

How the Church Exposes the World

Ephesians 5:11-13

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, September 27, 2020

So if you would, open your Bibles with me to the book of Ephesians. While we're talking about the light, we just read a passage in First John about the Light. We're going to talk about that some more this morning. And if you would open your Bibles to the book of Ephesians, and we're in chapter five. So we're looking in Ephesians chapter five, and I just want to read this to you before we begin. Paul writes, and he says this, he says,

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

But immorality or impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason, it says,

“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

We'll stop the reading there.

Just to say a few words about this, if you've been with us for a little while, you'll know we've been in the book of Ephesians for some time now as a church. We've been in it for about a year. And we've done that because we practice expository preaching here. We preach expositively, which means that we explain the Bible verse by verse. We do it in its own words, so you can follow along. When I preach, my goal is not just that you understand what I'm saying. I want you to understand what the Bible is saying. And to do that we go through it. One week, we'll go through a few verses, explain what they mean. The next week, we'll go through some more, and then some more all the way through the book, because we believe all of it. We believe every word, and as we've done that, in this book, we come to a very important subject this morning as we've done this in the book of Ephesians. We come to a very relevant topic for our day and age; and it's the subject of persecution.

As you know, this has been a year of persecution for the church. It's been a year of upheaval in the church worldwide, and at the end of the passage here, Paul says, if you're saved, if you're a Believer, and you believe all these things in this Book, this is what you can expect, you will be persecuted too. He will come for you. Just to show you this, if you notice, in chapter five, verse one, he starts off with the word, "therefore", to point you back to the previous passage. It points you back to what he's said before. And what it says before is that if you're a Christian, this is what you'll do. You'll put your sin away. We've been talking about that right? You will repent of your sin. In his own words, chapter five, verse one says,

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

I've told you before, this word imitate here is the Greek word, "mimetai" from which we get the word mimic, or mime. It means to copy someone or imitate their behavior. Paul says, You need to do that with God, you need to imitate Him because He's your Father now. He's your dad, and you need to do what children do with their father and copy Him. This also means, to take it one step further, God has changed your nature. Now He's changed your soul so you can get into the family. Otherwise, you couldn't get in. And you need to put your sin away for that reason, too. Chapter four says you need to do away with your lying and stealing and anger. Those are the sins that it mentions there. Chapter five says you need to put away your lust, which is a big one. It's very important because Paul spends several verses talking about that from verse three, all the way down to verse five, and even on into our text for today; talking about the sin of lust.

What he says now is that if you do that, if you put these sins away, you will be persecuted. Because the world won't like it. They don't appreciate it when you do that. The world likes what is similar to it. It doesn't like what's different. And if you do this, Paul says you will be different and you're going to feel a backlash. If you look in verse eight, he says,

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk his children of Light.

And then he goes on in verse 11,

Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light.

I'm going to walk you through this in a moment, but a key word in this passage is the word, expose. You see that word repeated twice there. It's the Greek word "elegxo", which means to rebuke someone or call them out on their behavior. It's a strong word in Greek. It kind of pops off the page. It's very divisive, because this is what a Christian does; he divides things, splits them up. Not intentionally, but not in a mean spirit or a nasty spirit. But he does this because he's in the light. Turn a light on, it divides the darkness. Put a Christian in the room, he does the same thing. One commentator said light has a cleansing effect to it. It has a purifying effect that points out all the imperfections and blemishes around it. And that's what a Christian does. That's what you do, you point out the imperfections of the world. The world thinks it's fine. It thinks it's okay. You show up and tell them they're not. You show up and tell them that they've broken the law of God. And if you notice a context here, the way Paul says this is interesting. He says that you do this by your life. You do this by the way you live. In other words, if you do all the things Paul is talking about here, if you repent of your sin, and your lying and stealing, anger, all that stuff, live a different sort of life, it will expose them. It will show them for what they are. You don't even have to say anything. Sometimes your behavior speaks enough. Some Christians think it's their job to attack the world all the time. They think it's their job to confront everybody on Facebook and social media. But that's not what this is saying here. Paul says if you just live your life, it will be a confrontation to the world. Yes, you need to evangelize, to explain why you live that way, but your life should stand out.

