

A Practical Q&A on Transgenderism

The Bible and Transgenderism

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Well, thank you for being here with us this evening. Tonight what I want to do is give some practical advice related to Christians and transgenderism. This is kind of a practical Q&A, question and answer, on transgenderism. How do we as Christians live in a transgender world where everything that we believe and have taught over the past few weeks is viewed as secular heresy and an assault on well-intentioned people as the case could be pejoratively made against us. The overarching advice that I have here is the advice that every Christian should have close to his heart on every issue of life. Again and again and again the answer to transgenderism is to come back Christ, come back to Christ and in different aspects of the person and work of Christ, you will find your answer to the issues that surround life in a transgender world. And we'll work this out as we go through six different questions here tonight but let me, first of all, just address a primary matter kind of by way of application even of that. If transgenderism starts to affect your family, if you start to deal with these issues on a personal level, the best counsel that I could give and this would be the counsel that I would give to people outside of our church, directing them to their leadership as well, if transgenderism begins to affect you or your family, I can only encourage you to seek out the counsel of your elders and to let people in spiritual leadership help walk you through this. This is too much for any one person to try to go through alone and if you are associated with our church, particularly if you are a member of our church, you are not alone in these issues and we will stand with you and we will help you through these things and we will consider it a privilege to do that. Part of the reason that I say about seeking the counsel of your elders is this, is that every situation is so different and so unique that it's impossible to give a message that is comprehensive and is particularly suited for every situation that you might face, and so counsel will be critical for you to seek out and that's kind of an overarching thing; come back to Christ, seek the counsel of your elders and everything that I say for the rest of this time here this evening will fit under the umbrella of those two things.

So let me just walk through some questions very very quickly. Whenever I do a series like this, I've said this many times, there's always a certain sense of sadness when it comes to an end, although I'm going to be glad to move on to other things, there's a certain sense of sadness that I feel knowing the time that has gone into this, the preparation, and just feeling like I'm at a point now where I just hand it over to the Lord and trust him for whatever the results of it may be.

Question 1: how do we trust God in a transgender world? How do we trust God in a transgender world knowing that the LGBTQ Mafia is very much out to squash and silence any kind of Christian voice in the discussion, and knowing that the time is not too far away for some of us where our jobs and livelihoods may be threatened by loyalty to Christ in the policies that come to play in a secular workplace, how do we trust God in a transgender world, how do we live without fear in light of this hostile environment in which we find ourselves? The media, the medical world, educational establishments are making it very difficult to voice any opposition to this agenda in any meaningful platform and I would just remind you of this: come back to Christ. This is not the first time that God's people have been isolated, it's not the first time that God's people have stood against the current of the times and it won't be the last, and what I would encourage you to do is to think beyond transgenderism and remember something that is far more important and far more transcendent, remember divine providence. Part of the reason I taught on divine providence within the past two months was to be able to make this statement now: remember that God is in providential control of absolutely everything that happens. He's in control of the secular mind, the secular direction of events, and he's in control of the particular circumstances of your own life.

And if you would, turn to the book of 2 Peter 2 and I'm just going to try to attach in most of these questions just a single text of Scripture to give you a sense of perspective and a place to hang your thoughts. How do we trust God in a transgender world? 2 Peter 2:7 is speaking about the ability of God to protect his people in times of trouble, and in verse 7 it says,

7 ... if He [meaning God] if God rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

The point here is that if you are here as a genuine Christian this evening, God knows how to protect you. He has the ability to do that. He's been doing it for millennia. He's been doing it throughout the course of the entire history of his people, going all the way back to the opening chapters of the book of Genesis. God knows how to deliver the godly in times of ungodliness and so at a very broad general level, you just come back to that and while you and I may lack wisdom for how to walk through particular circumstances at any given time, there should be this deeper, broader, more foundational conviction in your heart that you are in the hand of God through the saving work of Jesus Christ and as a result of that you will trust him day by day as you walk through whatever may come as a result of these things, because God knows how to rescue his people in times of ungodliness.

