Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Answering Key Questions About Homosexuality
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PHIL: Our subject today is on the issue of homosexuality. We chose this because in recent months it's one of the things that we've gotten the most questions from listeners about. John's last appearance, you know, on Larry King had to do with the issue of homosexual marriages and since then it's only become a bigger issue. So here we are and I'm going to introduce it by reading a little script that they've given me, so here we go. Are we ready?

Well thank you, Carl, and hello, John. I do have a lot of questions I want to ask you and so let's just get right to it. There's no denying that the debate over homosexuality has become one of the defining issues of our day and a major front in the culture war. I think the topic touches all of us in one way or another because it intersects with all of society's most basic institutions...home, marriage, government, and of course, religion and our faith. And so the questions that I have for you today are going to explore all of those areas. This debate over homosexuality is an emotional one and it hasn't diminished over time, only the opposite. And with all of the discussion lately about homosexual marriages and all of that, it's been at the forefront of our news. You can barely turn the TV on these days and not see something about it. And, in fact, most recently you were asked to be on Larry King Live to discuss this very issue. Tell us a little bit about that experience.

JOHN: Well, I was, frankly, glad for the opportunity because I always think it's a privilege to represent the Word of God and the truth of God in that particular environment, and particularly with something as heated as the discussion of homosexuality. I really welcomed the opportunity to bring the Word to God to bare on that. I'm a little bit surprised that I get invited because I'm so predictable. Even Larry King will tell me, "That I know exactly what you're going to say and that's why we have you here." I am very predictable. They can count on me to say what I really believe. And, you know, I remember being on there one time with a Muslim, a Catholic, a Hindu and a Rabbi, and if I hadn't been there, they all would have agreed with each other even though they're four different religions because everybody just sort of finds the middle ground and all of that. So I think it's a great opportunity to put the gospel out in bold contrast and bold relief. And it really doesn't matter to me what the subject is, any opportunity to present what God has to say on that subject is a great opportunity. And I was praying that the Lord would give me an opportunity also to present not just the sin of homosexuality but the gospel of grace offered to those who repent of it. And I had that opportunity also.

PHIL: In fact, on that broadcast you actually were able to debate the major of San Francisco...

JOHN: Right.

PHIL: Who...he was on there because he had illegally permitted homosexual marriages in California.

JOHN: Right. He really was the front guy for the movement. He was selected, trained, he was fixed up, you know, he was their man and they put him in there, got him in power and he was articulating the party line and he did what they wanted him to do, and that is to do all of those marriages even though it was against the law. But he made one really serious error on the television program. And I was just sitting there waiting for this, I didn't know where the entry point would be but he said, "I'm a practicing Catholic."

And when he said that, I knew exactly what I needed to say and so I said, "Well, if you're a practicing Catholic then you must believe the Bible is the Word of God."

And he said, "Oh, oh, ohhhhh, I don't want to get into a theological discussion."

I said, "I'm not asking you for a discussion, I just...I just want to know, do you believe the Bible is the Word of God? You said you were a practicing Catholic."

"I don't want to go there, oh, you're not going to force me to go there. I don't need to go there."

And I said, "It's a simple question, do you believe the Bible is the Word of God?"

And he had nowhere to go so he said, "Well, I guess I do." And that was good.

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN: And that's when I said, "Then you would know that the Bible condemns homosexuality as a sin." And, of course, there's no answer to that once you said what he said and...so then I had the opportunity to say that I mentioned that no homosexual would ever enter the Kingdom, 1 Corinthians 6, 1 Timothy 1:10, no homosexual will ever enter the Kingdom. And Larry King said, "Well maybe not everybody wants to get into the Kingdom of heaven." And he sets me up. He was setting me up. So I turned to this homosexual actor sitting next to me, he writes for the Gay Advocate, and I had met him earlier, and his name is Chad. And I said, "Well I think Chad wants to get into the Kingdom of heaven, don't you, Chad?" And he said, "Yeah, I do." And that was great because then I explained to him how that God would show grace and Christ to the homosexual.

So, I've said this before, whenever I get into that kind of environment there are only two things I want to say. One is that the Bible is the only authority, and two, Jesus is the only Savior. I don't know...it doesn't matter what the topic is, it doesn't matter what it's about, it can be about world religions, it could be about the war in the Middle East, it could be about homosexuality, but it all comes down to biblical authority and Jesus Christ as the only Savior, and have that opportunity even with homosexuals listening and even encountering them face-to-face is really why I live and move and have my being, to present the gospel of grace to sinners of all kinds.

PHIL: Now, the major of San Francisco obviously did not want to get into a theological debate with you. But there are people who claim that they can be Christians and homosexuals as well. They would argue that the Bible does not teach that homosexuality is a sin. How would you answer that?

JOHN: Well, you can look at the Bible positively. You can start in Leviticus 18:22 and you can go to Leviticus chapter 20 verse 13 and what you find there is, "That if a man lies with a man," that's the illustration, "it is an abomination to God." As a man lies with a woman...if he lies with a man, or obviously a woman with a woman, it's an abomination to God. Then in the twentieth chapter and thirteenth verse, the prescription for that kind of behavior is the death penalty. It is such an abomination that it was to be dealt with by the death penalty. There were about 35 iniquities specified in the Law, the Mosaic Law, for which the death penalty was prescribed and that was one of them.