You guys know what this is like? You've experienced this before, but you walk into a room, go into a party at work and what happens? It gets real quiet, doesn't it? It gets real awkward, because they stopped cussing. They stopped telling dirty jokes. Now, why? What just happened there? Well, they know you don't like it. They know you don't approve. The light just walked into the room. Or let's say you're at a hockey game. You're at a Chilliwack Chiefs game and you're talking to the person next to you, and they find out you go to church. They find out you're a Christian. What do they do? They stop yelling at the referee, right? Or maybe they change seats and they go do it over there. Because you're exposing their sin. You're calling it out, just by your presence. Let's say it another way, you hear a lot of people ask the question today, why does the world hate Christians so much? Why does it pick on us? Well, this is why, we make them feel guilty. We rain on their parade. They were having a good time till we showed up. Some people also ask the question, what did we do wrong to deserve this? You didn't do anything wrong, you did something right. Especially in the area of lust, which is what Paul is talking

about here, in this passage especially. This is really particular to the discussion of sexual sin. The world hates it. When you confront that, they hate it. You can confront their lying, you can confront their stealing, you can confront their anger and they'll be kind of okay with that. You confront their lust and they will come after you with a vengeance.

Several weeks ago, a famous pastor was interviewed on Fox News to talk about a show called, Cuties. It was a program created by Netflix to document the lives of several young girls who would learn to dance provocatively. They learn to dance in a sexual manner. The reporter asked him, "What do you say to that as a pastor?" And he said, "Well, you can't turn the sin off. You can't turn off the depravity. You know, several years ago, we accepted the sin of homosexuality. Then we accepted transgenderism. And now here we are talking about pedophilia." And as he said that you could see the reporter's face change. You can see they didn't like that. Because the world hates to have its lust confronted. They hate it. In fact, I would argue this is probably the greatest cause for all the persecution you see in the world today. This is the greatest reason for all the hostility toward Christians. We keep confronting their lust.

We take a country like Nigeria, for example, if you're following the news in Nigeria, the church is really hurting right there. It's really struggling because it's under attack from Islamic groups like Boko Haram. They're killing them; killing the Christians. And when you see that happening, you think it's a battle of faith. You think it's a battle of religion? It's not a battle of religion, primarily; it's a battle of lust. The Muslims think heaven is a place for lust. They think heaven is a place for sex, where you can sleep with virgins for all eternity. And the Christians show up and say, no, it's not. It's a wrong view of God, and they kill them over that. There's other things involved as well but that is a big issue in the persecution.

Paul says you need to be ready for that. That's what our passage is saying this morning. You need to be ready to see that sort of thing in Canada and North America. I mean, there's no reason why you should be exempt from this. There's no reason why you get special treatment.

In December of 2016, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Seminary published a statement that said that between 2005 and 2015, there were 900,000 Christians martyred worldwide. 900,000 of them, which comes to about one every eight minutes, for 10 years. It was just a decade of bloodletting which means that you're not going to escape this. Statistically, it may come for you; may come for me, which is what our passage is about today. You know, Martin Luther said, they gave your Savior a crown of thorns. Don't expect them to give you a crown of roses. It's not what you signed up for.

So if you're taking notes in Ephesians five, we're going to talk about this we're going to look at two ways the church exposes the world. That's our outline for today. That's what this is about. In Ephesians 5:11-13 we're going to look at two ways the church exposes the world. We're going to talk about this because this is so important today. This is very hands on stuff. In fact, even in our town, it wasn't that long ago that the SOGI curriculum was introduced here in Chilliwack. You guys remember that? The curriculum

to the sexual orientation and gender identity curriculum that was very pro LGBTQ. And when it was opposed, the town went crazy, didn't it? The town went nuts. Vancouver was even talking about it. I mean, you looked in the Vancouver newspaper, and they were saying what's going on in Chilliwack? Why are they blowing up over this? Because it's already here. You need to be ready.

We're going to look at that, with two ways the church exposes the world. The first way is this; by not participating in its sin. The first way the church exposes the world is by not participating in its sin. Which means that we don't join them in this. We don't take part. While we love the world, we want to reach it for Christ. We want to see people saved and come into the church. We don't do the things they do. There's a definite line in the sand on these issues. And if you look in verse six, Paul writes, and he says,

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, [these sins that we're talking about], the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light, (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead, even expose them.

