

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Building Blocks Of The Family

PART

1

TITLE

Different By Design

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:24-27; 3:1-21



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Well it's good to see you church family. Providence always a blessing to sing with you and if you're a guest with us this morning, we are thrilled that you have joined us. I had several people in the first service actually ask me and wonder if in the move to the new room if I was gonna actually go with a real podium instead of with a music stand. But I have grown really attached to this little guy and so he just moved himself right over from the DLC. He's right at home right here.

It is so good to see you and so many of us, I know, we have sacrificed, we have waited, we have prayed, we have hoped for this day and this day is here and I'm so incredibly grateful. I pray that you were and are really encouraged as you walked in. I pray that you feel motivated and this is an opportunity to tool. This is not a shrine, this is not an idol that we just wipe down and we protect, it's a tool to use for his glory. And I hope and pray that you are grateful today. I hope that you feel gratitude in your heart. You know God's word tells us these words. He says, "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we can ask for think, all according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church."

And Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forevermore. And it doesn't matter where we meet. It doesn't matter what room it is, it doesn't matter what day it is. He's worthy of our worship and he's worthy of our love. And so it is a joy to be with you. Next Sunday night we'll have the opportunity to come and celebrate and pray and thank God for this but I think it's fitting for us to do that right now as well. So if you would, let's bow and let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we thank you for your grace in our life. And we see what you have done. We acknowledge Psalm 66 where the Psalmist literally pleads come and see what the Lord has done and that's why we're here. And it's not really to see a building, it's to acknowledge that you, what you have done through Jesus Christ in rescuing us from our sin and giving us life and giving us hope and bringing us together and forgiving us of all of our sin and giving us eternal life through Jesus Christ, this is what you have done. And we acknowledge and we praise you and we thank you. And on this special day, Lord, we acknowledge mothers. We also recognize that even mothers come from your hand. Lord, they're gifts given from you to us and we're thankful. And we pray, Father, I pray for those in the room who feel very different emotions on this Mother's Day. Lord, we acknowledge that every one of us comes from a different place and our year has been very different.

God we acknowledge that some of us are just incredibly grateful for our mother, and yet we also acknowledge that some really long to be a mother. Lord we know that there are many mothers who have had to painfully bury a child and there's many children in the room who have had to very painfully bury a mother. And so on this day when we remember mothers and we remember your grace to us through our mothers, I pray that you would do a miracle and that you would work in each person's heart to meet the need that you see that we cannot see but that you see deep within their heart. And so we acknowledge you. And as we open up your word now, we thank you, God, that it is timeless, that it is truly your word. And so we bow before it.

We ask, God, that you would give us clarity as we begin a series right now, even on the foundations of the family, would you inspire our hearts once again, maybe even afresh or perhaps even for the first time, Lord, to see what you have done. But even more than what you've done, who you are. And so we lay our life before you. [inaudible 00:04:33] I pray in Christ's name, amen.

You know in Song of Solomon chapter six verse 10, there's really fascinating question that is asked and this is it. He says, "Who is this who looks down like the dawn? Beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun and awesome as an army with banners." And the answer to that question is a woman. Who but God could literally clothe something as strong as an army that's been arrayed for battle with the beauty of a moonlit night? That is precisely what he has done, and so, for every single woman in this room, every girl, young and old, married, single, it doesn't matter, we acknowledge God's grace to us through you.

Us, not just men, just as a people, as a family of faith, it's an amazing thing when you think about the strength and the beauty and the integrity and the mercy and the capacity to nurture and care and parent and teach, and all the different skill sets that God has literally implanted into the hearts of the ladies, young and old, in this room, and we are better for it. So we thank you, and we acknowledge you today, and whatever you feel on this Mother's Day, I want to ask you to turn in a Bible to the very first page of the Bible, as we start this here it's called "Foundation of the Family."

Its important for us to recognize that it was God who designed the family, and He did so intentionally. It is the primary building block of all of culture, and it's interesting that God did not leave the construction of family to chance. He didn't leave it to us to try to figure out, He spoke very clearly. What we find is this, that even in the first several chapters of the Bible, we find some of the early blueprints for the family. Building blocks that He has actually chosen and given to us, and then he informed and instructed those building blocks for us, so when they're stacked on top of each other, that we can actually experience the foundation that creates healthy families, that then perpetuates other healthy families.

