

# John MacArthur

## Such Were Some of You

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Now as you know, we have joined with some of our brothers in Christ to address the issue of biblical sexual morality on this particular Sunday, because the new law went into effect in Canada, Bill C-4, which basically made it a crime to offer to a transgender person or a homosexual person any kind of conversion therapy. It is a crime punishable by up to five years in prison to attempt to convert a transgender person or a homosexual.

The business of conversion is the reason the church is in the world. This is why we exist in the world. So when pastors knew this law had been established in Canada, they wanted to stand up for the truth of God and let the whole nation know that the church of Jesus Christ will preach the conversion of sinners from every kind of sinful lifestyle, including that one. So James Coates got ahold of me and said, "Would you join us?" and I said, "Of course." And so that led to the emphasis today. And we have been joined by about five thousand others who have sort of signed up to support this day in that way. And obviously the objective, of course, is that the church is called by the Lord to convert sinners. That's—I mean, that's His work. But we preach the message of conversion by which the Holy Spirit does that wonderful miracle.

In thinking about how we could address this in the most important way, I was drawn to 1 Corinthians chapter 6. And I would invite you to turn to that section of your Bible, 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 9 to 11. Paul is writing to the Corinthian church, and here he discusses the kinds of people who are in that church. And they are the kinds of people who are in every church: They are people who have been converted from all kinds of sinful backgrounds.

So listen to what he says, 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9 through verse 11: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will 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, will inherit the kingdom of God. 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 church at Corinth was made up of people who were converted from fornication, idolatry, adultery, effeminate sexual practice, homosexuality, thievery, covetousness, drunkenness, slander, extortion. That was a congregation of converted people. That's what they were, and that's what every church is: It is a congregation of converted sinners. This passage is describing the collection of sinners that make up the church. They are converted sinners. This is the mission of the church in the world: to convert sinners.

Governments can make laws all they want; they will never dictate to the church what its mission is. The mission of the church is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, that sinners might be converted—all kinds of sinner, every kind of sinner. The church is in the world to convert sinners. In James chapter 5 and verse 20, we read, “He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death.” Let me read that again: “He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death.” And “death,” being spoken of there, is eternal death, meaning hell.

So our mission is to convert sinners. That’s what we do; that’s why we exist in the world. We are not a charitable organization. We are not a moral organization in the world. We are not trying to make people better by some kind of behavioral instruction. We exist in the world to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ so that sinners can be converted, transformed.

The greatest man who had ever lived, up until his time, was John the Baptist; that’s what Jesus said about him, the last of the Old Testament prophets and the forerunner of our Lord. When the angel came to announce that he would be born, the message from heaven regarding John the Baptist was this: “He will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.” That’s conversion. “He will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.”

In the Old Testament, David, who was a great sinner, confessed his sin in the penitent tones of Psalm 51. It is an agonizing psalm to read because David is honest about his wretchedness. He had committed adultery with Bathsheba, and he had seen to it that her husband was actually killed. In the remorse of his sin, he cries out to God to forgive him and to create in him a clean heart. And in Psalm 51 and verse 13, David says, “[If You will do this,] I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You.” David knows what every converted sinner knows: that you were saved so that you could help convert other sinners. David says, “Create in me a clean heart . . . [and] I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You.”

Any attack on this operation of converting sinners to Christ is an assault on God, on Christ, on the Holy Spirit, on the Bible, on the church, that will be met by the church with one hundred percent resistance because this is our mission. Sinners must be converted, or they will not enter the kingdom of God. Being outside the kingdom of God means eternal punishment in hell forever.

The early church had one commission: the conversion of sinners. And as the apostles went out to preach the gospel to the nations for the first time in the book of Acts, the fifteenth chapter, they came back to report what was happening. And we read in chapter 15 of Acts and verse 3 that Paul and Barnabas came to the brethren in Jerusalem, and

verse 3 says, “Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.” When they came back to give a mission report, they were describing the conversion of Gentiles.

Down in verse 19 of the same chapter, “Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles.” They went out into the Gentile nations, who had no understanding of Christian truth; who had for the most part no understanding of the Old Testament, which was the only existing Scripture; no understanding of the gospel. They confronted them in their lostness and their sin for the very purpose of conversion.

An illustration of that occurred, for example, in the city of Thessalonica. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, we read this, verse 9, “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you”—that is, with the people in Thessalonica—“and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” Paul went to Thessalonica, he preached the gospel, they turned to God from idols and thereby were rescued from eternal damnation and wrath. That is what the church does in the world.