Just to say a few words about this text, if you notice, this is the first time Paul uses the word Light in the book of Ephesians. It's first time he mentioned it. Before, he called you children of God. Before, he said, you were part of God's family. Now he changes the illustration to say you're part of the light, which is the word "phos" in Greek, from which we get the word photograph or photography. It means you are God's photograph now. You are His picture of salvation. It's a humbling thing to say, isn't it? When people look at you, they should think of the change that's happened in your life and the grace of God. And to explain that, if you notice, he doesn't just say you're part of the Light, he says, you are the Light. That's significant. He doesn't just say that you are in the Light, but the Light is in you. It's part of your nature; now it's part of who you are.

And therefore, verse 11 says you need to act like it. You need to show it by not participating in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. That's a command there. In other words, this is not an option for you. If you're a Christian, you cannot participate in the darkness anymore. The light is in you now, it's in your nature, and therefore you have left the darkness behind. There's a certain moment of decision in the life of a Christian or when you're saved, in that you don't go back to the things you were. Paul says I put those things behind me and I'm pressing forward to the goal in Christ.

That's what this says and the word darkness, it means a lot of things here. It refers to a lot of things, but primarily refers to lust because that's what Paul's been talking about. It refers to the sin of adultery because he mentioned that in verses three through five. And he said you can't participate in this because verse 11 says it would be unfruitful for you. That word unfruitful, it means vain, foolish. Some of your

translations say fruitless, it means it doesn't amount to anything. I've talked to people who have struggled with lust, given into this sin and this is what they said, they said it was a complete waste of time. Totally fruitless. They didn't do anything for their family. They didn't do anything for their work. All they did was sit in front of the computer and watch pornography all day long. Totally fruitless. I talked to other ones who have said that when they're getting into this sin, they have no motivation to serve the Lord. They don't pray. They don't read their Bible. They don't come to church. I've talked to people you don't see them for a long time in the church and they'll pull you aside and say, I've been giving into this sin.

Paul says, you can't do that anymore. You can't go down that road, because it's your job to expose the darkness. That's why you can't get into it. It's your job to stand out from it. Because you need to rebuke it. You can't expose the darkness if you look like the darkness. Does that make any sense? You can't expose sin if you give in to sin. You have to stay away from it. You don't get the world's attention if you look like they do. There's a whole movement in the church today to become more worldly. That's the exact opposite of what this is saying.

We're not supposed to act like the world, which leads to several applications here, several ways you can apply this to our lives. For one thing, this means this, very simple stuff, you need to have some courage in order to be a Christian. You need to have some courage, because you can't just go with the flow all the time and do this. You can't just follow the crowd. Because this is what the crowd is doing, verses three to five, all this talk about lust, this is what the world is doing. You can't just go along with that anymore. You've got to grow a backbone and stand against it.

There's far too much of that going on right now. There are too many people just following the crowd, because they change their mind every other day on this issue. They change their mind every other day on lust. One day the world says homosexuality is wrong. They say it's a sin. Some of you grew up in a world where that was said. The next day they don't. Next day, they say it's fine and we should accept it and teach it in the public schools. One day they say transgenderism is wrong. That's a sin. The next day, they don't; change their mind on that. Bisexuality, we could go on and on and on down the list. It just goes back and forth and back and forth. And Paul says you can't do that and be a Christian. You can't go back and forth every time the world does. That's madness. That's insanity. Because God hasn't changed his mind on this. He still says it's a sin. He hasn't wavered. He hasn't backed down and you can't do that either.

Listen, friends, let's say it this way, you know, these sins, homosexuality, transgenderism; that was going on back then it's going on now. It was a sin then, it's a sin now. But you can't believe that if you don't have any courage. You can't believe that if you're not going to stand up. The Puritan, William Gurnall once said that a Christian without courage is like a knife without an edge or a soldier without a gun. If people are bold in sin, then we must be bold in our confrontation. If they want to sin with

courage, we have to rebuke it with courage. I think that's where we're at today. We're at a time where you can't be mousy about this, you can't be sissy about it.

It leads to another application here, another way we can apply this passage to our lives, and that is you need to realize it's going to take some sacrifice to be a Christian as well. It's going to take some commitment. As you read this passage and you tie it into what Paul is saying here, you realize you may have to lose something over this. Let's be honest, friends, we live in dangerous times today, don't we? We live in scary times when you could lose a lot over a passage like this. And depending on where you are, you could lose your job. You could get fired if you don't follow the latest rules of the LGBTQ movement. You could, in some places possibly go to jail. It's considered a hate crime to speak out against this. But even then, Paul says you have to stand on this. You can't back down because people need your help. They need to hear the truth and they're not going to hear it if you go back and forth and back and forth and back and forth.

