



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

“A Christian Response to AIDS, Part I”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we are indeed grateful to Thee for the Scriptures, for the ways in which the wisdom of God is manifested in them. And Lord, we must confess our failure to follow them and our failure to truly appreciate that in them we have the word of God which is infallible and sure to come to pass as it has been written through the instrumentalities of the Psalmists, the prophets, the apostles and some others. We praise Thee and thank Thee for the gift of the word; we pray that by Thy grace we may be more obedient to its instructions, relying upon the help of the Holy Spirit in all of the affairs of our lives. We ask Thy blessing upon us as we consider the way in which we should respond to some of the crises that are about us in our day. We ask Lord especially that Thou would be with each one of us as we think over these things together in this hour. For Jesus' Sake. Amen.

[Message] We're going to look together for the next two Wednesday nights at least into the subject of a Christian response to AIDS. And I'd like to begin tonight by reading a passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 9 through verse 11, a passage that I'll refer to later on in the message. So 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9 through verse 11, and the apostle has written to the Corinthians,

“Or, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

The importance of the subject of AIDS is illustrated in the small way by the fact that when we announce a topic on the word of God we have a small audience, when we announce a topic like the subject of AIDS, we have all of the rest of you that come out. [Laughter] And so it's obvious just from that fact that there's a great deal of interest in the problem of AIDS, a lethal disease that is crippling the body's immune system against illnesses such as pneumonia and meningitis and kaposi sarcoma, a virus with symptoms such as persistent cough, fever, breathing difficulty, blotches and bumps on the skin, even brain damage. Called in Africa because so many people have been affected by AIDS and because the symptoms are so common, “the slims.” In fact, those who are affected by it look like those who have come from some of the death chambers of World War II like Dachau. Transmitted by sexual relationship with infected persons, drug needles, even birth, so the disease is not simply a disease, though it may have originated in that way, associated with homosexuals.

Twenty-nine thousand Americans had it at the end of 1986, sixty-five percent of which were homosexual or bi-sexual. By nineteen ninety-one it has been estimated by the center for disease control that two hundred and seventy thousand will have it and one hundred and seventy-nine thousand will be dead. And the center also contends that perhaps as many as one and a half million now carry the disease in the United States. The only safe sex has become hetero sexual monogamy. That's the type of sex recommended by God. And we are seeing of course in our day that when we think about safe sex, the teaching of the word of God has again come to the fore and for that at least we can be thankful.

In its early days, many made witty comments concerning it. It was called Jerry Falwell's revenge. Today, the gay society is no longer gay and we don't make jokes like that any more -- at least we ought not make jokes like that any more -- because there are innocent people, as we define the term innocent, who have been infected by the disease. Even infants are affected with AIDS through birth. Society's responses to it have been very interesting. And I know that my response in the beginning would not be something I would want to be proud about, because I naturally thought this is simply a homosexual plague.

It has become a political issue, and some regard it as simply that because in their minds it concerns medical questions such as the discovery through research of a vaccine that will effectively counter it like other diseases that we have had at one time or another. It's a matter of concern because of the governmental expense for victims of AIDS to which we all may be exposed. And even the problems of the insurance companies which must be tremendously significant, have become political issues, will become even more so far as I can see political issues in the near future.

Others have said it's simply a disease; it's to be handled just like the Black Death or small pox or typhus or polio, some of the killer illnesses of the past. So therefore we should look at it simply as that. And then there have been a significant number of people, some of them evangelical Christians and some with only a faint acquaintance with evangelicalism who simply said it's the judgment of God upon homosexuals. I'll ultimately try to make the point that that's part of the answer, but it's much more complex I think than simply that. This particular analysis has been rejected by the masses of people as insensitive, for a person to say something like that obviously indicates he doesn't have very much of what the world regards as love or compassion. Or he manifests himself in the society about us as arrogantly self righteous, or simply, “The judgment of God? Who believes in the judgment of God anymore? There is no such thing as the judgment of God, that's simply a folk myth that people used to believe in, but no one believes anymore that God actually intervenes in our society. There is no such thing as a vengeful deity,” which is the idea that

people generally have about God when he is said to be a God who judges. So these are some of the ways in which our society has responded.