So there's a map, in fact it's on the board right now for you, of where we're going over the next seven weeks. It begins with gender, that's where we're at, male and female. This is the first building blocks, and before anyone gets married, we're single. It's important for us to recognize as a church family, that's not the Sunday that, if you're married, you skip, and there's two reasons for it, right? One is because the majority of people in this room are not married. I don't know if you know that, but the majority of people who call Providence their home, from the babies all the way to the seniors, are single. They're not married, and God has informed that season, and as a church family, he even gives us the responsibility to corporately come alongside our single brothers and sister's, and so this is for all of us.

And then what we find, the third one will be marriage, where God literally brings two single people together. And then, the fourth one, just a heads up for any parents, if you're a little nervous about that I promise to be careful with it, but we're gonna look at sexuality, that God tells us to have children, and to fill the earth, and that's a part of the foundation of families. Once we have children, we need parents, so there's motherhood and fatherhood. And then our hope is that when we get to week seven, is that we look at childhood. What we're doing when we look at childhood is recognizing that these little children are male and female, and they're single. And our hope is to actually speak a message to our children, to emulate their family, so that one day they can perpetuate healthy families that perpetuate healthy families, and so the process continues one generation to the next.

We begin today with the building block of gender, that God tell us that he created us male and female. Now, the fact is that there was a time in our culture, and it wasn't long ago, when teaching from the Bible on gender was not risky, it was not a flash point. The pastor's email box wouldn't fill up like mine will tomorrow. We recognize, as a culture, a boy was a boy, and a girl was a girl, and the Bible, and the hospital, and the parents, and culture, they all agreed. Those days have passed. We have thrown gender, a gift that god created, into the river, that's very, very fluid, of self identity, where each person can identify what they want to be, in spite of how God said that he created them to be.

You can look at various places in the world today, you can look at various work sites, in fact some of your job work sites have probably already sought to teach you about this. There's a school, it's called Mount Holyoke, it's in Massachusetts, and it's one of the early Seven Sister Schools. What that means, is that when all of the schools started in the Northeast, they were all for men, and so seven colleges were actually launched, in the early days of our nation, that, if a lady wouldn't be allowed to go to Harvard, or Yale, or Princeton, they could go to one of these seven.

Well this is one of those seven. It was entirely for women. In 2014, they thought, though, it would be important, because of the cultural trends, to identify what "they" mean, when they say that this is for women who can apply to this university, to this college. On their website, you can actually look at it, and they identify seven different genders, and not one of them are male, of individuals that can apply and can be accepted into an all women's college.

What I want to encourage us as we get started today is really in two fronts. The first is this, is let's not be shocked. Let's not be shocked, and the reason is this. If humanity can reject the glory of our creator that Romans 1 says that we did, then we can surely reject the glories of that which he's created. The second thing I want to encourage us, even as we're sitting here in these various weeks, and in this one on gender, is let's not scoff or let's not snicker. Let's not assume that we're better than anybody because we do not understand certain things. you see, what may seem absurd to you may be a significant struggle in the person who's sitting right next to you. If we, as a group of forgiven sinners, are to be anything, it should be a safe people for all who are seeking God.

And so, God's word begins in Chapter 1. We're gonna focus on verse 24 through 27, but I wanna read verses one and two to start with the authority of all things, God himself. He says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth, and the Earth was without form, and void and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

And then what we find is several days pass as God is creating things, and we get to verse 24, which He says is the sixth day, it says, "Then God said, let the Earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds. Livestock and creeping things and beast of the Earth, according to their kinds. And it was so. And God made the beast of the Earth all according to their kinds, and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish in the sea, and over the bird of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the Earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him male and female, he created them."

So what I want to do here this morning, is to identify are four really significant foundational truths, not only for you to think about for your own personal life, but for our families. The first is this, is that God has dominion over all He created. He has dominion. He is the one who was here before any. Notice what it says, "in the beginning, God." God never began, he was already there when the beginning began. He is eternal. And the fact is, that this mystifies our mind. We tend to want a starting point for everything, and so when we think about God, and we start sort of imagining what it was like, that God never had a starting point, our mind strains.

