

The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity #2

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Many of you will know that last Lord's Day evening I announced that I was beginning a brief series of studies on the subject, the divine antidote to sexual impurity. And I began that message by seeking to sketch in the cultural setting in which our New Testament documents were given to us. And I attempted to show how relevant those New Testament documents are in the light of the present state of our own culture. In Romans 12:2, the people of God are commanded not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. As we are called to the life of a non-conformist, the Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul tells us that that non-conforming lifestyle has its taproots in the ongoing transformation of our minds. We must think aright if we are to walk aright. And therefore, I am seeking to set this brief series of messages in a thoroughly Biblical and theological framework by enunciating several basic propositions before moving on to a more direct dealing with some of the texts in 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Thessalonians 4, and possibly several texts out of Romans 6. But I'm convinced that it's only as we think in terms of the broad Biblical teaching about this matter of our sexuality that we will be enabled by the grace of God to have our minds transformed that our lives may be well-pleasing unto God. And so we considered two propositions last Lord's Day. Proposition number one: our sexuality, including or desire and capacity for sexual pleasure originates with God and not the devil. And we went right back to the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 to establish this proposition. Proposition number two was this: the God who designed us and created us with our sexuality is the only one who has the right to determine and to impose upon us its legitimate functions. Just as God designed man and created him with an appetite for food and had every right to prescribe the sphere in which man would satisfy that appetite ("of all the trees you may freely eat, but of that tree you may not eat"), so God established in the garden the only legitimate framework for the physical sexual expression of the sexuality of a man and woman when God brought Eve to Adam. And God Himself pronounces this fundamental structural truth about human sexuality: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife [within the covenant of marriage], and they two [not three, not four, not outside of that covenant] shall be one flesh."

We come now tonight to consider the third and final proposition, and it is this: the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and will certainly result in the damnation of hell. Now, I know the words sound hard, almost caustic, but more gentle words will not do justice to the teaching of Holy Scripture. For when we turn to our Bibles, as I hope to demonstrate in a few moments, we are indeed driven to this proposition. Now, what I propose to do in our time together is first of all explain what I mean by the keywords in this proposition. Secondly (and this will take the bulk of our time), to demonstrate the Biblical foundation for that proposition. And then thirdly, to make some necessary applications to the various categories of men and women, boys and girls gathered in this place tonight.

First of all then, an explanation of the keywords. The proposition begins with this statement: the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin. What do I mean by sexual sin? Well, I do not mean what society at any given point in its experience will designate as sexual sin. Nor do I mean what we as individuals might like to define as sexual sin. But what I mean by sexual sin is any indulgence of one's sexual desires contrary to the revealed will of God. And as we shall see in our study of the Scriptures, God has revealed His will in this matter of our sexuality in general revelation. There is that which God has revealed in what Paul calls in Romans 1 "nature," but more particularly in His book of special revelation, the Bible. So when I state in this proposition, the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in practice, by sexual sin I mean any indulgence of one's sexual desires contrary to the revealed will of God. Now, what do I mean by the words willful, impenitent indulgence? I've chosen those words deliberately because there are few of God's children who did not struggle with the sin of sexual impurity: impurity in the mind, impurity in the memory banks of the mind, impurity of inordinate and ungodly desires, looks, and even deeds that are displeasing to God. The Bible records the wretched, tragic sins of incest among the Godly. It records the sin of adultery in the life of that man after God's own heart. And so it would be wrong to say that the indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or practice will bar a person from heaven. I'm not saying that. This is what I'm saying; this is what I mean: the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin. What is willful, impenitent indulgence? Well, it's Indulgence that grows out of a Romans 8:7 heart. In Romans 8:7 the Apostle Paul writes,

"Because the carnal mind [the prevailing disposition of heart and spirit in every one devoid of the Holy Spirit; everyone who is only what he was in virtue of his natural conception and his natural birth; has never been born of the Spirit of God; united to Christ by faith] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

By the words "the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin," I mean to describe this disposition that says, "My body is my own. I don't care what God says. His 'thou shalt' and 'shalt not' are of no account to me." I think it is most tragically expressed in one of the best sellers that came out of the intensification of the so-called feminist movement in the 70s, a book that was read by the millions, *Our Bodies Our Own*. And the whole philosophy of that book was to try to tell women, "Your body is your own. No man, nobody in society, and certainly nobody called God has a right to tell you what to do with your body, particularly as a sexual being." And I will not tell you what the substance of the book is about. It is shameful to speak about it. But that's the disposition. If you want a crass expression of it, turn with me to Revelation 2, for here we have a description of what I mean by the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin. As the Lord Jesus speaks to the angel or the messenger of the church in Thyatira, he writes,

"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" (vv. 21-22).