Later on you have the horrific statements, I think of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 1 about how the wrath of God is poured out from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness. And he goes on describing something of the character of that unrighteousness, but it comes down to the description of the wrath of God as God giving them over, first to sexual immorality and then secondly, giving them over to homosexuality. What that tells us is that homosexuality is not only an abomination and a sin worthy of the death penalty, but it is also potentially a divine judgment and that is to say God turns you over to the consequence of the iniquity that you persist in. That's one of the horrific statements of judgment in the Bible and you can tell when God is doing that in a society because homosexual...homosexuality begins to be acceptable and to reign supreme. That is the evidence that a society is under the divine judgment of God for that sin.

You have statements by the Apostle Paul, as I said, in 1 Corinthians and in 1 Timothy 1 about the fact that homosexuals and effeminate do not enter the Kingdom of heaven that are very, very clear. And then you have the amazing incident in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis of Sodom which is graphic and unforgettable where you have a whole city full of homosexual men who try to rape angels who came there and they were beautiful, they were obviously in human form, and the men were struck blind, you remember, at the door of Lot's house. And they were so passionate in their lust for those angels that in their blindness they still tried to find the door to break it down to attack those angels.

So, and, of course, you know what happened to them, Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain were buried under fire and brimstone and that was the dominant iniquity that brought on the wrath of God.

PHIL: Now I've met people who have claimed to be Christians and want to be homosexuals as well who would say, "Well the real sin of Sodom was just that they were inhospitable. That's no way to treat guests."

JOHN: Yeah, that is really true, Phil. There is writing on that by homosexual advocate authors who say that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was the lack of hospitality. That God buried them in brimstone because they weren't very cordial to their visitors. And, of course, that just shows the ludicrous nature of those kinds of things.

You know, apart from the biblical record, common sense would tell you that men belong with women and women belong with men. I mean, it doesn't...it's not really a Phi Beta Kappa that has to figure that out, and that's very apparent.

PHIL: You made that point, I think, on Larry King. I remember very well.

Well so, that's very interesting because you've quoted now from Genesis, which is before the Law. You've quoted from Leviticus which is Moses Law. And then you quoted from Romans and other passages in the New Testament, so that's something that runs throughout Scripture. It's not just unique to Moses Law.

JOHN: No, this is a moral foundation in all social relationships and it all goes back to the Genesis account that a man and a woman would come together and leaving parents cleave to one another for life. This is God's institution and is the building block of all society. Peter calls it the grace of life. Anything other than a man and a woman married for life is iniquitous. And the most perverse kind of relationship, of course, is that which is a man and a man or a woman and a woman.

Now you have to go back also to a little bit of history and understand that from the very outset Satan has assaulted that, starting in Sodom of Gomorrah, of course, dramatically and stretching through all of human history, right out to the very end. Satan is going to assault that so that you have the mystery religions, you have Gnosticism in every single form is androgynous, it reverses the male/female roles. Most of the ancient deities of nations could be male or female. They were flip-flop deities. I mean, there is this relentless effort on the part of Satan to overturn the most normal and essential building block of human society and that is one man, one woman married for life. Any assault on that, whatever it might be, Satan is after. In fact, you see almost all the categories of possible attack occur in the book of Genesis.

PHIL: Well, I mention that because a lot of Christians seem confounded by some of the argumentation that is thrown up against the position that Scripture condemns homosexuality. They will inevitably say, "Well that's Moses' law, but Moses Law also forbids you to wear mixed fabrics. So you couldn't wear cotton and, you know, wool at the same time or in the same garment." A polyester suit, they would say, is nearly as sinful as homosexuality.

JOHN: Yeah, but you already answered that question when you pointed out that the sin of homosexuality transcends the Law. It appears in Genesis and even, as I said, going all the way back to when God created man and woman to be together to procreate, to multiply and fill the earth, one man, one woman, leaving and cleaving, that was God's original design. It never changed. You have long after the Law in its ceremonial and its civil order is abrogated in the New Covenant, the affirmation of the sin of homosexuality, as I pointed out in the letters of the Apostle Paul. So, it transcends that. It is...it is important for people to understand that when you read the Law of Moses, when you read the book of Exodus, you read the book of Leviticus, or you go into the book of Deuteronomy, you must always sort out what was moral law and what was civil law because there were things going on in those days by which God endeavored to protect and preserve His people from the evil influences of the nations around them. And the way that God did that was to restrict them civilly, to restrict them socially, to cause them to conform to certain kind of rules and habits whether they were dressed like that, the kind of fabric, whether they were dietary laws, cooking laws, domestic laws, whatever they were, those kinds of things as well as all the varying ceremonies that had some symbolic meaning...that was intended to make it impossible for the Jewish people to have easy social access to all the nations around them. And that was for their own protection so that they didn't mix and embrace the idol worshipers that were really a part of their whole world. So those were civil and social laws. And God gave those in order to protect and preserve His people so that they could effectively obey His moral laws. And, of course, because of Israel's unbelief, the captivity in the northern kingdom, 722, the captivity of the southern kingdom in 586 B.C., they're taken away and into captivity. And Babylon, as you know, they come back 70 years later but they're only a fragment of what they once were. By the time you get to the time of Jesus, the Messiah shows up, the Messiah comes, He offers the Kingdom to Israel. Instead of embracing the Messiah and receiving the Kingdom, they kill the Messiah, they kill the Prince of life, and wanted a murderer to be released to them, you remember. They are therefore temporarily set aside again. The Lord does what benefitted all of us, right? The original branch, Paul says in Romans 9 to 11, is cut off and a new branch is grafted in to the tree of Abrahamic salvation blessing. And there will be a future day, Romans very clear on this, Israel is not forsaken forever. They'll be grafted back in. But for now they have been set aside for their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is now a New Covenant community of people made up of Jew and Gentiles and for us the ceremonial and civil law of the theocratic kingdom of Israel is set aside. And we are left with the moral law which transcends that and that law clearly embraces sexual behavior. And since marriage is the model from Genesis 2, any deviation of that is a

