

Worship Wars: The Truth, the Lies, and the Lord

2026-05-31 – Romans 1:24-32



When you hear of "worship wars" perhaps you are thinking of arguments about what we as Christians should (or should not) sing in church. But that is not what the Lord through the Apostle Paul at the end of Romans 1:24-32 has in mind. Rather, this section of God-breathed Scripture lays out the cosmic and deeper worship wars played out in earthly history and displayed all around us in our present day. In this passage, the Lord equips His people with precious truth in the face of lies. God details in His Word the nature of sins that flow from those who reject Him and offers sobering reminders about sin and sins consequences. Come prayerfully to be humbled by, in awe of and equipped with the truth of the Word of God. This truth is constantly assaulted by God's enemies outside the church and tragically, by many who claim the name of Christ and profess faith in Jesus Christ, who have snuck in Christ's church. Praise God His Word is fully sufficient, clear, powerful and entirely trustworthy. Soli Deo Gloria.

Grace and peace from God our Father, through Jesus Christ, our risen, ruling, and one day soon returning Lord, and the only Savior. Brothers and sisters in Christ, and good morning, friends. It is good to be with you on this Lord's Day to sing praises to our God, to call upon Him in prayer, and to be reoriented around His lordship through the preaching and hearing of his holy word.

I am going to pray and entrust our time to the Lord, after which I will ask you to stand as we read this morning's sermon text from Romans 1. There on the screen. Let me go before the Lord now in a word of prayer. Would you bow with me?

Almighty God and merciful Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God, we come today hungry for Your word and Your truth. We have been fed lies. We have fed ourselves lies. And so we need Your truth. We are desperate to have deception in our hearts removed, that we would walk in wisdom and step with Your Spirit to the praise of Your glory, exalting and treasuring Jesus Christ in our hearts.

God, we confess and are sorry for many sins that we have committed this week, and we cry out to You and ask that Your glorious gospel, the undeserved grace that You have given in Christ Jesus, would spread in our hearts and lives, in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our families, that true worship, God, would resound all across the Chicagoland area and throughout our beloved but broken nation.

God, we pray You do a mighty work in the lives of those who are suffering for the gospel in nations where brothers and sisters in Christ are in chains and are persecuted. We entrust them to Your loving care and pray that You would help them persevere. Help us, God, to think of them, to care for them, to do what we can to the praise of Your glory. Strengthen them, we pray, and strengthen us.

We thank You for Your holy word and how it centers us upon promises, precious and holy promises that our souls desperately need. And so God, for these friends today, please strengthen each one gathered, increase their faith, we pray, their hope and anticipation of Jesus' return, comfort those who grieve, and Lord, may You have Your way in us today, we pray.

We ask, God, that You be glorified in and through the preaching of the word. Help me and help these brothers and sisters to be attentive and mindful, and men and women of the word who love Your word and live to the praise of Your glory as worshippers. We pray this in Jesus' name, and all God's people said, "Amen".

Brothers and sisters in Christ, again, it is so good to be with you on this Lord's Day. So glad that you can be here. And a warm welcome from the brother and sister saints of Christ the King Reformed Baptist Church, your neighbor just about 10 minutes south of here. We are praying for you and are encouraged by the gospel lighthouse that is here at Cornerstone.

If you are able now, would you please stand as I read from Romans chapter 1. I'll start in verse 24 and I'll read all the way through to verse 32. Here now the word of the living Creator God of heaven and earth from Romans 1, starting in verse 24 through verse 32:

"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." (Romans 1:24–32)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

My friends, right now across every single nation on earth there is a war raging. In our nation there is a war raging. You've not heard about it in the news. It's not reported on by the press. There is a war raging in our own state here in Illinois. There is a war raging in the village or the city that you live in. There is a war raging in your neighborhood and on your street. And there is a war raging in your home and in your very heart.

What is this war that I am speaking of? This is a worship war. A worship war. Now when you hear that you might think of battles between fellow Christians in the 90s and early 2000s over which songs to select—what should we sing in church, contemporary Christian music or classic hymns or something else, those who want to sing Psalms only—these kinds of things, these worship wars where we're deciding and disputing back and forth amongst ourselves as believers what to sing. But I'm not speaking about that. I'm speaking about something far more fundamental, far more biblical.

