

Introduction

Good afternoon. Today we've come to the sixth session in our series, *A Better Story: God, Sex and Human Flourishing*.

But, before we dive into the lecture. We're going to do something a little different. We have the privilege of welcoming one of our brothers in Christ and one of our sisters in Christ who are gay to come and share with us. One is my daughter, Spencer, whom I love so much. Who just amazes me! Spencer, you are such a delight to me and your mother. And our church is so honored that you would come and talk with us. Thank you.

Our other guest is Dylan Crigger. Dylan started attending Incarnation back in 2015 when he was a college student at JMU. He graduated in 2018 with a BA in writing and composition, and then in 2021 he graduated from JMU again, this time with an MA in writing and composition. And now he's an adjunct professor of first year writing at JMU.

Thank you Spencer and Dylan for being so brave and kind and offering to share some of your story with us tonight, and over the weeks to come.

....

Thank you Dylan and Spencer. Thank you so much.

One reason Dylan and Spencer have done this is because it's so important, whenever we're talking about sexuality and gender to remember, we're not simply talking about concepts, we're also talking about people. Real people, people to be loved.

And one of the best ways to love people is to listen to them.

Both Dylan and Spencer have agreed to come back each week that remains in our series. And each week they will share a little more about themselves and their experience. And they'll be joining us for Q&A each week so that you can ask them questions if you'd like.

Thanks Spencer and Dylan. Your courage and honesty, your willingness to be seen and known. It is such a gift to us. Thank you. Let's give them a hand.

Our structure tonight will be just like it has been for the last several weeks. I'm going to talk now for about 35 minutes. And then we'll do the Q&A. But starting tonight, we'll do the Q&A in two parts. The first part will be with me about the material I'm covering in the lecture. Then for the second half of the Q&A Spencer and Dylan will join me so that you can ask any questions of the three of us for which their input will be helpful. You should've received slips of paper to help you with this.

Sex in the Roman Empire

A significant part of what we're doing in this whole series is trying to understand the Christian vision for sexual flourishing. Last week we looked at the Purposes of Sex, that is, sex that goes with the grain of the universe. This afternoon we're shifting our focus to sex that goes **against** the grain of the universe: disordered sex. And to do that, let's back up for a minute. In fact, let's back up 1,971 years.

Let's go all the way back to the year AD 51 when the apostle Paul staggered toward the city of Corinth. After months of being abused, beaten, imprisoned, starved, and chased. He is physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. He's run out of money, and is all alone.

And as Paul approached this port city, he surely would have seen, looming over the town, the massive Acrocorinth, rising 1,800 feet above the surrounding plain. And on top of this huge rock, was the temple to Aphrodite towering over the city.

And hobbling into the city Paul would have been confronted by the bewildering noise of power, and commerce. See him making his way to the center of town, he's surrounded by a loud cacophony of temples, markets, brothels, merchants' stalls, and public offices. Watch this solitary missionary creep along into such an overwhelming cityscape.

And like many of the other cities in the Roman empire, this city has a tremendous **social imbalance**. There are just a few rich people, while everyone else is either grievously poor and illiterate or they are slaves. In fact, the majority of the population are slaves.

And the reason this matters for us tonight is because **when it comes to sex, in the world in which Christianity was born, your sex life was determined by your place in the social fabric of the Roman empire.**

For example, if you were a **free woman**, the rules were hard and fast. In a society where the average life expectancy at birth was 24 or 25, the demands of reproduction were **urgent** and **unavoidable**. Marriage came early. The legal age was 12. Most girls married in their mid-teens. The very highest class held off until sometime in their late teens.

And your highest priority was to be **modest**, because in that culture modesty was how you made it absolutely clear to everyone that your babies belonged to your husband. Girls were to be virgins when they married and then there must be no suspicion whatsoever that you were ever with another man.

In this culture, ancient women, in the words of the classical historian, Kyle Harper, "lived every moment in a high-stakes game of suspicious observation."¹ "Your job was to produce babies for the state. Rome needed citizens and soldiers."² And so **Modesty was the one glory of a free woman.**

Now, if you were a **free man**, the rules were different.

The code of masculinity hated any hint of men acting feminine, or passive, or soft. And nobody even imagined that you needed to be chaste. In fact, **“there is not even a word for ‘male virgin’ in either Latin or Greek.”**³ The rule for men was **not purity**, it was domination and moderation. Your primary job was to show that you were in control.