violation of God's moral law.

PHIL: There is no neat delineation of the Old Testament between the moral and the ceremonial precepts, so...I mean, I agree with you and it seems very clear to me that the laws against homosexuality would fit in the moral category, but since the Bible itself doesn't divide it that way, how do you know that? How do you make that argument?

JOHN: Well, because whatever the institution is that transcends Israel's unique identity, I mean, if you're talking about marriage, that transcends. If you're talking about sexual behavior, that transcends. If you're talking about those things that are in the Ten Commandments, lying, and covetousness and obedience to your parents and not taking God's name in vain, you're not talking about some kind of civil conduct here. So wherever the Scripture speaks to matters that are...that are literally characteristic of human behavior, not what we wear, what we eat, how we conduct our patterns socially, but when you're talking about moral conduct, moral categories, whatever it is that God lays down, transcends the limitations of that law. But even more important than that, God has abrogated the non-moral elements of that law clearly in the New Covenant. I mean, it's sort of a symbolic thing in Acts chapter 10 where Peter has this vision, you know, and he sees this sheet full of unclean and clean animals and he's told to, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." And he says, "I can't do it." You know, he was kosher, he was raised with these restrictions and restraints. And you remember that in that vision he is told not to call unclean what God has cleansed. And with that as an abrogation of the whole of the dietary law and all the stuff that went with it, you also have the abrogation of the Sabbath law. Very clearly the Sabbath is only a shadow of things to come, we don't need the shadow anymore, the substance is here.

So the New Testament clearly abrogates those ceremonial things. I mean, ripping the temple veil from top to bottom threw away, virtually threw away the structure of temple worship. And so I think there are things clearly indicated in the New Testament that abrogate that. The moral law, however, never changes. And the reason is, the moral law is a reflection of God's holy nature.

PHIL: Right. Now you've mentioned actually a three-fold division in the Law. There's moral laws, there are ceremonial precepts and then there are civil laws as well. And this is one that sort of ties together the civil and the moral, isn't it? Because you cited a verse that prescribes the death penalty for the practice of homosexuality.

JOHN: Yeah, there were many...

PHIL: That pertains to the civil, the penalty, right?

JOHN: Well, the punishment pertains to the civil law. The conduct pertains to the moral law.

PHIL: Right.

JOHN: But what God did...now remember, Israel was a theocratic kingdom, it wasn't a democracy, it wasn't a dictatorship, it was theocratic. That is, God was the ruler and He mediated His rule among His people through the priests. There were 24 courses of priests, thousands of priests belonging to 24 orders, each of them served two weeks a year at the temple. The rest of the time they went back into their community and they were the students of the Law and the interpreters of the Law, and the local teachers and like local pastors for their people. The structure of the Kingdom, that is the law of the Kingdom, the constitution of theocratic kingdom was the Law of God. And so naturally whoever it was that enforced the Law of God would be the government, the authority. And it would be the priests who knew the Law of God and represented the Law of God who therefore were the officers of the theocratic kingdom. And so, even when an Israelite paid his taxes, he gave his taxes to the priests and supported the priests. They were the officers of the government. So in this theocratic kingdom, God established penalties for violations of His moral law. And this was a model of a perfect environment, a theocratic kingdom. Thirty-five...as I...35 different moral violations were punishable by death. One of them was homosexuality. Just to spread that a little bit, another one was disobeying your parents.

Now immediate swift death to juvenile delinquents would have a tremendous impact. Immediate swift death...

PHIL: It would certainly cut down on the number of delinquents, wouldn't it?

JOHN: It certainly would. It would...and the same with homosexuality...swift judgment. And I will tell you this, if there were today a theocratic kingdom and we were in that theocratic kingdom, those sins would be punished the same way because that is a just punishment...that is a just punishment. Frankly, the wages of any sin is...what?...is death. So that is a just punishment.

