

**How Can God Be So Narrow... Sex is Reserved Only for Marriage?  
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The first tenet of the Confessing Church Movement is, “Jesus Christ alone is Lord of all and the way of salvation.” I titled last week’s message, “Is Jesus Christ the only way of salvation?” I shared emphatically, “Yes he is, Jesus is the only way.” Many people believe that there are many roads that lead to God. The Scripture is very clear when it states that Jesus is “the way, truth and the life....no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Acts 4:12 affirms this truth, “Salvation is found in on one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

This week I am looking at the second tenet of the Confession Church Movement: It states that “God’s people are called to holiness in all aspects of life. This includes honoring the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, the only relationship within which sexual activity is appropriate.

Last fall, the chaplains at the University of Nebraska took a survey of incoming freshman and asked them this question, “How much influence did your church play in developing your views of sexuality?” Of the freshman that were surveyed, only 2% said that their church had something to do with their views of sexuality. Here are a few of the comments that were made by the students surveyed:

- People in my church don’t believe in sex.
- Our church is boring. They don’t talk about sex or dating or marriage. It’s probably just as well. They’d make that boring, too.
- In our youth group, we talked about sex but avoided the juicy stuff.

Some of you know that I help lead a national organization within the Presbyterian Church USA called OneByOne. This organization helps the local church learn how to reach out to those who struggle with same-sex attraction (homosexuality). This organization has been in existence for 11 years. I took a look at my filing cabinet. I have five file folders filled with information about homosexuality. I have just one folder that has information about healthy biblical sexuality. That tells me something. The church doesn’t talk much about sex.

This morning I am going to talk about sex as a part of this sermon series on the on the Confessing Church. If you are concerned, this is not an R-Rated message- maybe PG but definitely not R. The reason why we should be talking about sex within the local church is because the Bible talks about sex.

The first truth I want to share with you is.....

OUR SEXUALITY IS A DIVINE CREATION - God designed it.

Gen. 2: Then the Lord said, “It is not good for the man to be alone;

I will make a helper suitable for him.” And then Scripture says....

The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Adam yearned for a partner. God created Eve by taking a rib from Adam and shaped this bone into a Woman. When God brought Eve to meet Adam, I don't think Adam said, "I bet she has a wonderful personality." He said, "WOW! Yea God! This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Matthew 19:4: Jesus says, Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning, made them male and female. He made them complimentary. God made sex up. God didn't run out of good ideas and then decided to invent sex. He made sure sex was an integral part of his original design.

I also want to say that the sexual yearnings you have are not part of the fall of humanity. They are not a part of our sinful nature. They are an important part of the created package. It is what God intended right from the beginning. Sexual yearnings are the design of your body. Sex is a gift from a loving and creative God. It is a good gift. It is a good gift for you. I Timothy 4:4-For everything that God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected. Underline the word everything. That includes your sexuality. It is part of how God made you. Sex is not dirty. It is not a necessary evil. God made everything good.

What is bad about sex? Absolutely nothing! What is bad is the perversion of sex; the abuse of sex; the misuse of sex. Satan tries to take what which is good, and perverts and twists it. He does this with our sexuality. Sex is good! We need to accept God's gift without guilt and shame.

Dr. Gwyn Waters was teaching an evening preaching class at the seminary I attended. It was a long day for me and I was nodding off. Dr. Walters was a Welshman. His sermons were preached with eloquent prose. I am sure he was making some remarkable points about preaching. I still found myself falling asleep. In my slumber I heard Dr. Walters begin to talk about his sex life with his wife. Suddenly, I woke up. Having my full attention, he stated to the class that after he and his wife made love they would hold each other and then thank the Lord for the wonderful gift of their sexuality. They told God verbally how much they appreciated this amazing gift.

The second truth I want to share with you is.....

SEX IS A GIFT. We need to be grateful for what God has designed for us. Some of you, however, may find it very hard to do be grateful. Why? You have been victims of incest or sexual abuse. You have been traumatized by sex. Believing that sex is a wonderful gift is very difficult for you to internalize. Let me suggest that if you have never sought help, you ought to find a sensitive and skilled therapist that can help you deal with your pain and heartache. The goal would be that someday you can thank God for your sexuality and for creating you a sexual being. Our sexuality is a Divine Creation. It is a gift from God.