There is as I mentioned one reason to rejoice, and that is the demolition of the sexual revolution which for a decade or so had tried to tell us with loud placardings of freedom from Victorianism and freedom from Puritanism and that we could do generally what we wanted to do. And for that of course we can be thankful, because now we know that that is not true. And furthermore, we can thank God for the fact that the gay ‘80s, as it has been called, has also been demolished. One of the significant things is that the gays who are not gay but nevertheless who still go by that term, are some who have responded to the education more than some of those who are not. They are afraid, and rightly so, they’re reeling.

Charles Colson made a very interesting point, and that’s the point I think to which I alluded when I mentioned the fact that we have a large number in the audience tonight when ordinarily for a meeting like this we don’t have that many. But Mr. Colson made a very good point. I thought it was very significant. He said, “There is a painful irony in the fact that it took AIDS to accomplish what no amount of pulpit pounding could do. People have a greater fear of disease than of God’s judgment.” Now that’s a striking thing, that people actually in our society, with the word of God in practically everyone’s home in this western world, can be more fearful of disease than they can of the judgment of God. I appreciate that comment by Mr. Colson who has made some very significant comments over the past at least five years.

Now tonight and next Wednesday night what I’d like to do if the Lord gives me the time to do it, I’d like to deal with these three points. First of all, are homosexual partnerships biblical? And what I’d like to do because I know many of you would say well we don’t need to do that because we know a half a dozen texts in the Bible that say that they are not biblical, so why involve ourselves in it? The reason I want to do this is because many of us, I’m sure are not acquainted with some of the sophisticated arguments that have been advanced by some thinking people even, to support the idea that homosexuality is a legitimate style of life. We’ll talk more about the details of it, but it is possible

to defend this in way that would be confusing for the general evangelical and difficult to counter so far as many of us are concerned, because we haven't even bothered to discover the reasons why homosexuality is presented as something like a third sex by the homosexual populous. So I will try to deal tonight with are homosexual partnerships biblical? And we'll look at some specific texts and see what is being said about these texts by those who are homosexual and then some of the arguments that have been brought forward to support the legitimacy of homosexuality. And then second, and incidentally, I think that might be of some help to us when we discuss this matter with others, perhaps even homosexual friends that you have.

Second, is AIDS the judgment of God? And we'll try to deal with that and the way in which it can be called the judgment of God. Is it called the judgment of God personally, societally, or in what sense is it legitimate if it's legitimate to speak of AIDS as the judgment of God?

And finally, we'll spend the remaining time next Wednesday night after we deal with that topic on a Christian response to this epidemic in the light of what we've said these two nights.

And so tonight, are homosexual partnerships biblical? Now the question at stake is simply this, “Are homosexual partnerships and heterosexual marriages or partnerships if you want to use the same word to show the claim for parallel thinking on the part of the homosexuals. Are homosexual partnerships and heterosexual marriages two equally valid alternatives, thus equally loving relationships, equally tender and mature relationships and equally enduring relationships if we speak particularly of homosexual relationships that do endure for some period of time?”

And now we want to turn to some of the relevant biblical affirmations that we must keep before us as we think about this. First of all, as a relevant biblical affirmation, I won't try to defend these, because I think you will accept them the moment that I state them. When we look at this, we have to remember that we are all human beings or persons. In other words, the homosexual is a human being, a human person, just as you and I are human beings and human persons. So we'll keep that before us. They're not separate from humanity in that sense. And secondly, we are all sexual beings. Now we may have a different orientation, some of us are male, some of us are

females, and there are some who claim to have a third orientation of homosexuality. But we at least can agree that we are all human beings and we all are sexual beings. And thirdly, and I think this is something that we evangelical believers need to keep in mind to, we are all sinners. In other words, we're sinners and homosexuals and lesbians are sinners with us as sexual human beings. In fact, to put it very simply, all sexual deviation is sinful deviation, and the deviation of persons who are sinners. I don't think there's anyone, excluding our Lord who could affectively say, "I have never had a lustful thought." Now Jimmy Carter popularized that, but I think nevertheless, in spite of the fact that he was funny, in saying it, there is certainly a truth expressed in what he said, and particularly in the words of our Lord which suggest that this is something which may all have shared in and probably have.

