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## GENESIS 18:16-33

Series: Understanding Your Roots

Today we're going to look at the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. So for those of you who are online, I just want to remind you as I've tried to share with you in advance already that this is probably not appropriate for children nine years and younger. Now I do think it's important to talk to children about sexuality. Even as preschoolers we need to talk to them because when children are growing they need to learn, especially in preschool they need to learn privacy and they need to learn about appropriate touching. They need to learn about a boy and a girl. We start those conversations early in a child's life as they're growing. But today we're going to talk about some advanced things that are important for us to talk about. The words that we're going to use and the concepts will not be appropriate because we don't want young children to be exposed to things that are above their developmental stage. So I would encourage you to either turn off the sermon and listen to it later or allow them to do something different during this talk.

However, if your children is ten years old and older I would go get them. And if they're not listening, they should be. This is a great opportunity for them to be interacting with you about sexuality. Very important topic for all of us to be able to address. I want to try to deal with this with compassion and justice today in a way that is sensitive, discreet, but pointed so that we can have these conversations in families. The family is the place where we talk about sex. It's a place where we need to understand sexuality and all the things surrounded by them. Not just the biology of having sex, but all the things surrounding that. And then the church family is a place where we also want to be having these kinds of discussions. We want to be talking together as a church family. So children, I would say, young people, if you have any questions that you talk to your parents and if you still want to dialogue more, call me, talk to me. I'd be more than happy to have conversations about this subject with you or others here in the fellowship.

For those of you who are middle school students and high school students, I'm glad you are listening today. I trust that this will be helpful because I know that some of you are likely struggling personally with some of these very issues and have friends that are dealing with these kinds of issues as well. So we're going to address those. As we do, we're going to open God's word. We're going to read it and then I'm going to make some comments that will guide us through this process to try to give us some understanding of where we're going here and what we're doing.

I'm going to read to you from God's word. I don't have slides for these, so you don't have to advance the slides. We'll just stay right with this because there's so much of the context I want to read I didn't want to throw it up. I do have some other slides we'll use in just a little bit.

I'm reading from Genesis 18. If you remember in the story, Abraham had an experience with these three visitors. One was God and two angels came to him. The conversation now continues. It says – *Then the men* (that is these three guys – God and the two angels) *set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."*

In other words God is saying, "It's important for Abraham to understand what I'm going to do." And I'm saying to you, it is important for you to understand this material we're going to talk about. God says, "Shouldn't I reveal this to him? He needs to understand this whole concept of what's going on here." In the same way, we all need to understand this together.

*Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."*

*So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And there's going to be a dialogue. Listen to the dialogue that goes on. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?"* In other words what Abraham is saying is God, you're compassionate. We've got to think about the people involved in this conversation. We've got to think about the individuals here. Lord, what are you going to do? There are fifty people who are righteous, will you consider them? See, God's going to bring about justice and then there's also compassion. So Abraham is appealing to God's sense of compassion to address this.

Picking up at verse 25 – *"Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"* And the LORD said, *"If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."* Compassion is very much a part of who I am, God is saying.

*Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?"* And he said, *"I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."* Again he spoke to him and said, *"Suppose forty are found there."* He answered, *"For the sake of forty I will not do it."* Then he said, *"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there."* He answered, *"I will not do it, if I find thirty there."* He said, *"Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there."* He answered, *"For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."* Then he said, *"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there."* He answered, *"For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."* And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

You hear the dialogue. It's very important because the very first principle we must understand is that we as Christians must ramp up the dial on two very important missions that we have. One is justice and one is compassion. This is the whole dialogue going on between God and Abraham here. Justice versus compassion. God is saying look, if there is any righteous people in there, if there's even ten (that's as far as Abraham went, I think because he thought surely there's ten), but God's not going to do any destruction here if there's even ten He says because of compassion and justice. The two are very important for us.

Now this is so important because as we interact people in the marketplace or people that we find out that they're saying I'm gay or something like that, we need to know what conversation we're having. Very important to understand that. And if you misunderstand this, then you end up with some kind of convoluted idea.