The tragedy is, however, the theocratic kingdom which God originally established began to disintegrate very early, didn't it? I mean, it didn't take very long. When God established His law, it wasn't long until the people began to fall into sin, they made all kinds of promises that they didn't keep. They disobeyed the Ten Commandments all over the place. There was capital punishment exercised for a while, and then, of course, in comes their desire for a king and they get a bad king, Saul, and the thing goes down further and David is a bright spot, at least most of the time. And then Solomon comes, the kingdom splits, and it just gets worse and worse. And what you had then was an unwillingness on the part of those who were responsible for the theocratic kingdom to enact the civil punishments. And because there were no punishments for these kinds of sins, they flourished

everywhere, adultery, fornication, immorality, homosexuality, baby sacrifice, offering your children to Molech, etc., etc., etc. And since God then removed Himself from the nation Israel, there has never been another theocratic kingdom. Okay? And that's why today the kingdoms of this world, and Jesus said the kingdoms of this world are different than My kingdom, do not punish sin the way God prescribed it. And so the question might be asked, "If we did what was right in America, what would happen to homosexuals?" And the answer is, they would be executed. But before you rush to make that law, that would also happen to adulterers and juvenile delinquents, those who disobeyed their parents. And if that had been the case for the last 50 years, this room would be a lot emptier than it is now. But that doesn't change God's standard. And in the end, folks, God gives a reprieve here and God doesn't give every sinner what he deserves when he deserves it, but eventually...right? The grinding of God is slow, but it is nonetheless effective.

PHIL: Let's be clear about one other thing, too. And that is those civil penalties are the purview of the civil government and not the church.

JOHN: Yes, because although God has endorsed government, God has ordained government as a concept, not every government is a reflection of God's will. We know that. In fact, I can't think of one government that is. Can you? We had a fairly close approximation here in the west, in America, we inherited a strong Christian influence from England and other parts of Europe, a Reformational emphases. And they even got a little carried away back then, you know, when they were killing heretics, and not just the Catholics were killing heretics, but the Protestants killed a few as well. You know, even the pedobaptists were drowning the Anabaptists. So it's not a pretty sight when men try to turn an earthly government into some kind of reflection of the divine kingdom. There will be that kingdom and when will that come? When Jesus returns and establishes His earthly kingdom. And that is promised in the Bible. The kingdom will come and the Lord will rule with what kind of rod? A rod of iron, He says, and at that point sin will be punished the way God has always deemed that it should be punished, swiftly and on the spot. And those sins which are worthy of that kind of punishment will receive it, no matter what the sin is, whether it's homosexuality, or anything else, from the very outset God has provided forgiveness, salvation and the hope of eternal life to those who repent and embrace the gospel.

PHIL: I'd love for you to keep going, and we will tomorrow, but our time is nearly up for today. We're going to continue with questions tomorrow on this topic and our listeners are going to want to tune in and hear more of your answers.

Before we go, any other comment you want to leave us with today?

JOHN: I just want to say that 1 Corinthians 6 says, "Such were some of you." You were homosexuals, you were effeminate, you were adulterers, you were liars, it goes on and on, but you were washed

and you were cleansed. And that's what the Lord Jesus offers. We're not trying to bring damnation on the head of homosexuals, we're trying to bring conviction so that they can turn from that sin and embrace the only hope of forgiveness and salvation for all of us sinners, and that's through faith in Jesus Christ.

PHIL: And, John, welcome back. Yesterday's discussion was fascinating as you answered some of the fundamental questions about homosexuality and what the Bible says about it. And I want to get right back into it. Maybe you'll be able to answer some of the practical questions our listeners have on this controversial topic.

I want to kind of take up where we left off yesterday. We were talking about the Old Testament civil laws against homosexuality, which prescribed stoning. And you were saying that that those civil laws are really not the purview of the church. When we argue for what the Bible teaches about homosexuality, we're not arguing that Christians should take up stones against our homosexual neighbors, right?

JOHN: Well absolutely right. The whole law of the Old Testament, *lex talionus*, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, was never for personal vengeance. Personal vengeance is never an option for an individual. Lynch committees and that kind of thing never are in the purview of Christian people. We never use anti-government behavior, rebellion, law-breaking approaches to get what we think is the kingdom way. Our responsibility is to recognize that God has allowed government to be what it is. I mean, God has ordained government, even the governments that we look at and say they're evil, they're dictatorships, they're corrupt, they're full of graft and crime and sinfulness and even a muddled democracy like we have that is now under the control of a dominant force of immoral and ungodly people. Nonetheless, the eternal God of heaven has not lost control. And I remind people so often that you have to go back to Romans chapter 1. In Romans 1 we have a form of wrath. If you study God's wrath, and I don't want to get too lengthy here so pull my plug here, Phil. But God's wrath comes in eschatological form, that is the form of God's wrath that comes at the end of the age when Christ comes described in Revelation and Daniel, the wrath of God comes in eternal form and that is hell, the wrath of God comes in a consequential form, that is sowing and reaping, what you sow you reap, there's some things built into life. If you do certain kind of things, you're going to reap certain kind of results.

But there's another aspect of the wrath of God and that is that Romans 1 wrath. It's the wrath of God in which He turns sinners over to their own choices. And you can see when it happens in a nation. It's happened over and over again. God's allowed all the nations to go their own way. Eventually this is the cycle. They know about God, they reject the knowledge of God, they become wise in their own conceits, they turn away from God, they become idolatrous and then God gives them over to...what? Well Romans 1:24 says, "He gives them over to sexual sin." Verse 26 says, "He gives them over to

homosexual sin." And then verse 28 to 32 says, "He gives them over to a reprobate mind." You have there three steps in divine judgment.

When God abandons a nation, when God gives a nation up to its own choices, when, in a sense, He removes restraining grace, the first thing is they will become preoccupied with sexual sin. I see that in our own country in the sexual revolution of the sixties, in the Playboy mentality which is now dominates our public media. It's not just pornography, it's in the songs, it's in the magazines, it's in the books, it's on the TV, it's a way of life. The diminishing interest in marriage, living together is the standard fare. We have literally been turned over to sexual immorality.