Now probably, some of us have not been exposed to one or two terms that we must distinguish when we talk about homosexuality. We must distinguish between homosexual orientation or what is called by some who speak more technically of this, as inversion, as over against homosexual perversion, or homosexual practices. Inversion is a term that is often used of those who have homosexual natures, or homosexual desires but who have not practiced homosexual acts. And that is called homosexual inversion, an invert as over against a pervert. A pervert being a person who has such desires and such orientation but has also practiced homosexual acts occasionally that will come up in the course of what I want to say to you.

Now let's turn to assuming that we agree generally on these biblical affirmations, let's turn to the relevant biblical texts. For some of you who may want to do some study in this question, there is a book that was written some years ago by Derrick Sherwin Bailey called *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*. He was the first professing Christian theologian to reevaluate the traditional Christian understanding concerning homosexuality. The passages that we are looking at are about five and we'll turn to the first one now, and so if you have your Bibles turn to Genesis chapter 19 verse 1 through verse 13. Genesis 19 verse 1 through verse 13 you'll recognize as a chapter that has to do with the wickedness and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And I'll read through some

of the verses of the chapter just to recall to your minds the things that Moses has written. The 19th chapter begins with now the two angels, these are the two mentioned in the preceding chapter who had come with the Lord God to talk with Abraham and Sarah,

“The two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, "Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." They said however, "No, but we shall spend the night in the square." (And incidentally, this particular event is repeated almost as a copy of it in Judges 19, we won't look at it, it's very similar.) Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them. (Now that's a translation that is an interpretation, and there's nothing wrong with that, providing that's the correct interpretation. But as you can tell from your marginal readings, and I notice that this particular version here does not even have that. This is the word that means in most of its occurrences in the Old Testament, simply to know, the verb Yada which means to know. But here, and I think rightly in this instance, but this is the point of debate,) bring them out to us that we may have relations with them. But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, and said, Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof. But they said, Stand aside. Furthermore, they said, this one came in as an alien, (That is to sojourn) and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them. So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house

with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the gateway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway. Then the men said to Lot, Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

Now the Lord had already said that in chapter 18 and verse 20, "the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great and their sin is exceedingly grave." And in verse 14, "Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city. But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting." What was the sin of Sodom? Now no doubt, you've heard someone in your Christian experience, if you've been exposed to expository ministry, or if you've simply read the Bible and looked at marginal notes such as we have here, you've heard someone or you've seen the interpretation that this is a reference to, to know in the sense of physical knowledge and therefore this chapter has to do with homosexuality. These men wanted to have homosexual relationships with the men who had come to visit Lot.

Mr. Bailey objects to that for these reasons, he says the word to know occurs in the Old Testament almost a thousand times, only ten times does it refer to sexual knowledge. What about the other nine hundred and forty-three times or so in which it doesn't mean that? So isn't it abandonment of good hermeneutical practice to accept a meaning which occurs about ten times out of roughly a thousand occurrences in the Old Testament and say it means that here? So you naturally would want to say, well what was the sin here? And so Mr. Bailey and others have suggested that Lot was guilty of a breach of local hospitality that he had welcomed unexamined strangers who might even be spies and for this reason they were concerned. Furthermore, there's more sense to this than you might think, you might smile and laugh, but I confess that's the way I felt about it when I first came and considered this particular exposition, Isaiah refers to Sodom and

he refers to the sin of Sodom as being hypocrisy and social injustice. Jeremiah refers to Sodom and he refers to the sin as being adultery, or to the sin of Sodom as being adultery. Ezekiel refers to it and he refers to it as arrogance and greed. Now furthermore in the New Testament we have some interesting statements made by our Lord. In Matthew chapter 10 and I think it's verse 15, we read these words from him, “Truly I say to you it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city.” That is the city that will not accept the apostles when they come. That's interesting isn't it? In other words, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is not nearly as great as the sin of Dallas if it turns against the messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we're inclined to think that if that's homosexuality, well it's not quite as heinous as it seems to a lot of evangelical Christians. And then in chapter 11 and verse 24 he says, “Nevertheless, I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, and Sidon.” Those are amazing statements on our Lord's part in light of this.

