

## The Cure for a Deadly Virus

You have all heard about the great health hazard created by the coronavirus. Both the United States and other countries have limited flights to areas of China where the virus originated. And people who have visited these areas and return here are put in limited quarantines in an effort to curtail the spread of this deadly sickness. What if someone came up with a vaccine to cure those suffering from the coronavirus? How much could they charge someone who was dying for a shot of that vaccine? A thousand dollars? \$100,000 per shot? A million dollars? The truth is that there is a sickness far more pervasive and deadly than the coronavirus—and it is a sickness that has spread worldwide. And there are people who have the sure cure for that mostly deadly of all sicknesses. Do you know what the cost of that remedy is? Nothing—absolutely nothing. The cure is completely free of charge.

And with that being the case, I found it astounding that a doctor of sorts was ready to deliver a much needed supply of this death-defeating medicine to various parts of Great Britain to help stem the tide of death. And yet the citizens of several towns and cities there in Britain raised such an outcry against this man that those who had invited him to come did a 180° turn and refused to let him come. While the coronavirus is splashed everywhere in the news, little has been reported about this most deadly sickness. Have you heard about this? What is this deadly disease, and who was the one willing to carry the cure to these dying people there in Britain? Well, the disease is commonly known as “*sin*”. And its chief symptom is open rebellion against God and an utter refusal to follow His commandments. And the

death that this sin causes is that same eternal one in Hell that I mentioned last week. And the person who was denied access to parts of Britain was the evangelist, Franklin Graham—who is the son of Billy Graham. The life-giving medicine that he offered was Jesus Christ through the Good News of the Gospel. And why were so many of the British people opposed to his coming? Jayne Bryant is one of the members of the local government for the town of Newport West in Wales, where one of Graham’s revival meetings was cancelled. She justified the cancellation on the basis that Graham has “*a long record of preaching hate, prejudice and intolerance*” that is unacceptable to the LGBTQ community whom she supported. Similar justifications were issued in the cities of Liverpool, Glasgow and Sheffield, England.<sup>1</sup> Rev. Graham responded on his Facebook page to those unfounded complaints by Britain’s LGBTQ community and explained: “*The rub, I think, comes in whether God defines homosexuality as sin. The answer is yes. But God goes even further than that, to say that we are all sinners—myself included. . . My message to all people is that [through Jesus Christ’s work on the Cross] they can be forgiven and they can have a right relationship with God. That’s Good News—The Gospel is inclusive. I’m not coming out of hate, I’m coming out of love. . . [I invite] everyone in the LGBTQ community to come and hear for yourselves the Gospel messages that I will be bringing from God’s Word, the Bible. You are absolutely welcome.*”<sup>2</sup>

Last week, we covered some basic Bible verses to lead us in witnessing to others. And we want to do this, as Peter said, “to give the reason for the hope”<sup>3</sup> we have in Jesus Christ. When you give those reasons, quite often the person to whom you are speaking will offer

some objection. And in today's society, one of the biggest objections against Christianity will be that "*Christians are anti-gay*". In other words, they are saying that "*Christians hate homosexuals*" and wrongfully accuse them of being sinners. And, you might be surprised who will hit you with that kind of response. Many of you have not only children and grandchildren, but great-grandchildren as well. All of them are being indoctrinated by our secular society with the view that homosexuality is a natural lifestyle—as morally acceptable as any heterosexual relationship. When your grandchild boldly throws that view in your face and angrily tells you that the Church's view on human sexuality is archaic, you don't want to stand there with some stunned look on your face. You need to be prepared to state the Christian position with gentleness and respect.<sup>4</sup>

And in order to do that we need to understand something. We need to understand the difference between *temptation* and *sin*—because there is a big difference in having a "*same-sex attraction*" vs. actually taking part in *homosexual activity*. Same-sex attraction is the temptation. Actively participating in a gay lifestyle—that's the sin. It's an important distinction that we need to be mindful of when witnessing to a member of the gay community—particularly if it is someone struggling with that issue. So, how do we define "*temptation*"?