We need to be wise. The remainder of this message, the remainder of these five questions are hopefully going to point us in the direction of wisdom, but the overarching thing to start with here this evening is this, is that we do not need to be afraid. We should not be afraid. We do not walk in fear because we trust the ever living One, we trust the living God, we believe that he is intimately involved in the affairs of our life and in the course of world events and that he has made us his friend, that in Christ we have a brother in heaven who is at the right hand of the most high God and he is ever living and interceding for us, and we trust him for that even if we can't see what the road ahead might be.

So how do we trust God in a transgender world? We come back to Christ and we remember that he can be trusted. He has been leading his people since the creation of the world and, beloved, even in the course of world history there have been far more autocratic, ruthless men in power seeking the destruction of God's word, literally burning copies of Scripture, literally seeking the destruction of God's people, literally burning his people at the stake, and God's church has carried on. God's church stands purified and with a legacy of faithfulness from our spiritual forefathers and God is going to do the exact same thing for his people during this time as well. So we are not afraid that this is a threat to the ultimate existence of the church and we understand that we can trust God individually through what will come.

So that's question 1. Question 2, a very important question that I want to spend probably a disproportionate amount of time on, point 2: how do we raise children in a transgender world? How do we raise children in a transgender world? Well, we come back to Christ, that's always our answer to everything, we come back to Christ and we remember this, that in one sense, beloved, in one sense there is nothing new or different for us to do because the instruction to Christian families, to Christian fathers and mothers, is unchanged since Apostle Paul wrote it some 2,000 years ago.

Look at the book of Ephesians 6, Ephesians 6 where in the simplest of language in God's all-sufficient word, we find these words. Ephesians 6:4,

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Our approach to raising children, raising families or helping our children raise their children in a transgender world, is not simply a defensive posture of protecting them from what's out there, but there is this positive dimension that we have an entire Bible to teach them, we have an entire manner of life and wisdom to communicate to them to build them up in Christ, to instruct them in the Gospel of Christ, instruct them in the person of Christ, instruct them in the work of Christ, instruct them in obedience to Christ, there are all kinds of things that we have to tell our children that have nothing to do with transgenderism, and so at that level, we simply keep teaching our children about Christ and the Gospel. We teach them the hymns of the faith that will come to their mind and echo in their minds in times of difficulty and trial. We teach them God's word. We show them faithfulness to Christ. Here's one for you, you lead your family as you guys are

doing as shown by your presence here this evening, you lead your family and you model as an example being faithful to a local church. The simplicity of this is quite encouraging and to communicate to your child the truth of Christ, the truth of the Gospel, and simple faithfulness to church in a week to week consistency of being with God's people and serving within a local church puts very high guardrails around their lives and directs them in the path in which they should go. We should never underestimate that even though there's not a lot of bells and whistles necessarily that go with that kind of faithfulness. It's just the quiet, steady consistency of living a daily life of faithfulness to Christ that helps communicate this truth to your children.

Now with that said and on that positive way, now looking more at how to defend them and to help them through the transgender lies that are permeating our society so much, need I say that it is going to be important for you to monitor what they are reading, what they are exposed to in the media, and to remember that television and smart phones and internet access are not actually necessary for productive childhood development? I know that's a shocking countercultural thought but we've been doing this for millennia, raising families without those things and so apparently it's possible to do that and it's going to be important for you to be all the more aware of it because it's so embedded in what's being communicated in our culture. To raise children in a transgender world, I believe, is going to take even a higher level of commitment and involvement from parents than what's even been necessary 10 or 20 years ago because it is just so prevalent in what they're going to see and read. So you need to be aware of what's going into their minds.