Sadly, there’s so much confusion about the purpose of the church because so many churches are false churches. They are fraudulent. They don’t stick with the mission. Many of them don’t seem to care about it. There are plenty of churches that are ordaining people who need to be converted before they get ordained.

To illustrate the reality of conversion, we go back to our text of 1 Corinthians chapter 6. And Paul gives us very clear instruction. In fact it’s so clear, it’s almost obvious, and that’s why he begins by saying in verse 9, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not [enter] the kingdom of God?” There’s a certain amount of incredulity in that. You wouldn’t think for a moment that anybody would be foolish enough to assume that unrighteous people would be in the kingdom of God, who is righteous, who is holy. Are you so foolish that you don’t even know that? The kingdom of God does not belong to those who are unrighteous. And if you are unrighteous, you have no part in the kingdom of God. That is a foundational truth that cannot be gainsaid.

Now what do we mean by the kingdom of God? We mean the sphere of salvation where Christ rules over those who have been redeemed through the work of Christ on the cross. The kingdom of God is made up of the converted, not the unconverted. The unconverted belong to the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of darkness. The unrighteous simply refer to the unconverted, the unholy.

And then Paul says, “Do not be deceived.” “Do not be deceived.” So many people are deceived about what the kingdom of God is and who’s in it. “Don’t be deceived. I’ll tell you who’s not in the kingdom: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers.” They’re not in it; they’ll never inherit it. The unconverted have no place in the kingdom. So the purpose of the church in proclaiming the kingdom of God and the salvation that gives you entrance into the kingdom is to preach the gospel that converts sinners so they can enter the kingdom.

Look at this list. And it’s a representative list. You could add other categories of sins. But it starts with fornicators. That’s *porneia*, from which we get the word “pornography.” That’s just general immorality of any kind. They’re not in the kingdom.

Idolaters are not in the kingdom because they’re worshiping other-than-God, or something other than God. That’s false religion. Adulterers are not in the kingdom. Adultery means the violation of marital codes, marital pledges, marital covenants, violation of marriage vows. They’re not in the kingdom. Thieves are not in the kingdom. The greedy, or the covetous, are not in the kingdom. Drunkards are not in the kingdom. Revilers, or slanderers, are not in the kingdom. And swindlers, or extortioners—conmen, criminals, et cetera—are not in the kingdom.

Now so far I haven’t heard about any laws that the government is going to make to forbid us from trying to convert swindlers, or trying to convert slanderers, or trying to convert drunkards or thieves. There’s no laws made to protect those people. But they make laws to protect two of these categories: the effeminate and the homosexuals. Why is the government doing that? Why has the government selected sins to protect? Why is that happening? Because the government is under the sway of Satan himself, and the damage done by these sins is massive, substantial, and seminal because it destroys human identity, destroys marriage, and destroys the family, and destroys children, and destroys the society. So the kingdom of darkness makes laws to protect the most destructive behaviors.

What does “effeminate” include? Well, it’s the word *malakos*. It means soft, like soft clothing—just the word “soft.” But used in the sexual sense, it refers to the passive partner in a homosexual relationship, or the transvestite, or the cross-dresser, or the transgender person, or the male prostitute, or the eunuch—the one who offers himself to the aggressive homosexual. The “homosexual”—yes, that’s *arsenokoitēs*, from two words: “man,” “bed”—someone who goes to bed with a man, man in bed with a man. So you have really pretty broad terms. Homosexuality and all the forms of transition bound up in the word *malakos*.

In 1 Timothy chapter 1, there is another list that you would do well to look at. First Timothy chapter 1, verse 8, Paul's talking about the law and why the law should be preached—"if you're going to preach law, if you're going to make law." And here is what the law is designed for: "We know the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious." And now you begin to get some categories of these lawless, rebellious people: They are "ungodly," they are "sinners," they are "unholy," they are "profane," and they are "those who kill their fathers or mothers," they are "murders," "immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching."

Again, I don't see governments in a big hurry to make laws to protect kidnappers or perjurers. Why are they bent on protecting homosexuals? What interest does government have in protecting a particular sin?