Step two in the divine judgment is when a society normalizes homosexuality and they do what is unnatural. Men with men and women with women, Romans 1:28 says.

And the third step is God gives them over, having given them over to sexual immorality, and then step two, giving them over to homosexuality, gives them over to a reprobate mind. That's a mind that doesn't work, that's a non-functioning mind. And that's simply irrationality. And when you get there, there's no way back because if your mind doesn't work, you can't honestly assess where you are and you can't get back. And so rather than say we need to exercise some kind of...some biblical effort to kill homosexuals or kill adulterers, or kill murderers and bring Old Testament law on the heads of people, I think we are way at the other end of this picture and we have to say, what we're seeing in our own country today IS God's work and God is not turning this into a theocratic nation, God is rather unleashing His judgment and it started with the sexual revolution and now with the homosexual revolution and then the reprobate mind. And what the reprobate mind is, is an inability to think straight, where you begin to laugh at this calamity. It's the Jerry Springer show gone berserk. And I look at that and I see that as the hand of God withdrawn.

But this is a great time to understand, too, that in the desperation of this, the emptiness is becoming more and more obvious to sinners and this gives us great opportunity for the faithful proclamation of the gospel. And I can tell you, even talking to Larry King off camera, he has said to me, "I wish I had your faith." And I don't think he's alone. I think...and he wouldn't mind me telling you that. I think there are many people who in the throes of the horrors of this are awakening to the glory of the gospel. That may not have any national consequence, but it's going to have personal impact.

PHIL: That's interesting. And there are a couple of things there I want to ask you just quickly about. So you're saying there is a sense in Scripture in which the sin of homosexuality is identified as particularly abominable.

JOHN: Yes, it is a perversion. It is not a normal sin. It is not a sin that you could...you could say is...how can I say this...sort of the front line. It's way down the line somewhere. I remember reading

an unbelievable report by Halpern who was a New York coroner in a book he wrote on his years as a coroner. He did 65 thousand autopsies. And he said he could take one look at a corpse and tell whether a homosexual did the murder because of the multiple mutilations. And he didn't know any biblical basis for this at all. But he said it releases a level of passion that is beyond anything else he saw as a coroner. And I think that's what we're saying about homosexuality, it goes to extremes that not all sin goes to.

PHIL: At the same time, I've also heard you point out the hypocrisy of those who seem fixated with this one sin, who single out this one sin and publicly protest it and so on.

JOHN: Right. Exactly right. And I think for that you go to, you know, the gospel of John and, you know, the Jews have the stones in the air and they're going to throw them down on this woman, right? That's caught in adultery and Jesus says, "Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone." You know, there are degrees of sin. I think that's true. There are degrees of eternal punishment. There is more severe punishment. But I will tell you this, the worst homosexual in the world, the most perverted homosexual in the world will not experience as fiery an eternal punishment as somebody who said he was the vicar of Christ and represented Jesus Christ and lived a hypocritical life, said he was a preacher of Christ and was a phony and trampled under foot the blood of the covenant. For them the hottest hell is reserved. And sometimes you even find those people who say they represent Jesus Christ, dress up like they represent Jesus Christ and molest children which compounds the worst of both. This is a very serious matter and what we're seeing again in our country today with this explosion of homosexuality, among those who have always purported to be the representatives of Jesus Christ is the most twisted thing imaginable.

PHIL: It's interesting because that puts the sin of false teaching in perspective. You're not saying that homosexuality is better, but that false teaching is worse. That's really a shocking thought.

Is there any sense in which Scripture calls us as Christians to be tolerant of homosexuals?

JOHN: Well it depends on what you mean by tolerant. When I was on Larry King and I was in the green room, as they call it, the waiting place before the program started, the young actor who came in to debate me, a homosexual advocate, very eager advocate, by the way, written a number of articles, and a really winsome young man and just... I liked him from the time I met him. And my objective was very clear. I thought of the... immediately into my mind I thought of Jesus and the rich young ruler and the rich young ruler was a spiritual hypocrite and he went away without ever coming to salvation. And the Bible says, "And Jesus loved him." As distasteful and horrendous as hypocrisy is, and nobody ever was more blatant about hypocrisy than Jesus, Matthew 23, I mean, He just ripped and shredded the spiritual hypocrites, and yet He could not help but love this man. And I just...I just wanted to love this guy because I...he's a sinner like I am, like all the rest of us are and I think the key for me was to

let him know that I was just the opposite of what he thought I might be, that I was not quote/unquote "homophobic" and I wasn't out of balance and I wasn't angry, I was more compassionate and concerned about his soul than anything else. And so we spent that time in there, I just let him talk the whole time, and got to know him and we established a relationship that led to my opportunity to see him, you know, on the program respond in a most tender way to the gospel which I gave him right on the air. So I think...I can't tolerate that sin, but I'll tell you this, I have a...I have a greater hatred for the sin in my own heart than I do for the sin in somebody else's life.

PHIL: That's a good thought. So it's important while we don't tolerate the sin to show the love of Christ to the individual.