Now let me just go further into controversial things and get myself in all kinds of trouble with what I'm about to say, not necessarily from you but from anyone who might hear it outside the walls of our church. Let me just say this and just be what I think is obvious even if it's completely incorrect politically. I would encourage you to beware of relatives who are in the homosexual, transgender lifestyle. You need to take seriously that they are living in open rebellion against God and as a result of that, that influence is going to affect the way that they interact with your children and they will groom your children over the course of time if you are not careful. So I encourage you to defend your children from the violation of their minds even of close relatives, close biological relatives, defend your children from the violation of their minds as much as you would protect them from the violation of their very bodies, and to realize that the influence that can come from those kinds of relationships could be very detrimental and counter to what you're doing and be happening right under your nose. Some of you know this by personal experience from your circle of relationships and you know that I'm speaking the truth, and so I would encourage you to watch that, to be aware of that, and to make no apologies for protecting your children from those that are in the circle of your broader family who might be seeking to lead them astray.

Now this is all just kind of bullet point stuff, you know, in the course of 55 minutes here, that's about all I can do is just throw darts against the wall and hope that some of them stick in your mind and you can come back to it again later. Along with that and kind of going along with the media comments, I just encourage you to be very diligent to know what your children are being taught, who is teaching your children, and what materials

are being used to teach your children and to not hesitate from boldly removing them from activities that would promote a transgender worldview. For some, I'm not laying down a rule here that bears no exceptions, but we need to be mindful as we move into future years that public schools may cease to be a viable option for Christian parents and we just need to be aware of that and to be aware of the fact that the homosexual community is promoting policies that intentionally hide information about transgenderism from parents so schools will hide information from their parents if the homosexual lobby has their way with school privacy policies that they are promoting, and we just have to be aware of that and to be aware that school administrators may not be trying to protect your interests as much as they are the so-called privacy of your children. Parents of preschool children should begin now. Those of you maybe that are newly married and you don't even have children yet, I would encourage you to start now to discover alternative schooling options, whether it's private schools, Christian schools, homeschooling. Be aware of other things. One of the primary duties that you have if you're going to bring children into the world as a Christian is, one of your highest priorities is not your secular success, not your financial well-being, but to protect those little lambs that God has given to you and to protect them and to take measures and to give your effort to protect them so that they are insulated from this ungodly demonic worldview.

Now again, those are kind of negative preventative things. I want to suggest to you also that there are ways for you to do with your children in private as you're raising them over the course of time that can help protect them from gender identity issues. Without referring to transgenderism specifically, you can teach them things like this, that God made boys and girls, and God makes boys to be boys and makes girls to be girls, and one of the things that you can encourage them with is just your loving statements over time that tell them, "I am so glad that God made you to be my boy, that God made you a little girl. I'm so glad that you're a little girl." And you reinforce and you lay a foundation in those early formative days of their mind that they are a boy, that they are a girl because that's the way that God made them, and that you are very glad that God did that and that God gave that child, "Gave you, my son, gave you, my daughter, to my family. I'm so happy about that." And you give them a sense of security and identity from the very start that can help guard them from the counter influences that may come later in life.

Now with that said, there's so much. I told you, I'm leaving out more than I'm saying, but at the same time I would encourage parents along this line, I would encourage you not to overreact if your young boy wants to play with dolls for a time, or if your little girl likes to climb trees or seems to be a bit of a tomboy. It's going to be so important for us not to impose adult interpretations on those innocent acts of childhood development, and to not overreact to these things, that this is just part of natural childhood development and this isn't something that we need to make a big deal about or to panic over.

I have a personal example about this that I was not sure if I would say this, but why not? Personal story here, okay? Everybody can just kind of breathe a breath of relaxation here. As I may have told you in the past, the Green family from which I come by generations are mechanics. My grandfather was a mechanic in Comiskey, Indiana, and he had his own car shop back in the, I don't know, the thirties and forties, and automobiles were still

relatively new. My dad was a mechanic. He was a service manager for Chevrolet. He was an airplane mechanic. My brother was a mechanic. My uncle and my cousins are mechanics and they're all mechanically inclined, and that became kind of a defining feature of masculinity in the Green family is that you were really good with cars and stuff like that. This is how manhood was defined.

