

HUMAN SEXUALITY COURSE:

God, Sexuality, Gender & LGBTIQ+

Talk 2. Jesus' Sexual Ethics & Creation Design

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Overview of Lecture Two

- Here we look at **Step 2** in doing sexual ethics:
 1. What is the situation/condition regarding sexuality?
 2. What ought to be the situation? The Vision/God's design
 3. How to be free to be that? Redemption and formation
- We look at **Jesus' sexual ethics** and his way of interpretation
- Then at God's **Creation Design**

SEX ETHICS Step 2: What ought to be?

- The Biblical vision of human sexuality
- **Jewish ethics** - Jesus works from (back to) the **creation story**:
God's design/purpose for sexuality... AND... The Fall & consequences
- **Therefore, the theological framework... God's STORY... is:**
Creation AND new creation... in 'Kingdom theology' terms:
 - 1) Creation: design & purpose
 - 2) The Fall: into sin and its consequences of broken creation/humanity
 - 3) Redemption: in Messiah – sexual salvation, healing, transformation
 - 4) New Creation glorification: the state of sexuality in the future age

5. SEX ETHICS: Jesus on sexuality & marriage

- Mark 10:2-9, **God's creation design** and **The Fall** ('hardness of heart')

Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

"What did Moses command you?" he replied.

They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

"It was *because your hearts were hard* that Moses wrote you this law,"

Jesus replied. "***But at the beginning of creation*** God 'made them male and female.' '***For this reason*** a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."

5. SEX ETHICS: Jesus on sexuality & marriage

- **Here Jesus** bases his sexual ethics on **creation design** for acceptable normative sexual behaviour for human flourishing as God's image
- He emphasises the **“two-ness” of the sexual bond** from Genesis 1 & 2
- He limits **sexual partners to male & female in a marriage union** – two become one – a third party, or same-sex, CANNOT make a ‘whole’
- **Limits it to two partners**, thus prohibiting polygamy, polyamory, and polygyne... in a Greco-Roman world that practiced all three and more!
- **Prohibits revolving door divorce & remarriage** “for any & every cause”

5. SEX ETHICS: Jesus on sexuality & marriage

- Matthew 19:1-12: Jesus adds '*porneia*' as the reason for divorce... It breaks the marriage covenant. In v.8-9 Jesus said...

“Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your **hearts were hard**. *But it was not this way from the beginning*. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, ***except for sexual immorality ('porneia')*** and marries another woman commits adultery.”

- '***Porneias***', translated sexual immorality or adultery, is *the summary word* used for all sexual engagement outside the covenant of marriage
- Comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT (Septuagint, LXX): it uses *porneia* for all forms of illicit sexual behaviour outside marriage

5. SEX ETHICS: Jesus on sexuality & marriage

- **Jesus' interpretation** goes back to the 7th Commandment...
- ***Porneias* violates the 7th Mitzvah (Deut 5:18) – Jesus in Matt 5:27-30,**

“You’ve heard it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery (*porniea*).’ But I tell you, anyone who looks at a woman **lustfully** has already committed adultery with her **in his heart**. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell”
- The inner cultivation and intention of the heart is as good as the outward deed... Fantasy of the mind is the idolatry of the heart.

5. SEX ETHICS: Jesus on sexuality & marriage

- **Mark 7:20-23** (cf Matt 15:18-19), Jesus refers to ***porneia & aselgeia***, prohibited sexual behaviour in the Holiness Code (Leviticus 18 & 20, in the 'Septuagint'), among other sins, on purity and impurity laws...

“It is not what enters a person (by eating) that defiles them, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s ***heart***, that ***evil thoughts*** come: ***sexual immorality***, theft, murder, greed, malice, deceit, ***lewdness***, envy, slander, folly and arrogance. These evils come from inside and defile a person.”

- Thus, Jesus works from **creation design**, to the **7th Command** (*porneia*), expanded in the **Holiness Code**; *i.e. the resulting sins of **The Fall***.