We need him to have a starting point, and the reason that we feel that, and while we feel a little bit risky when we can't find one of those starting points, is that you and I have been given a measure of dominion on the Earth by God himself. And as people who have a measure of dominion on the Earth, over the animals and whatnot, is that we feel like we need to identify a starting point for what we're looking at, so that we can measure it, we can contain it, we can control it. This is why, when you go to a doctor, if you're sick, they're gonna ask you, "now how old are you?" What are they doing when they ask, "how old are you?" They're starting with a reference point. They recognized that there's a life span, and the average is around 78 to 80 years old, so if you're 50 years old, when you say, "I'm not feeling well," they ask, "how old are you?" "I'm 50." All of a sudden that doctor recognizes that what they're doing is dealing with 30 years. What are they doing? They're containing, they're controlling, they're measuring, and this is what we do.

And then we come to God, and God is eternal. Which means he can't be measured, he can't be controlled, and this uncontrollable one, it says that he created the heavens and the Earth. What power and authority and wealth must be with God. Think about this for a second. What's in my hand? See, is this a trick? He's gonna magically have a bunny appear. No, there's no bunnies. What's in my hand? There's nothing in my hand, okay? So recognizing that I'm not God, I'm just like you, just a person, what can I create right now with what's in my hand? Nothing, which means that everything that we say we create on the Earth is a dependent creation.

What I mean by that is this. When we cook, we cook with foods that are available to us. When we paint, we paint with different color that are available to us. When we build buildings like this, we construct with materials that are available to us, but that's not how God creates. No, how he created is he created from nothing. He took what was nothing, and he created all that he made, and he creates as much as he wants with what he makes. You see, you and I are dependent on material, he just makes material. And he can make as much of it as he wants. He's uncontrollable, he's all powerful, and what this means is that when he has never began, we can not measure him, so we can't get our hearts and our minds around him, and we recognize that he has absolute power in creating. What that then means is this, is that he has creator rights over what he made.

You see, some of us in the room own a house. And we go to our drawer, and we pull out the deed, and we say, "see, I own this," and God says, "yeah, but I own all the wood in the world, and all the steel. I own everything in the world." What that means is he has creator rights, even over your house. He has creator rights over your life. Psalm 24 Verse 1 says, "the Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof the world and those that dwell within." What does it mean? It's all his. We're all his. Everything is his. He has dominion over everything, and just think about this. We're almost there, according to his own imagination, nobody can press him, nobody can contain him, no one can control him. He chose according to his own sovereign will to create male and female.

What does that mean? It means that he has authority over male and female. He has dominion. He has creator rights over male and female. He has the ability to say you are male, and he has the ability to instruct you how to be a male. He has authority, he's God. We start here to recognize that we have to bend before this uncontrollable, eternal, holy God. And what's remarkable for us, remarkably good, I should say, is that all of this authority, he is stunningly committed to our good. You keep reading, as you read Chapter One, it starts in Verse 10 in the end of the day, it says, "and God saw that it was good," at the end of Verse 12 it says, "and God saw that it was good," at the end of Verse 18 it says, "and God saw that it was good." The same thing at the end of Verse 21, and 25, and then you get to Verse 31, and it says, "and God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good."

Now, if you start from where it begins in Verse 10, by looking at his word, stepping back, and going, “wow, I really did a good job with this, this is really good,” you can actually recognize that the goodness is associated with what he created is because it’s good for you and me. The very first time that he says, “this is good” is right after he separated the sea from the land. Now let me ask you something. If he has no intention to put us on the Earth to live there, why would he call something good because there’s a marker between land and water? No, its good because it’s good for you and I not to be flooded, that’s why it’s good. He didn’t make us to swim forever. He made us to live on land.

You keep looking and he makes vegetation that gives forth fruit. Why? Why would that be good? Well it’s because it’s good for you, because you like to eat, and so do I. He makes animals, he makes the moon and the sun and the stars, and all of these things. He says that it’s good, it’s not just because it’s good inherently, it’s also good for you and for me, and what this means is this. This eternal God, who created all things, who has authority and dominion over all things, is committed to you. And so you can trust him. You can trust him with your life, you can trust him with your being male, you can trust him with your being female.

The second thing that we see here, this foundational truth, is that God has intentions for creating us male and female. You notice that God created all things, but is very clear that he did not create all things equally. We’re told that the fish, and the trees, and the beasts of the field, that each one of them were created according to their kind, but we were created according to his kind. We were made in the image of God. And so God created things so that if you look at a puppy, you learn something about a dog. If you look at a sapling, you’ll learn something about an oak tree. If you look at a human being, you’ll learn something about God.