Now what can we say in answer to this? Well in the first place, we could say, wicked and vile seem to be inappropriate adjectives for a breach of hospitality which might have been characteristic of the culture. Furthermore, the offer of women to the men suggests a sexual connotation on the part of the sin. So in the verses of this chapter we have something that suggests that. And then in verse 8 we read, “Now behold I have two daughters who have not had relations with man.” So it's obvious that a sexual connotation is found in this context. But the thing that clinches it for believers of the Bible is the statement made in the Book of Jude. I think some people often wonder, what's the use of the Book of Jude? Well sometimes even one chapter can become useful in Biblical doctrine. But in verse 7 of the Epistle of Jude we read these words, “just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after different flesh.” That word strange which is found in the New American Standard Bible is the word *heteros* which means different. There is something different about them, significant about them or exhibited as an example in undergoing the judgment of eternal fire. And so the New

Testament text together with the context of the chapter suggests that we can not explain Genesis chapter 19 as being simply a breech of hospitality.

But now there are texts in Leviticus, I won't turn to these texts, but there are at least two texts in Leviticus that refer to homosexuality it seems on the surface. “Men are not to lie with men.” You remember those passages like that. Ordinary homosexual acts are related; perhaps acts involved in the taking part of religious prostitution are suggested by that. Now obviously Mr. Bailey will take the interpretation and homosexuals that those statements about men lying with men are things that have to do with the religious taboos at the time because after all, the fertility cults were prominent in the land to which they were going and therefore that is the thing about which Moses must be speaking. There is no evidence of homosexual intercourse in the Canaanite fertility cult and so it must have been just a reference to the religions in which prostitutes, both male and female were attached to temples which individuals used in order to carry out symbolically fertility signs. It was part of the religion, if you wanted your fields to be fruitful, then you would have intercourse with a prostitute and by so doing you would have communion with the deity who is responsible for the rain and for the other things that make for a fruitful and productive farm. And so it is claimed that that's all we have in these Levitical texts. But when one reads the passage, there's nothing specifically in the context about this. It seems that these verses have to do with ordinary homosexual acts.

We turn over to Romans chapter 1 and verse 26 and verse 27 because I know that Bible readers immediately think of this passage as being one with out doubt must refer to homosexual practices. In verse 26 and verse 27 Paul writes these words, incidentally, I can remember some years ago in *the Dallas Morning News*, I wished I'd clipped it out then but I thought it was so foolish that I didn't even bother to clip it out. But a homosexual replied to someone who had written in to the news and had condemned homosexuality by just citing texts, and this individual then gave a bit of exegeses of these passages which confounded me because I'd never heard those interpretations. So there have been thinking attempts to support homosexualism as a practice. Paul writes,

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”

Now this certainly seems to be the same kind of sin as the sin of Sodom, or sodomy, in fact that's of course the source of the term which is used so often in our day, sodomy seems to be a definite condemnation of homosexual life. But now, suppose I were trying to support this from the other side of the matter and I were to say, well, Paul has things to say about homosexual acts, but not about homosexuality. Paul is talking about perversion, not inversion, and so it's perfectly alright to be an invert, they have that disposition, but they don't practice the acts, they don't indulge. And Paul in this passage is referring to perverts, not inverts. Or, Paul is referring not to homosexuality as a whole, but he is talking about the perversion of the true and legitimate practice of homosexuality. In other words, he's talking about people who are reckless homosexuals; he's talking about people who have promiscuous life styles among the homosexuals, not people who are loving and enter into relationship that is loving and tender and mature and enduring with another person of the same sex.

I could see by the looks on your faces that that interpretation has not gone over too well with you [laughter] well, happily so. Because so far as I can tell, there really isn't anything in this context which would suggest that Paul knew the difference between inversion and perversion as we know it. I'm sure he would know if you explain the terms to him what you were talking about but, these were terms unknown at that time in fact were not even known not so long ago.