God says, "I called her to forsake her sin, but she wills not to forsake her sin." That is willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin. We have another example of it in Revelation 9:20-21 (and I take the time to do this because we are treading on a razor's edge in the conscience of men and women, boys and girls, and we dare not be careless):

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass,

and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

"We want to murder, we shall murder; we want to steal, we shall steal; we want to indulge in sorcery, we shall indulge it. Our bodies are our own; our sexual standards are those which we make. And even the God in heaven who sends plagues upon us can be ignored. We have nothing to say to Him."

That is what I mean by willful, impenitent indulgence. I am not speaking of the true child of God who may struggle with impurity of mind. He doesn't need to pick up a pornographic magazine. He has a file drawer of pornography in his own head from his own past or her own past. He may have to do as one man said in my presence on one occasion, "I have to go to the Lord Jesus 100 times a day and say, Lord Jesus, cleanse my mind." I am not saying that a person who struggles continually and struggles intensely with the temptation to willfully indulge sexual impurity in the mind or in practice is barred from heaven. God forbid that I should any such thing. I'm not talking about the person who as he or she began to develop into puberty felt out of it. They were not normally and naturally drawn as others were with the same degree of desire to heterosexual interest. And they find themselves tempted to homosexual or lesbian attractions. But with all of their might, they fight against it, and they cry out to Christ for help and grace. I'm not speaking of such. Please, please--I beg you--listen to me! The proposition is the willful, the impenitent indulgence of sexual sin in the mind or in practice. I'm not talking about the teenage boy or girl who struggles with indulging autoeroticism, who struggles with making his or her own body to be the terminus of sexual pleasure, and struggles and wrestles and stands and falls. In God's name, struggling saint, don't let the devil lay a false guilt trip upon you. I begged God that I wouldn't be such an instrument. Please listen! Here's the proposition: it is the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or in the practice. What do I mean by in the mind or in the practice? I mean in your heart or in your life. It's not enough that's there's no man or woman who can point to you and say, "You have had illicit sexual contact with me in your body." You must be able to say, "By the grace of God, I am not indulging willful sexual contact in my mind with any living creature but my legitimate spouse." It's not a matter of mere external conduct. It has to do with the heart as well as with the hands. It has to do with the inner man as well as the outward man. And by the term "will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell," those words need no explanation. They mean exactly what they say. Heaven will be barred and hell will be opened to anyone who willfully, impenitently indulges in sexual sin.

Having stated the proposition and explained the key words, now secondly, let me set before you the Biblical basis for this proposition. And now we're going to look at seven texts in the New Testament. We start with the words of our blessed Lord in Matthew 5:27-28. Here our Lord is not changing the meaning of the law He gave upon Sinai. What He's doing is stripping away all the veneer and all the encrusting that the Pharisees had put around God's law so that the true significance of the law will be known and understood by His hearers. So He says,

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery [and those who said this and taught it were externalists. They were formalists. The heart did not matter. All that mattered was the hands and the bodily parts]: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her [everyone who looks on a woman with an intent to lust, to desire her as a sexual partner] hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