JOHN: Absolutely. And that's why again 1 Corinthians 6, such were some of you. My church is filled in many quarters with converted homosexuals. We've seen them through the years come to Christ. This idea that this is genetic and you can't be cured, that is not true obviously...it's not true. It's a sin. Sin is genetic but not specific sin tied to our genes. It's we inherit the sin nature. But we've seen people come to Christ through the years and our church, I think, in many ways has a reputation for that. And I may tell the story a little bit later, but I remember one prominent young man who was a leader of the Gay Pride Parade in L.A. which is a Gay/Lesbian parade that has as many as a million people involved, one of the people who was involved in organizing that thing was dying of AIDS and he was so afraid of death and future judgment that he said to some people...he told me this with his own mouth...he said some people in his homosexual world, "I am afraid to die, I'm terrified of facing the future. What do I do?" And they told him to come to Grace Community Church. And we have that reputation that when life gets desperate and you have nowhere to turn, we have a message of hope for homosexuals. And they know that when they reach that point.

I've stood in a hospital...I remember going into a hospital room and there was a guy there...they called me and said, "Come down here and talk to this young man. He's dying." The hospital called me and they said, "He's asking for you to come." And so I went down to the hospital and I met this young man who was in the throes of death. And his parents had been Christians, they raised him in a Christian home, he had been in Christian school, but he had gotten into the homosexual world. He was the worst. He was involved in the Bathhouse Movement up in San Francisco which launched the AIDS epidemic. And here he was dying and when I stepped into the room it was just a bizarre situation. He had two of his homosexual friends there and I came in and went over to his bed and I grabbed a hold of his hand and he squeezed as tight as he could. And I said, "What can I do for you?" And he just poured out this terror and this fear in his heart, facing eternal hell. And he said, "I know what I've done is wrong, and I know I've dishonored God and Christ and I don't know if God will take me now."

I just talked to him. I said, "Do you know the gospel?" He explained the gospel perfectly. I said, "Are you ready to repent of your sin and embrace Christ?" He said, "I don't know if He'll receive me. I don't

know if He'll receive me." And I said, "Well, all you can do is ask." And I said, "Why don't you ask and then after you ask, I'll ask."

And so he just began to pray and these guys bolted out of that room. They didn't want to be a part of that. And he just poured out his heart to the Lord. And he kept squeezing my hand harder. And I prayed for him. And he again was just weeping in that hospital. And I finished the prayer and we just stood there silent for a while. And he looked up at the wall and he just stared at the clock and I said, "Well," and below the clock there was a calendar indicating the date, and I said, "What are you looking at?" He said, "I'm looking at the day my new life began."

PHIL: Hmmm.

JOHN: And he said, "Can you give me something to make up for all the lost years?" And so I gave him some things to read, I think *The Gospel According to Jesus*was jumping in pretty good.

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN: For somebody who is brand new in the faith. And he lived five days and evangelized everybody that came anywhere near him. I've seen this many times...many times. In fact, I rejoice in that and I think that has to be the attitude we have toward these people. They need the gospel. They need to be saved.

PHIL: I want to hear the end of the story of the fellow whose friends sent him to Grace Community Church because he said he was fearful. But I'll you ask that in a minute. Let me just change gears for the moment because I want to get this in. You know that the church's attitude toward homosexuality has changed, and when I say the church, I mean the visible church, not necessarily genuine Christians or the true church, but the visible church has changed so that there are many denominations now that say if we're going to show love to homosexuals we have to embrace them along with their sin and there are even denominations that...mainline denominations that have begun to ordain homosexuals to the ministry. What do you make of that?

JOHN: That's the church of Satan. That is not the church of Jesus Christ. That is the church of Satan. You know, when they say they're a church, that's not a church. I resent the fact that they even use the name and that they name Christ. In ordaining homosexuals, marrying gays and lesbians, having like the Episcopalian church a gay bishop...by the way, the word "gay" is part of the...part of the promo campaign to overturn the true designation for this sin. But that's not the church...that is not the church. That is the church of Satan, that is the corrupt counterfeit church. The true church, as you said, we understand the truth of the Word of God and we believe it. Not only that, that church is the church of Satan not only because they reject the Bible but because that movement in itself is bent on damning

sinners because it will not ever be able to redeem them, right? Because it accepts them the way they are. And the sad reality, and this is where the thing gets confusing, is on the one hand you've got the church of Satan that claims to be the church of Christ, on the other hand you've got the true church of Christ, in the middle you've got this blurred group of quote/unquote "evangelicals" who are buying things from both sides. They're trying to hold on to Jesus Christ and the gospel and some of the truth, and at the same time open their arms and embrace and be wide and accepting and forgiving and loving. This is the new marketing technique. This is what happens in a seeker-sensitive environment. You know, you don't want to offend anybody.

So... I talked to one of the staff members of the largest seeker-friendly church and I said, "If you've got a guy in your church who was a homosexual living in homosexual sin and you knew it, how long would it be before you personally confronted him about it?"

And his response to me, this is anecdotal, but he said to me, "Well, it would probably be a couple of years until he really felt welcomed."

PHIL: Wow.

JOHN: And I said, "Well, you know," I said, "that's where you and I differ. If I knew that a guy was coming to our church and he was wanting to belong and he was continuing to engage in that, I would want to confront him immediately so that he could be delivered from that sin." Furthermore, I don't think people who want to continue in homosexuality would even come to our church very long. Why would they inflict the pain of having to hear the truth all the time on themselves? But if you create an environment comfortable for sinners, then you have failed to do what God has mandated that we do. I mean, the bottom line is, Jesus was crucified because He confronted sin. But there was no other way to redeem sinners.

PHIL: One of the earliest debates you ever did, in fact one of the few debates you've ever done, because you don't do any, was with the founder of a denomination that was a church of homosexuals.

JOHN: Right, the Metropolitan Community Church, his name was Troy Perry, he's still there. Yeah, this was Decision Magazine which was the magazine of the Billy Graham organization, still is, had an editor named Sherwood Wirt. You probably remember Sherwood, he was the early editor of Decision.

PHIL: I remember.

JOHN: He thought it would be great to have a debate. And so a group of quote/unquote Christian homosexuals came and I came and I had a friend who was the starting guard for the Rams. And knowing the volatility of this group, I brought him and he was about...he was about six-four, 265, and I

just stayed really close to him. And it got very, very intense because this was the basic deal. They said, "Well, the Bible is psychologically and sociologically unsophisticated. And its attitudes about homosexuality reflect primitive understanding, lack of sociological sophistication. And it reflects the ancient biases of people who didn't really know what we know today."

And we...interesting thing happened because this guy, Troy Perry, said, "We, you know, we believe in homosexual monogamy," but I knew people who knew him and he was not monogamous and I brought that up. And at that point it got very volatile and I...they walked out. I mean, they only had two choices, to engage me physically, and have to deal with my friend, or leave. And my heart was broken over that because...and one of them was Presbyterian guy who was in training to be a pastor. And I realized that the worst situation a homosexual could ever be in is to think that his sin is compatible with salvation because that's deadly. He's worse off than a homosexual who has no connection to the church or to the true gospel.

PHIL: But it's becoming a bigger problem because in those days that was a unique denomination, it was...they were outside the main stream but this whole kind of thinking is moving in a real quick time, very short amount of time, into the main stream of main stream denominations.

JOHN: Well, see, but it fits the pragmatism of the church. Today the church is pragmatic. Today the church doesn't say doctrine is our life blood. The church says practice is our life blood. You know, marketing. What's our strategy going to be? How are we going to have the most effect of the most people? How we going to win people, draw them in and attract them? And the conclusion is that we've got to take all the offense out and homosexuality is going to be an offense because these people are rabid. I mean, look, this, to me, this sin is so perverse, it is so twisted that it takes a massive campaign to sell it to people who common sense tells this is ridiculous. And even the AIDS epidemic, I mean, how could...how could without aggressive campaigning could they ever overcome the impact of AIDS? I mean, it's staggering to think that this epidemic could come as a result of this, and they could still have the, have ingratiated themselves in our culture the way they have. So it takes a massive, massive, relentless kind of campaign and the church has succumbed to this intimidation.

PHIL: The church is following the culture. And what's frightening is that the culture is moving so aggressively toward embracing homosexuality. And in Canada, for example, it was recently...some legislation passed that adds language to their laws against hate speech that says if you speak negatively about anyone's sexual orientation, that amounts to hate speech. So in effect now, it seems it would be illegal to speak negatively about homosexuality or to call it a sin on the radio.

JOHN: So you judge, should we obey God or men?

PHIL: Well I think we ought to obey God.

JOHN: I know, so that's what we'll do. I mean, look, we submit ourselves to the laws as long as the laws of men do not cause us to disobey the Law of God. And to preach the truth is what we live for and whatever comes, comes. If, for example, the worst scenario is some station in Canada said, "You know, you're not going to be on anymore," that doesn't change anything either. Right?

PHIL: Right.

JOHN: That doesn't change anything. We have to do what we have to do and leave the results to God. And I'm content to be faithful to His truth. I know you are too.

PHIL: By the way, not to pick on Canada, it's already that way in Europe and America is moving that way at break neck speed. Does it make you concerned about the future of our society or do you see this as, in some ways, ironically opening greater opportunities for the ministry of the gospel?

JOHN: I don't know what the future of our society is as such, but I know the way the world is going, evil men are going to grow worse and worse. I mean, that's pretty clear. This society is in a spiral on a greased slide going down so fast. You know, we're getting closer to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and then there will be a theocratic kingdom and He will rule and He will rule in righteousness and peace and grace, but He will rule. I don't know the particulars about what nations are going to rise or fall, but I do believe that the darker the night, the brighter the light and I do believe it is a plus and you might find this shocking for me to say, it is a plus to see the death of a superficial kind of morality. It is, you know...I have absolutely no interest in maintaining the Judeo/Christian ethic. I think people living under the illusion that they somehow are cultural Christians is not helpful. I think sinners have to come to the realization that they are desperately...desperately sick, the whole head is sick and I think as the society gets worse and worse and sin becomes more and more dominant and pervasive, its consequences become more apparent, and I would think that this is a time for the gospel to flourish. And historically that has been true. Self-righteous people are not a fertile soil for the gospel. Jesus said that when He said, "I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." So even under the judgment of God in this kind of situation, the Lord is still going to rescue those who put their trust in Christ. This is not a time, and this is what grieves me, this is not a time for the church to change its message. This is not a time for the church to compromise. Of all times in history, this is the time to be bold and straightforward and faithful to the truth.