Now there are other Pauline texts, for example in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9 and 10, we looked at that in our Scripture reading, I'll just read verses 9 and 10 again because this again is a text that seems to say that homosexuality is clearly a sinful kind of lifestyle. He says verse 9; this is 1 Corinthians 6,

“Or, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, (Now that’s an interesting statement, right there, nor effeminate, the word means something like soft, so it is thought to be those who receive homosexual advances. But he distinguishes then between those who are effeminate and those who are homosexuals.) Nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you;”

That’s interesting isn’t it? Now let’s turn to 1 Timothy chapter 1 verses 9 and 10. 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 9 and 10 is a passage that I’ll just read because the apostle is saying much the same thing that he has said in Romans and 1 Corinthians. Verse 9 of 1 Timothy 1,

“Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.”

Now if we only looked at these texts, we probably if we were opposed by people who had a knowledge of the word of God, we could win the argument probably, but in actual fact, we’d probably have something of a standoff, that is we’d have a difficult time convincing an open minded person that it’s surely wrong and these other interpretations have nothing in their favor. So let’s consider another kind of argument that I think is probably a very significant one, and it’s the relevance of the Genesis account of the divine institution of marriage. So I’d like for you to turn back to Genesis chapter two and we’ll ask the question, “Is the homosexual parallel that they have sought to make between homosexual partnerships and heterosexual marriage a justifiable parallel?” As I say we could argue the texts and the interpretations and I think, I don’t have any doubt that I would win the argument, I would pronounce myself victor at the conclusion and I think I would be

justified, that’s been the orthodox Christian position. Now there isn’t anything that they’ve brought forward that’s very convincing. They are rather unique arguments, and they’re clever arguments, but they are not convincing arguments.

But now when we come to marriage itself and see what the Bible says about the institution of marriage in its beginning, then we have something that’s extremely significant. Now you know of course that in Genesis chapter 1 in the announcement of the creation of man, male and female are said to be created in the image of God. That means that males and females are equal before God, both in the image of God. Now of course in chapter 1, having emphasized equality in the sexes, in chapter 2 we have an emphasis that is a bit different. Here we have the emphasis of complementarity. That is they compliment each other and as a matter of fact, all of the things or almost all of the things that the apostle says in the New Testament about the relationship of males and females to one another and in the church, is found in Genesis chapter 2, in fact these several chapters, 1 through 3 say just about everything that Paul says in his epistles. What he does is exegete these passages in a careful convincing kind of way. So we have equality in chapter 1 and we have complementarity in chapter 2.

And three truths emerge from chapter 2. First, the human need for companionship. In verse 18 we read, “Then said the Lord God, it’s not good for man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him.” And second, the divine provision that God made. Verse 20 and 21, “The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.”

That’s the divine provision. So, from an undifferentiated humanity as someone has put it, male and female came. One from the dust, the other from the man. Now the resulting institution is described in verses 23 and following, “And the man said” well after verse 22,

“The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (This is the resulting institution of marriage. So, what is striking about this of course is the mention of the word flesh.) This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

What Moses is talking about is heterosexual, he’s talking more about heterosexual intercourse and he’s talking more about heterosexual intercourse and the union that flows from it. He’s saying more than that about this relationship. What he’s saying is that there is a kind of, not simply union, but a kind of reunion in the sense that when the two come together, there is now one flesh. So that the relationship of marriage is a relationship in which there is kind of a reunion that takes place. Two originally one, not aliens who cannot become one flesh, become one in sexual encounter. That’s the kind of picture that’s presented here. In other words, it’s a union of persons, not simply bodies, not a union of bodies a union of persons. That is what is meant in the Bible when we talk about sexual intercourse between a male and a female. It’s not simply a fleshly experience, unless we define fleshly as inclusive of the whole of the man.