Well, you can imagine the shock and horror that my father felt when I as a three or four or five-year-old kid announced that what I really wanted for Christmas – this is funny – was a Penny Brite doll. Now you may not know what Penny Brite is, I'm not sure that they're still on the market but just kind of consider it the modest version of a Barbie doll and you can go on eBay and you can still find them and all of that, and that's what I wanted to play with. And my dad asked my mother, she was just telling me this recently, I was asking her questions about this, my dad asked my mother and said, "Are you really going to get that for him?" And she said, "Well, sure if that's what he wants, that's exactly what I'm going to get for him." And I played with that doll for a while, it was probably just a couple of days, right? It was longer than that, but my mom was way way ahead of her time in just understanding that this wasn't that big of a deal.

So that happened and then it went on, it went on that, you know, I never developed the mechanical ability that has always marked generations of the Green and now my son has it also. My son is mechanically inclined. You know, I feel like one untimely born here. I don't know where I came from in the line of this family, but I was a reader and I did different things and I used my mind and I wasn't interested in working with my hands like all of our family was at all. The point being is that you need to be careful – this is a very important point – you need to be careful about defining what boyhood and manhood mean simply according to your limited family experience. Boys and girls have different interests without trying to be, wanting to be the opposite sex. And so we just need to be aware of this and to not overreact if a child develops interests that are different from ours, if they're not saying, "I want to be the opposite sex, I'm trying to be the opposite sex," then, you know, let's just go with the flow and raise them and shape them over time and trust the Lord to honor our efforts to be Christian parents here. While we want to be cautious about the worldly influences, we don't want to overreact to what's happening within our own family and to just love those children over time and trust the Lord to work it out, and there's a lot more that could be said but I'll leave it at that. Just remember this: resist the temptation to impose adult interpretations on innocent childhood development. That's very important while you're protecting them in these other ways, but the overarching advice here in terms of answering the question how do we raise children in a transgender world, we come back to Christ. We teach them Christ. We love Christ before them. We elevate Christ in their eyes. We teach them the word of Christ and we lead them to Christ again and again and again. We praise Christ to our children so that they develop a Christ-centered heart that we trust and hope and pray that one day the Lord would be pleased to bring and to use as a context to impart new life to them that they might be saved.

So those are my thoughts about raising children in a transgender world. Point 3: how do we respond to transgender people? How do we respond to transgender people? Well, we

start with this premise: we come back to Christ. Do you see the theme here? Do you see the recurring issues here? We start with this premise, we come back to Christ and we realize something very very important: loyalty to Christ may cost us personal relationships and if it does, that's okay because Christ told us to expect this in advance. Look at Matthew 10, and when I say he told us to expect this in advance, the "this" is that personal loyalty to him may cost us personal relationships. It's a broader point than living in a transgender world.

Matthew 10:34, Jesus said this to his disciples,

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."

Christ is a dividing line that cuts through families. Many of you, if not most of you, know this by personal experience, that relationships have been strained because of your commitment to Christ and sometimes even your doctrinal commitments within the framework of a broader biblical Christianity. Well, in verse 37 Jesus says,

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

So we realize that ever and always the first priority of our heart is vertical to Christ and being loyal to him and loyal to his truth. It is not worth the approval of the world, it's not worth the approval of a family member for even a moment of disloyalty to Christ. We are loyal to Christ and we recognize in advance, we settle it in our minds now before the flareup comes that loyalty to Christ is more important to us than any human relationship ever could be. That is simply part of being a Christian, beloved. I'm not saying anything that is the biblically radical or biblically controversial here. You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. That's the first and greatest commandment and so we start from that premise.

So what do we do, then, in light of that if a friend or a loved one comes out as transgender to us? Well, I would make a couple of suggestions here. This is kind of like an extended pastoral counsel session together here. I'd encourage you, first of all, to try to control your initial emotions and reactions and interact with them. You know, "When did you first start feeling this way? Have you spoken to anyone else? What did they say?" And just kind of draw out what they have to say to you. You know, you're not compromising anything by simply hearing what they have to say but it's obviously going to progress beyond that, and when they ask you to affirm them, when they ask you to use their new identity, to call them by the opposite sex, to use other pronouns than what you've always done, beloved, here's where the rubber meets the road. At that point in the relationship in the discussion, understand that that is the point where you need to hold to truth above the relationship, and in love you tell them that you do not accept the transgender worldview. You can give them this whole series of messages to help explain

that. You can ask them to listen to it before they go any further. You tell them there's so much more than they may realize about what they are saying.