If the heart goes out with the inordinate desire and the look feeds that desire, the only thing that keeps that man from actually physically committing adultery is circumstances and perhaps secondary motives. But if he indulges it in the heart, God reckons it as though it were the deed. He has committed adultery already in his heart. And as if someone was to say, "But Lord Jesus, if that's what that law requires (heart purity), then we'd have to gouge our eyes out not to look and lust." He says, "Very well, then gouge your eyes." Look at the next verse: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee [why? This is a matter of heaven or hell]: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Cast into hell for what? For going out and actually spending a weekend in a motel with woman other than your wife? No, looking with an intent to lust. The hands may never touch; the mouth may never touch; other bodily parts may never touch, but hell will be your portion if the mind has consented to the sin. That's what Jesus said. Do you see it with your own eyes in your own Bible? What this generation says are "innocent fantasies." That's what they call them--"healthful fantasies," fantasies feed by the hours Monday to Friday with the soap operas when frustrated young and middle-aged women vicariously enter into the heavy-breathing scenes on their favorite soaps. They sublimate all the frustrations of their real relationships into this fantasy world. When men ogle their *Playboys* and their *Penthouses* and all of the other slick, vile girlie magazines. They indulge willfully and deliberately adultery of the mind. Jesus said the punishment is hell. That's what Jesus said. And He doesn't mean we can deal with this sin by literally plucking out the eye, because blind men can lust as well as sighted men. If you will to lust in your heart, you don't need two eyes to do it. You can conjure up the images with this amazing faculty called the human mind and imagination. Jesus is using this as a figure of speech saying at any cost stop it, or you'll burn in hell. I said the language is going to be blunt. You young men, listen to me--I beg you in Christ name. You women, whose souls are being bartered by the glut of filthy magazines and filthy programs, filthy television, filthy, filthy everywhere you turn--here's the issue: heaven or hell. The willful, impenitent indulgence of sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell. Jesus goes on to use a second figure: "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (v. 30). The man who says, "My body is my playground, mind and members, to use as I please." You'll find that God doesn't conform to his judgment in the day of the great judgment. Jesus is dead in earnest. This proposition is born out by the words of the Son of God.

Now turn to Romans 1. Because this passage has been preached on in recent years by one or two visiting pastors, I will only remind you of the leading lines of thought and urge you to reflect upon it at your own leisure. As Paul is demonstrating the universal need for that Gospel which is the power of God to salvation, he begins in chapter 1 and verse 18 with these words: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [suppress] the truth in unrighteousness." And then he goes on to say that what is known of God in general revelation they will not embrace. Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. And what they know of God and what they see of God's works would never lead them to represent Him in an image of man, of beasts, of creeping things and of birds. They would know this great God who made all that is about them and all that is within them. This God cannot be rightly represented by something that they make with their hands. And so they make themselves fools and become idolaters. What does God do? Verse 24: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." From the heart to the body--do you see the connection? God gave them up to the lust of their hearts unto uncleanness that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves. Why?

"[For they] changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up [to coming of age where they are no longer in bondage to puritanic and Victorian morality--that's what we're being told, but that's not what the Holy Spirit says] unto vile affections [passions that are dishonorable--and what is brought into sharp focus?]: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (vv. 25-27).

And what is the sum statement of all this? Verse 32: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." They gain full acceptance for their deviant sexual behavior, but it doesn't change the mind of God. His wrath is still being revealed. And when you hear of evangelical homosexuals and evangelical lesbians, you must rear back on your hind legs and say, "No! There is no such character or beast on God's earth." The evangel delivers homosexuals and delivers lesbians and delivers adulterers and fornicators. But it does not cause them to go on in their deviant sexual behavior saying, "God smiles because God understands. God made me the way I am." Yes, He did. He made you male or female. And the natural use of the man must never be exchanged for the natural use of the woman. God holds men culpable from what's obvious just from nature with no special revelation. A man need never hear the words, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" to know. And this is why in many pagan cultures that don't even frown upon fornication, yet frown upon adultery. The very essence of the two-one flesh relationship is such that when a covenant of marriage has been made, men regard it an unnatural and culpable intrusion into that sacred sanctuary when someone dabbles with another's husband or another's wife.

A third passage: 1 Corinthians 6. You remember as we've been reading through 1 Corinthians, Paul has had to take up a number of practical concerns with the church at Corinth. And here he's beginning to address the problem of believers going into heathen law courts against one another. Verse 1: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" Now keep this in mind: he describes the unconverted, the non-Christians, as the unrighteous. Now come down to verse 9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" He says,

"You Corinthians, in the light of what I'm having to deal with, maybe you've forgotten something: that if your lifestyle, if the pattern of your life is like that of the Gentiles, the unconverted, if you professing Christians enter into a pattern of behavior that is decidedly non-Christian, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