Now you can see from what Moses has said that we have the essential parts of marriage here. Notice we have a man, he states, “For this cause,” verse 24, “A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife.” In other words, this is an exclusive union between two individuals, a man and his wife. Secondly, “For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother.” Now what’s in view here is not simply somebody sneaking out of the back door and having a liaison with some woman. This is to be a public kind of thing. That’s how a marriage is originated, as a public affirmation, a public stand, a public step. That’s why in our marriage ceremony that’s represented. And so when a marriage takes place, we meet in a public place. And even in places

where we don't have church weddings, they meet in a public place like the mayor's office in Europe, continental Europe. And then later on they go to the church for the spiritual side of things, but this is a public kind of commitment, a public occasion. “Will leave his father and mother,” in fact the whole marriage ceremony is kind of typical isn't it. The father brings the bride down the aisle, and comes to the minister and to the groom and stands between the bride and the groom until the question is asked, “Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?” And he says, most preferably in my opinion, “I do.” Not her mother and I, but I do, now I just like that you understand, I think a marriage is just as much a marriage if he says, “Her mother and I do.” But I love it when a man says, “I do,” he's the head of the family, that's what he ought to be saying.

I've told many of you this but I've rehearsed weddings and they said, “I do” in the rehearsal, and the night of the wedding they say, “Her mother and I do.” [Laughter] So, there have been some conversations taking place at home. [Laughter] But you know even the very fact that the father brings that bride down to the front and answers, “I do,” is like God who took Eve to Adam. That's exactly what is being played out symbolically in a marriage, because that's what we read here, “And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.” That's the father right there in our society.

Now he goes on to say, “And shall cleave to his wife.” This is a covenant. This is a kind of permanent agreement in which there are certain responsibilities that each have, represented by the I will answer to the questions, or I do. So “cleave to his wife,” suggests a covenant, it's heterosexual and it's permanent. And finally, we read, “And they shall become one flesh.” This is the consummation and intercourse and the evidence of it is that from this union there does come a fruitful progeny, and in the child a reflection of mother and father, one flesh.

Now it seems to me in the light of this, and it's very plain and very clear, that every deviating relationship, every deviating relationship comes under the judgment of God. Now we're inclined in our day to say that, “Well people do commit adultery and there are liaisons that individuals have with one another,” but we don't think about them in evangelicalism like we think about homosexuality.

And I suggest to you that that's a mistake. Let me read you a statement made by one of our leading Biblical expositors, “Christians should not therefore single out homosexual intercourse for special condemnation. The fact is that every sexual relationship or act which deviates from God's revealed intention is ipso facto, displeasing to him and under his judgment.” This includes polygamy, and polyandry which infringe the one man one woman principle have many wives or many husbands. But Moses said, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother.” Clandestine unions since these have involved no decisive public leaving of the parents. And so we meet and we meet in hidden places and avoid the public eye particularly our friends, that isn't what Moses was speaking about. Casual encounters and temporary liaisons, adultery and many divorces which are incompatible with cleaving and with Jesus' prohibition “let man not separate.” And homosexual partnerships which violate the statement that, “a man shall be joined to his wife.” And some, the only one flesh experience which God intends and Scripture contemplates is the sexual union of a man with his wife who he recognizes as flesh of his flesh.

Now, in the closing few moments, I want to make a few comments concerning some contemporary objections that have been lodged against this picture that is given us in the Bible and specifically in the Book of Genesis, and throughout the remainder of the Scriptures for that matter. There are homosexuals who profess to be Christians. And they, in order to justify their lifestyle have set out some arguments other than certain answers to the specific texts that we have looked at.

One is an argument from culture. That is the questions that were prominent at the writing of the Bible are not our questions. In the case of Sodom, questions of hospitality, and the conventions of hospitality or in Leviticus, fertility rituals, we don't have that type of thing today and so those texts don't really apply to us. And then the apostles and others didn't think about things in our day. So the things in the Old Testament were not things the apostle was thinking about, and the things that the apostles were thinking about were not the things that trouble us. We live in post Freudian days. They don't know anything about inversion and perversion and things like that. But think about it for a moment. That's why Genesis is so important. Because even before there was

any culture, by creation, God set out as his will that a man should be joined to his wife and should cleave to her. There was no culture, that's by creation. And all of the people who like to interpret the Bible according to culture, not any of them can handle this in that way. They like to say, we're liberated from that type of thing, we have sexual liberation, we're liberated from the Victorians and the Puritans, and sometimes the Calvinist are thrown in for good measure. And we're liberated from these cultural ideas concerning sexuality. That argument will not hold water.