Well, "*temptation*", broadly speaking, is defined as "*the enticement to do evil*" instigated by Satan, who is the tempter<sup>5</sup>. In other words, it is the invitation given by Satan to induce you to commit sin. Satan has an excellent track record when it comes to tempting human beings. In fact, with the exception of Jesus Christ who never sinned<sup>6</sup>, Satan is batting 1000 in successfully tempting and causing

every human being who ever lived, including you and me, to sin. Satan uses temptation to destroy a person by leading him or her to sin thereby resulting in their death in an unrepentant state, all of which lands them in Hell. That's Satan's game plan. Sin, on the other hand, is acting upon the temptation by rebelling against God—typically, by failing to obey His commandments. Or as the Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary puts it—Sin may be defined as the: *“Actions by which humans rebel against God, miss His purpose for their life, and surrender to the power of evil rather than to God.”* So, you can see here that being *“tempted”* is not what *“sin”* is. Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness<sup>7</sup>, but that does not mean Jesus sinned. He did not. Rather, He resisted the temptation and, therefore, never sinned.

In fact, temptation can be a positive thing for those who stand firm and hold to God's commands. The Apostle James tells us about this positive aspect of temptation and then goes on to vividly describe the negative side for those who give into temptation and move on to sin: “God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and He never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.” James

1:12-15 (NLT2) This is absolutely critical to explain to someone who may be struggling with same-sex attraction. Why?—because they think that the very fact that they have a sexual attraction to the same sex is, in and of itself, sinful. And because of that, some of them feel that they

might as well give into a gay lifestyle simply due to their inability to suppress those feelings. In other words, those feeling must prove that they are hopeless sinners—they tend to think. But, that is not the case. That same-sex attraction—that is the *temptation*, not the *sin*. They are not doomed by that attraction, but are called to resist that temptation—as very difficult as that may be.

All of us have things that tempt us more than other things do, and we know how difficult resisting temptation can be. But, we need to remind those to whom we witness, as well as reminding ourselves, that overcoming temptation will win that “*crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him*”—to again use those words from James. And so it is for someone who wants to be a Christian, but is struggling with these sexual temptations. The temptations that people face regarding sexual sin are tremendous. But, we need to assure them that those temptations are never too great for anyone who calls upon the Holy Spirit for help—for God’s grace is always sufficient<sup>8</sup> to enable us to overcome any temptation, whatever it may be.

Now, with all of this in mind, let’s get down to our witnessing to them. When you are witnessing to someone, they may ask you—as being a Christian: “*Why you are “so anti-gay?”*”. Well, some of those who ask that may not have much of a biblical background. So, you will want to be able to point them to the numerous places in God’s Word that says *homosexuality is a sin*. And we do this, *not with an attitude of judging or condemning them*, but to inform them of the dire consequences of their gay lifestyle. Let’s say that you have the lifestyle of a world traveler. And you had traveled to Wuhan, China. And for whatever reason, you just loved to visit Wuhan. And so, you were

determined to keep right on going back to Wuhan, even after the corona virus originated there. You'd just throw caution to the wind and keep going back. In all likelihood, you'll get sick with the corona virus. And if you don't do something about that kind of lifestyle, you may well die. Likewise, continuing to engage in a gay lifestyle without repenting will certainly earn you a place in Hell—just as any other sinful lifestyle will do. *“Where does the Bible say this?”* they may ask; or, *“Isn't that just an Old Testament notion that no longer applies?”* they may inquire. Well, it's certainly in the Old Testament, but it's also stated unambiguously in the New Testament that homosexuality is a sin.

For example, Genesis 19 gives the story of the men of Sodom who threatened Lot with great harm if he didn't turn over to them the two visitors he was sheltering in his house. In case you have any doubt as to what these men of Sodom had on their minds, the Scripture is quite graphic in describing what happened. Genesis 19:4-5 informs us: “Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.’” (NIV) These gay men of Sodom could not have chosen two worse visitors to pick on because they happened to be angels sent by God to see if Sodom was really as morally bad as some people had complained. Of course, the angels found it to be beyond redemption and basically nuked the place. Jude 7 in the New Testament summarizes what happened: “And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's

**judgment.**” Jude 1:7 (NLT2) That’s how seriously God considers the sin of homosexuality.

Now there are a variety of other scriptures that state very explicitly that homosexual conduct is a sin. Leviticus 18:22 is pretty clear: “**Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.**” (NLT2) This is reiterated in *Leviticus 20:13*.<sup>9</sup> In the New Testament, Paul in his letter to the Church in Rome makes it clear that both homosexual and lesbian relationships are sinful.<sup>10</sup> Again, in one of his letters to Timothy, Paul notes that homosexual acts rank right up there with such sins as murder, kidnapping and habitual lying.<sup>11</sup> And because of that, the Bible teaches that those who embrace an unrepentant, gay lifestyle will be barred from entering heaven and will find themselves spending eternity, not just with their gay friends, but with many more *heterosexual* fornicators and adulterers, along with a host of thieves, greedy people, drunkards, partiers and swindlers. If you don’t believe that, read 1 Corinthians 6:9.<sup>12</sup> So there is absolutely no question about it, those who practice homosexuality are actively engaging in sin. And because of that, we need to be able to witness to them. We need to tell them that God loves them and wants to save them from the wages of sin which, as we know, is eternal death in Hell.<sup>13</sup>

But in witnessing to them, keep this in mind. We love to hammer down on *homosexual sin*, but *heterosexual sin* is probably a thousand times more prevalent in our society—men and women shacking up, living together outside the confines of marriage: *That’s a sin too*. Homosexual sin and heterosexual sin are *both great sins in God’s eyes*. And this leads us to what I really want to talk about—not that what I’ve

just mentioned from God’s Word isn’t important. It surely is. But, if we truly want to give both the homosexual sinner and the heterosexual sinner the “*reason for the hope*” that we have in Christ, then we need to understand what the Bible tells us about *sex and marriage* because it is absolutely one of the core beliefs of our faith.

If you read Genesis 2, you will find that Adam was living there in the Garden of Eden surrounded by great natural beauty and all the wonderful animals of the world. Materially, he had everything he needed. Yet, something was definitely missing. There was a great void in Adam’s life—so great that God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” Genesis 2:18 (NLT2) And so, what God proceeded to do was to create *woman* from the very rib of Adam. And, in seeing this perfect partner who filled that void, Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” Genesis 2:23 (NIV) He and she were the perfect match for each other—every emptiness that he felt she filled, and all her longings were met by him. And so they married and became husband and wife, and something amazing happened as Genesis 2:24 goes on to explain: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (NIV) Did you catch that?—*One flesh!* The two became one, each complimenting the other as only the pairing of a *male and female* can do. The man was not the same as the woman, nor was the woman the same as the man. But, together in marriage, *they completed one another* in a manner that neither one could ever do on their own. And this first couple set the pattern for every generation since then, where the sacred marriage bond is something that God blesses in recognition

of that “perfect fit” between the two who become united as one. It is a oneness “*physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually,*” all because God “*designed it to work that way.*”<sup>14</sup>

And there is a reason for this. You see, the marriage between a man and a woman is reflective of something extremely sacred—something that is at the very core of our faith. *It is reflective of the very nature of God.* In *Deuteronomy 6:4*, it tells us: “The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” (NIV) We know this to be true. And, we also believe in the Trinity—which describes the *oneness of God*, yet in the undivided threefold nature of *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit*. It is a divine mystery beyond our comprehension as mere humans,<sup>15</sup> and yet this *oneness of flesh* referred to in the Book of Genesis to describe marriage is a reflection of this *oneness of God*. And so the sacred institution of marriage not only serves to satisfy human sexual desires, or to provide the practical benefit of human reproduction as children are born of the marriage—but it also serves as a clue to us that begins to reveal what the holy “*oneness of God*” is really all about. The oneness of the marriage *between a man and woman* is reflective of the nature of the “*oneness of God*” in the mystery of the Trinity.