A previous administration of our government in America, there were 250 homosexuals and transgender people in the White House operation, and this current administration has exceeded that in just one year. Why are they specially protected? We don't protect kidnappers; we don't protect perjurers. It is preposterous to protect sodomites, and preposterous to protect them to the degree that they can prey on your children, to be seduced into that kind of life which your children are supposed to have the liberty to decide about without parental consent. That's insane. They are given free reign as predators to deceive and seduce your children.

What interest does the government have in protecting homosexuals from the kingdom of God? Why is it a threat to convert a homosexual, to convert a transgender person? Why do they want to make laws to prevent that? Do they have a particular interest in populating hell with a certain kind of sinner? What business do they have in telling the church under divine mandate that it's a felony to convert a sinner?

The church doesn't help, in many cases because so many churches are confusing. There are churches called Metropolitan Community churches; they are churches founded by Troy Perry, who was a very well-known homosexual a number of years ago in Hollywood. Currently there are 222 Metropolitan Community churches around the world in 37 countries. They are churches for homosexuals. And I remember sitting at a table having a debate with him, personally looking at him across the table and confronting him about the sin and confronting him about the wretchedness of starting churches in the name of Jesus Christ made up of people who had not converted from that sin, and he tried to pass himself off as a noble homosexual who was monogamous. And I happened to have in my notebook the police record from his multiple arrests in Hollywood for anonymous sex on the streets with just about anybody.

He's still around, still the patriarch of these 222 churches. And to show you how this society feels about Troy Perry, who is in the business of making sure that homosexuals and transgender people are deceived and stay on the road to hell—to show you how this culture feels about him, in June of 2021 he was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Los Angeles Dodgers. What's his achievement? All sinners need to be converted.

Now what does the Bible have to say about this? We have the general statement that I read to you in 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1. Let's get a little more specific and go back to the Old Testament. First, let's talk about the transgender issue. Go back to Deuteronomy chapter 22, Deuteronomy chapter 22 and verse 5. God is laying down the law for life in the Promised Land, and verse 5 says, Deuteronomy 22:5, "A woman shall not wear a man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." "Abomination" is a very strong word. "Detestable" would be a synonym. It is detestable to God. Any cross-dresser, drag queen, transsexual, transvestite, transgender is an abomination to God.

Chapter 23, verse 1, God said, "No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord." Look, having these kinds of surgeries is nothing new, nothing new. It went on in paganism all the time. People who did this then weren't called transgender, they were called eunuchs. In ancient time, people were castrated for their gods, to become temple prostitutes, male prostitutes. Some nations did it at the age of ten, or even younger. The people were so deeply into paganism and perversion that they would literally offer up their children to their gods as emasculated male prostitutes to be raped by the male "worshipers." Anyone who was in that condition, it says, shall not enter the assembly of the Lord. You can't be with the people of God. That's strong.

Was there any hope? What if you did that, and you came to your senses and you wanted to change? What if you were sorry? Was there any way back to God? Turn to Isaiah 56, Isaiah 56, and we'll look at verse 3: "Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, 'The Lord will surely separate me from His people.' [Let not] the eunuch say, 'Behold, I'm a dry tree.'" This is a good word. This is encouraging. God speaks, and He says, "No, the foreigner, the stranger who joins himself to the Lord, he's accepted. He doesn't have to say, 'The Lord will surely separate me from His people.'" The Lord will accept that stranger, that non-Israelite, that pagan.

Well, what about the eunuch? "[Let him not] say, 'Behold, I'm a dry tree.'" It's not the end. "Is this the end: that I have no life; I'm just a dead tree; I'm as good as dead?" No, don't let the eunuch say that. Verse 4, "For thus says the Lord, 'To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant'"—in other words, to the eunuchs who come to the true God—"to them I will give in My house and

within My walls a memorial, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.” There’s a play on words. There is hope for a eunuch. There is hope for a male prostitute. There’s hope for somebody who’s had gender transition surgery. There’s hope for those who choose to please the true God, hold fast His covenant—He will not just accept you on the fringes, but “give in My house and within My walls a memorial.” In other words, “I will remember you; I will write you down as a part of the family in the house, and you’ll have a name better than that of sons and daughters because you weren’t just born in, you were adopted in. And you’ll have an everlasting name.”

And the same is true for the foreigner, in verse 6, who comes to love the name of the Lord. Yeah, the stranger, the pagan, the idolater can be converted and come into the kingdom of God, and the transgender person can be converted and come into the kingdom of God.