But even then, no one expected moderation among boys from the time they hit puberty until they were in their mid-twenties. You see, most men didn’t marry until they were in their late twenties. And at the beginning of puberty, the widespread cultural view was that it was impossible and unhealthy to regulate the sexual life of a male after puberty until they were in their early twenties. The most that could be hoped for was that the young man, in this frantic period, did nothing that would bring himself harm. And then, in their early twenties, it was expected that the young men would cool off and ease into a more respectable self-control and eventually get married.

Now don’t get me wrong, once a boy reached puberty there were two non-negotiable rules in the Greco-Roman world:

1. do not have sex with another man’s wife, and
2. under no circumstances was a boy to be passive, and that meant at its most fundamental level, that a freeborn male should never, ever be penetrated.⁴

The social code of **manliness for a man**
was as severe and unforgiving
as the code of **modesty for a woman**.

So there were, to be clear, two entirely different sets of standards for sex: one for free men, and the other for free women.

And then there was everyone else. The slaves. Like I said, more than half of the population. And for **slaves**, none of these rules applied. And in fact, the entire approach to sex in the Greco-Roman world depended on the existence of people for whom these rules couldn’t be true: slaves.

The high Roman Empire in which Christianity was born was a slave society. Chattel slavery. And the numbers are astronomical. Slaves were everywhere. And a slave’s body had no legal or social protection. In the words of one of the foremost historians of ancient Roman slavery and sexuality,

- “domestic slaves” were “considered little more than breathing furniture.”⁵
- “Sex was simply a domestic service,”⁶
- and therefore “slaves...were subjected to untrammelled sexual abuse.”⁷
- The man of the house could use any slave—male or female, child or adult— as sexual receptacles.

A **famous saying** from Greece in the 4th century BC, gives some sense of the views of Roman society in the first century:

- “We have courtesans for our pleasure,
- prostitutes for our daily bodily needs,
- and wives to bear our legitimate children and to preside over our households.”⁸

You see, one of the functions of slaves and prostitutes in the Roman mind was that they **prevented adultery** by acting as a **safety valve** for male lust. The **fundamental belief** was that male sexual energy had to be expended.⁹ So “in an empire saturated with the bodies of slaves” and prostitutes—(which were virtually always sexual slaves)—“in an empire saturated with the bodies of slaves” sex was **readily available**.¹⁰

And then there was the art—what we would call pornography. The graphic sex you can find on Netflix and Hulu, and porn sites on the internet. It was plastered on bathhouse walls, and inside ordinary homes as decorations: wall paintings, the ubiquitous lamps with engravings and drawings.

“For instance, it wasn’t uncommon to have pictures of men having sex with boys painted on water pitchers served at the dinner table. Imagine that—‘And in Caesar’s name we pray, Amen... please pass the water, Mom.’”¹¹

Between that and the ever present brothels and prostitutes, historians tell us that no one was shielded from sexual depictions.

“No matter how promiscuous you think our modern culture is, let me assure you: it is nothing like first-century Rome. What we call pornography, the Romans simply called life.”¹² Men, women, and children were surrounded by paintings, carvings, and actual acts of sexual activities.

And so, to summarize this awful history. “Roman sexual morality was fundamentally about class and gender. If you were privileged, morality meant women had to be chaste and men had to [exercise] power and control. If you weren’t privileged, if you were a slave, Roman sexual morality... wasn’t even an option. If you weren’t one of the lucky ones, then” you would be exploited.....and quite likely from an early age.¹³

And so, the **culture of Roman Corinth that Paul walked into early in AD 51** was **“geared to deliver sexual satisfaction” to freeborn men “cheaply and easily.”**¹⁴

And from archeology and history, we know that “even against the indulgent backdrop of late Roman sensuality, **Corinth stood out as especially excessive.**

And **it is within this chaotic atmosphere that we must learn to think about those early Christian converts** that **Paul taught to walk in the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Christian Sexual Morality in the Midst of the Roman Empire

And when we turn to **1 Corinthians**, the letter that Paul wrote to these Christians a few years later. When we turn there we see that “sexual holiness isn’t just a ‘rule,’ an arbitrary commandment. It is” fundamental to being a Christian. It is a significant “part of what it means to turn from idols and serve the true and living god. It is part of being a genuine, image bearing human being.”¹⁵

And the actual details of what it meant to be sexually holy was developed from **two key, foundational concepts**. One is positive and the other is negative.

First Foundational Element of Christian Sexual Morality: Creation

The first one, the positive one is **creation**.