This is a worship war that takes place in the hearts and lives of every single human being—man, woman, boy, girl. There is a worship war raging in every single heart, every person in every nation. Now this worship war is something that is deeply personal, so don't try to distance yourself from this today. Don't try to

think that's for someone else, that's not for me. As we'll see, this is absolutely something for every single one of us.

And starting tomorrow, we are going to see on much more full display one of the leading false gods, one of the leading idolatries in this nation in the hearts and lives of men and women. Dr. Jared Moore, the pastor down south, wrote the following. He said this:

“There are 75 days celebrating LGBTQ+ in America. There are three times more LGBTQ+ holidays than Christian holidays or holidays for any other religion or people group in America. The “Progress Pride Flag” in June 2023 was hung centrally at the White House between and level with two American flags, violating the US flag code. The American flag is supposed to be displayed centrally when multiple flags are displayed and it's supposed to be above the other flags.”

Moore says this as a summary conclusion: “LGBTQ+ is the dominant false religion in America.”

Add to this the fact that there is an LGBTQ Pride night celebrated amongst almost every major league and minor league sports team, with ticket sales for some teams going to organizations that support gender reassignment surgeries on minors. Drag queens are protected and promoted everywhere, even amongst children who come to these sporting events. Celebrities celebrate. Musicians and artists who are popular influencers promote and celebrate this idol, this false god, across our nation rampantly.

Of course, sin begets sin. And this perverted abomination, these perverted abominations really lead to supporting other perverted abominations. We see this all across our nation, but we have to understand something, friends. It is a worship war. There is something behind that. This is the fruit. But there is at its root an idol, at its root a rejection of God Almighty.

We cannot live in our naive bubble and say as Christians, “That’s political. Don’t be political. I came here to be a church.” My friends, understand this: that which is “political” has now made pronouncements that are seeking to redefine the word of Almighty God. They’re manipulating men and women, boys and girls, and causing untold damage, as we will see.

You have Christian music artists from the 90s and the 2000s coming out in droves—once self-professing Christians, now who are pro-affirming, as it were—and that is celebrating sin and mocking God. Groups like Plum, Jennifer Knapp, two of the three musicians/singers from DC Talk, Jars of Clay, Reliant K, Everyday Sunday, Point of Grace, Amy Grant, and more—all celebrating sin, all affirming what God hates. This is absolutely a problem not just out there, but it’s a problem inside here, inside the Church of Christ. We have a worship war raging.

Here is the main contention today from this text of God-breathed Scripture: **Since the Lord alone is eternally worthy, worship Him in truth.** Since the Lord alone is eternally worthy, worship Him in truth. Today with the Lord’s help we’re going to walk through three lies and three truths. Three lies and three

truths that I pray strengthen you, bless you, that help you to be a more faithful worshipper of the one true and living God. We're going to walk through these by looking at the lie first and then the truth.

The first lie:

Worship is done by some people but not others. Worship is done by some people but not others. Occasionally in pastoral ministry I will talk to someone and they'll say something like this: "I'm just not that into worship, pastor. I'm just not that into worship." Now taking in the best possible light, what they're saying is, "I don't like the singing of the word" or something like that. They'll say something like, "Pastor, I don't enjoy corporate or gathered organized religion." Of course, one always wonders whenever someone says something like that, "I don't like organized religion," if they would prefer disorganized religion, right? It's one of those strange things. What would they prefer?

But understand that whenever someone says, "I'm not into worship," in a very fundamental sense they should be, on the spot out of love, corrected. Why? Because worship is not merely done by some people. We've seen this in previous weeks: *"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."* (Romans 1:21–23)

The context of Romans 1 is a worship context, and it is saying that all humanity—not just Jewish people—all of humanity, they are worshippers. Worshippers of either the one true living God, the Creator, or of something or someone else—something in creation, something less than God, something that God made: an image bearer of God, a human being, or something else—an animal or an idea.