Now I realize that if they're coming out at that point, they very well may not be receptive, and that they may tell you that you have to choose between your religion and your relationship with them and, you know, this could be a son or daughter, this could be a sibling, this could be a parent, for crying out loud, the way these things go. So I realize that we're talking at the most intimate level of the closest possible relationships and your heart is breaking throughout it all. That's why it's so important that we've talked about this ahead of time before this comes up so that you've thought through what the issues are and you have a pattern by which to respond. If, and I'm going to be very very strong about this, if someone transgender tells you that you have to choose to either affirm them or lose the relationship, here's my encouragement to you, first of all, recognize that for the outright unvarnished manipulation that it is. This is pure manipulation that is going on in a conversation like that. I would encourage you to find words, if not in that conversation maybe in a subsequent note or a later conversation, but at some point find the opportunity to tell them that they need to repent of this, they need to repent of the transgenderism and they need to repent of the manipulation and caution them that they are moving into a realm that is not safe for them. We've seen in past messages that the suicide rates are exponentially higher in the transgender world than they are among the general population. We need to warn them about this and then tell them what is the unvarnished truth in your relationship with them. If they break off the relationship, make clear to them that it is not you that is walking away, it is not you rejecting them. They are the ones who are ending the existing relationship. They are the ones that are injecting change into the realm of your prior love and closeness, and to not allow them and to not accept the burden of guilt that they are trying to put on you in making that kind of threat. This is no relationship anyway, right? If a relationship is simply you bowing down to the threats that someone else makes to you, this is not a relationship anyway. And based on the prior five messages that we've preached here, you should have a solid understanding of why loyalty to Christ and loyalty to the truth disallows you from embracing and endorsing the transgender life and the transgender ideology. We just have to be very strong and very firm on. We have seen in the news just within the past day that any kind of corporate allegiance to prior Christian principles is subject to negotiation when the dollars get to be big enough, and it's going to be up to common people like you and me, it's going to be up to churches that are trying to be biblically faithful to hold the line on this, and we are not going to have, we should not count on any support from anyone outside the realm of true Christianity as we do.

So our convictions are going to be important here. As we do that, we remember Christ and we come back to Christ and we believe and we accept and we want his approval more than anybody else or anything else in the world. We want Christ to greet us when we enter into his presence and say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master." I personally want to come before Christ recognizing that the whole of my life and ministry is pockmarked with great imperfections but that there was a spirit of willing faithfulness and a refusal to accept compromise where matters of truth were plainly in play. Those are the kinds of things I believe that strengthen your

conscience enough to go through the emotional turmoil of this kind of conflict as you are dealing with transgender people.

So we come back to Christ. Fourthly, we ask this question: how do we help the families of transgender people? How do we help the families of transgender people? I mean, this whole thing is just enormously complex because there are just so many different dimensions to the issue. There's the relationship with the transgender person themselves. There is the understanding of the ideologies that we've looked at in recent weeks. There are the biblical issues. There's the cultural issue. There's issues, you know, how is this going to maybe affect my job? And now, you know, and we just realize that there are just so many complexities to it, that's why I've spent six messages talking about it. I was trying to sort these things through one step at a time.

Now, how do we help the families of transgender people and here we enter into that where my pastoral affections and compassions are especially kindled, when I talk about families of transgender people, the families that are watching their loved ones enter into this world, enter into this lifestyle, they dislike it but all of the doctors are putting pressure on them to endorse it, the media pressures them, other people in their family pressure it, and they feel like they're going crazy, they feel like they're the ones that are insane because they're standing alone against the tide of this as they're watching their loved ones become somebody that they were never born to be. So you may have opportunity to speak to people like that who have had loved ones leave for the world of transgenderism, well, I would encourage you, first of all, to tell them that they are not crazy for not going along with it, to tell them the things that we've talked about here at Truth Community Church, that God made everyone in the world either a man or a woman, and to reassure them that it's not their responsibility to accept and endorse someone else who is rejecting what God made them to be, and to just simply be a strength and encouragement to them, and this will probably take a good bit of time.