If you brought along a Bible, turn to **1 Corinthians c6v16** where Paul is talking about sexual sin, and at the center of his discussion he says, *“As it is written, ‘The two will become one flesh.’”*

And here we see Paul following along in Jesus’ footsteps. Paul, when he’s dealing with sex, and what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, Paul goes back **Genesis c1 & c2**. He’s rooting Christian sexual morality in creation. The starting place for the Christian understanding of sexuality and gender is **not** our experience, or intuitions, or feelings, or friendships...it’s what was God’s original purpose in creation.

This was what we looked at last week. And we saw that the original purposes of sex are: unitive, procreative, and sacramental. Good and true and beautiful sex is “for others:

- for the spouse,
- for the world,
- and for God.

Good sex attends to the beloved, not just in bed, but in the unified life together where both partners learn to die to self and to serve one another in love.

And good sex points us to our children.

And good sex points us toward God.”¹⁶

And this is very different from a basic presumption about sex in the Roman Empire when Christianity was coming on the scene: the presumption there was that “sex was just sex, one instinctual need among others, to be channeled in certain fundamental ways.”¹⁷

Transition: We spent last week focusing on this, that the first of two fundamental issues for the Christian vision of sexual flourishing is **creation**.

And now, this week we will see the second foundational element for Christian sexual morality is the concept of *porneia*. It's a greek word, I'll translate it in just a moment, but it's important that we start with it in the greek language.

Second Foundational Element of Christian Sexual Morality: Porneia

If you've brought a Bible with you, turn to **1 Corinthians c6v13**. Look at the last phrase in that verse. *"The body is not meant for πορνεία but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."*

Now this word, *porneia*, is just as important to the Christian view of sex as creation, the purpose of sex when God created it. *Porneia* used 56 times in the NT.

In most modern English versions the word is translated *"fornication"* or *"sexual immorality."* But that's too weak.

And in light of what I just pointed out about the city of Corinth, it's not surprising that **the** place in the New Testament to go in order to best understand what is meant by *porneia* is in fact Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In **1 Corinthians chapters 5, 6, and 7** Paul addresses a series of issues regarding sex.

In **c5v1**, he begins the discussion by declaring, *"It is actually reported that there is πορνεία among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife."*

So it seems that "a man had begun to cohabit with his stepmother, probably widowed." But remember girls got married starting at 12 years of age. And guys got married in their mid- to late-twenties. So "the two may not have been so far apart in age."¹⁸

From the Christian perspective, coming out of Judaism and the Old Testament, this relationship was incest. **Leviticus c18v8** identifies one form of incest as sex with your parent's spouse. Now, the Old Testament doesn't call incest *porneia*, but by the time of the New Testament, the term *porneia* has **expanded to cover any sexual relationship outside of consensual sex in a marriage between a man and a woman.** In other words, *porneia* is any sexual relationship in violation of the Old Testament law.¹⁹

Notice the next verse. **1 Corinthians c5v2**, *"And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?"*

So from a Christian perspective, this particular relationship was intolerable. And so Paul chastises the Corinthians for tolerating the presence of this man among them. At the end of **v2**, he says *"Let him who has done this be removed from among you."* And down in **v9**, he reminds them that he had previously told them the same thing, *"I wrote to you in my [former] letter not to associate with πόρνοις [people who commit porneia]."*

What's going on here? Well to understand why part of the Corinthian church is proud of a thing that from Paul's perspective is so clearly and fundamentally wrong, we need to turn to the next chapter. In **1 Corinthians c6vv12–20** Paul is dealing with the background belief system that is undergirding the approval of incest.

In **1 Corinthians c6v12**, Paul quotes a slogan being used by some of the Christians in Corinth. *"All things are lawful for me."* This was like a banner for a libertine segment within the Christian population of Corinth.

Where did this come from? Two places:

1. **First of all, it's what anybody raised in Corinth had grown up believing.** You see, these Christians had grown up with a life entrenched in sexual indulgence. We've got to remember where we started tonight, the traditional Roman attitude toward sex for a free male: moderation, but not self-denial. "Sex was just sex, one instinctual need among others, to be channeled in certain fundamental ways."²⁰ In this society it was expected that men would indulge their sexual desires with prostitutes, slaves, and others who lacked social honor.
2. **And second,** about five years before writing this letter to the Church in Corinth, Paul had written to the Christians in Galatia boldly declaring on another topic, in another context: *"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."* And then at the monumental Jerusalem Council, in **Acts 15**, the Gentile Christians were freed from the magnificently intricate regulations of the Jewish dietary code. Apparently some of the Corinthian Christians were claiming that **the freedom we have in Christ** also freed us from the highly demanding sexual code of the Old Testament.

But Paul's response is very sharp. He "stops this line of thinking in its tracks" as he shows that **"sexual morality is part of the proclamation of...God's restoration of the [entire] cosmos."**²¹

Look at the end of **v13**. Look at the last phrase in that verse. *"The body is not meant for πορνεία but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."* And then in **v15**, *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?"*

It's a rhetorical question. **The answer is, No.** **"The body is a temple. The place where God dwells."** And so the stakes could not be any higher. Look at **v18**, *"Flee πορνείαν. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the πορνήση sins [into] his own body."* So *porneia* is an act of pollution in the sacred space of the Christian body.

Now.....turn to **c7**. Again Paul begins by quoting a Corinthian slogan, *"It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."* Okay, so apparently in addition to the libertine segment in the Corinthian church that interpreted the gospel of grace and freedom to mean a free man can have sex with prostitutes, and slaves, and boys, and girls, and all the other avenues

encouraged by the Greco-Roman culture. In addition to that libertine group, there seems to have been another group who was taking the opposite view: sex is bad. All sex is bad. The body is a temple, and sex is pollution to the body.

And Paul's response to this is, "No. Sex in marriage is **not porneia**." In fact there are two kinds of sex: married sex and **porneia**.

- Good sex is sex in a marriage between a husband and a wife that is oriented toward its unitive, procreative, and sacramental ends.
- And all other sex is against the grain of the universe, it's **porneia**: all sex beyond the marriage bed of a man and a woman is bad sex—this is sex that strains against all the goodness God offers us. With this term **porneia** God is telling us the truth about the reality of sex gone wrong.
- **Porneia** is disordered sex. It is sex that is contrary to God's good intentions.²²
- "Sexual holiness isn't just a 'rule,' an arbitrary commandment. It is part of what it means to turn from idols and serve the true and living god. It is part of being a genuine, image bearing human being."²³

Listen to what God tells us in **1 Thessalonians c4vv3–8**, *"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality [porneia]; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you."*

Do you see?! Sexual immorality is very, very, very bad. It's sex that rejects the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are saved "by the grace of Jesus Christ, which he poured out for us in the cross and the resurrection. [And so] our understanding of sex-gone-wrong can never be...[thought of as we] get sex right and then come to God. The order runs the other way. God the Father, because of what Christ has done restores us to right relationship with him in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that same Spirit dwells in us, giving us power to bear" "faithful witness in the world to what Christ has done. Part of that bearing faithful witness is to...shun **porneia**."²⁴

The First Sexual Revolution

Back in 1954 Flannery O'Connor wrote a short story with the title, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost." It's about a homely, strong-willed, precocious twelve-year-old girl.

One weekend her two second cousins come to stay at her house. They're older, 14 years old. And their names are Joanne and Suzanne, but they call themselves "Temple One" and "Temple Two" because at their catholic boarding school, one of the nuns, Sister Perpetua, had told them as they left school to remember that each one of them was a Temple of the Holy Ghost. And so they should behave themselves with boys. And they should even use this phrase to fend off any fresh young men in the back seats of cars. They should say, "Stop sir! I am a Temple of the Holy Ghost!"

Well, the cousins think this advice is hilarious. And they spend the weekend, mocking the nun. But the twelve-year-old girl, she doesn't think it's funny. She's deeply moved by the thought. "The news that she is the dwelling place of God makes her feel as if somebody has given her a present."²⁵

She came to see that our bodies are less like playthings and more like temples.²⁶

And the early Christians learned just that. They listened to what God was telling them through Paul's letter to the Corinthians, and so they learned to "*Flee sexual immorality.*"

- And over the course of three hundred years, the exceptional sexual views of the Christians played out in an empire full of cities that offered endless allurements.
- For 300 years, the early Christians learned to protect the bodily integrity of vulnerable women.
- They learned to reject all sex outside of marriage.
- They learned that sex was sacred.
- That sexual morality was integral to the Christian vision of redemption.
- They learned that the proclamation of the gospel was inseparable from the issue of sex.

And they learned to live in an environment where their views of sex became **the great divide** between themselves and the wider world.²⁷

And they did this for 300 years. And then, right under their noses...Rome changed.