Now, why did God invent sex? God invented sex for three reasons.

First, God invented sex to promote intimacy and unity between a husband and wife. Sex helps to bond a husband and wife together. Five times in Scripture it says....And they shall become one flesh.

In the movie "Vanilla Sky," Tom Cruise dumps Cameron Diaz. They had had a sexual relationship. She begins to stalk him. One day she finds him walking on the street and she confronts him by saying to him, "Don't you know that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise, whether you do or not?" Cameron Diaz could have been quoting the Apostle Paul who wrote, Do you not know that he who

unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh" (1 Corinthians 6:16).

Friends, there is nothing healthy about casual sex. Lauren Winner in her book, *Real Sex: the Naked Truth about Chastity*, writes that, "While we might feel casual about sex, sex itself, because of how it unites the beings of two people, is never casual." Sex unites. It bonds husbands and wives together in an exclusive way.

Second, God invented sex to provide enjoyment for the husband and wife, for the mutual pleasure of both. Please hear me, God created pleasure, Satan didn't. The pleasure we receive when we eat really good food, or smell a rose or make love is from God. Judy and I were invited by a couple from the church to join them last night to watch the musical, *Riverdance* at the Academy of Music. How wonderful it was to have our senses stimulated by extraordinary dance and music. This performance elicited great pleasure in us. God created music and dance. He created sex for our pleasure too.

Often during a wedding service I will talk about the Song of Solomon. I will say that God wants you to be romantic; he wants you to enjoy one another, spiritually, emotionally and physically. Have you ever read the Song of Solomon? It's about love and romance. Let me read some passages to you. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out (Song of Solomon 1:1-3). How beautiful you are, my darling. Oh, how beautiful. Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead, Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of pomegranate. Your two breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies. (Song of Songs 4:1,3,4).

Third, God gave us sex so that we could produce children. The very first command that God gave to us is, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. That is the one command we have definitely fulfilled.

Those are the reasons why God gave us sex. The sad thing is, the only benefit for most married couples is the third. Often couples have children, but there is no sexual enjoyment in their life. There is no sense of unity or intimacy. Sexual intimacy is more than just having children.

The third truth is.....

Sexual expression is reserved only for marriage between a man and a woman. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thess. 4:3, It is God's will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable. It doesn't matter if you are 15, 25, 35, 45 55, 65 or whatever age, God wants us to be sexually pure. Paul says, I urge you...that you would be pure, holy, sanctified in all that you do, especially when it comes to your sexuality.

Why did Paul have to deal with sexual purity in the Church of Thessalonica? It was because sexual immorality was rampant in this culture. It was common during Paul's day, that men would have several wives. Temple prostitution was a form of worship to false Gods. It was an honor for a woman to serve as

a Temple prostitute. Homosexuality was common and some men used their slaves for sexual gratification. Because there were so many Gentile converts becoming a part of the local church Paul had to teach them what is right and what is wrong about sexual purity. The Gentiles had grown up in a culture where anything goes. The people satisfied themselves in any way they desired. The culture in which Paul lived and ministered was very similar to the culture in which we live.

In verse 3 it says, Avoid sexual immorality. The word immorality comes from the Greek word, pornea. From this Greek word we get the word, pornography. Pornea means any expression of our sexuality outside the context of marriage. The Bible says.....avoid it! Don't have sex outside of marriage! This includes premarital sex, extra-marital sex, and homosexuality.

Let me remind you of the second tenet of the Confessing Church Movement –“that God's people are called to holiness in all aspects of life. This includes honoring the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, the only relationship within which sexual activity is appropriate.” The leadership of the Langhorne Presbyterian Church believes that sexual activity is reserved only in the context of marriage, one man with one woman. Though the leadership of Langhorne PC believes this about our sexuality our culture says something very different.