This is ultimately what He had in mind, is for us to know something about Him. I recognize that we so frequently think that whatever it is that we’re about, it terminates with us, but it doesn’t. You are male and female not for you, but for Him. For Him, the eternal one, the uncontrollable one, the one that we can not measure. It’s the point to Him. You see, when Caesar’s of old, when they would conquer vast lands, before internet, before newspapers, before Facebook, before it could get out with a picture that said “hey everybody, guess what! We’re gonna be in the room, so come in on Sunday,” or before He could say, “hey everybody, I’m your new Caesar, so and so passed away, here I am!” He could never get to those vast places, and so those people would never see Him. So what would He do?

He would cause his image to be pressed down upon coins, coins like the one on the screen. He would have his image pressed down upon concrete, and placed in buildings, and on books, so that people far and wide would be able to see something about the king that’s ruling over them. Now the difference between that illustration and God is that God can be in all places at all times. He’s not confined to a room in Rome. And yet, what God has done is this. He’s created two different image bearers. A male, and a female. And he’s stamped both with his likeness, in order to point other people to Him. Now you understand that if this is true, then what it means is that we can not change on a whim what we want to be without obscuring people’s vision of who He is. He created us with intent, male and female.

You have to ask the question, “well if there’s one God, and He created two, and the two are different, and they’re clearly different, then why would He do that?” And the answer must be because one couldn’t tell the whole story, is that God created the man and He says, “you know this is really good, I’m really, really good. Really tells a whole lot about me, but you know, there’s more. That doesn’t tell everything about me. It’s accurate, but its not sufficient.” And so what we find, just by way of illustration, is that God is created male and female. And there’s absolute similarities with us.

We’re all created in the image of God, we all can talk, and think, and laugh, and emote. We can do all kinds of things that are very similar. Life for a man and a women is very, very similar to the place that we look, and we think well, this is a human being right here. There’s great similarities, and yet there’s also vast differences. There’s vast differences in what our body looks like. Chromosomes, hormones, body size, body weight, where the fat naturally stores in our body. You look at muscle mass, you look at strength, you look at all these things physically, and there’s a clear difference between a male and a female.

The scientific world would not argue. What’s also interesting is the world of psychology and sociology would also not argue with the reality that God has said to us that men and women are different even in how we relate to one another, how emotional we are, how many words in a day that we actually will use. We look at the different things, different ways that God created us with different capacities. I don’t know if you know this, I read this this week, it’s fascinating, that a woman’s brain actually has four times as many cells that connect the right and the left lobe that allows them to multitask at a greater rate than a man.

Think about that for a second. This can be a relational strain, and this is why. If you get in an argument with a woman, and you’re a man, and they both go to work, let’s just say, or one stays home and one goes to work, it’s amazing. I can get into an argument with Tabitha at breakfast, and I can drive to work and get so focused on what I’m doing that the right and left brain, they’re not communicating anymore, they’re just, “this is what I need to do,” to where something gets left to the end of the day.

Yet it’s very different for Tabitha. She recognizes that every interaction in her day, there’s always this thread that goes through, and that’s, “I’m not quite right with my husband right now.” It’s also true with risk, isn’t it? Lets just say that we all went out into the parking lot, we had somebody get up on the top of the building, ride their bicycle off, and land into a little water swimming pool, we’re like “woo, how cool is that.” They have a helmet on, right? And it’s fully tinted, so you can’t tell if it’s a male or a female. All of a sudden they jump off, right? Who do you thinks doing that, is that a male or a female that’s gonna do that? Right?

Its because God created male and female with a different capacity to assume risk. If the person jumps into the water pool, pulls off the helmet, and all of a sudden there's beautiful hair and she does this number, we're more surprised if it's a woman doing that than a man. There's clear markers, there's differences that God has created. What you need to understand is this. Like those two picture frames, what God wants to do in each one of them is that He created you in such a way that when somebody would look at your gender, as a female, that that person could look through that picture frame and see something true about God. His strength, his nurturing ability, his ability to communicate. All of these different things, God has created with intent.

What we find is that God did this, He created us differently, to compliment one another's ability to be able to showcase His glory, and this is His intent. When we move to the third, which is the tragic part of the first three chapters of the Bible, and that is that sin has destroyed the harmony of our created differences. Its clearly not Eden anymore. This is what we read in Genesis Chapter three. Starting at Verse One, it says, "now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the lord God had made. He said to the woman, did God actually say 'you shall not eat any tree in the garden,' and the woman said to the serpent, 'we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said you shall not eat the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. Neither should you touch it lest you die,' but the serpent said to the woman, 'you will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good from evil.'" So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."

And so for a time, man and woman lived in this garden in perfect harmony. All of their created differences were leveraged to serve one another, and to help one another, and to raise one another in order that God would be glorified. Then Satan comes, and the very first thing He does is he asks a question that questions the word of God. Did God actually say that? Isn't that true, what's happening today in the world? Everything that we attack that God creates, one of the very first things is, "does the Bible really say anything about that? I don't think it does." Did God really say.

And then what he does is he entices them not to be content as image-bearers, but to demand to be like God, capable of redesigning things. This seems so appealing, and so they sinned against God, and suddenly things became unraveled. There's three enormous transitions that take place almost immediately. The first thing that happens is shame replaces trust. This is a trusting environment where they recognized that one was stronger in an area than another area, and yet they never took advantage of each other in those areas of strength and weakness.

They walked around naked, and they didn't fear what the other person would do in shaming them. Now, once they recognize that the other person was sinful, suddenly they didn't trust anymore. There was shame, there was regret, there was fear. There was hiding. He even says in verse seven, "the eyes of both were open, and they ate, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin clothes."

And so the second thing that happens is isolation replaces affection. One of the most tragic things that I find in the first three chapters of the Bible are the three sentences that Adam speaks. The very first one, there's total affirmation and acceptance. He says in chapter two verse 23, "this, at last, is bone to my bones and flesh to my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man."

What's he saying? Yes, I want you to be near, come near, this is a good thing. They sin and notice what they do. Notice what it says in verse eight, "and I heard the sound of the lord of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden, but the lord God called to the man and said to him, 'where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.'"

What does that mean? It means every man for himself. You find your bush, I'm finding my bush. And so, what was an affirmation and acceptance of one another, we're a team, we're together, now they're living in isolation. You know the fact is that some of us, even in this room right now, are totally isolated. There's people who are in this room right now, and they have no friend, they have nobody literally close enough to know what's happening in their life.

Isn't it amazing that when Jesus Christ dies and reconciles us, and forgives us, and brings us into a church environment, he populates the new testament with verses about how we're supposed to live together, we're supposed to bear one another's burdens, we're supposed to forgive one another and care for one another, and love one another, and pray for one another. What's he doing? He's reversing the curse. He's saying that sin takes all these differences, and in fear we hide ourselves, we isolate so nobody can find us, nobody can see us. What does the gospel do? He first connects us back to God, and then he connects us to each other.

That's not the only tragic thing though that took place in the garden, because the third thing that happens is they begin to blame, where at one time there was a sense of responsibility, God comes, and he's says, "what'd you do?" And the man says, "the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate it." You see what Adam just said there? He said God, ultimately, this is your fault. Things were working just fine around here until you put her here. And once you put her here, she tempted me. You tempted me. This is your fault. And what a tragic thing, our go to as men and women, "hey did you do this?" "no, I think they did."

We blame shift instead of taking responsibility, and then, sadly, then comes the curse. Then God speaks, and He goes, “okay this is what’s gonna happen,” look at what it says in chapter three verse 16, He says, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing, and pain you shall bring forth children, and your desire shall be for your husband, and He shall rule over you.”

For the longest time, I looked at the end of chapter six and it says, “oh when I get married, my wife is gonna find my attractive, your desire shall be for your husband, that’s a great thing.” That’s not what it says at all, okay? We know it’s not what it says because the same Hebrew structure is actually found a chapter later. See, Adam and Eve, they have some boys, Kan and Abel, and Kane wants to kill his brother Abel. God comes to him and He says, “don’t do this, I know you’re jealous of him but don’t do this.” This is what He says, “sin is crouching at the door, and it’s desire is for you, but you must rule over it”

So here we find the picture of what takes place, how does sin destroy the harmony of our created differences, this is how it happens. When sin reigns in our heart, we exploit one another’s weaknesses with our God given strengths in order to get the upper hand. This is the genesis of the Me Too movement. This is the genesis of all abuse in the world, is stronger people, whatever their strength is, whether it’s sexual appeal, whether it’s physical strength, whether it’s verbal ability, whatever it is, it’s saying, “I’m gonna take my strength and I’m gonna overpower you to gain control.

This crushes harmony. So what did God do? The fourth thing we see here is this, is that God has rescued our created differences in Christ. You see, in chapter three verse 15, speaking to the serpent, God says, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring, and he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

What’s happening here? As sin unraveled the harmony of creation, God promised a rescuer. He promised that there would be a seed that would be born of woman that would crush the head of the serpent, even though the serpent would strike at his heel and inflict pain, and this was Jesus. The apostle Paul says as much, he says, “but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His son born of woman and born under the law, and so Jesus came and he lived without sin, and yet he went to a cross to pay for our sin.”