"O, but wait a minute, Paul, we're Christians. We've made professions of faith; we've been baptized. You baptized us. You were the preacher that lead us to Christ." Paul says, "Don't you know the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Now look at the next three words: "Be not deceived. [Let no one tell you that a willful, impenitent pattern of unrighteousness that parallels the lifestyle of the worldling is consistent with ultimate entrance into the kingdom of God at the end of the age.]" Then he's going to be specific: "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Write it down. Let it be indelibly stamped upon the chambers of your mind and the walls of your heart: the willful, impenitent indulgence of sexual sin in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly

result in the damnation of hell. Look at the ones that he names: "fornicators," the broadest term for the sexually impure. There's a family of words, and it's the generic term for all forms of sexual impurity, every expression of deviation from God's sacred law concerning sexual practice and thought and disposition. Don't be deceived. One whose lifestyle is that of a fornicator is not going to have any inheritance in the kingdom of God--period. No discussion. No talk about "Well, aren't there carnal Christians, and won't there be just some who lose a few rewards." No, he says that if you're a fornicator, you'll go to hell. That's what you need to know. "Neither fornicators nor adulterers." "Adulterers" is the narrower term. It means the violation of the marriage covenant, a violation of the sanctity of that sanctuary of marital intimacy, and that can be violated in a number of ways. And any pattern of willful violating of that sacred sanctuary--don't be deceived, such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Then there are two more terms: "nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind." It's difficult to ascertain precisely the meaning of these two words, but the general field among lexicographers and linguists is agreed that it refers to male prostitutes, homosexual offenders. Some say, in one case, it's the broader term of someone who prostitutes himself as a homosexual prostitute, and the other being the more aggressive homosexual. But the words are unmistakably clear. Hence the American Standard renders it: "nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men." Write it down; be determined not to budge, that anyone who willfully, impenitently practices homosexuality, male or female, in the mind or in the body shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Now, Paul did not say, "Those who struggle with homosexual or lesbian tendencies; those who sign no peace treaty with those tendencies; those who with all of their heart long to be kept from the indulgences of those tendencies in mind and in spirit--God does not bar those from the kingdom any more than He bars the person who struggles daily with a quick temper, and someone else who struggles with a hypersensitive or hypercritical spirit, or someone else who struggles with covetousness, or someone else who struggles with pride. Don't for a moment--anyone sitting here who feels inwardly red in the face at the mention of homosexual and lesbian--my friend, God does not exclude you from the kingdom if you are trusting in Christ and wrestling with your temptations in the strength of Christ and with Gospel motives drawn from the cross and the power of the Spirit of Christ. It is those who willfully, impenitently indulge in these sins that have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Now Ephesians 5. Let God be true and every man a liar. The Apostle in these last three chapters of Ephesians is giving practical application to these Christians as to how they are to live an alternate lifestyle in the fellowship of the church and in the face of a watching world, and says in chapter 5 verses 1 and 2, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love [there's the central command. Do that in the context of being imitators of God], as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." We're to walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Now look at the next words:

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know [if you know anything beyond your own name, Paul says know this], that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (vv. 3-6).

Could words be plainer? You can imagine how everything in me wanted to wretch and to vomit on the very paper upon which the print was found when someone has the audacity to

say, "I've come to such a discovery of the love of God and the love of Christ that I can now embrace my homosexuality with thankfulness and pride and say that Christ has never been more precious to me since I moved in with my homosexual lover." I've seen the words with my own eyes. I wanted to puke on the paper. This letter was sent to a whole state of friends shamelessly. That preacher in England a few months ago said, "The two greatest mistakes I made were getting married and going into the ministry." He leaves a wife and three grown children to live with his homosexual lover. Shameless! Why? Somebody has deceived them. "This is love. God's love accepts me for who I am. And if you love, you'll accept me for who I am."

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love." What kind of God? The God whose wrath falls upon the sons of disobedience. That's the God we're to imitate. And a love that is not mushy and unprincipled and caves in to the latest pronouncements of sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical doctors. As I've told people, it wouldn't bother me one bit if it can be unmistakably proven that most homosexuals have some genetic predisposition to homosexuality. It wouldn't bother any more than if they discovered that some people have a predisposition to addiction to alcohol. Others may have a predisposition to punch everything that moves in the face, and others a predisposition to be unusually passionate. Some men have higher levels of testosterone than others. Shall we say that if your level is above this, fornication and adultery aren't sin? Nonsense! In God's name, dear people, pray in these passages; memorize them; load your conscience with them. Be prepared to do what the Apostle says we are to do: "...fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." If you've been set apart from sin unto God, you've left these things as the pattern of your life. And you are, as in the language of verse 11, to "have no fellowship [no koinonia, no participation] with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." And I've cried to God, and one of my fellow elders cried to God before this meeting, that I would be chaste and discreet in what I said. It's shameful to even speak of some of these things. But the world is not silent; it's speaking to you all the time. It's speaking to you in Ally Mcbeal plots where everybody is neighing after someone else's woman, and every woman is neighing after someone else's man. In the spate of teenage sitcoms that have hit the major networks in the past several years, they're always giving the impression that fornication is nothing to be concerned about. It's like scratching your ear when it itches or blowing your nose when it's running, a very natural, normal, acceptable physical reaction to certain urges. No, my friend, the proposition is true: the willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sins in the mind or in practice will bar a person from heaven and will certainly result in the damnation of hell.