Kyle Harper, the outstanding historian of Roman antiquity that I referenced earlier. On the first page of his book, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*, published by Harvard Press. On the first page of the book, he says that the transformation of the Roman world from polytheistic to Christian over the course of the first, second, and third centuries AD was one of the most sweeping transformations in history. And in his own words, "Few periods of premodern history have witnessed such brisk and consequential ideological change. [And] Sex was at the center of it all."²⁸

Harper calls this, **the first great sexual revolution.** By the 4th century, Roman Emperors began to pass laws making forced, coerced prostitution illegal. Laws supporting the better way of Christianity with its deep respect for all people, regardless of age, gender, and social class.

Transition: And now, let's wrap this up by seeing what all of this mean for us today.

Christian Sexual Morality in Our Secular Age

We Christians find ourselves in an odd position these days. We are surrounded by a culture that bears some of our values: the universal dignity of all individuals, and the fundamental importance of freedom. And yet, the way our society holds these values are different than the way Christians hold them.

For Christians, they are derived from the story of God's creation and restoration of this world. As one of my favorite theologians, Herman Bavinck, put it: **the essence of the Christianity is that "the creation of the Father [was] ruined by sin [but it] is restored in the death of the Son of God and re-created by the grace of the Holy Spirit into" into the kingdom of God.**²⁹

And this is the story within which we understand sex—it's within this "larger story of the gospel, and its picture of a created cosmos in the throes of restoration."³⁰

In our secular age, we Christians, here in the West, are beginning to experience what the church experienced when it all began. The differences between our view of sexual morality and that of the surrounding culture, **it's really about the clash between different worldviews. In fact,** "there is **probably no greater clash** between worldviews than the one between our culture's view of sex and Christianity's vision for sexual flourishing."³¹

"In the early Church, sexual morality was not baggage, afterthought, or accident. It was the plane on which Christians tried to live *in* the world, but not *of* it."³²

And so **"we must come to see our sexual lives as particular callings within God's mission.** [And] we need to acknowledge and affirm that this is a heroic struggle...in our cultural context...[And] these Christian practices will feel alienating and at times unbearable."³³ But we can do this!

And one last thing. While "there are many ways that sex goes wrong. Christians don't claim this to shame people or to try to police other people's bodies. Christians claim this to tell the truth about the world."³⁴

And to offer grace.

Remember what we learned about sex in the days of the High Roman Empire. The lucky and the rich "got protection and honor," but no one else did. And then Christianity came along.

And “in the kingdom [of God, everyone’s] body is honored. In Rome, bodies were for power or pleasure or the state or the market. In the kingdom [of God], we are all called to be chaste,” none “of our bodies are” for sexual sin. All of our bodies are “for the Lord. [And] in Rome, if you were sexually shameful, there was no going back”³⁵

But “Jesus, [he] is building an upside-down kingdom where

- outcasts have their feet washed,
- the marginalized are welcomed,
- and dehumanized people feel humanized once again.
- Where truth is upheld, celebrated, and proclaimed.
- [And] where those who fall short of that truth are loved.”³⁶

“In God’s kingdom, there is forgiveness and healing and grace and freedom.”³⁷

So if you’ve felt intense shame over your sexuality, or over your sexual sins I hope that what I’ve said this afternoon hasn’t fed any feelings of worthlessness.

Instead I hope that you can catch a vision of the better story God offers. And I hope that you’ll turn toward Jesus. I hope that you’ll begin to see His mercy, His care, His love. Because “getting to know God’s love for you...and learning to respond to him with love in return...is...the purpose of your life.”³⁸

Let’s pray.

Resource to Recommend to the Church at the End of this Session

Kyle Harper. *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*. (Harvard University Press, 2013)

Kyle Harper. “The First Sexual Revolution: How Christianity Transformed the Ancient World.” *First Things*, January 2018.

Announcements

1. Next week there will be a change of order of topics. Next week, “Space at the Table: Homosexuality and Christian Faithfulness” and the following week, Gender and Trans*.
2. In a few minutes, Dylan and Spencer and I, along with my wife Janielle, are going to the Golden Pony. And if any of you want to go with us, we’d love for you to come along. It’ll give you a chance to ask questions you didn’t get to ask, or we didn’t get to cover. It’ll be informal. Let’s see it’s 6pm...we’ll probably walk over there around 6:20 or so. In the mean time, we’ll all hang around here for a bit if you want to chat some more.

¹ Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 41.