And we actually have the story of a converted eunuch. Go to the eighth chapter of the book of Acts. This is an amazing story, Acts chapter 8. Philip, one of the believers in the Jerusalem church—his story starts in verse 26: “An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, ‘Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.’” It’s a desert road. The Lord communicates to Philip that He wants him to go down this road into the desert. “So he got up and went, and there was an Ethiopian eunuch.” That would be someone who physically was emasculated for the service of his gods and his queen.

He is “an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,” and he has significant responsibility, being “in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship.” What is he doing coming to Jerusalem to worship? Maybe he had read Isaiah 56. *Maybe he had read Isaiah 56* is not a stretch. Why? Because, verse 28 says, “He was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading”—what?—“the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and join this chariot.’ Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet.” He has read that there is no reason to accept that your life is over and you’re a dead tree forever, and he’s on his way to Jerusalem because that’s associated with the God of Isaiah. And he’s also reading more of Isaiah. He’s reading the part about the Son of God.

And Philip says to him, “Do you understand what you’re reading?’ And he said, ‘Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?’ And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. [And] the passage of Scripture which he was reading was [Isaiah 53]: ‘. . . led as a sheep to slaughter; . . . a lamb before its shearers is silent, so He doesn’t open His mouth.’” And he reads about this Lamb, this sacrifice who is pierced for our transgressions. And the eunuch says to Philip, verse 34, “Who’s he talking about? Who

is this?” And “Philip opened his mouth . . . beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.”

What a wonderful moment. A dry tree, a hopeless pagan, and he finds out that God, the God of the Israelites, will accept him. And he’s been stigmatized his entire life. He’s an adult, been around a while, or he wouldn’t have had the responsibility he did. He can’t reverse, physically, what was done. He bears the stigma. His conscience is torturous. He finds that the God of Isaiah will welcome him into the family and give him a memorial name, which means make him a permanent occupant of the home and give him everlasting life. And now he finds out that the access to all of that is through Jesus. So “Philip opened his mouth” in verse 35, “and beginning with this Scripture,” Isaiah 53, “he preached Jesus to him.” I love that moment. “As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’” So guess what? Philip told him about baptism.

By the way, that was part of the message of the gospel: “Repent, and believe, and be baptized.” And so he says, “[There’s] water! What prevents me being baptized?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ He answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’” What a wonderful moment.

“And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water.” Did you hear that, you Presbyterians? They “went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him”—he immersed him. “When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way”—what?—“rejoicing.”

This is what we do: We offer devastated people the gospel of conversion, through faith in Christ, that brings them joy. That’s what we do. That’s a living illustration of the promise that Isaiah gave in that fifty-sixth chapter. So the Old Testament was clear about the sin of any kind of transitional surgery, any kind of transitional clothing, anything that made confusing your sexual identity. And it was an abomination to God, detestable. And you couldn’t be a part of the assembly of God’s people—oh, unless you came to the true God with a heart of faith, as this man did on the road to Gaza. Now what does the Old Testament say about homosexuality? Let’s go back to Leviticus 18. We saw the transgender part, but what about homosexuality itself? Go back to Leviticus 18. And again, the Word of God is clear, verse 22, Leviticus 18:22, “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” That is not confusing. That is as clear as it can be. In fact, it’s right alongside another abomination, verse 23, “You shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.” Homosexual sex is in God’s eyes just perversion, like bestiality.



Verse 24, then, of Leviticus 18, “Do not defile yourselves by any of these things”—and here’s some history—“for by all these the nations which I’m casting out before you have become defiled.”—“All the nations around you are into bestiality and homosexuality; they’re all into it, and that’s how they became defiled.”—“For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.” Israel’s going to the land of Canaan, and the question comes up, “Why did God allow Israel to take over the land of Canaan?” Because God was punishing the people who were in Canaan for this kind of behavior. God’s judgment had come on them. Part of that judgment was Israel, His people, taking over the land that they had defiled. “The land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.”

And then God says to Israel, “But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you.” “You’re not to allow bestiality; you’re not to allow homosexuality at all.” And He reminds them in verse 27, “(For the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has been defiled),” parenthetically. And then in verse 28, “So that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.” “Look, you’re going to have the same exact problem if you behave in that exact way. What happened to the previous nations is going to happen to you.”

Verse 29, “Whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people.” Capital punishment. Capital punishment. Why? Verse 30, “Thus you are to keep My charge”—or “My command”—“that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the Lord your God.”