You know, just as a personal testimony to this, I lost my best friend from high school over this. I lost a friend I grew up with because he married another man. He was involved in a gay marriage. And he won't talk to me anymore. I haven't heard from him in years. But it doesn't change my commitment to this because I love my friend, I care for my friend and he needs to hear the truth.

You know, based on the latest statistics I could find, only about one to 2% of the population in Canada professes to be gay, one to 2%, which means that the vast majority of the country are not. The vast majority of Canadians don't practice this way of life. Which means that despite what they tell you, this is not a normal thing. Statistically, it's not normal in the country. The way it's presented on the news, you would think everybody's doing this, you would think everybody is giving in to these types of sins, but they're not. And also, despite what they tell you, they're not happy. As a people group, they're miserable. The Canadian Mental Health Association put out a statistic that gay young people are 14 times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers, 14 times more likely. And there's no way you can hear that and not have mercy on them. There's no way you can hear that and not have some compassion.

I think so many times we approach a sin like this when we come to a sin like homosexuality with anger, because it's so aggressive today, it's so in your face. We need to remember that Jesus died for every sin, including this one, he can forgive any sin, including this one. And it's our job to tell people that. We need to live a different sort of life to the world, we need to show them that we have changed. And then we need to tell them why. But we can only do that if you're willing to give something up. And we can't do that if you're not willing to make a sacrifice on this issue.

The story is told at the time a missionary named George Atley died in Central Africa. He was killed while preaching the gospel there, because he was ambushed by some tribesmen. But he didn't fight back because in his hand, they found a fully loaded Winchester rifle. In other words, they attacked him, but he didn't attack back. And they fired at him, but he didn't try to hurt them. There's a lesson in that today.

The world is attacking the church over this, but we shouldn't fire back. We need to love people and show them the light.

That leads to another point to consider this morning, another way the church exposes the world. In our texts, the first one is by not participating in its sin. The first way the church exposes the world is by not participating in its sin, which means we don't join them in this, we don't take part. Even though you see these things on the news, even though you see this on the television, on social media, we don't go down that road. We want to show them a better way, which leads to another point, and that's this, another way the church exposes the world is by bringing its sin into the light. Just to piggyback off the first one, a second way the church exposes the world is by bringing its sin into the light. That means you have to show this sin for what it is, that's part of your job as well. You have to show people what the Bible says about this. It's one thing to live this out. It's another thing to speak up and we're supposed to speak up too.

If you look in verse 11, Paul writes, he says

Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in the secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

If you notice, as Paul goes on in this passage, and he describes how we should respond to the world, he says something that's a little strange here the way it's worded, because he says you need to expose the darkness. He says do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness but expose them, rebuke them, call them out. And then in verse 12, he says

for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them.

It sounds a little confusing as you read that because it sounds like Paul is saying, rebuke them, but don't rebuke them. Call them out, but don't call them out. What he's actually saying is this, this sin is so evil, it's so bad that you need to be careful of the way you talk about it. Now I've read some Christian books on the subject of lust, that were so explicit, I couldn't finish them, had to put them down. They were too graphic. That's what Paul's referring to here. You don't want to do that with this. You need to be careful how you talk about this sin.

But he goes on, he says, but you still need to talk about it. You still need to bring it up. Because verse 13 says,

But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light.

By the way, I'll say something about this in a minute, but the Bible says a lot about the sin of lust. It talks a lot about the sin of adultery, but it always does it in careful terms. It always does it tactfully. But it talks about it because verse 13 mentions this,

All things become visible when they're exposed by the light.

That means a couple of things here. Several ways to interpret verse 13. For one thing, it means that you need to shine the light of God's Word on this sin. You need to shine the light of the Bible on it and tell people what it says about sexual sin because they don't know. We live in a world where they have no idea. I meet people all the time in my neighborhood or around town and they're just shacking up, not married, not even committed to the person they're living with. The world is in the darkness over this. They're blind, they can't see.