That's the lie. The lie is that only some people worship but others don't. But the Truth is: **worship is done by everyone. To be human is to worship.** That's the truth. To be human is to worship. We've seen this from the context here of Romans 1. Only God the Creator is deserving of all honor, awe, and thanks. You are either wisely worshipping that worthy Creator or foolishly worshipping the unworthy creation. You're not in the middle. You're not standing on the fence deciding where you're going to land. It's either worship of the one true living God or worship of something or someone else.

You have to have this understood and clear in your mind and heart. An idol or the Lord. The King or the King's creation that cannot save, that cannot sanctify you or make you holy, that cannot rescue you, that offers no eternal hope, that is meant to bring this King glory and honor, yet you have made ultimate. You have made final. You have given slavish devotion to. You have said this is worthy of my life. It's worthy of my attention, my money. It's worthy of all that I am to sacrifice for this—this thing, this person, this idea, this dream, this ambition.

Make no mistake about it, most people who are worshipping idols today are worshipping something that God created and that is good, but it's not meant to be worshipped and given the glory that it is due by idolaters. We all worship.

Consider the smattering of quotes from theologians and thoughtful pastors throughout church history who have pressed this point home. Martin Luther: "Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that really is your God."

Jonathan Cruse wrote an excellent book, “What Happens When We Worship”. And here’s what this brother pastor said: “The truth of God is suppressed. We saw that earlier in Romans 1, but worship is not.” Cruse says this: “We will worship whether we like it or not, because this is how we were made. The least religious people in the world are still worshippers.”

By the way, if you have a hardened atheist friend, this is always a free one you can do with them. “I’m not into worship. I reject God,” this kind of a thing. You do worship, and you challenge them and you love them and say, “You are a worshiper. You just don’t know what you’re worshipping, so you’re doubly deceived.” You love them, you press them enough to say, “No, no, no, we will not let you off the hook with that. I don’t care how hardened you are, you are a worshiper. You just don’t know what you’re worshipping yet.”

A few more quotes. Dr. D.A. Carson, my seminary professor, said this: “Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator God precisely because He is worthy—delightfully so.”

And G.K. Beale, who wrote probably the leading scholarly work on worship in the last decade or so, said this: “Do we realize how almost exactly the Baal culture—that is, false idolatrous worship in the ancient Near East when Israel was around and God was speaking to them through the prophets—do we realize how almost exactly the Baal culture of Canaan is reproduced in American church culture? Baal religion is about what makes you feel good. Baal worship is a total immersion in what I can get out of it.” And of course, in the ancient Near East, thousands of years ago, it was successful, Beale says. The Baal priests could gather crowds that outnumbered followers of Yahweh the Lord 20 to 1.

Perhaps the leading theologian of the church for many centuries, certainly one of the top 10 in terms of the shaping of the Christian church, Augustine said this: “There is a delight which is given not to the wicked but to those who worship You (that is God) for no reward save the joy that You, God Yourself, are to them. That is the authentic happy life, to set one’s joy on You, grounded in You and caused by You. That is the real thing and there is no other. Those who think that the happy life is found elsewhere pursue another joy and not the true one.”

Worship—everyone is a worshiper, sacrificing for, glorying in, delighting in, pursuing, devoting themselves to that which they think is worthy of honor, giving a weight to it in their life. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, **“Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.”** What do you speak about the most? What are you often evangelizing or telling others about? Might that be your God?

It’s a sobering reality to consider this first lie and this first truth that worship is done not by some people but by all people because to be human is to worship. Paul the Apostle makes that abundantly clear in Romans 1, the text that we are in here today. Look at verse 25 again in your Bible: **“Who exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”**

So there is one who is worthy. There is one who is blessed forever. That is the Creator and the King. And He has made Himself known and He is powerful and He is good and He has blessed us with all good things we enjoy. And then there’s an exchange that takes place, a transfer of affections, a transfer of joys that takes place in sinful human beings’ hearts and minds where we say no to the Creator. We will not worship

and serve You though that is Your due. Rather we will worship Your creation. And like the act of a fool and like the act of a blind man we run headlong into that which ultimately will destroy us.