As you are dealing with that and as you are talking with that, to sympathize with them, to weep with them, and in that I would take you to a passage in Romans 9, if you will, and to affirm the grief and the sorrow that they feel and in Romans 9:1, this is obviously not a transgender passage, but to help them see that in Scripture we have examples of godly people grieving deeply over the way that others are rejecting Christ. Paul says about the Jews in Romans 9:1, he says,

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

And if I had opportunity to sit down with a family like this, I would take them to this passage and say, "You see? We have loved ones who break our hearts and even the Apostle Paul knew what that was like, that there is great sorrow and unceasing grief in his heart"; to remind them that Jesus himself wept over Jerusalem and their rejection of

their King, and that the heart of a godly person knows what it's like to grieve when they watch their loved ones rebel against God and turn away from him. It is grievous to watch people reject their Creator. It is grievous when people reject Christ and we want to come alongside and be a friend of those who may not have many other friends in this situation.

Now I've said about all I know that can get you into trouble, so why stop now, right? It is often the nature of the LGBTQ community to act like a cult and to separate and isolate people from those who have always loved them. This is often the way that it is done and relationships are broken off for the sake of pursuing this lifestyle. And I would tell these dear families that, "Look, you may not be able to prevent it and to encourage them to lean on Christ and to look to Christ, to look to the word of God, to look to the One who said, 'Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.'" And to point them to Christ as the only one who can be their loyal, omnipotent, sufficient friend in this time. You can offer this series on transgenderism to them if they'll take it, but preeminently point them to Christ and be a sympathetic friend to them.

One other little thing that I'll mention here, again the fingers of this just go in so many different directions, let me just mention a book to you that I've alluded to in the past. There is a book written by an author whose father left her for the transgender lifestyle when she was a very young child. The woman's name, the author's name is Denise Shick, s-h-i-c-k. She has written a children's book that is age-appropriate. I've gone through it, I've read it myself. It's age-appropriate to help children think through these issues and the title of the book, it's very sad that this is even necessary and a thing in our world, but the title of the book is "When Daddy Leaves To Be A Girl." When daddy leaves to be a girl. For families who are dealing with this, this is a resource that might be helpful to help young children process that kind of change in their family life. Look, we're dealing with raw reality here. We're dealing with the way these things play out and what we want to do, what we're trying to do here in this series is to just meet the challenges head on and directly and compassionately as we possibly can.

So we have answered four questions so far. How do we trust God in a transgender world? How do we raise children in a transgender world? How do we respond to transgender people? And how do we help the families of transgender people? Wow, that's a lot. Let's answer a fifth question, shall we? How do we respond to the pressure of a transgender world? How do we respond to the pressure of a transgender world? What do we do when transgender people tell us to use different names than those by which we have known them? To use different pronouns than we have ever called them? And to just insist on and to tell us that these are the words that you must use to address me now? And increasingly they are able to say these things with legislative support and penalties attached to the way that you respond. Well, this is a difficult question. I have heard different Christians give different answers to the question. This is my opinion and the reasons for it. Generally speaking, we want to love these people, we want to communicate the love of Christ to them but, beloved, if Scripture teaches us anything, it is that we must speak the truth in love, that truth is not sacrificed on the altar of so-called love. Love must be based on the truth and as I see it, the most important thing that we can do is to help them see that much more than their personal identity is at stake in this discussion; that God is the one who

assigns sex in the mother's womb, and that nothing that we say to each other changes that reality. Nothing we do to our bodies, none of the hormones that we take, putting on dresses when we have male anatomy, none of that changes the reality of what God made us out to be. So I think that we say, "I will treat you with love and respect but I cannot accept your desire to put words in my mouth, my friend. My conscience answers to a higher authority than that."