Verse 13 also means not only do you need to shine the light of God's Word on it, but you need to take away the darkness around it. You need to take away the confusion around this sin. This is a very confusing sin today, isn't it? This is a very confusing topic in our world. It's so messy because people say so many things about it. There's so many opinions. Verse 12 refers to that because in verse 12, it says,

for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

That means the world wants to hide this sin today. They want to keep it from being found out. Several commentaries said that there were several famous groves in Ephesus, places where they grew plants and things, and people would go there in hiding and commit their sins. The significant thing about that is Ephesus was a very wicked town and even in a wicked town, people still wanted to hide it. Paul says you can't do that. It's your job to take the darkness away, expose them to the light, pull the secret out into the open. It doesn't help the world when you keep all of this a secret. It doesn't help the world when you keep this sin in hiding. They want to keep it in hiding.

And this is so important. You have to say a few words about this. We got to talk about this a little bit. But the world loves to hide its sin and then they do it in very sophisticated ways today. In fact, there's a whole cottage industry that specializes in this. One of their primary goals is to hide sin, and it's called the modern psychology movement or the mental health movement. They're experts at hiding sin. Now, I'm not going to say that everything they do is wrong. They do some good things, I'm sure. But one thing psychologists get wrong is that they refer to sin as a disease or a disorder. You guys know what I'm talking about? You read any of the sins in Ephesians four and chapter five, and you will find a psychologist that will call it a disease. Or if you take a sin like homosexuality, when I was about high school years, they started calling it a mental illness and saying you're born with it. Now I think they probably say other things. But what that does is it takes away all the responsibility from this it takes

away all the accountability and you're just a victim. We're all born in sin. We're all born with a sin nature. But what that says is this is this is not sin. This is purely biological.

God doesn't say that. God does not say you're a victim of this. He says you're responsible. There's an accountability here. All the sins in this list, there's an accountability here. Look, some of you are born with an angry temperament. Ask your husband or wife, they'll tell you that. But that doesn't give you an excuse to get angry. We have to tell people this. You have to remove the veil of secrecy from these things.

It leads to a couple of applications here, several ways you can apply this to your lives as well. For one thing, this means you're going to have to stop being so influenced by the world. If you want to do this, if you want to follow what this says here, this means you're going to have to stop being influenced by the world because the church needs to influence the world, not the other way around, Amen? The church needs to sway the world. It doesn't need to sway us. If the church is anything today, it is swayed; it is gullible. Because Christians today will believe anything as long as it sounds nice; will believe anything as long as it sounds clever. If the experts call it a disease, if the experts call it an illness, the church just says okay.

You know, several years ago, actually, I think it was within the last year, a famous Christian leader in Ontario was recently asked about his position on homosexuality. He said, "I'm not sure. I think we need to revisit that issue." Now let me ask you, why did he say that? Because he's being influenced by the world. He knew if I take a stand on this, I'm gonna get backlash. You know, when you read a passage like Leviticus 18:22, and it says,

You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female, it is an abomination,

there's really nothing to revisit there. It's pretty clear. Or you read the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and how God treated the people there, how he rained down fire and brimstone on this sin, on this issue? Or you come to Ephesians five, which we just read, where it says in verse five,

For this, you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person... has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Or if you go to First Corinthians, chapter 6, I just want to read this to you. Because some will say, Well, some of that's in the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 6:9 says,

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived

If you notice, that means do not be tricked, do not be fooled, do not be influenced by the world. Because

neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul uses three different words there to describe, at least two anyway, to describe the sin of homosexuality. But he does it, so you'll get the point, that God hasn't changed on this. By the way, the good news in that verse in First Corinthians is he goes on in verse 11, and he says,

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.

And the good news there is he's looking at a congregation of people that wants to live that way, in the town of Corinth. And he says, but you're not that way anymore, because you've been washed. But you can't wash them off if you don't tell them this is a sin.

It leads to another application here as well, another way to apply this to our lives and that is this and it goes back to what we said at the beginning. In all of this passage, this is what Paul is saying, you need to know where your power lies as a Christian, you need to know where your strength lies as a Christian and your strength lies in being different from the world. Your strength lies in sticking out. It doesn't lie in you doing the same thing. It doesn't lie in you looking like the world does. There's no power in that. There's no strength in that. It lies in being different. We've got it so backwards today. So many people think if I just look like the world and I fit in and I get contextual, whatever the word is, then they'll like me and they'll become a Christian. Paul says it's just the opposite. You need to be different. I just told you if you live this way, and you do these things are going to stick out. That's a good thing. You want to stick out because it makes people pay attention. They won't pay attention to you if you look like they do.