The second lie is this: **Rejecting to properly honor God, the Creator, is harmless**. Some believe that if you reject the proper honor of the Creator, it's harmless. Nothing's going to happen. It's just your opinion. That's your religion. This is mine. This is the God I worship and serve. We're just different in that way. Different strokes for different folks. You prefer chocolate. I prefer vanilla. These kinds of things. It's all relative.

That's a lie. A lie straight from the pit of hell that is dragging hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of people right here in the Chicagoland area alone down to hell. Rejecting to properly honor the Creator God is absolutely not harmless. Rather the truth, **the second truth**, is this: **Rejecting to honor the Creator causes devastation**. We are talking about untold devastation. The history books have not contained the devastation because it's so massive. No record of human history paints a clear portrayal of all that has happened, the devastation to human hearts, to relationships, to people, both spiritually and forever. There is untold earthly and eternal harm that happens when you reject the proper worship of the living Creator.

And too often Christians are easily manipulated. A few lines are thrown about tolerance and don't be a bigot and be kind. The truth is manipulated. And Christians get stirred up to think, yeah, we are supposed to be kind. And then what happens? What's sacrificed for that version of kindness? Well, truth is sacrificed on the altar of worldly kindness and being nice. It's a temptation for every single Christian in the United States of America today, even those who think, "I'm strong in the Lord, I have a steel spine." You have a relationship, you have a friend, you have a family member who says something, they cry, they weep, they tell you something and you are tempted to compromise in the truth of God's clear word. Don't pretend that you're not, my friends. And if you haven't been there yet, you will be—to feel the pull, the temptation to reject the proper honor that is due to the Creator, and you'll think nothing can come from if this individual just embraces an alternative lifestyle or worships and serves another God that's slightly different from the one true and living God. After all, they're really nice.

No, my friends. Reject the lie. Reject the lie and embrace the truth. Embrace the truth that the Creator is worthy of worship but also rejecting to properly honor the Creator causes devastation. It destroys. It divides. It is not neutral at all.

Romans 1:24 speaks about this idea that their bodies would be dishonored among them. What kind of devastation does this cause? Well, the text of Romans 1:24–32 tells us three times we have this language of "God gave them over," "God delivered them over," "God handed them over" (your translation might say).

- Verse 24: God gave them over in the lust of their hearts.
- Verse 26: God gave them over to degrading passions.
- Verse 28: God gave them over to a depraved mind.

This is highlighting a spiritual, relational, personal devastation. You reject the proper honor of God, you don't give Him thanks. God will give you over to your worst vices. It's not just a passive "I'm gonna let them go." It's more than that. The divine almighty God of heaven and earth—He's not kicking you in that direction. He's watching you go that way and shake your fist at Him and you're pursuing that. And what's

happening is God is saying to the sinner who has already rejected His lordship, who has already shaken the fist in the hand of the Almighty time and time and time again, “You are not worthy. This thing over here, this creature, this creation that is worthy—that is God—that is ultimate.” And God is saying the worst vices, the worst sins, that which pollutes you, that which destroys you, that you want, you can have, and you will have.

There’s a spiritual, relational, personal devastation to rejecting the proper honor of God.

Sometimes people say things like this: “God’s going to judge us. God’s going to judge our nation. God’s going to judge those who practice such things.” And I understand what they’re saying. There is a sense in which there is an ultimate eschatological—that is, future-oriented—judgment that will come on judgment day, on the day of the Lord. That’s a real category in the Bible. But understand this: Romans 1 makes it plainly clear that the wrath of God, as we saw a few weeks ago, is revealed on earth from heaven as sinners pursue and love and embrace and walk in their sin. In a very real sense, the judgment of God is already here. And so do not say one day God’s going to judge, one day God’s going to judge. No, my friends, that is the judgment of Almighty God. It is a partial judgment, a reminder that a future judgment is coming, but that is in a real sense the judgment of Almighty God. When sinners idolatrously love their sin and pursue that worship and then bear the fruit of this sin that leads to death, it is, in a very real sense, the judgment of Almighty God.

There’s also a creational, societal, national devastation as sinners reject God. Romans 1:26 and 27 says this: ***“Their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural. And in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another. Men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”***

This is a creational, societal, national devastation. You destroy the family, you destroy that basic foundational block of a society between a man and a woman that come together in marriage, and you wreak untold damage upon a nation. And we see this all throughout human history. There’s a pattern there to this.