So in the LGBTQ agenda they would say Christians hate homosexuals. Homophobic we are. That God hates homosexuals. You see, that whole argument is false. It's wrong because it's missing two very important ideas. The justice with the compassion. God has compassion on everyone. When Jesus was here on earth, Jesus ate with sinners, even with people who had sexual challenges in their lives. He ate with them and was criticized for that. He had compassion on people. That is the primary message I want you to hear today. That we want to have compassion on people. I'm going to give you some very specific ideas about how you might relate to someone, in your family, someone you know, someone at work in a way that demonstrates compassion. What do you do in the midst of this challenge? We're going to talk about that.

But before we do, we have to examine the justice part of that a little bit more. Because we don't just have compassion, we have compassion with people while at the same time recognizing that we hold on to truth. And we must do both of those at the same time. The compassion-justice challenge is not just in the world dialogue, but even in the church.

We do this not just with the issue of homosexuality but even in the area of abortion for example. Let's imagine in a church that there are some people who are passionate about the pro-life movement and they're asking people to come and do the march with them down in Washington D. C., and they're asking people to come and picket at a certain abortion clinic, or they're asking people to sign a petition, and they're talking about choosing life and how abortion is wrong. And someone else in the church comes up and says, "Could you tone it down a little bit because we have this pregnancy center and we're trying to get men and women there and talk to them about the surprise pregnancy that they didn't want. We feel like your message is compromising what we're trying to do." It's that very same dialogue that we have even in the church. This isn't just something outside of the church.

We must hold two things together and it depends in our lives which arena we're in. If we're in the public arena...As Jesus is out in the public arena, He's very strong and He calls the Pharisees hypocrites white-washed tombs you guys are. Very strong justice mentality. But when He's alone with people it's compassion. In fact about Jesus it says He sees the crowds and His heart is overwhelmed with compassion because He sees that they are like sheep without a shepherd.

They're lost in the midst of their life situations. We need to also have this sense of compassion in the midst of the situations we deal with individuals. So when someone comes to you and says, "I'm gay," then you want to embrace them with compassion. "I love you. I'd like to hear more about your story." I'll give you some more ideas about what to do in that regard in a few minutes.

But what I want you to do is I want you to understand some key ideas. We're going to draw the big markers here, the key things that you need to do and I'm going to give you four different truths now. I pray that God would use these four truths in your life as you interact with other people in regards to this issue. You have to do it with compassion, but these are the four truths.

If there are some young people listening right now and you're saying, "You know, I feel like I'm attracted to people of the same gender and I'm getting a lot of support of that from the community, from the blogs I read, from the Facebook posts, from the websites that talk about this." I hope that these four truths will influence you in a way to help you see this in a different context. See this in a Christian context so that you can experience the ability to wrestle with this.

I would suggest that the church is a place where we can wrestle with things. I would hope that a lesbian couple would feel comfortable coming into our church and that they would be loved and that this church would be a place where people could explore their sexuality in the light of godly values. In the same way that I would expect that two people who are living together (and that's sexual sin) would be able to feel comfortable here and would be able to experience God's grace and understand their sexuality in the terms in an understanding of biblical worldview and how the Bible talks about this.

Now we have to understand that in our story even there are three kinds of people when it comes to sexual sin or even sin in general. Those people who are attracted to it, then there are people who practice it, and there are people who promote it. You have to understand what we're talking about here. There's people who are attracted to it, there are people who practice it, and there are people who promote it. In this case these people are consumed in Sodom with this and we're going to see they're the promoters here. They're the wicked, as described in the passage because they're promoting evil. They're not just practicing it. They're not just attracted. They're promoting it. So if a lesbian couple were to come into the church here, we would welcome them and we would encourage them and we would help them experience God's grace and forgiveness in all of its beauty. However, if they came in here with an agenda to try to convince other people that they should also become gay or lesbian, then we would take a firm stand. We'd hope they would feel uncomfortable then in the church because we wouldn't allow that. Do you see the balance between justice and compassion? We need both of those things here as we're moving forward.

So let me share with you some principles to keep in mind regarding sex. We're just taking one piece of that today in order to understand. The first thing I want you to see here is that we're called to a two-fold mission of compassion and justice. The next one we want to look at is this idea that desire does not determine right and wrong. This is a very important idea because this is misunderstood in the gay and lesbian movement. This is misunderstood because there is this belief that if I feel this attraction to do something it must be okay. It must be alright. It must be

normal. And I would just suggest that that is not the case. In fact this is not just something that is true about the homosexual feelings that someone might have. Even heterosexuals can have desires that are wrong. If a thirty-year-old man who has been married for several years comes to his wife and says, “You know what, I’m feeling like I have more to offer to the world than I have, I’m going to start having sex with more women.” What’s she going to say? She’s going to say, “You’re not that big. Forget it. We’re not doing this. I’m not going to participate in this.” Just because he has a desire to do this thing doesn’t make it right.

There’s a big difference between the way Christians face this issue of same-sex attraction or sexual immorality than the world experiences this. Well let’s take a heterosexual example for a minute because we’re not isolating homosexual sin as worse than heterosexual sin. Sexual sin is sexual sin. It’s against God’s law and it’s wrong. But let’s imagine a fifteen-year-old young man who comes to his dad being really honest with his dad, he says, “Dad, my hormones are just raging. I would like to have sex with as many girls at school as I can in a short amount of time as I can.” And of course Dad would say, “Son, I really love you and I understand the challenges that you’re facing, but I want you to know that’s wrong. That would be something you do that would not only be wrong and against God, but it would damage you now, you would hurt other people, and it would damage you for later on.” That’s what a loving dad would say. But that same fifteen-year-old now goes out to the world, goes to school. And the fifteen-year-old at school goes to the counselor at school and says, “Hey, my hormones are raging and I would really like to have sex with as many girls as I could here at the school in as short amount of time as I could.” The counselor is going to say, “Oh that’s normal. Here, let me give you some condoms.” So you have to understand there’s a big difference between the way a Christian is going to approach this subject and someone who is not a Christian.

Whether it’s heterosexual sin or homosexual sin, you have to understand that this is something that’s wrestled with. I would suggest that all of us, every one of us, must deal with our sexual desires. It’s something we must address in our lives. Desire doesn’t determine whether something is right or wrong. There’s a message out there that says if you feel a particular way then you should run with it because if you feel good you should do it. Right? Do whatever feels good. That’s a mistake. That’s not what God has for us. That is going to create all kinds of problems for you now and in the future.

In fact let me just show you a verse about desire that I think might be appropriate. In James 1:14-15 it talks about desire and it says this: *But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires he is lured away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

So one principle I think you want to consider if you’re wrestling with these ideas and same-sex attractions and you’re hearing a message out there, young people, I want to encourage you to recognize the desire. Just because you desire something doesn’t make it right. You’re not going to hear that message out in the world, but I want to tell you as a Christian what the Bible says. I want you to understand why your parents may set limits on you. Because desire does not make it right. Very important to consider that particular idea.

I want to take you to a second idea. This is the idea that comes from the LGBTQ agenda that says of Christians (this is how we're viewed) that "you Christians view that some people are wired bad (that is homosexual) and some people are wired good (that is heterosexual). That is so unfair because some people have these desires and urges from very early age, probably even from birth. And so therefore Christians are unfair." That is the outflow of that particular argument.

But let me clarify this and try to help you understand what this looks like from a Christian perspective so you understand what God would be saying about this kind of thinking. One – it is true that people may have urges or desires or same-sex attractions from a very early age, maybe even from birth. That's not inconsistent with what God teaches. Because God teaches this – that all of us, all people experience wiring problems. Every person has bad wiring. There's not people who have good wiring and people who have bad wiring. God teaches that all of us have bad wiring from the beginning. He calls it a sin nature and we are born with it. It is not something we develop overtime, although you can enhance it and make it worse. We're all born with a sin nature and that sin nature is a propensity or an attraction to be selfish and do things that are wrong. We all have that. We are not born good. We are born bad. That's what the Bible teaches and that's why we need salvation in order to help us.

But it's not just sexual desires that some people seem to have been born with that are a problem. Either as a homosexual desire or a heterosexual desire, some people seem to be born with heterosexual desires that are going rampant as well. But it is not just sexual issues. I've had parents tell me, "My child came out of the womb screaming and they've been yelling ever since." There are some people who seem to have a propensity from the very beginning to anger. They are just angry people. And it started in the womb or wherever, somewhere back in there. There's this propensity that anger seems to have been there right at the beginning. The same thing is true with lying. Sometimes a parent will say, "You know my child has been lying since he could speak." And I can understand that. Some parents say, "I don't know where he gets this because we don't lie in our house." I say, "I can tell you where he gets it. He gets it because he has a sin nature." All of us have a sin nature, all of us have wiring problems. All of us have challenges in our lives and they affect every element in our lives, including our sexuality. So whether you have heterosexual desires or homosexual desires, you have this wrestling inside that you must be able to manage and deal with. And of course the biggest solution to that is God's grace in salvation.

Well I need to move quickly just because I have so much to share with you. I want to talk to you about another very important principle that you can bring to the table when you have opportunity. And that is that the Bible takes a strong stand, a clear stand against homosexuality. Now I'm sure you've heard of churches who have said, "Well that's really not the case. In fact we're going to embrace homosexuals, we're going to reinterpret the scripture, we're going to even ordain homosexual sin our church." So that makes it really confusing sometimes for Christians because Christians sometimes say, "Well some people interpret the Bible this way, some people interpret the Bible this way." I want you to know that when you come to the Bible, the Bible takes a clear stand on homosexuality. If you're going to try to change that, you've got to do a lot of massaging to the text. You've got to make up stories, you've got to create ideas because the text is very clear.

I don't have time to go through all of it. There are six texts in the Bible that demonstrate this. But let me just show you three of them. I just want you to see in the Bible what does the Bible say about this?

Leviticus 18:22 – *“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”* I'd say that's pretty clear.

Leviticus 20:13 – *“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death, their blood is upon them.”* That is also pretty clear.

But some would say, “Well that's the Old Testament. And we know the Old Testament has a lot of laws.” Well let's got to the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 3 it says this: *“Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down of the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murders, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.”* That's the New Testament. Do you know what that says in the Greek? Exactly what it says in the English. You know what that says in the Hebrew? Exactly what it says in the English.

Now there are some who might come along and say, “Well those passages couldn't be referring to a man who loves a man and they have a committed relationship.” Well look at the passage. Does the passage say, “well if they have a loving committed relationship then it's okay”? No. It is wrong. That's what the passage is saying and we just need to understand that. The scriptures are our authority. We don't use desire as our authority. We don't use the latest blog or cultural norms or laws even as our authority. We use the scripture as our authority. The Bible makes a clear statement about this subject and we need to be aware of that as we're going forward.

Now there are arguments about this, so if you're really interested in this, I want to throw up a reference for you. [*The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* by Robert Gagnon.] This is a book that goes through each of these passages, addresses the concerns and objections from those who try to massage the passage and shows how they are not adequate interpretations of the passage. This is a great resource. If you want to get more detailed into this I would encourage you to take a look at that.

But there are some people who want to go further and will say this: “Well Jesus didn't really speak to this issue. Well first of all that argument... Jesus didn't speak to wife-beating either. That doesn't mean we can beat our wives, okay? It's an argument from silence. It's a logical fallacy. It's a foolish way of coming to have some kind of a discussion. But I do want to say this. Jesus did speak to this issue and I want to read a verse that talks about it. Because especially as it comes to the whole transgender issue...I saw on Facebook I think there are 57 different genders now. There's the pan, the bio, all these different things that people can call themselves if they're going to separate sex from gender. Let's see what Jesus has to say about this subject, sex and gender. He says – *“Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made*

*them male and female.*” You can’t get away from that. You can’t get away from the fact that it’s male and female. It’s inescapable.

Here’s what I tried to do this week. Someone told me this and I went to do it myself. I went on Amazon, there is a shirt that you can buy called “I am Pantastic.” It is a flag for the movement, the gay and lesbian movement, that I’m pan, that’s my gender. But when you click on to buy the shirt, you go to the next screen and you have to choose whether you’re a man or a woman if you want this shirt. Do you want a man’s shirt or a woman’s? You can’t escape the idea that there is male and female.

It goes on. He says – “*For this reason a man (this isn’t just someone who’s a male and female, he’s a man) will leave his father (that’s male) and mother (that’s female) and be united with his wife (that’s female) and the two will become one flesh.*” Jesus makes a very positive statement about this when He’s talking about the family. So let’s be very clear that those who are trying to misuse scripture are missing the point.

Another very important truth that we want to acknowledge is that God’s grace is big enough to handle sexual challenges. There are some people who just feel hopeless. There are some people who feel so guilty they want to take their lives. I just want to say, if you feel so conflicted about this issue, you just don’t know what to do because you have got desires that don’t fit into your family values or whatever, I’d love to talk to you about it. Let’s get some help. Let’s help you wrestle with these things. Because God’s grace is huge. It’s so big, God forgives us for anything and God empowers us in our lives in some very important ways. God’s grace is big, big enough to handle sexual challenges. That is for heterosexual relationships too. If you have messed yourself up so much you have sexual challenges in your life, God’s grace is so big to help you deal with this.

That’s why that verse when Paul prayed, “God, take this thorn in the flesh from me,” we don’t know what the thorn in the flesh was (it probably wasn’t a sexual thing), but God’s answer is one we can apply to our sexual challenges and that answer is: *My grace is sufficient for you.* God’s grace is sufficient for us to be able to manage these things and it is very powerful.

Well I want to spend a few minutes talking more about the compassion. This is really the emphasis I want, and I’m especially talking about those who are in your family, those you know that are closest. The issue of proximity is important here. Because you only have so much influence based on your proximity. The further a person is away from you in proximity, the harder it is to do these things and have compassion. Let me show you some ideas of what this looks like.

I would suggest you consider this as someone comes to you and says, “Dad (or mom or uncle), I just want you to know I’m gay.” Your response in that moment is really important. Because what you want to say is, “I love you,” and you want to pray for this heart of compassion that Jesus had to be able to care for people in the midst of their struggles. To just be able to strengthen relationship. I love you. Maybe if you’ve got a young person who’s coming out like this and saying these kinds of things, you might say, “Hey, let’s go on that road trip we’ve been wanting to go on,” or “let’s build that project we’ve been trying to build.” Relationship is so important

because relationship allows us to have this context in which we can pass on values. So relationship is going to be strategic. Strengthen relationship as much as you can.

Then listen and affirm. Affirm their honesty. I mean it takes a lot of courage for someone to say that and you might tell them that. “I’d like to hear more about your story.” Obviously people don’t come to this conclusion overnight. “What has brought you to this place where you’re making these statements now or making this decision in your life? I’d like to hear about your story.” If we’re going to walk through someone’s life with them, being able to listen and affirm their boldness and honesty I think is valuable. I think we want to infuse hope into people’s lives.

Do you know how many young people today are struggling with sexual formation during their teen years? Do you know what that percentage is? 100% of young people struggle with sexual formation during the teen years. That’s just part of what they’re doing in their lives. It’s important for us to infuse hope in that process. We know that during the teen years children change and they’re growing. Some of them will grow out of these same sexual attractions, just like they grow out of wanting to be this kind of occupation when they get older and they go to something different, they make changes in their lives. It’s just something they’re going through at the time. Others will struggle with this in some deeper ways. Especially if they start acting upon it and they start moving forward in this it can get really complicated in a person’s life. We want to infuse hope as much as possible.

I would encourage you and I would suggest that you not feed the confusion. If she says, “I’ve changed my name to Bill and I want you to call me a he,” you might say to her, “I’m not going to do that. I’m going to call you by your name and the reason for this is this: I love you and I’m committed to you and I don’t ever want to lie to you. And so I can’t in good conviction say that you’re a he when you’re a she. I can’t do that. That would be lying to you. I will not lie to you, and so I’m not going to participate in that.” It’s very possible that this child will be enraged and upset and so on, but you’re positioning yourself in the midst of this in a way that you can speak truth and love at the same time. You want to be loving.

