**Homosexuality and the Gospel**

Albert Mohler at the 2004 Desiring God National Conference delivered one of the best talks I’ve heard on homosexuality, the church, and the gospel. A chapter-length version was then published in [*Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1581346972/thegospcoal-20) by John Piper and Justin Tyler.

**On living in light of a limp:**

An analogy might be useful at this point. Consider a man who has sinned by driving under the influence of alcohol. One night, sinfully drunk and recklessly irresponsible, this man gets into his car and drives it right into a wall at high speed. His body is broken, but his life is saved as he is taken to the hospital and receives emergency treatment. He recovers from the accident, but he will forever walk with a limp. Throughout his life, he will drag an injured leg, which can heal to a point, but will never be fully restored.

Let us follow this man as he comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He becomes a wonderful trophy of God’s grace, as the grace of God transforms him, reordering his affections right down to the fact that he gains victory over alcoholism. Regeneration has produced a new man, even as sanctification is demonstrated in his growth in grace. Old things have passed away and behold all things have become new ([2 Cor. 5:17](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.%205.17%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank))—but he still walks with a limp.

The work of the Holy Spirit in his life is evident, even as his limp continues as a part of his experience. He will limp all the way to the grave. He has become what only God could make him as a demonstration of God’s glory in the salvation of a sinner. But until the day of his glorification, this man will limp.

That limp does not become a disqualification for this man’s ability to display the glory of God. As a matter of fact, he may begin to see his limp as a way of explaining to people, “I want to tell you who I was in order to tell you who I now am by the grace of God. You see, this limp is a part of my story. I do not exult in this limp, but this limp is an important part of telling my story about how I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ and how he changed my life.”

In reality, every one of us limps. Throughout our lives until the day of our glorification, every one of us will limp. We must look to the moment of our glorification as the moment of our release from every limp. On that day, every tear will be wiped away, every injury will be fully restored, everything will be made right, and everything will be made whole. Everything and every redeemed person will then perfectly display the glory of God. We are the people with the theology adequate to explain this, and thus, we can offer the only genuine means of personal transformation.

**On change:**

We know better than to say that people cannot change. We also know better than to believe that people can change themselves. As Jonathan Edwards made clear, we sin in our affections, and we do not even understand ourselves in terms of why we love the things we love and desire the things we desire. This is why we are so dependent upon the work of Christ in our lives and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in reordering our affections. This is no easy process, but it is real and it is enduring.

Is our purpose to make homosexuals into heterosexuals? The answer to that question must be both yes and no. We must urgently urge all sinners to repent and abandon their sin, but convincing homosexuals to think of themselves as heterosexuals is not tantamount to salvation. We must be honest about the sinfulness of homosexuality in order that we can show homosexuals their need for salvation and the transforming power of Jesus Christ in their lives. We can promise that this power of transformation will, by the grace of God, lead to a reordering of their lives and require a turning away from the sins of their past. As Christians, coming for whatever our individual background in sin may be—we come under mutual accountability to the Word of God and his command in all things—including our sexuality.

**To those struggling with homosexuality:**

I want to speak honestly to those who are struggling with homosexual affection. You must know that this is sin, and you must recognize that your affections are corrupted by sin. Even in your own heart, you can probably never even separate your desires and impulses in terms of inner motivation and affection. Like all of us, you are a sinner in the midst of a sinful world, but don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t change. Becoming heterosexual is not salvation, but the miracle of regeneration and sanctification will produce, by God’s grace, the right affections in your heart and desire. Knowing what God has declared to be objectively right and objectively wrong, we must direct ourselves—whether our sinful sexual profile be heterosexual or homosexual—toward the objective glory of God as revealed in his Word. We must claim the promises of God and seek God’s glory in every dimension of our being.

**Do we want homosexuals to find heterosexuality?**

Yes, as much as we want liars to become tellers of the truth and adulterers to be faithful; as much as we want the disobedient to become obedient to parents and the proud to be humble. God’s glory is in seeing that God’s command is accompanied by God’s provision so that we, by his grace, can be transformed so that we will even desire what he wills for us to desire.

This is what the church is all about. We are the people who gather together to exalt in the grace of God and to proclaim the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ as the answer to human sinfulness. We come together to hold each other accountable to the Word of God and to rejoice in what God is doing in us until the very day that we die. We come together in the assurance of the resurrection that is to come and the glorification that will be God’s gift. Like the apostle Paul, we are convinced that “he who began a good work in [us] will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus” ([Phil. 1:6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%201.6%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)).

**To the church:**

We must be the people who love homosexuals more than homosexuals love homosexuality. This is a tough challenge. We have to be the people who, because we are possessed by a passion to see God’s glory in his creation, love homosexuals more than they love their sin. This means that our love has to be a tenacious love. This will also require that we come to know and establish relationships with those struggling with homosexuality. Armed with an awareness of both the problem and God’s provision, we have no right to consider that homosexuals are beyond the grace of God or that any individual is beyond the hope of redemption and transformation. Compassionate truth telling is deeply rooted in Christian love, and this means that we must love homosexuals more than homosexuals love homosexuality.

Every sinner loves his sin, but the church must love sinners more than sinners love their sinfulness. This is precisely how Christ has loved us, and we must love other sinners even as Christ has loved us.

We cannot allow a homosexual to reduce his identity to being a homosexual. This is a tough message, but we live in an age of identity politics when people say, “What I do in my sex life is who I am—period!” We are the people who know that this is nonsense. Sex is a part of who we are—a vitally important and powerful part—but it is only a part of the total human being. Our sexual desires and sexual practices are genuine pointers to our inner reality and our relationship to God, but sexuality is not the end of the story.

Christians must be the people who refuse to put the period at the end of the sexual sentence. We cannot allow homosexuals to be isolated as a class of persons who are beyond the grace of God and exist in some special category of human sinfulness. We must be the people who say to homosexuals, “I am going to love you even more than you love your sin, because in this same way I was loved until I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Someone loved me more than I loved my sin, and this is how I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.”

Our doctrine of salvation must be accompanied by a strong doctrine of the church. The ecclesia —the purchased people of God are a covenanted community gathered in mutual accountability to the Word of God. In the bonds of Christ, we are to love each other even more than we love ourselves. Even in the process of church discipline, our purpose is not only to protect the integrity of the people of God, but also to love persons into obedience and conformity with the Word of God. The common life of the church is really all about this mutual accountability, mutual encouragement, and exhorting each other to faithfulness unto the authority of the Word of God. The church sins when we deal with these issues wrongly, unscripturally, and superficially.

**On fatigue about this issue:**

It is easy to detect a sense of fatigue setting in among Christians in America who are tired of arguing, debating, and speaking the truth about homosexuality in the midst of a fallen and rebellious culture. This fatigue is evidence of sin, even as it is an understandable response to the difficulty of our task. We are now coming to a point of cultural crisis, and the church is called to faithfulness, as we must declare God’s truth with a boldness never summoned before. The church must demonstrate even more candor, more courage, and more truth telling. We must demonstrate more genuine compassion, even as we reach out to a civilization that is literally falling from within. Even as civilization falls, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ must stand as the People of God, determined to keep its wits even as it shows the love of God and seeks the glory of Jesus Christ, in season and out of season.

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