The same, however, cannot be said of a gay marriage. This “*oneness of flesh*” can never be achieved by the union of a *man to a man*, or a *woman to a woman*—those pairings can never become “*one flesh*” in the eyes of God. And, they certainly do not reflect in any way the “*oneness of God.*” But, the union of a *man and a woman* in marriage goes even farther than that. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, makes reference to that same passage in Genesis that we

read earlier and writes: **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking *ABOUT CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.*”** Ephesians 5:31-32 (NIV) Holy marriage not only reflects the true nature of God, but it also reflects the relationship of “*oneness*” that Jesus Christ has with the Church. Jesus, of course, does not need the Church, but to achieve our own completeness as members of the Body of Christ<sup>16</sup>, *we must be one with Him.*

And so, this reflection that the marriage of a man and woman has on the nature of God, as well as upon Jesus’ relationship to His Bride—the Church<sup>17</sup>—are two of the principal reasons that Christians who honor God’s Word are so resistant to the *false notion of gay marriage*. For in the eyes of God, it does not reflect His sacred nature, but rather the sin-stained nature of the fallen world in which we live. And we, indeed, live in a fallen and broken world. But, we don’t make the world any less broken by treating something that is a sin as if it were acceptable in God’s eyes. Accepting sin and rejecting God’s Word only contributes to the brokenness. It would be like deliberately taking that trip to Wuhan, China, and then walking around without a protective mask in a crowded public building with sick people all around sneezing and coughing water droplets infested with the coronavirus. And just standing there and taking a deep breath of that cloud of virus as if it were a good thing. Do that and you’ll get sick and you might even die from it. Homosexual sin, heterosexual sin and sin in general will bring death with even more certainty. And yet the vaccine is free. Choosing God’s way instead of the world’s way doesn’t cost a dime. Obedience to God’s Word—that’s the only way to cure the sickness of sin.

**It's tragic that some of those towns and cities in Britain are refusing to hear Franklin Graham's message. It would be sadder still if someone in our own community—a friend, family member, co-worker, whoever—yearned to hear the truth about human sexuality, but we didn't know what to tell them. Always be ready to give everyone an answer for the reason of the hope you possess. Our hope of salvation is in Christ Jesus. Be faithful. Know His Word and be a witness to it to others.**

**So, having said this—Are Christians anti-gay? Well, let me put it this way: If a doctor makes the trip to Wuhan, China to treat those stricken by the coronavirus—does that make the doctor anti-Chinese? I don't think so. So, in our witnessing to others, Christians need to take on the role of doctors, and not so much the role of judges, when it comes to approaching homosexuals. After all, we have the only vaccine that can heal them. It also happens to be the only vaccine that can heal us as well. The name of that vaccine is Jesus Christ, and this is His medical library [holding up the Bible]. What more do you need to witness to the gay community? What more do you need to witness to the world?**

**Let us pray.**

Forest Hill Baptist Church  
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Darvin Satterwhite, Pastor  
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<sup>1</sup> Anugrah Kumar, "Franklin Graham's UK tour: LGBT activists pressure more venues to pull out," Christianpost.com, February 3, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> See 1 Peter 3:15 above.

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 4:3 And the **tempter** came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (NASB) See also: 1 Thessalonians 3:5.

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest [Jesus Christ] who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. (NASB)

<sup>7</sup> See Matthew 4:3 above.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9 [Jesus told Paul:] "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> Leviticus 20:13 If a man practices homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman, both men have committed a detestable act. They must both be put to death, for they are guilty of a capital offense. (NLT2)

<sup>10</sup> Romans 1:26-27 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. (NLT2)

<sup>11</sup> 1 Timothy 1:8-10 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, (NASB)

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (NASB)

<sup>13</sup> Romans 6:23.

<sup>14</sup> Sam Allberry, [Is God anti-gay?: And other questions about homosexuality, the Bible and same-sex attraction](#). The Good Book Company: India (2015), pp.17-18.

<sup>15</sup> Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 5:23 For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. (NLT2)

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready. (ESV)