And then in chapter 19, verse 2, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord . . . am holy.” And then He says in verse 3, “I am the Lord your God.” And verse 4, “I am the Lord your God.” And verse 10, “I’m the Lord your God.” “You can’t treat Me that way, or you’re going to end up like everybody else before you. It is an abomination.” And He repeats all through the next chapter, “I am the Lord your God. I am the Lord your God. You’re insulting Me if you do these things.”

And by the way, in chapter 20 and verse 13, we have the penalty for that behavior of homosexuality: “If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death.” Capital punishment for homosexuality. So destructive, so devastating to personal identity, God’s design, family, society. Homosexual life is defiling, always brings divine wrath. You will not escape it, *you will not*; and the penalty is death. That’s God’s protection on His people from the damage that is done to a society by homosexual behavior.

God played this out in a pretty dramatic way back in Genesis. Let's go back to Genesis. You know in the beginning God created a man and woman, right? One man, one woman, brought them together; marriage between a man and a woman for life—that was God's design. Then came the Fall; and as soon as the Fall came, we began to see the corruption of marriage by the twelfth chapter of Genesis. By the nineteenth chapter, the end of the nineteenth chapter, verse 36, you have incest. By the thirty-fourth chapter, verse 2, you have rape. By the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis, you have prostitution. So the corruption of sexual behavior comes in all its forms, and you're not even out of the book of Genesis. And homosexuality is also seen.

Turn to the nineteenth chapter. This is one of the most horrific scenes in the entire Bible, Genesis 19. It's a story that only needs to be read to be understood. Two angels came to Sodom. "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." He obviously knew they were heavenly visitors in some kind of physical form, like men. "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, we will spend the night in the square.'" And this immediately terrified Lot because he knew his city.

Verse 3, "He urged them strongly"—"No, you can't stay outside." "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"—before they could lay down for the night—"the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter"—a mob. "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.'" They want to rape the angel—the two angels. This is how perverse they were. And Lot, horrified, "went out to them at the doorway, and [pulled the door closed] behind him, and he said, 'Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.'"—"You don't know what you're doing. This will be the end of everything. I know how God feels about homosexuality. You can't do this. You have no idea what you're doing. These are angels." "Behold," he says in verse 8; this is a bizarre twist, "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."

This is such a weird thing for a father to do. But he understood, the judgment that would come on that house on the basis of homosexuality would be far greater than the judgment that would fall if his daughters had a relationship with those men. And he may have hedged a little; knowing that they were homosexuals, he may have hoped they would reject the daughters. But he knew God hated homosexuality.

He said, “Don’t do this. They’re being protected in my house. I don’t want the judgment.” “They said, ‘Stand aside.’ Furthermore, they said, ‘This one came in as an alien, and already he’s acting like a judge’—“this man Lot! Stranger!”—“Now we will treat you worse than them.’ So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.” They’re going to rape these angels if they have to go over Lot’s body and smash the door.

“But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.” The angels saved him and slammed the door. And then in verse 11, “They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness”—and there were a massive mob of them, and they were “small and great,” meaning they were the range of people in the society. And “they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.” How about, “Look, I’m blind; I think I’ll leave”? I mean, you’re blind, and you’re still driven by this lust, that in your blindness you’re trying to find the doorway?

And “the two 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.’ 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.’” They thought he was jesting.

In the morning “the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘. . . Take your wife and your . . . daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.’” And they hesitated. “So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the Lord was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city.” And “one said, ‘Escape for your life!’” And then down in verse 24, they “rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.” And Lot’s wife looked back, and was told not to, and turned into a pillar of salt. That’s how God feels about homosexuality. And He’s the same God today.

You know, there are some who have tried to suggest that the sin of Sodom was a lack of hospitality. But Jude describes the sin of Sodom as going after strange flesh. And Peter in 2 Peter describes the sin of Sodom as going after strange flesh. The gross sin of that city was the sin of homosexuality, for which God burned it to a crisp and everyone in it. This is what happens through history when God looks on other cities. We know this because in the book of Isaiah, for example, from Isaiah 13 to 23, the prophet declares judgment from God on all kinds of cities, all kinds of nations, for the same kind of conduct. Isaiah pronounces judgment on Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, Arabia, and Tyre.

In Jeremiah 46 to 57, the prophet Jeremiah receives the word of the Lord concerning the nations to be judged: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. In Ezekiel 25 to 33, God pronounces judgment on Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Egypt, and Assyria. Throughout history God destroys nations who behave in violation of His law.