5. SEX ETHICS: Jesus on sexuality & marriage

- Jesus' future-age vision (Jewish Eschatology) of sexuality Luke 20:34-36, Jesus replied, “The people of **this age** marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in **the age to come, in the resurrection from the dead, will neither marry nor be given in marriage** – they can no longer die – **for they are like the angels**”
- Glorified bodies: genital/erotic sexuality is a ‘this age’ procreative gift to teach us to love – **perfected** in resurrection bodies – still differentiated as male & female, as in Revelation 7:9 (not to be confused with Paul’s “neither male nor female”, which is our equality & oneness in Christ).
- Sexual Redemption: This future breaks thru in Christ’s life, death & resurrection = reverses The Fall to **Creation Design... AND New Creation**

5. SEX ETHICS: Creation Design - Genesis 1

- Gen 1, overall picture... Gen 2 zoom lens into male & female creation
- Gen 1:1,26-27 In the beginning **God created** the heavens & the earth. And the earth was formless... and God said, “Let there be...” (five times) **THEN** on the sixth day God said, “Let us make **adam** in our image and likeness, so that **they** may rule over... So God created **adam** in God’s own image, **male and female** God created **them**. And God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply.... Rule over...”
 1. “**ha adam**” is “the earthling” (human being) – **Adam** was created out of **adamah**, the ground/dust/earth (Gen 2:7)
 2. **Image of God in complementary pair** – climax of the pairs in Gen 1, heaven & earth, light & darkness, evening & morning, water & land...

5. SEX ETHICS Step 2: Creation - Genesis 1

3. 'male & female' (*zakar uneqevah*) is a **sexual pair** (Gen 1:28, 5:2, 6:19; 7:3,9,16)... differentiated image of God... the climax of creation
4. **Equal & compatible** (complementary) – BOTH to **rule** AND **procreate**
5. Animals created as male & female, **BUT human sexual differentiation is *uniquely* integrated into God's image**; i.e. we are not 'instinct driven' – dogs are not discriminating in their 'sexual ethics'!!
6. Attention to '**kinds**' of creation (structural congruity) – differentiated **humans are uniquely God's 'kind' (image)** for all creation to see
7. Was “**very good**”: **goodness of sexuality – gift of love, power, relate**

5. SEX ETHICS Step 2: Creation - Genesis 1

8. Sexuality – our way of relating – that either **enhances... or effaces... that** (differentiated) **image of God** on earth
9. ‘Male & Female’ are ‘**angled expressions**’ of God who is: masculine & feminine... AND beyond sex & gender... God is **spirit**, John 4:24
10. **BUT**: male & female in their **individual identity** also ***imago deo***...
Male as male is God’s image: we cannot be ‘completed’ by male-male sexual union – likewise with female-female – we are designed for ‘completion’ in equal but complementary gender marriage union
11. Stress on **equality & compatibility**, **NOT** on male dominance – only after the fall in Gen 3, as part of the curse, *the male will rule over...*

5. SEXUAL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

2:7 Then the LORD God formed *ha adam* from the dust of **the ground** (*adamah*) and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**, and *ha adam* became a living being... The LORD God took *ha adam* and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** it and **take care** of it.

- **Uniqueness of humanity** (earthling, singular) ‘**after God’s kind**’... part dust and part glory, body and (S)pirit: ‘**bodily spiritual being**’
- “The spirit of man (**adam**, generic = human) is the candle of the Lord, searching out every inner most part”, Prov 20:27 = **will & conscience**
- “**Work**”: to **rule & reign** with God over creation, “take care of” what God **entrusted to us** – including our sexuality – we will account to God

5. SEXAUL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

2:18-21: The Lord God said, “It is not good for **ha adam** to be alone. I will make *a helper suitable for him (ezer kenegdo)*. Now the Lord God had formed out of **the ground (adamah)** all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to **ha adam** to see what he would name them... **But for ha adam no helper (ezer) was found**”