I mentioned to you last time, this is one of the greatest ways the church changed the ancient world. This is one of the greatest ways they impacted it is because they look different. As husbands stayed faithful to their wives and wives stayed faithful to their husbands, the first century people perked up and said, What is this? We've never seen this before. And they told them the gospel. It's been said that the ancient world was not changed in Caesar's Palace or the halls of the Senate, it was changed in the kitchens and the workshops of the poor and the Christians. Because as one slave worked with another slave in the kitchen, and they saw how this one acted, and they saw how that one treated their family, they said, I need that. That's different. I don't have that.

We need to get back to that. We need to get back to that way of thinking. I'll never forget the time someone told me, they believed in Jesus, they trusted in Him, they were a Christian, according to what they said, until they saw how their pastor lived. And until they saw how he slept with and had affairs with women in the church. And then they said, I abandoned the faith after that, because he was no different from the world.

Friends, we need to be different. We need to stick out. You know, the Hindu man. Mahatma Gandhi once said that "I would believe in the Redeemer if his people acted more redeemed." I think that's fair. I don't agree with everything Gandhi said but I think that's fair. We need to act more redeemed in this area so people will believe and it leads me to ask how are you doing with this today? Are you acting, redeemed in the area of lust? Are you sticking out from the world? If people looked at your marriage, and they looked at your home and they looked at your kitchen and your workshop or your computer or iPhone, would it make them wonder, "Why does he do that? Why is he different?" I ask you that because it should. Your life is supposed to stick out, because you're in the light. You have left the world behind, you've left the darkness behind. And God puts you on this earth to expose them.

To ask this another way, how is your courage in this area? How is your bravery in this? Are you taking a stand on these issues? You're gonna have to do that if you want to obey this. You're going to have to take a stand and show some courage because you will face opposition in this. It's inevitable. We already are. I would lie if I said I wasn't a little nervous coming to this passage this morning. But it doesn't matter. The passage says what it says, right? And God will take care of you if you're faithful to Him.

You know, in my studies this week I came across the story of a time during the Boxer Rebellion in China, when the rebels captured a mission station. They captured a school full of Christians and they blocked all the gates except for one gate. They left one exit open. And they told the students that you can leave if you just spit on the cross on the wall. You could go home if you just compromise and defile it. But if you don't, we'll kill you. And after a few minutes of pause, of waiting, one young woman approached the cross and she knelt in front of it and she prayed and then she went to face the firing squad. And it wasn't long before everyone in the camp joined her. All 100 of them came and stood beside her while they were shot. Because sometimes it just takes one. Sometimes it just takes one person to stand. Stand at work. Stand at home. Stand in your neighborhood and the world will join you.

My question for you this morning is will you be that one person today? Will you take a stand on this? Listen, so much depends on this. This is in many ways when you're reading this chapter, this is where the battle is at right now. Maybe someday we'll be fighting over the sin of anger or lying or stealing. We're not fighting over that right now. We're fighting over lust. And you have to take a stand. Let me close us in a word of prayer. Let me pray for God to give you grace. To do this.

Heavenly Father, we do ask for your grace this morning. We ask for it in so many levels as we study this text. First of all, we don't want to have a mean and angry spirit. So many Christians are having that today. They're angry over the sin of lust. They're angry at what they're seeing in the world. We don't want to be angry. So we ask for Your grace to be kind and loving to others. As we think about these things, as we expose the world and its darkness. But at the same time, Father, we ask for Your grace to be bold, and stand. We don't want to be cowards anymore. As a church, we don't want to back down every time the world says this is a sin or that's not a sin and they change their mind. We don't want to

change our mind with them. We want to stand with You. So Lord, we ask You give us grace to do that. Lord, I pray for these brothers and sisters in Christ, as they go out into a dark world, they go out into dark workplaces, and they go out into a dark neighborhood. Help them to be different. Father, when people look at our church, would they say Lord, that there is something special about those people because of the way they live? God, would You change us. Grow us in Christ. Take us far from the sin of lust. Take us far from all of these sins in this passage so we can imitate our Father in heaven and we pray this in Jesus name, Amen.