I think most of us understand that God punishes sinners individually. But He punishes nations, and there's a long history of that national punishment laid out in the Scripture. Even in the New Testament, Jesus pronounced doom on cities: Chorazin, Bethsaida. Sadly, Isaiah also had to pronounce judgment on Israel. Look at Isaiah 3. I'm going to take a little time, not much longer. But in Isaiah 3, this is very powerful.

As it turns out, God warned Israel not to reject His Word, not to conduct their lives the way the pagan nations did. But in the third chapter of Isaiah, if you look down at verse 9, you see that Israel had also displayed their sin like Sodom; they didn't conceal it. "Woe to them! They have brought evil on themselves." Here comes judgment on another nation; and we all know that it came in the Babylonian captivity—devastating, crushing destruction and death. Because Israel didn't heed the Word of the Lord, they got the very same punishment as the pagan nations—because they behaved in the very same way.

But I want you to see a picture of what this began to look like. At the end of chapter 2, verse 22 says, "Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?" Stop trusting in man. That's exactly what they had done. Stop trusting in man rather than God, or God will judge you. Push God out, put your trust in man, and judgment will come.

And verse 1 declares, "For behold, the Lord God of hosts is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah"—this is what the judgment looks like: God removes "supply and support, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water." The judgment begins with God attacking them at the level of provision and protection. All of a sudden they can't get what they could always get. Things aren't available that were once available. It comes down to the very necessities of life. That starts to disappear.

And then in verses 2 and 3, God removes everyone who has value, everyone who could help. "The mighty man," verse 2, that's literally the hero, "and the warrior"—that's the man of war, the great military genius, the leader, the protector; the judge, the prophet, the diviner—that means the man of wisdom; "the elder," the ancient man who has the history and the experience. And the collapse of all these leaders, the disappearance of all those who have value, and it trickles down to even—"the captains of fifty."

Leadership at all levels begins to disappear. “And the honorable men” would be the highly distinguished men, and “the counselors and the expert craftsmen and the skillful orators.” Everybody who could bring some value is disappearing. They trusted in man, and now they’re being stripped of the only men who could help. And when all the powerful and wise and influential are gone, verse 4 says, “I’ll make mere lads their princes, and capricious children will rule over them.” All of a sudden their leaders become weak and childish. No strong leadership.

So the people are oppressed, verse 5. This is what happens; sounds familiar. “The people [are] oppressed, each one by another, and each one by his neighbor.” You get anarchy; you get chaos, disorder, civil destruction, civil disobedience. “The youth storm against the elder”—no respect for those that are older; young people terrorize the older. “The inferior” have no respect for “the honorable.” When God begins to judge a nation, all of a sudden what once was available is not available anymore. And all the people you could depend on, all the great people who could make a difference, are gone. And now you’re literally being ruled by weak, childish rulers. And there’s anarchy in the streets, and chaos and disorder.

In fact it’s so desperate, they need a leader. So “when a man lays hold of his brother in his father’s house, [he says], ‘You have a cloak, you . . . be our ruler’”—that’s the only qualification: “You have a coat; you be our ruler”—“and these ruins will be under your charge.” Already they’ve ruined the place.

But “he will protest on that day, saying, ‘[I’m not going to be] your healer’”—“I don’t want to take this responsibility on.” “For in my house there is neither bread nor a cloak; you should not appoint me ruler of the people.” In other words, everything begins to disintegrate, everything, all the way down to leadership.

“For Jerusalem,” verse 8, “has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the Lord, to rebel against His glorious presence.” They were displaying sin. They were just like Sodom. “Woe to them!” “Woe to them!” Good news in verse 10: “Say to the righteous it’ll go well with them.” Oh, I’m glad to hear that. “For they will eat the fruit of their actions. But woe to the wicked! It’ll go badly with him, for what he deserves will be done to him.” Mark that. The wicked get exactly what they deserve.

And verse 12 sums it up: “O My people! Their oppressors are children, and women rule over them.” “Their oppressors are children”—childish, weak, effeminate—“and women rule over them. And those who guide [them] lead [them] astray and confuse the direction of [their] paths.” Sin destroys people, yes; it also destroys nations. And this nation, and any nation that makes laws to protect sin is on that same path to total destruction. Sin

destroys—I'll say it again—individuals, and it destroys nations because it invites down on its own head the wrath of God.