A number of years ago, a man named Pat Conroy wrote an article highlighting and detailing the pain of his own divorce, the pain of what that was like and the loneliness and the sorrow. Perhaps some of you have experienced that. And if you have, we’re praying for you. We’re so glad that you’re here. We’d love to connect with you and share that burden with you, encourage you in the Lord. But this man, Pat, this is about 50 years ago, actually, or almost 50 years ago. And in this article, he said a line that has stuck with many of us. He said this: “Every single marriage that ends in divorce is the death of a small civilization.” That which was supposed to give life and lead to life and abundance and blessing was devastated by sin. And all across this nation you have this undoing, this unwinding, this assault on the family, this assault on marriage.

We shouldn’t be surprised. In Ephesians 5, the Bible tells us very clearly that it is a picture of Christ and His love for the church. Would the enemy of our souls, that master deceiver, that murderer from the beginning, would he want that to be something that the world sees—healthy, God-honoring marriages? No, absolutely not. There would be an effort to undermine that at every turn. So there’s a creational, social, national devastation.

This is highlighting the fact that lesbianism is unnatural. Two women desiring one another sexually is wicked. It is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God. It's highlighting the fact that homosexuality—desiring someone sexually of the same sex—is wicked. It's an abomination to God to desire someone sexually of the same sex. This is plain in the text of Scripture.

Some liberal scholars have tried to explain this away. They have tried to say things like this is highlighting some temple cult practice. This is highlighting not the same thing we understand of two loving monogamous relationships. That's not what's being highlighted here. But my friends, the Scriptures could not be more clear. In the Old and the New Testaments, homosexuality is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God. It is wicked. It is something that God punishes nations for, as Leviticus 18 and 20 detail. It is something that He punished Sodom and Gomorrah for. There was a number of sins there—inhospitality, not caring for the poor, not caring for those who are hurting and abandoned—but also homosexuality. That was a very clear vice and sin that was walked in and hated, and so God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire.

We should not misunderstand the nature of this because it is so devastating and there are so many lives today of your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers who are being devastated and crushed by this. The late Voddie Baucham says this: *“Homosexuality mars our view of the image of God by denying the complementary relationship between men and women. It denies procreation, one of the principal purposes for which God designed marriage and sex. It blasphemes the illustration of Christ's self-sacrificing love for His church, and it violates clear commands of Scripture. Hence, while all sexual sin is an expression of idolatry, homosexuality is a step further down the road of depravity.”*

That's a plain teaching of Scripture. One of the things we cannot lose sight of is the fact that there are many who think they are loving and kind. There are many who think that they are loving and kind to those who they affirm and applaud and pursue of their own sexual sinful vices, particularly when it comes to LGBTQ+. And it's a travesty. It should be repented of. It should not be winked at or coddled. To be clear, it should not be viewed as this unpardonable sin. But too often when pastors and brothers and sisters in Christ in the true Church of Christ speak about homosexuality, they actually have this effect of leading it to die the death of a thousand qualifications, so it's not clear. Voddie Baucham said that years ago. And he said too often when we talk about this sin, unlike any other sins, we speak about it in this language. It acts as if there's something holy to this sin. There's not. It's a sin and we're straight about it and we say this is a sin. It is wrong, it is wicked, you need to repent of it.

But we also have to warn people who would claim the name of Christ especially and who would reject the lordship of Christ and the clear teaching of the Bible. A leading authority on the matter of homosexuality in the New Testament, New Testament scholar Robert Gagnon, who was at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for a long time, in his massive tome *“Homosexuality in the Bible”*, said this: *“It is not a kindness for a parent to allow a child to play with a scorpion or touch a hot radiator, nor is it a kindness for the church to give its blessing to forms of sexual expression that, as Paul notes, degrade the body created by God.”*

You are not loving at all but actually full of hate towards that neighbor who you are affirming in their sin. Hear it. Repent. Call out to God for mercy. He will forgive you. And tell the truth to that person in love. Not

arrogantly, not self-righteously, not because you're better than them. You're not, you're a sinner too. But do not lie to them. Do not affirm them in the path that will lead to destruction.