There's a parallel passage in Colossians 3. I pass over it, and I want you to turn with me now to Jude verse 7. There's some so-called evangelicals who say the crowning sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality, because through one of the prophets God speaks of Sodom's great sin being self-indulgence and inhospitableness, and totally ignoring the context in which God is addressing, not literal Sodom and Gomorrah but His own nation. They conveniently overlook passages like this that confirm Genesis means exactly what it says, that God sent hell out of heaven upon a society that had become so obsessed with what Jude calls "strange flesh" (other kinds of flesh). No longer satisfied with the flesh of a man and a woman in the sanctity of marriage--men with men; women with women; bestiality--vile, filthy sins. Listen to the Word of God: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh [fallen in and ranged themselves behind every path to strange flesh], are set forth for an example...." We're being told the example is what a society is like when it gets rid of its puritanical morality.

"We are to be proud Americans. We have shed the shackles of puritanic morality. Lift your head high as an American." No, as Pastor Smith said tonight, "We hang our heads and we blush." Why? We are a nation given over to strange flesh and to fornication. Sexual impurity is part of the American way of life. Talk to anyone who goes to a third world country where they export American television, and it's one huge river of moral pollution. I understand that 80 channels of that pollution funnel down into Trinidad. That's what my son-in-law told me-- he just visited there. I've seen it in the Philippines, and I almost want to put on a foreign accent and change my passport. Dear precious young people, it is not a sign of maturity and advanced moral sensitivity and awareness to call it anything other than what God does: fornication and strange flesh. And what has God done in sending hell out of heaven upon the cities of the plain? "[They] are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Sodom and Gomorrah are a preview of hell that awaits people who go after strange flesh and who give themselves over to fornication. Jude is not speaking about those who fight against it; who mourn and grieve the tendencies toward it; who apply every Gospel principle to mortify it. No, he's not speaking of you, my dear brother, my dear sister, young man, young woman, older man or older woman. He's speaking of those who, in the language of our text, give themselves and go after. The willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell.

Then in the book of the Revelation, our final witness, a text again that I would urge you to memorize. Chapter 21 gives a beautiful description of the redeemed earth after the coming of our Lord Jesus and that mighty conflagration (described in 2 Peter 3:10) when the elements will melt with heat and the Lord will renovate this old earth and bring in the new heaven and new earth wherein dwells righteousness. John is describing that in chapter 21. And after this glorious description, he then says in verse 7, as if someone asks, "But, John, who will be there?"--and he says, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." Will that mean that God who made all men will eventually be the loving Father of all men and confer upon all men the blessings of this new heaven and new earth? John says,

"[No!] But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers [fornicators, the sexually impure, the sexually licentious (those who will not have God's restraint placed upon their sexual passions and appetite in mind or in body)], and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

When the devil stokes the fires of your sexual appetite, young people, and you're tempted to indulge, remember this: no matter how difficult it may be to mortify the fires of passion stoked by a wicked devil, they are nothing compared to the fires of hell that will consume your body and soul if you give yourself to the life of a fornicator and do not repent. Ask yourself, "Will I bare the tension of unquenched, fiery passion now in the grace and strength of Christ, or will I give myself to those fires to be thrown into the eternal fire?" You need to ask yourself that. People mock at the day when young people used to think, "I must not indulge in personal sexual sin and fantasies and personal sexual gratification and adultery and fornication because I'll burn in hell." That's laughed at now as a silly old grandma's notion. God's no silly old grandma God, and He hasn't changed His Word. And God says that fornicators as well as murderers, the fearful (those who make an idol of their friends, an idol of their associations and will not be identified with Christ and bare His reproach), the unbelieving, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and the liars shall have their part in the lake of fire.