According to the Janus Report, 21% of the men and 15% of the women surveyed had intercourse by the age of 14. In the northeast, 78% said they had intercourse by the age of 19. People in upper socio-economic income brackets have had more premarital intercourse and extramarital sex than those in lower income brackets. 70% of those who said they were religious, said they had had premarital sex. Even though there are many people having sex outside of marriage, the leadership of this church still believes that sexual expression is reserved only for marriage

I met my wife Judy at a fraternity party. Judy was a young and very attractive freshman. I was a “sophisticated” and “stud-like” sophomore who thought he knew it all. I noticed Judy across the chapter room of my frat house. I liked what I saw. I grabbed a Theta Chi glass and a rose and approached her. Needless to say, she was quite impressed with these wonderful gifts that I gave her. I asked her to dance. She said “Yes.” Wow, I was getting somewhere. After a few dances I asked her if she would like to go out with me that weekend. I waited for her to say, “Yes.....I would love to go out with you. As a matter of fact, meeting you tonight was the best thing that ever happened to me.” Judy responded to my question, “No, I can't go out with you. I already have a date.” I was crushed. “What, you already have a date?” I waited a few more weeks. We finally went out two weeks later. In fact, we went out together the entire year. As we spent more and more time with each other our relationship became more sexual. And finally, we went all the way. In the early 70's they would say, we hit the home run.

For the next 3 years Judy and I had a rather intimate relationship. We never lived together, but we spent many nights with one another. Over time our relationship had become rather stale. We were drifting apart. Then, in the fall of 1973, something happened to both of us that changed our lives forever. Judy and I became Christians in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. We committed our lives to Jesus Christ. Both of us saw our great need to place our faith in Jesus Christ and be forgiven of our many sins. A month after we became Christians we attended an event at the Villanova University field house. A

national evangelist by the name of Josh McDowell of Campus Crusade for Christ was speaking on the topic, Maximum Sex. Since our sex life was stale, just like our relationship, I thought attending this seminar would be a very positive step for us. I was excited about what we would learn. I was startled, however, when I heard the speaker challenge each person to consider having maximum sex only within the context of marriage. He made a strong biblical case for Christians waiting until marriage to have sex. His presentation was quite compelling. Judy and I left the field house, walked to our car, got in, and began to discuss what we had heard. Judy had been feeling guilty for some time about our sexual relationship. I wasn't feeling guilty. As a matter of fact I was trying to figure out how I could have both sex and Jesus. After we spent an hour talking about the presentation we had heard, we both knew what we needed to do. We needed to ask God for forgiveness and then to give our sexual relationship over to Him. We understood that we needed to stop having sex. For the next year Judy and I never put ourselves in a compromising situation where we would be tempted to become intimate. A year after our Villanova experience we were married.

Since that experience in the front seat of my car 34 years ago I have preached and taught that sex is reserved between a man and woman only in the context of marriage. That is what the leadership of Langhorne Presbyterian Church believes.

As I close I want to express that our sexual yearnings are essentially a yearning for God. That makes having intercourse, becoming intimate with another person, something of a sacrament. In the Protestant tradition we believe that Baptism and Lord's Supper are the two sacraments that we practice on a regular basis. When two people are sexually intimate with one another, that is a holy moment. When we reduce sexual intimacy to just "doing it" or "putting a little excitement in my life" or "taking away some loneliness for the night," we are trampling upon the holiness of sexual expression between a husband and wife. Heb. 13:4 says, Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure. Hebrews 13 talks about the holiness of sexual expression within marriage.

We don't tend to see sexual activity as holy. We don't realize we are getting our hands onto another person's soul when we have sex with them. We don't realize that is why many people carry around so much hurt and guilt from their sexual experiences outside of marriage. That is why the Bible teaches that sexual intercourse is to be confined only to the bonds of marriage. That is what the leadership of this church believes. That is what I hope you believe.

#### **PRAYER**

Father, I thank you that sex is your divine creation, that you invented it and you gave it to us as a wonderful gift between a husband and wife. Thank you that you made women to be women and men to be men.

Lord, today, there is a lot of confusion about sex. People have misused it and abused it, perverted it and exploited it. There is a lot of hurt and pain because people have broken your boundaries. You reserve sex only within the context of marriage, between a man and a woman. And so, bring healing to those who have acted outside your will, for sex. If they have crossed over this boundary, may they ask for



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forgiveness and then, feel in their heart that they have been forgiven by you. May they never feel that that they are “damaged goods.”

Thank you God, that this church stands for Biblical purity. May you give the elders of LPC your wisdom and grace as they apply the truth that sexual activity is only appropriate within the context of marriage.

I pray in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen