we have to do this by exposing the ugliness and destruction of current sexual ethics (ask questions)

Books

Evangelism:

- *Honest Evangelism: How To Talk about Jesus Even When It's Tough* by Rico Tice (Good Book, 2015)
- *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* by J. Mack Stiles (Crossway, 2014)
- *Ten Modern Evangelism Myths: A Biblical Corrective* by Ryan Denton (Reformation Heritage, 2021)

- *Before You Share Your Faith: Five Ways to Be Evangelism Ready* by Matt Smethurst (10Publishing, 2022)
- *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer (IVP, 1961)
- *The Heart of Evangelism* by Jerram Barrs (Crossway, 2021)
- *Evangelism in the Early Church* by Michael Green (Eerdmans, 1970)

Apologetics:

- *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* by Timothy Keller (Penguin, 2009)
- *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion* by Rebecca McLaughlin (Crossway, 2019)
- *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical* by Timothy Keller (Viking, 2016)
- *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (HarperCollins, 2001)
- *Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student on Keeping the Faith in College* by Michael J. Kruger (Crossway, 2021)
- *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask (and Answer) about Christianity* by Rebecca McLaughlin (Crossway, 2021)

Cultural Commentary:

- *Making Faith Magnetic: Five Hidden Themes Our Culture Can't Stop Talking About... And How to Connect Them to Christ* by Daniel Strange (Good Book, 2021)
- *The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress, and Equality* by Glen Scrivener (Good Book, 2022)
- *The Secular Creed: Engaging Five Contemporary Claims* by Rebecca McLaughlin (TGC, 2021)
- *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* by Carl R. Trueman (Crossway, 2022)

Sexual Ethics:

- Lectures by Philip Johnston, "Bodies with Meaning"
<https://www.thenations.church/bodieswithmeaning>
- "Isn't Christianity Homophobic?" Chapter 9 in *Confronting Christianity* by Rebecca McLaughlin
- "Consent," Chapter 4 in *The Air We Breathe* by Glen Scrivener
- "I Have Gay Friends Who Are Kind, Wonderful, and Happy—Are We Sure That Homosexuality Is Really Wrong?" Chapter 5 in *Surviving Religion 101* by Michael J. Kruger
- *A Better Story: God, Sex, and Human Flourishing* by Glynn Harrison (IVP, 2017)
- "The First Sexual Revolution" by Kyle Harper at First Things
<https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/01/the-first-sexual-revolution>
- "Transgender Meds for Kids? 4 Findings from New Report" by Rebecca McLaughlin
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/transgender-meds-kids/>
 - See also an "On Point" interview with the lead researcher, Hillary Cass:
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-full-interview-with-dr-hilary-cass/id121534955?i=1000654913712>
- *Making All Things New: Restoring Joy to the Sexually Broken* by David Powlison (Crossway, 2017)
- *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* by Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George (Encounter Books, 2012)
- *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment* by Ryan T. Anderson (Encounter Books, 2018)