The final witness from the book of the Revelation is chapter 22 and verses 14 and 15:

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. [There are those who will be washed and made clean who will have a God conferred right of entrance into that blessed city.] For without are dogs [what a wretched description. To someone in that culture, the dog was the essence of the unclean beast], and sorcerers, and whoremongers [ask yourself the next time your passions rage within you, 'Is it worth this momentary gratification to be put without with the dogs?'] You need to ask yourself that, because that's what the Scriptures say], and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

I could bring in other texts, but if these seven texts do not persuade you that this proposition is drenched in Biblical perspectives, I don't know what will. The willful, impenitent indulgence in sexual sin in the mind or practice will bar a person from heaven and certainly result in the damnation of hell.

I've stated and sought to explain the key words in the proposition; I've given you this survey of these seven basic Biblical texts; now I come to my final applications. And the first application is this: knowing and believing this proposition that I've laid out before you, supported from the Scriptures, applied to your conscience will not change you if you are presently indulging in sexual sin. There isn't enough in the Bible about the terrors of hell to scare a man away from his sin unless the grace of God through the Gospel works in him. You see, what I've been basically doing is preaching the law, and the Scriptures say, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4). Knowing this cannot change you if you're indulging in sexual sin. The law has no such power. But I hope it has awakened you to realize what you're trying to believe from the den of society's message in your ear is but a loud echo from the pit of hell spawned by that one whom Jesus described as a murderer and a liar. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth. And he's seeking to damn some of you with the lie that what Mom and Dad taught you and what your conscience instinctively tells you to this hour, that your personal sexual fantasies are sin; that your personal sexual gratification is sin, because it's outside the bounds that God has established. And that actual physical relationship you sustained with that woman or that man is sin. What I've simply been trying to do by opening up the Scriptures is to persuade you that the voice of God that's been thundering within your own breast, that you've been seeking to stifle--you ought to listen to it, because that voice has been answered by the voice of God speaking in His Word. And the voice within and the voice that's come without is the voice you'll hear in the day of judgment. It's not the voice that your own indwelling, vicious corruption is mouthing; it's not the devil's voice that will be the arbitrator of your destiny in the day of judgment. It's the voice of God that's been speaking in your conscience and has spoken in the Word of God to you tonight. And though that voice exposing you, letting you see yourself stand naked and exposed before God, doesn't save, you'll never be saved until you are exposed.

The second thing I want to say is: however, knowing this should drive you to Christ who can forgive; who can cleanse, and--blessed be God-- who can empower you so that you will no longer be a slave to those sins. He can cleanse. Matthew 1:21: "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save [deliver, rescue] His people from [out of, away from] their sins." Christ can deliver. He says in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And when Paul wrote to the Corinthians after that description of the lifestyle that's inconsistent of being in a state of grace, he says in verse 11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord

Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." He said you were washed, which may be a reference to the external, symbolic washing of baptism. I won't go into the debate, but the next two things are clear: you were washed; you were sanctified; you were justified. You were set apart from that realm in which your sins were your master, in which you were bound by the cords of your own iniquity. You were taken and set apart from that realm unto God in Jesus Christ. You were sanctified; you were justified: declared righteous as though you had not broken any of the Ten Commandments, let alone the Seventh, and more than that, as though you had perfectly kept them all of your life. And how did this happen? He said this happened in the realm of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the realm of the Spirit of our God, the revelation of God's grace and mercy in the person and work of the Lord Jesus and the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit. He said this is what effected the change. And my dear friend, young or old, you may be held with cords of sexual sin that you've despaired would ever be broken--I have good news! If you're sitting here convinced they must be broken or you'll be damned, go to the Christ who can brake the chains, can wash and cleanse you, sanctify you by His almighty Spirit, justify you on the grounds of His own perfect obedience to the law and His death under the curse of the law. I love the text in Matthew 12:31. My mind was drawn to it in my preparation for tonight. So often the text is used to debate what is the unpardonable sin. When in the midst of Jesus dealing with that subject, there is one of the most precious Gospel promises: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men...." Am I speaking unto some tonight who have descended even unto bestiality. Perhaps you've indulged in homosexual fantasies and practices. You have defiled your body and the bodies of others, and you say, "How could God take a filthy wretch like me?" Listen to Jesus, "I say unto you, Every sin shall be forgiven unto men." You say, "O, but Pastor, you don't know what I've done." Yeah, I don't know, and I don't want to know. But are going to tell Jesus He didn't know those sins when He dared to make this promise and have Matthew put it in the Word of God? He knew all about your sins. Don't argue with Him. Every sin shall be forgiven. Go to the place where forgiveness is found. It's not in you; it's not in me; it's not in this church or any other church--no sacraments; no rituals. It's in a person. His name is Jesus, and He's the mighty deliverer. You go to Him and going to Him, He says, "He that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." Knowing what we've preached tonight will not change you if you're indulging sexual sin. Secondly, knowing this should drive you out of yourself to the Christ who can forgive, cleanse, and empower you.