It is devastating to think about what happens when we reject the proper honor of the Creator. It is far from harmless, and in point of fact, it is devastating. It causes relational and it causes spiritual and personal devastation. It causes creational, social, and national devastation. It also causes rational, logical, and eternal devastation.

Look there in your Bible at verse 32. We read of these list of vices and it says the following: ***"Although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."*** Your translation might say "applaud" those who practice them.

Think of the person who's walking towards a cliff. They can't see that they're about to fall down and be utterly crushed. They're just walking, reading on their phone probably in this day and age, right? So many people on their phone like this, walking. You can see there's a cliff there. There's a hole. They're going down. Would you be loving in the slightest if you did not say anything? You did not shout and say, "My friend, turn away, stop!" When it comes to eternity, when it comes to facing the Judge and the Creator and the King, we allow someone to walk in their sin, to embrace in their sin. We don't warn them. We don't love them and say, "Turn, repent, go a different way, come to Christ." We don't do that. And how much more unloving, how much more wicked are we if we don't warn those who are on their way to destruction?

My friends, it causes untold earthly and eternal destruction. Notice what the Scripture tells us in verse 27. It says this: ***"Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due."***

Many have noted that tragically our neighbors who identify as LGBTQ, but particularly those who are males, they have far shorter life expectancies with many of them dying in their early 40s on average. There's untold devastation in their lives in terms of sexually transmitted diseases, all sorts of social pathologies that ravage their bodies, alcoholism, abuse. That's because vice promotes vice. Sin begets sin. You cannot contain it. If you make room for some sin in your life, you make room for more sin in your life and it will grow and it will grow.

Do not reject so arrogantly and pridefully the worthy worship of Almighty God, the Creator, the King. Do not reject His word. Understand the devastation that it leads to, both here on earth and forever. Matthew Poole, a commentator of another generation, says this: ***"How meet (that means fitting), how fitting was it for they who had forsaken the Author of nature that they should be given up not to keep the order of nature."***

And retired pastor in the United Kingdom, Geoffrey B. Wilson said this: ***"Today, the increasing prevalence of sexual perversions is a dreadful mark of God's wrath upon civilization which glories in its post-Christian character."*** That's happening today in the United States of America, my friends. That's happening across many Western nations in Europe. And it is a sad reality that we are nations under the judgment of Almighty

God. Yes, we recognize we have been incredibly blessed, but there is a brokenness that only Christ and the gospel and serious revival and reformation to the word of God can cure.

That's the second lie—that it is harmless to reject the proper worship of God. No, no, no. It causes devastation.

The third lie and the **third truth** are these: **Without true worship people walk wisely in truth.** Sometimes we think and are tempted to think in our flesh that neighbor seems very nice, they seem very good, they have their life together, they pay their taxes, they pay their bills, they're not rowdy. But they are a sinner. They are a sinner who needs Christ. And if they reject Jesus Christ, do not be deceived by the outward niceties you see in their life. Do not think that without true worship people will walk wisely and consistently in the truth. They won't. It's not a question of if but when they will leave the path of walking by the common grace of God in a path of wisdom and righteousness. They will embrace sin. They will embrace their folly. They will embrace their sin all the way to judgment.

And we are those who have the good news of Jesus Christ. We are those who can and should proclaim to them: My friend, do not believe this lie. You cannot reject God and think that you will walk in His wisdom. That's not the way that life works.

Too often what happens in our lives is we find ourselves speaking a lot about the sin of others and the sins of the world. It's easy to do that, to be the critic. Sin, sin, sin, sin, sin. But we are not just bad news people. We're not bad news people. We're actually good news people. We're people with good news. Amen? We're people with good news, brothers and sisters in Christ. And so we tell people this, **the truth: that without worshipping God, the truth will walk out.** You cannot maintain a close relationship with truth and rationality and walking in wisdom while rejecting the Creator God, who is truth, who has given wisdom, who is the source of wisdom.

Romans 1:28 in your Bible says this: ***“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”***

Years ago, I was at a pastor's conference and pastor in South Carolina now, Kevin DeYoung, told a humorous story where one of his sons (he has nine children and they love to sometimes play pretend church a number of years ago). And one of his sons stood up, the others were down in the pews that were the floor. He stood up on a pretend podium, five-year-old young son or however old he was, and he said, “Good morning, church. You are all sinners. Let us pray.” A strong doctrine of sin, but more needed to be said. And of course we laugh at that because it's a young boy who's just imitating his father, but the truth is too often we can just say sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, and we don't talk about the rescue from sin found in Jesus Christ.

It is too easy to point out this mistake, that mistake, this error, this wickedness. And we should, to be absolutely clear, call a spade a spade. We should not overly qualify where sin is actually found. We should not wink at it. But we should also not distance ourselves from the fact that we are a part of humanity and we are a part of Adam, that we too are in sin and we are bound for hell apart from God's grace in Christ.

And you have to say, do I believe that? Do I believe that and do I practice that? Do I actually tell myself and my family? Do I tell my neighbors, worship of the true and living Creator God, it is essential, it is not optional. And if you pursue idols, if you pursue these things, if you wrap yourself up in an idolatrous identity—LGBTQ+—you call yourself gay, this or that, and that is to be sure, friends, an idolatrous identity. That's what that is. It's saying this comes before in Christ. This comes before being one who follows Christ and has been saved by God's grace in Christ.

We tell people worship is essential. There is a worship war raging and you need to come to faith in Christ today. You need Jesus. You need His grace. You need His rescue. He will forgive you. He will sanctify you. What does the Scripture tell us in 1 Corinthians 6? The Apostle Paul says it so clearly: ***"Such were some of you."***

We offer hope that is unrivaled to those who identify as LGBTQ+. The Church of Jesus Christ must become comfortable with the fact that there will be many who are, yes, victimized by this movement. Far too many of us forget that. There will be people who come in these doors who have heard the gospel of God's grace, who've been radically saved by this gospel as the word through the Spirit has saved them. And they don't know the first thing about following Christ. We need to disciple them. We need to love them, come alongside them, offer compassion to them, speak the truth in love with them, absolutely. Bear that burden with them.

But the Church of Jesus Christ has to be prepared, has to be prepared and equipped to handle what is going to come inevitably because of the lies about worship in the world. And we go forth with those who love the truth. We love the fact that God has created us in His image, male, female, for His glory. We love the truth that though we are great sinners, God's grace in Jesus Christ is greater, is stronger, is more powerful. There is a power greater on this earth than sin.

You look at the number of people, celebrities, people in this nation who are in high positions, who seem to wink at, ignore, or celebrate sin, particularly the abomination we've been looking at today. And it grieves us and it can intimidate us. But I love this quote by Dr. Owen Strachan who said this in the introduction to a book by Jared Moore, "Lust of the Flesh". Strachan says this: *"There is a force in the cosmos far more powerful than sinful desire, potent as it is. The force is the goodness of God, the overpowering mercy, the all-conquering grace of God that flows from Calvary to us. Christ's death means the death of our sin and the defeat of the devil. Christ was crucified for us, Christ was resurrected for us, so we live now in the power of Christ and battle the flesh every day of our existence."*

There is hope, there is good news for those sinners right now who are enslaved in untold wicked vices. There is great shame out there amongst so many, and the gospel comes as a healing balm to pull those sinners out, to say there is a Lord who will receive you and give you mercy and give you a new hope and a future and a new forever family in the Church of Jesus Christ.

But we cannot, my friends, walk on this earth as those who are not fully committed to worshiping God in spirit and in truth. We have to reject the lies. We have to counter them. Yes, with grace and truth. Yes, with love and wisdom to the praise of our God. Not an ounce of self-righteousness. The Word of God does not allow us to come at these sinners pridefully and point the finger and be like, "You, how wicked." We come with compassion, the compassion of a Savior. And we come with His truth and we say, "My friend,

those are sins. The sins that you are embracing, those idolatrous identities that you are walking and wrapping your life up in, do not do that. Flee that. Turn to Jesus Christ. He will forgive you.”