- **Kenegdo** means ‘suitable counterpart’: ‘as’ (*ke* prefix)... ‘his’ (*o* suffix) **neged**, meaning BOTH ‘**similarity corresponding to**’ (similarity as to *humans*) AND ‘**different opposite**’ (a distinct sex extracted from him)
- Masculine noun **ezer** is **helper**, a relational term, is **not** subordinate – used 21 x in OT; 16 x of **Yahweh** as Israel’s **helper** (superordinate)
- Thus, *ezer kenegdo* = **benefactor soul mate** = equal counterpart

5. SEXAUL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

2:21f, “So the Lord caused the *adam* to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of his ribs (or **side, *tsela***) and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God **made a woman from the *tsela*** he had taken out of the *adam*, and he brought her to the *adam*”

- ***tsela***, 33 times in OT, **a side of sacral architecture**: We are God’s sacral architecture in **our differentiated sexuality**... Eve is architecturally **“built”**, *bnh* (used only of Eve) while Adam was merely **“formed”**, *ysr*
- “Eve was not taken from the **feet** of *ha adam* to be his slave, not from his **head** to be his ruler, but from his **side** to be his beloved partner”
- **“bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh”**, 2:24, reinforces “side”, which means ‘as close to my body in physical oneness’, i.e. **completion**

5. SEXAUL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

NOTE the fourfold emphasis of ‘taking FROM’ the human (adam):

- v21, God “took one of (lit. ‘FROM’) his sides/ribs (*tsela*) and closed up its place with flesh” (i.e. now ‘empty’ but ‘covered’)
- v22, “God built the *tsela* that he had taken FROM the human (*ha adam*) into a **woman** (*isshah*)” (an architectural design of beauty)
- v23a, The human declares, “This is bone of/FROM my bones & flesh of/FROM my flesh” (i.e. not just that the woman is my bone & flesh)
- v23b: “this one shall be given the name **‘woman’** (*isshah*) for FROM the man (*ish*) this one was taken” (i.e. ‘adam’ is now ‘ish’... next slide)

5. SEXAUL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

- **THEN** ... **2:24-25**, “**For this reason** a man (**ish**) will leave his father and mother and be **united** (**dabaq**, joined, attached, glued, ‘cleave’) to his wife (woman, **isshah**), and they (the two) become **one flesh**. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

THE MEANING & IMPLICATIONS

1. What is missing from the **adam** (human... now an **ish**, man) is **THE** ‘part’ that God has built into a woman (**isshah**)
2. In this context “**one flesh**” in 2:24 clearly implies restoring the missing part to an **indivisible whole**. I.e. **man & woman are two essential complementary parts in a holist picture of sexuality**

5. SEXAUL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

3. “One flesh” thus does not mean merely ‘the same family’ but restoration of the sexual whole... therefore, *the image of “one flesh becoming two sexes”* (*adam ‘cut’ into male and female*) *grounds the principle of two sexes “becoming one flesh”* (union)
4. **Differentiation of the sexes:** *ha adam* saw himself (accurately) for who he really was in light of the complementary other, and vice versa. He then saw himself as “man” (*ish*... male, *zakar*, 1:27), and she saw herself as “woman” (*isshah*... female, *egevah*, 1:27).
5. We **complete one another** as equal complementary opposites
6. Sexual union is **the seal & celebration of the marriage covenant**

SEXAUL ETHICS: Creation, Genesis 2 ‘Zoom’

7. **Naked and no shame:** only felt shame **after sinning**, and ‘covered up’ – genital/erotic sexuality for marriage – all else is ‘*porneia*’
8. **Therefore, the purpose of genital sexuality (sex) in marriage is:**
 - A) **Covenant:** sexual faithfulness, integrity, protection... ‘loyal love’
 - B) **Companionship:** intimacy, bonding, affection... ‘making love’
 - C) **Celebration:** of the covenant = pleasure, fun... ‘enjoying love’
 - D) **Co-creation:** fruitfulness, children & family, raising/developing images of God to fill the earth with God’s redemptive goodness (**ONLY male AND female biology created for this very purpose**)