Now some people, some Christian writers in some of the books that I read about this as they are dealing with their Q&A's about it, some people say that you should play along and honor their wishes and call them by the name that they want to be called by and use the pronouns that they ask. Look, I'm not going to presume to define it for every person in every situation. Here we're speaking in the realm of matters that go beyond the four corners of Scripture, but for me personally, I want to be the guy that was telling them truth all along. If down the road they have a change of heart about this, if down the road the Spirit of God works repentance in their hearts, if down the road they have a different perspective on it, I don't want to be in a position where I have to apologize for having agreed with that which they are now rejecting themselves because then you've compromised, you've compromised your testimony, in my opinion, you've compromised your testimony for the sake of momentary false harmony and hidden the truth in the process. So however you personally work out the application of this, I think that somewhere at the core of your response to those kinds of demands is somehow we have to communicate to people that, "I am not accepting the transgender worldview and I don't recognize you as the opposite sex of that into which you were born." However that plays out from there, however you communicate that, I think that somewhere that needs to be in the mix of how we respond and not just give them the impression that this is okay, that there's no problem here. And as I hope to do in two or three weeks on a Sunday, to urge them to come to Christ and rather than finding their identity in their personal feelings inside about who they are, to find their identity in the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to him for salvation and find their identity in him and their meaning in life and who they are, to find it through repentance of sin and faith in Christ and to be identified with him in his life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension on high, and to tell them this is a far better identity than anything you could create in the contours of your own mind.

Now I realize that in saying these things and one of the things that made me cautious and to hesitate as I entered into this series kind of counting the cost of a series like this and saying these things that I felt like needed to be said, I realize that faithfulness to Christ for some of you either hearing this in this room or on subsequent media, I realize that faithfulness to Christ in this realm may come at a personal cost of relationships and for some even a threat to their careers and employment, and that's especially true in Canada and Britain and other places that are further down the road even than America is on this. The province of British Columbia is just a cesspool of despair in the way that they have given themselves over to these things. And I realize that there are life consequences that are at stake in what we are saying here this evening. Well, let me just encourage you as we think about those things what I've been saying throughout this message, to come back to Christ. To never view these things, to never view the situations, the people or the

consequences of it, never view them apart from Christ. Come back to Christ again and again and again.

Now how would that apply to responding to the pressure of a transgender world? Look at the Gospel of John 15, if you would. John 15:18. Jesus told his disciples,

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

Look, Christ was crucified. Let me say that again: Christ was crucified by a world that hated him. If we are followers of his, it should not surprise us that some kind of lesser persecution comes to us, and the mere fact that we are threatened with persecution is not a reason or an excuse to change things, to distort the truth, to hide the truth in order to avoid it. This is part and parcel of what it means to be a Christian, that sometimes there is a price to be paid for following Christ and sometimes the price in the providence and the design of God for your life, is very high. The price is not how we determine whether we will be faithful or not, we must recognize the truth and be loyal to the truth and let the consequences of that fall where they may.

And Jesus promised a particular blessing on those who suffer for his sake. Listen as I read the familiar passage from Matthew 5:10 where Jesus said to his disciples,

10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The idea is theirs and theirs alone. It's only people that suffer that are somehow persecuted for the sake of righteousness who belong to the kingdom of heaven. And he goes on to say in verse 11,

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

If it comes to one of us to suffer loss for the sake of loyalty to Christ in this realm, Jesus would say, "You're blessed to be persecuted for the sake of My name," because your reward in heaven is great and we're not living for what happens in this life, we're living and our eyes are set on the world to come. So we come back to Christ and loyalty to Christ makes us willing to pay the price. If it happens to someone in our church, we need to be committed in advance to be there for them to support them through it, whatever that means.