He was buried in a grave, and then he rose from the dead, extending to us an invitation, and that is that if we would believe in him, if we would admit that we are in need, that we are a sinner and we can not save ourself, if we would believe in him, in Jesus Christ, in his accomplishments, in his cross, in his resurrection. If we would confess Him as lord of our life, the bible says that He would forgive us of all of our sin, he would give us his righteousness, he would give us the power to forgive other people, their sins against us, and he would give us the ability to rescue every part of his design that was ravaged by sin, including male and female.

This is what He has done. He has the power and authority. In a moment, we're gonna march out several young boys and girls to dedicate them to the lord, but before we do I wanna give you just a few applications for these four significant truths. The first is this, is lets trust Christ and yield to his authority. He has dominion, but ever since the fall we've had a king problem, a king problem. Judges 17:6 says in those days there was no king, and everyone did what was right in their own eye. You see, when Jesus Christ is not given the authority to rule in your throne, or in your heart on the throne, what takes place is you and I always assume that rule. And what's so sad, is perched on that throne, we go so far as to resist God in forming our gender, and we go so far as to feel the right to inform God of his.

You have to understand, God is like our North Star. You see, in the early days, before phones, and GPS, and maps, if you were a fisherman and you were out at sea and you got lost, you'd search for the North Star, a reference point, a fixed point that you could identify among all the other stars, and once you knew where that was you could navigate yourself back to where you needed to be. God is our fixed star. He is that North Star. James, chapter one verse 17 says, "every perfect gift is from above. Coming down from the father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

He is the fixed point, his word is the fixed point. These are unchangeable things, and they'll help us navigate the complexities and the difficulties of our own life and our culture. Let's yield to Jesus Christ as the king of our heart.

The second thing I want to encourage us, turns to application is let's protect gender but never worship it. We should honor it and protect it, but never worship it. You see, gender is a great gift, but a horrible God. What you find is those who are so infatuated with gender, they risk bowing down to it. Romans chapter one verse 25 says, "they exchange the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator."

Male and female is part of the creature, not the creator. When we assume that it is the way for us to find sole satisfaction, the way for me to be happy in life, what we're doing is we're elevating it to God status. Gender is just a really poor God. You see, gender is not the point. Family's not the point. God is the point. God made us male and female, the point to Him, and so Providence, let's urge our boys to become men and our girls to become women, and let's never lose sight of biblical masculinity and femininity, for if we do we will surely lose some of our vision of God.

The third thing is let's extend love and grace to all people. Many of you are asking right now, "okay I see it, I see it within scripture, I believe it, but I live in this culture, I work in this place, I have friends who are struggling with this, so what are we supposed to do?" I'm gonna just read this to you, and then I'm gonna write it this week so that you have it, so you're not gonna be able to keep up with your notes if you're trying, okay?

The first thing I would encourage is this. We should love people who struggle with gender identity, we should welcome them to our church, and as they respond to the gospel with faith and repentance, we should receive them as part of our family. The second thing we should do is protect people from any physical or digital abuse, or act of ridicule. Social media is such a gift, and such a plague at the same time. We need to be careful of it. But every single person, no matter their struggles, is an image bearer of God, and worthy of our affection, and our protection. The third thing is that we should show compassion for anyone experiencing distress regarding gender identity, and only those believers humble enough to see their own struggles will be capable of walking with people through struggles that seem very different from our own.

The fourth and last thing that we shall do is we shall continue to declare the whole counsel of God, including the truth about God's design for us to be male and female. Male and female persons that are created in the image of God. Providence for the good of your family, and for the good of future families, I urge you this morning to consider the word of God. Let's pray together.

Father thank you for your grace in our life, and thank you for your mercy. We ask, God, that you would take the confusing parts of what we just studied, what we read, and what I said and you would distill it into a way that our mind can grasp first that you are trustworthy, and you are God, and you are king, and you have authority, and you're eternal, and that we're here to glorify you, and not the other way around. And so we ask that you would give us compassion as a people, to love well, God, even now we pray for these little ones as they come out, because we have the privilege to hear their names, we have the privilege to pray, and dedicate them. Would you help us to affirm what you said is true of them. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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