² Beth Felker Jones, *Faithful: A Theology of Sex* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 48.

³ Kyle Harper, "The First Sexual Revolution: How Christianity Transformed the Ancient World," *First Things*, January 2018.

⁴ Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 22–37; 55.

⁵ Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 64.

⁶ Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 295.

⁷ Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World*, 295; Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 26.

⁸ Demosthenes, *Against Neaera*

⁹ Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 46.

¹⁰ And sex was cheap. The price of sex with your slave was nothing, and the price of sex with a prostitute was about the price of a loaf of bread. So you can imagine, the crushing amount of sexual acts women had to perform to survive and to profit for their owners (Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 49). The horrendous fact of the matter is that the bodies of slaves could as well have been inert matter.

¹¹ Preston Sprinkle, *People to be Loved*, 56.

¹² Sprinkle, *People to be Loved*, 56.

¹³ Jones, *Faithful*, 49.

¹⁴ Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 74.

¹⁵ N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: HarperOne, 2018), 218.

¹⁶ Jones, *Faithful*, 42.

¹⁷ Harper, "The First Sexual Revolution."

¹⁸ Harper, "The First Sexual Revolution."

¹⁹ *pace*. Preston Sprinkle who cautions against using *porneia* as the umbrella term for all of the sexually illicit behavior identified in Leviticus 18 for the following reasons: (1) *Porneia* is not used in the Greek translation of Leviticus 18, "so how can we assume that it includes all of these laws? Maybe it does and maybe it doesn't...I have a hard time saying *porneia* must include same-sex relations without concrete evidence" (*People to be Loved*, 205 n1). (2) *Porneia* is a flexible word in the first century. "Sometimes it includes many different types of sexual sins, while other times it only includes adultery or other specific sins." As a result, Sprinkle concludes, "I find it tough to say that *porneia* clearly includes same-sex relations when Jesus uses it in Matt. 15:19" (*People to be Loved*, 205 n1).

²⁰ Harper, "The First Sexual Revolution."

²¹ Harper, “The First Sexual Revolution.” As Harper points out, “He could have ruled narrowly—along the lines that sex is a moral category like violence or greed, not a merely ethnic cultic norm like rules about shellfish and the Sabbath. He could have enjoined Gentile Christians to obey the old Jewish codes, which regulated sex in detailed ways. Instead, he offered a conceptual framework that, while drawing some of its language and logic from familiar sources, [and in doing this, Paul] offered an entirely fresh way of grounding sexual morality. His model of human sexuality [you see] flowed from a much grander vision than we find [any where else] in antiquity.”

²² In Matthew c5v32, Jesus teaches that “Anyone who divorces his wife except on the grounds of porneia, causes her to commit adultery.” So for Jesus, who was more strict about divorce and remarriage than the Old Testament law was, Jesus says porneia is so serious, so heinous, it constitutes grounds for divorce. So porneia violates the faithfulness of the marriage covenant. It denies the reality that God has created a one-flesh union between a husband and a wife. Porneia is to cheat. It’s to break faith with your spouse. In Matthew c5v18, Jesus is responding to an attack from some Pharisees. They’ve challenged him about hand washing. So Jesus says, “What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, porneia, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.” Jesus is connecting the heart to the body, the outer life, to mouths and hands and thighs and genitals. “Porneia is visible, bodily behavior produced by hearts captive to sin” (Jones, *Faithful*, 45). In 1 Thessalonians we see the glorious gospel truth that our “salvation doesn’t stop with our forgiveness. It moves on into our transformation” (Jones, *Faithful*, 46).

²³ Wright, *Paul*, 218.

²⁴ Jones, *Faithful*, 45, 46.

²⁵ Philip Yancey, *Rumors of Another World: What on Earth are We Missing?*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 85.

²⁶ Allberry, *Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?*, 30.

²⁷ Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 85.

²⁸ Harper, *From Shame to Sin*, 1.

²⁹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Vol. 1*, 112.

³⁰ Harper, “The First Sexual Revolution.”

³¹ Preston Sprinkle, “Preaching on Sexuality and Gender,” The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, www.centerforfaith.com.

³² Harper, “The First Sexual Revolution.”

³³ Jonathan Grant, *Divine Sex: A Compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hypersexualized Age* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015), 230.

³⁴ Jones, *Faithful*, 50.

³⁵ Jones, *Faithful*, 72.

³⁶ Sprinkle, *Embodied*, 23.

³⁷ Jones, *Faithful*, 72.

³⁸ Tushnet, *Tenderness*, 101.