PHIL: And just to make that point, tell us the end of the story of that fellow.

JOHN: Yeah, Robert. He came to the church on a Sunday morning. I didn't know he was there. And I get up on Sunday and then read a Psalm, usually, or some other Scripture, but usually a Psalm. And I was reading a Psalm that day and it was about how the Lord breaks the chains and sets the prisoner

free. And I was just reading through the Psalm. And finished it and preached the sermon. Afterwards he came to me and he introduced himself. Told me his name and told me he was one of the organizers of the Gay Pride Parade. He told me he had been told he was dying now. His AIDS virus had reached the point where it would take his life. He said he was terrified to die. He said that he had asked the people in his homosexual circle where he could go in the desperation of his heart, looking at the future, and he was told to come to Grace Community Church because they knew others had found hope there in that circumstance.

And so he came. And it was really funny what he said. He said, "You got up and you read that Psalm about setting the captive free and breaking the chains and all of that. And at that," he said, "I burst into tears and I knew I was in the right place because I needed to be set free. I needed the chains to be broken." And there's a phrase in there about leading them into the way, the way out of danger and trouble. And he said, "I saw, all of that became clear to me that I had found the place to be freed and liberated and let out." And then he said, "I was ready, I didn't know where to go or who to talk to or what to do." And then he said, "From my vantage point you did a very disturbing thing, you got up there and you just kept talking and talking and talking and you gave this really long talk like almost an hour," he said, "and I kept saying to myself, why doesn't this guy shut up so I can get down there and find out what I need to do to be set free?" That was my sermon he was talking about. He said, "I don't know what you said because it was so irritating to me." He said, "I just wanted..."

And so I said, "Wow." He went into the prayer room and, I mean, his life just absolutely was revolutionized that morning. And he was transformed by the grace of Christ. And a few weeks later on a Sunday night, gave this whole testimony standing in the waters of baptism and I immersed him. And the Lord gave him a few months. And it was just before the Gay Pride Parade when all this happened. And so everybody coming down Hollywood Boulevard, he had an apartment there, all the people that were important went into his apartment to say goodbye to him because he was on his deathbed. And he had this testimony and some Christian literature which he gave to every person who came to visit him, so he was witnessing as strongly as he could. And he went to be with the Lord. I mean, that to me is the perfect story. That's...that's the thief on the cross, isn't it? A life of dissolution and sin and God's grace is so great that never have you passed His grace if you ask, even in the last hours. And I've seen that happen a few times. But never have I been told that my sermon was such an irritation as on that occasion.

PHIL: I hear that about my sermons all the time.

JOHN: I doubt that.

PHIL: But that...what's remarkable about that man's testimony is the power of the Word of God proclaimed boldly.

JOHN: Just read, just read it.

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN: You know, I've told people through the years, the Scripture is a lion, you don't have to defend it, just open the cage, it will be okay. Let it go. I mean, the Word is power, especially, of course, when the Spirit of God quickens it to the understanding.

PHIL: Thanks, John. Look, we really just have a few minutes and I'm thinking when we put these broadcasts on the air, you never know who's listening, and I'm certain there are people listening right now who are homosexuals who may feel they are in bondage to that kind of sin. Do you have any words for a person like that? What does that man or that woman need to hear?

JOHN: Well, I mean, my words would be somewhat of a summary of what I've been saying. There is hope in the goodness and the grace of God. God is in the business of forgiving sinners. He is in the business of setting captives free. He is in the business of releasing prisoners. He is in the business of washing and sanctifying and purging and cleansing sinners. That's what salvation is all about. And, you know, you if you are in homosexuality may feel that this is something from which you can't recover, that the impulses are so deep and so gripping and so dominating that you may feel, try as you have in the past, to liberate yourself from this and you've been unable to do it. And my word to you is that there's nothing too hard for the Lord, nothing too hard. But it's going to start when you break...you break open as it were your protection and you confess this as sin and from the depths of your heart you plead to be cleansed and washed and forgiven and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and the source of your salvation. And at that point, what happens is, the old life dies, the Bible says, and you are born again in a new life. And in that new life is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and therein lies the power to have dominion over that sin and to see that sin broken in terms of its power. It will always...it will always be there, and I tell people this, no matter what your sin patterns are, if you've been engaged in them long enough, the sin may go away gradually and slowly, you may find greater victory, but the memory will be there. And Satan always has a way and the flesh always is open to recycle iniquity. Do you notice that in your life? Sins you committed in the past long ago forgiven, the devil brings back the memory of those sins, sometimes even makes the excitement of those sins a sin in itself.

So there's no guarantee in this life that the memories will go away. There's no guarantee that you're going to be perfect in this life. That's not going to be true. But there will be forgiveness, there will be victory and there will be joy and peace and confidence in the forgiveness that's found in Christ. And the church will open its arms and truly embrace the forgiven sinner no matter what the pattern of the sin in the past was.

Could I just lead us in a closing prayer, Phil?

PHIL: Please do.

JOHN: Father, thank You for this wonderful time of fellowship with these dear friends. And we pray that You'll confirm to our hearts all this week that it's come from You and make us more like Your Son. May we understand Your perfect holiness and may we be holy because You are holy. To that end we ask Your strength and Your help through the Word and the Spirit in Christ's name. And everyone said...Amen.

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