Romans 1 tells us what that wrath looks like. God gives a nation up. He gives them up to sexual immorality, Romans 1:24. And then He gives them up to homosexuality, and then He gives them up to a reprobate mind. You go from sexuality—a sexual revolution, pornography—to homosexuality, to insanity. A reprobate mind means you don't even function. There's no way back because you aren't rational; you start making laws to protect people who are insane. "Why do you say that?" Because they don't know whether they are male or female; how insane can you be? That becomes in itself a judgment.

So we know how God feels about the transitional, transgender movement. We know how He feels about homosexuals. Is there any hope? Let's go back to 1 Corinthians 6, and we'll wrap it up, 1 Corinthians 6. This is the good news, verse 11: "Such were some of you." Is that good news? "Such *were* some of you."

Right there in the Corinthian church; right here at Grace Community Church, I know, personally, people who have been converted out of every one of these categories—in this church. I've been here half a century; I've seen it all. And that's our mission. And people have asked me through the years, "Why don't you get out of California?" Because this is where people need to be converted. "Some of you," he says—all of you, really, were outside the kingdom of God, alienated, hopeless sons of hell, children of wrath. "But you were washed, you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Amazing statement! And he uses three words to describe it. It's such a thorough conversion. This is not therapy; this is not a process. This is a divine event that takes place in a divine moment. It's something that had already happened to them; it wasn't in process. "You were washed," "you were sanctified," "you were justified"—a decisive event in which God washed you, sanctified you, and justified you, the hopeless sinner. Three words. First of all, if you're a sinner, you need to be *washed*. It's a compound verb—washed thoroughly, washed down to the bone, deep-cleaning. No matter what the category of your sin, you come to Christ and you will be washed. And then you'll be *sanctified*; once all the filth is washed away, the Lord will plant His holy presence in your life. And then you'll be *justified*; He will declare you righteous. You say, "Well how did I get righteous so fast?" Because God will credit to your account His own righteousness. That's conversion.

That's why we exist. And no government will ever make any law that will stop the true church from being in the business of converting sinners.

You can be washed, which includes complete forgiveness. You can be sanctified, which includes being a new creation, becoming holy, as it were. And you can become justified in not a process and not a therapy; it's a divine miracle when you trust Christ, trust in His name, and it's the work of the Spirit.

How dramatic was this conversion? Go back to chapter 1; we'll end there. How dramatic was the change? Chapter 1, verse 2, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling." What? Did those effeminate, transgender, homosexuals, revilers, slanderers, perjurers become "saints"? Yes. That's how complete the conversion is. It's a divine, miraculous transformation. In the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, whatever your category of sin, Christ can convert you into a saint, washing all the filth away, giving you a holy, new life, and covering you with His own, everlasting, perfect righteousness. That's the message of the gospel.

It was some years ago that I read Psalm 107 like I did this morning in a service here, and just read it. And as it turned out, there was a gentleman sitting back here in that area, and he told me this afterwards: When I read that, he was so excited by what he heard, and when I read the part about how God would lead you in a straight way—his name was Robert Lagerstrom. He was one of the leaders of the Hollywood Gay Pride Parade. He had been told he was dying of AIDS. He didn't want to die; he was terrified. He said to some of his homosexual friends in Hollywood, "Where can I go? I'm afraid to die. Where can I go?" They told him, "Go to Grace Community Church." That's the truth. He said, "I came to Grace Church my first Sunday. I sat there, and you read Psalm 107, and you read that God could break the iron bars and the bronze gates and set me free. And when I heard you read that, all I wanted to do was run to you, and you just kept talking. And then people sang, and then you took an offering, and then you kept talking. And finally you said, 'Amen.' And I came flying to the prayer room." And he was converted that day, totally transformed. And he happened to live on the Gay Pride Parade route, which was not long after that, and he opened his home for everyone to stop by and gave them the gospel. I baptized him right here. He lived for a few months, and he went to heaven.

That's why the church exists: so that sinners can be converted and enter the kingdom of heaven. Any government that stands in the way of that work of God is in the most dangerous position that anyone could ever be in on this planet. Far more dangerous than any human enemy, or any virus, or any other conceivable threat is to have God come down in judgment. The church will be the church. Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank You again for the clarity with which Your Word speaks to us. So much pouring through our hearts today. We pray that some sinners would be converted today. Please, Lord, open hearts. That's my prayer. Amen.