But too often, Christians get intimidated. They’re not willing to pay the cost. But this is the cost of being a Christian in the United States of America in the 21st century. There will be slander. You’ll be ridiculed and looked down upon. We are forgetting here what’s going on in our nation. We think there’s one political party who embraces this, there’s another who doesn’t. Don’t be so naive, my friends, to think that this can be solved by some vote, the ballot box. It cannot be the case. It does not mean we’re unengaged with those matters at all. But consider this. It’s a sobering stat when it comes to those who might get caught up in thinking there’s something in the ballot box we can do that would actually overcome this. Just a few years ago, there was a vote taken and 49 Republicans voted to confirm—Congressmen voted to confirm—the fact that marriage could be not between one man and one woman, but defined ambiguously.

We cannot put our hope in any kind of political party, any political movement. We put our hope in Jesus Christ and the gospel that saves. We put our hope in the fact that God does save sinners. And again, we walk in wisdom in this world. We reject the idea that we are on this world and there is neutrality when it comes to worship. We love the truth of God’s Word. We walk in the truth of God’s Word and we confess our sins.

If you’re here today and you’ve been a coward, too intimidated to speak up about the truth of God’s Word, recognize that God, according to the Apostle Paul to Timothy, has not given you a spirit of timidity, but one of power, love, and self-discipline. You might be thinking, it’s not worth it to speak up at my job. I just got hired. I cannot speak up now. I don’t want to lose this job or this promotion opportunity. My friend, Jesus Christ is worth it. He will be with you through it all.

We cannot redefine or minimize or be embarrassed about the straightness with which our God speaks about the truth of sin. We also cannot be those who dishonor God by affirming others in their sin or bless them in that or confuse them in that. We need to repent of that if we’ve done that and God will forgive us in Christ Jesus. Praise God for that.

Understand this, friends: You do not love but you hate those enslaved in their idolatry if you affirm them in it. You’re not tolerant. You’re not open-minded. You’re not choosing kindness. Rather you are intolerant of God’s truth. You’re closed-minded against the Lordship of Jesus and you arrogantly mock the Creator if you claim to love better than He does.

This is a serious, serious thing that the Church of Jesus Christ is significantly underdeveloped in its discipleship to handle. Too often the pulpits are silent, they’re cowards, they’re quiet, they come off too harsh, self-righteous, legalistic, or they ignore it altogether, or they compromise and cave with the world. We can’t be any of that. We have to let the Word of God shape us and mold us. We have to let the Spirit of God through the Word of God set the agenda and drive us.

This truth will drive us. This truth is sufficient, sufficient for all that we need in this life. Understand again, there is a force in the cosmos, as Owen Strachan says, far more powerful than sinful desire. We know this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We read it a few weeks ago. The gospel is the power of God to salvation for all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles.

So my friends, go out equipped with this. The Lord God of heaven and earth has entrusted to us this gospel, this good news for a world that is enslaved right now to all sorts of sins and vices. We have good news for them. There's a cost to sharing this good news, but as you walk on this earth, as you proclaim this King and the lordship of Jesus and the rest you found in Him alone, my friends, you will never regret for a second giving honor and glory and worship to the God who has revealed this truth and publishing this news widely to the praise of His glory.

Let us live as true worshipers on this earth. Let us pray.

Almighty God and merciful Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we thank You so much for the gospel hope we have in Christ Jesus. We pray we would be more than ever compassionate men and women committed to Your glory, driven by Your lordship, devoted to Your truth. We need, oh how we need, revival across this nation. We need and we long to see our neighbors who are at war with Jesus repent of their sins and join us here in another faithful church where they are worshiping King Jesus.

God, make us bold, forgive us for timidity and help us, God, and strengthen us by Your Spirit through Your word to be those who proclaim the truth of the gospel, who proclaim the liberation and the deliverance that You alone can give. For God, though You are the God who gives people over to their sins, You are the God who saves sinners by Your grace. Thank You, God, for that, we pray. In Jesus' name, and all God's people said, "Amen".

Scripture References:

- Romans 1:24–32
- Romans 1:21–23
- Matthew 12:34
- Romans 1:25
- Romans 1:24
- Romans 1:26–27
- Ephesians 5
- Leviticus 18 and 20
- Romans 1:32
- Romans 1:27
- Romans 1:28
- 1 Corinthians 6