And sometimes you’re going to set boundaries on your people. I mean if you’ve got a son who says, “Hey look, I’m going to wear a dress tomorrow to school,” you’re going to say, “I don’t think so. You’re not going to do that.” “Well then I’m not going to school.” “Okay fine. Maybe that’s the best thing. Let’s take a road trip for three months and let’s build a relationship together.” I’ll tell you three months on a road trip is a lot better than school when it comes to influences along these lines, and the academics are not going to suffer that much for all the character and love that can be developed in that three-month period of time.

Sometimes we’re going to set boundaries on an adult child and say, “I don’t want you having conversations with your ten-year-old brother about this. It’s just not appropriate.” So there are some times when out of compassion we are going to set boundaries. But the whole message that we have is one that we love you, we want to walk through this.

It is complicated. I’m not trying to make it simple. I know it’s difficult. It’s challenging to know exactly how to handle specific situations. But our goal is to be compassionate and loving and that

is our primary emphasis when we're dealing with people one-on-one while holding onto truth and not giving up the truth that we have.

I want to answer one more question before we're done here today and it's the question can people change? Well let me ask you a question. Do you think a thief could change? Someone who's stealing things, do you think they could change and be a person who even doesn't desire to steal anymore? Do you think a greedy person, someone who wants all stuff for themselves, do you think they can change and become a more generous person?

I want to show you a verse because I believe this will help us in our understanding of God's grace and how big it is. *Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.* But the last statement is so important: *And that is what some of you were.* You used to be; you are not that anymore. Maybe you were a practicing drunkard in the past, but you are no longer a practicing drunkard. Maybe you were a practicing man who's sleeping with men, but you are no longer that in your life. That is what some of you were. This is what God does. He transforms people in their lives. He changes who they are and He changes their lives.

Now sometimes God will even take away the desire, as He does with alcohol. Sometimes a person who is addicted to alcohol will have no further desire to drink. In the same way, God could change a person's sexual desire so they no longer have a desire to go out and commit adultery. They no longer have a desire to go out and look at pornography. God can change that desire. They no longer have the desire to have sex or to engage in sex with someone from the same gender. Okay. God can change that and He does. That's the beautiful transformation of the grace of God. God changes people and He even changes them from the inside-out. He changes their hearts and they have no desire. That's very possible that God may do that.

On the other hand, some people will live with the desire to drink or the desire to steal or the desire to have sex with someone of the same gender or even have a desire to commit adultery or get involved in pornography. Those temptations then need to be managed. And they are managed through the grace of God. God wants to work in any person's life to help them to enjoy the blessings that God has designed. He designed sex, He designed marriage, He designed our hearts, and He knows what's best for us and He knows how we can have fulfillment in life.

Young people, let me make this radical statement just so you get this in perspective. You can go through all of life and never have sex and still be happy. Maybe you don't realize that right now, but that is very true. God has a beautiful plan available to you. So the most important decision that's made here in the midst of sexuality is this: I want to commit myself to Jesus Christ. I want to dedicate myself to serve God 100% in all of my life. Because the real question when it comes to the debate in the public arena is this: Do I view God as sovereign in my life and do I view the Bible as the authority in my life? Those are the real questions. Because if I do, then I'm going to recognize that God has something very good planned for me He calls salvation. It affects every area of my life and it's something I want to walk in, even though I may not participate in things I would really like to do. That's what happens in any of our lives. There are some things we'd

really like to do. We don't do them because we are saved and we enjoy the grace of God in a very powerful way.

I want to again say to you young people, if you in your own heart are experiencing some temptations in this area, whether they are heterosexual desires or homosexual desires, the solution is Jesus Christ. I hope that you'll take time today and ponder these things we've talked about and allow God to speak to you in the midst of that and to understand how God wants to radically take over your life and do some powerful things. That's what He wants to do in you and I trust that the people you come into contact with who are Christians will have that compassion to be able to guide you and support you in the midst of that.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Father, we need a lot of grace in this area. It's a hard and challenging subject to talk about. There is so much push back and antagonism and violence even from the culture towards Christians who try to be compassionate and loving and at the same time they hold onto truth. So Lord, I pray for wisdom on the part of the folks here that are listening that you give us the ability to love people, but at the same time to hold onto truth. Give us your grace, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.