And my final word of application is this: knowing this, that is, this truth we've considered embodied in this proposition, resting down upon these texts of Scripture, knowing this with God's blessing can be a means to keep you from the erosion of your conscience in this sex-soaked generation. I'm particularly burdened for you dear young men and woman. I look out into the world in which you've been reared, and it's not right for people to say, "Things are always the same. The older people always think things are worse." You face issues that I never faced. You face a glut of--think of the shameful mess of our president when words I never even heard used till I was a grown adult were on the news every night, and little children asking mommies and daddies, "What does this mean? What does that mean? Who's Mona Lewinsky?" There were no *Playboy* magazines and all the other stuff that makes *Playboy* considered soft, soft, soft pornography. That wasn't around. I've told God more than once I feared to think where I'd be if I faced the temptations some of you face. There's no hope for you if you don't get these texts into your soul and pray God that this stuff will become part of the very fabric of your being. Then let the tidal waves of ungodliness, impurity, and foul uncleanness beat upon you, and you'll stand firm in Jesus Christ, in the strength of His Spirit like a Daniel refusing to bend no matter what the pressure. There was a

poem that I made available to the men, I think at a pastors conference. I can't remember where, but Pastor Smith reminded me of it, and I want to close with it.

Sin is a monster of such awful mien [appearance]
That to be hated needs but to be seen,
But seen too oft, familiar with face
We first endure, then pity, and then embrace.

Do you see what the poet understood? Sin is ugly. All you need do is see it for what it is, and you know it's ugly. It's the ugly hell-creating, Christ-crucifying, devil-making moral reality. That's what sin is--ugly, ugly, ugly from head to toe and from side to side. Sin is a monster of such awful mien that to be hated needs but to be seen, that is, to be seen for what it really is. But seen too oft, familiar with its face, we first endure, then pity, and then embrace. That's what you young people especially are facing. All of us face it, but you especially. The fact that people say, "Its face is tolerable; its face is half attractive; its face is beautiful"--that doesn't make it any more beautiful than if I look in the mirror and say, "You're as handsome as Clarke Gable." It will never come to pass. Saying it don't make it. Do you get the message? When we come, God willing, in our subsequent messages to look at the principles by which Christians must furnish their minds and regulate their lives to be kept sexually pure, never forget it, there's no such thing as an innocent exposure to a rather good PG 13 movie with only four sex scenes and only a half a dozen curse words. What in the world are you talking about? You are tolerating the blatant violation of God's law and saying, "Well, it wasn't too bad." You see what's happening. When your defenses are weakened in your reaction to it out there, they are weakened to your indulgence to it in here. To react to it out there and not in here is the essence of hypocrisy. But to fail to react to it out there while you think you can react to it in here is the essence of self-deception. Do you follow me? You think about it. Some of you may be watching things on your television now that when you first saw them five years ago, you were shocked and revolted and clicked it off, and now you're watching it. And you call it Christian maturity. No, that's not maturity. That's backsliding in heart. And the Scriptures say, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways" (Proverbs 14:14). My friend, pray God will help us all to see this monstrous sin in its native ugliness, and seeing it, turn from it; ever and continually run to Christ. I've been here in this assembly for 37 years, and while there have been some tragic personal lapses among various members--unless someone has covered it, and it will take the day of judgment to uncover it--I bless God that there's never been any fall into this kind of sin among the leadership while in leadership. As far as I know, we've never had to discipline any internal involvement in sexual sins. We've had individuals who have fallen into gross sexual sin with someone outside the assembly, and there's had to be discipline. God's been very gracious to us, but I tell the pressure on this congregation in years to come are going to make the bygone years seem like kids play. And if we do not furnish ourselves with the Word of God, we're done! May God help us!

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