Another argument, an argument from nature, I'm gay; you understand I'm using this as an illustration. [Laughter] I'm gay because God made me that way. That's very common; I'm gay because God made me that way. As a matter of fact, some like to say you can see this even in animals because in animals there are some evidences of that which is similar to homosexuality. Well, does animal behavior set the standard for human behavior? You have to have a weak argument if you think that's true. As a matter of fact, the apostle in Romans chapter 1 says something very specific about this; he calls these things unnatural acts. And if you'll look up the use of the term nature, you will see that it means simply according to our nature, that's the force of this word, phusis. And here in Romans 1:26 through 1:28, the apostle writes,

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, (or against nature) and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

Paul calls this unnatural. We cannot say I'm gay because God made me that way, that's not true.

Well we can argue from the quality of relationship. This is that which I referred to previously as the argument from love. One of the sad things as you well know is that professing Christianity what some one would call middle of the road Christianity; professing Christianity has made pronouncements that this is legitimate. Every Methodist should blush at some of the things that the Methodists have said. The Methodist Church has justified the argument that because of quality of relationships between homosexuals, loving, tender, relatively permanent and enduring, that we must treat that as a legitimate relationship, the argument from love, human love of course, human ideals of love.

And lest you think the Methodists are the only ones, the Anglicans also have done the same thing. And the only reason I don't know of others is probably because I haven't done research. I don't think it's necessary to pile up in our professing Christendom those who have said things like that. After all, you Christians who are thinking people, let me ask you the question, is love the only standard by which we judge actions? And further, what kind of love are you speaking about? Are you speaking about sentimental affection? That's not a standard for moral norms. The Bible speaks specifically against that kind of thing, for the Bible says loves not the only absolute, even Christian love, true Christian love. Love is wedded to truth, truth should be loving, but love is only love if it's in the truth. So, to affirm quality of relationship, if the Bible speaks against it, it's just false.

Now, there's one final argument. This is particularly an argument of Norman Pittinger. “God loves us, and God accepts us just as we are, that's the gospel.” And he has the nerve to cite just as I am without one plea, that's the gospel, that's the gospel. And if we don't accept people just as they are, then he argues we don't understand the gospel. But the Bible doesn't say that, the Bible says God accepts us when we have acknowledged our sin and when we have received Jesus Christ as Savior. He doesn't accept us as we are apart from a conversion experience a relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, that's not Biblical.

So, I conclude, for our time is up, that homosexual partnerships are not Biblical, they are a deviation from God's word and from God's norms. Can homosexuals change? Many who are not

homosexuals like to say it's not possible for them to change. But there is enough evidence to say by all means they can change. It's not a natural state, it's a learned state and many of our psychologists and others have finally begun to come around to that, that it is a learned state. Christ receives homosexuals too. Just like the rest of us sinners. And don't forget, that we are all sinners and in fact, in Corinth, there were some who were like that for Paul after mentioning the sin says in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 11, “And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” Homosexuality is an abomination, but adultery is a deviating abomination to God also. Sexual liaisons, the kind of casual sex that is so prominent in our day, which makes it so significant, think of the warnings. Listen to this, you're not having sex only with your partner, you're having sex with everybody your partner has had sex with for the past decade or more. Any homosexual who has been sexually active in the last five years can have no assurance that AIDS is not already secretly at work in his body. AIDS, we can't be thankful for much, but we can surely be thankful for the fact that even the New York Times is suggesting that a real live option is heterosexual monogamy today.

Well, next week, we'll ask the question, about God's judgment upon AIDS. Is AIDS a judgment of God upon us individually or societally. We'll try to answer that question and then also, how should we as Christians respond to the present crisis. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are thankful to Thee for the word of God and for the light that it has given to us. Oh God, in the crisis that faces us as a nation, may by Thy grace through the activity of the Holy Spirit ...

**[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]**