Final question, question 6 here: how should the church respond to a transgender world? Well, I'm about to state some pretty important policy for Truth Community Church and this is the direction of our church and gives you a sense of how seriously we take these matters. Within the walls of Truth Community Church I trust our position is clear. We believe, we teach that transgender ideology is opposed to the truth and cannot be reconciled with the truth; that Christianity, biblical truth and transgender ideology are two mutually exclusive realms. That has consequences. If a transgender person came into our church, we would welcome them to this extent, we would welcome them to come and learn and to sit under the teaching and the sound of the Gospel, but we would not affirm them in their transgender identity. In that sense, it's no different than any other kind of sinner that comes into the room, whether it's a drunk or whether it's an adulterer or a liar or a thief, if they come in to hear the teaching of God's word and they sit in a respectful way, then we welcome them and we would pray that God would use his word in their life to perhaps convert them and to cause them to be born again. We make the Gospel the priority. We give them our time as we are able to do so, but practicing transgender people are not eligible for membership. They would not be recognized as Christians in any way, shape or form no matter what their verbal profession might be. The lines there are clear.

Beyond that and I'm so grateful to the Lord that we're able to say these things and as a friend told me last night, to plant a flag on these issues in advance, furthermore we would say in advance – and we all need to hear this – that members of Truth Community Church cannot defend transgender identity to others, they cannot affirm transgender identity in others especially in family members. This is not an option. This is not an option to affirm and defend it. It's one thing to love the person, to try to walk through these issues, to suffer under the weight of it. That's one thing. To affirm it and to defend it and to recognize their transgender identity, that's a different realm and that's what's not allowed. Transgenderism is an assault on the truth and I say it clearly even though I say it with compassion, beloved, that members who would affirm transgender identity in the way that I have been describing would be subject to church discipline. It is just as immoral to betray the truth as it is to betray a spouse in adultery and we have made very clear our reasons for our positions on transgenderism and this is the position of our church on these matters. This is part of us defending truth in a transgender age and responding to a transgender world. So to the best of my knowledge there are none of those issues in our congregation right now, so this isn't aimed at anyone that's dealing with anything in their immediate families. We're just stating principles here so that there is an awareness in our church life about what is accepted and what is not.

So those are our practical Q&A on transgenderism. Let me just close by saying this. This message tonight, this Q&A, has necessarily had somewhat of a defensive posture in terms of defending ourselves from possible intrusions of transgenderism upon our teaching, upon our church life, and upon our personal lives. It's necessarily had a defensive posture, but remember that the whole message throughout here has been framed in remembering Christ and remembering who he is; that we trust him and therefore we are not afraid, we trust him and want to obey him and therefore we are willing to uphold truth even if it is unpopular, and we want to be faithful and loyal to the truth even if it comes at a personal cost to us. That is not a defensive reactive posture, this is the positive, highest, noblest

aspect of being a Christian is our opportunity, this is just one application of the greater reality that a Christian has to be loyal to Christ in response to his saving grace in our lives. And because we are so grateful that he's redeemed us from our sins, we're so grateful that he gave his life on the cross to save us from the eternal torments of hell, and that he suffered those in our stead and in our place, we are so grateful to him for that that any kind of cost that living for him in this life may bring is inconsequential by comparison, and our love for Christ is what motivates us to uphold his truth, our love for Christ is what motivates us not to accept transgender ideology and deceive people into thinking that they're okay when they're not, and our love for Christ calls us to support one another and to proclaim the Gospel in this very dark and dying world.

As I said, on a coming Sunday I hope to preach a message of hope with particular application for transgender people one final time. In a very Gospel-oriented evangelistic way, we will come back to this issue in order to present Christ to people for one final time on this subject. For now let me just thank you. You have done what I asked you to do from the very start, you have stayed with me through this very long and difficult and heavy series. I'm grateful to you for that. I'm grateful to the Lord for however he uses this and we just commit it into his hands now having done what we think is our duty.

Let's pray.

Father, we do humble ourselves here before You. We ask You for Your wisdom and Your protection as we go forward and supremely, Father we come back to Christ. We thank You that He is with us always even to the end of the age, and we corporately proclaim to You and to one another that we trust You in this world in which we live. Throughout the ages, O God, You have protected Your people from difficulties, from assaults, from persecutions, You've preserved them through them sometimes letting them spill their blood for the sake of Christ, other times delivering them from the worldly danger, but whatever the case may be, Father, we know that we are in Your hands. We love to be there and we know that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. So Father, from that position of strength, security and serenity, we commit all of these things to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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