

Changing Times

Allen Hirst

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I have an interesting topic today. Some of you might find it to be a little disturbing. Unfortunately, some of these you need to be aware of the status of some of the current events. If they have not already had an impact on you or your family, they likely will soon. You need to know about these events and the dangers they impose to you and your family. Some families in the church are already feeling the negative impact. We all need to be aware of the problem and plan for our defense. In the United States, the month of June is officially LGBT pride month. In 1999, President Bill Clinton first declared June, a gay and lesbian pride month. Then in 2009, Barack Obama declared June as an LGBT pride month.

According to the Library of Congress website, the intent of the declaration is to honor the Stonewall riots which started on June 28, 1969. The riots were pushed back against police raids on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar located in Manhattan borough in New York City. Since then, the gay rights movement has become more militant and has gained more power through government legislation and court decisions. For example, in the State of Washington, same sex marriage legislation was signed into law on February 13, 2012. In 2018 and 2019, the Washington State Supreme Court upheld a case filed in 2013 and decided by the Benton County Superior Court judge, in 2015 against Arlene's Flowers and Barronelle Stutzman for not providing service for a same sex wedding.

A recent Olympia, Washington AP headline on May 9, 2023 reported: "Trans-minors protected from parents under Washington law." The law allows minor children to seek shelter and gender mutilation without parental consent or knowledge. According to the article, minors seeking gender affirming care in Washington will be protected from intervention from estranged parents under a measure Governor Jay Inslee signed into law Tuesday. The Senate Bill 5599 was signed into law less than four weeks ago on May 9. "Estranged" generally means to be alienated or not getting along over differences of an opinion or for whatever reason. For example, if your minor leaves home and claims you are stopping them from taking drugs or surgery needing to affirm a sex change, the government, at their discretion, may or may not notify you. Either way, your permission or denial has no impact. Our government through physical force has the power to enforce permanent changes that will irreversibly damage your child's ability to have children or live a normal life.

God condemns homosexual conduct and sexual mutilation. As a society, our government is steadily legislating and enacting laws that are in conflict with the laws of God as they are described in the Bible. In our society, there are many sounding the alarm, but they are often mocked and belittled as hate mongers and spreading false rumors. In this sermon I want to start looking at applicable scriptures concerning God's instruction on the topic and hopefully help us find biblical solutions for our defense. If

you turn to Mark 12, our nation is in trouble. The trouble actually extends to the whole world. This nation has had the greatest modern influence around the world of any other nation in our lifetime. The problem is that this nation has rejected the basic Judeo-Christian laws that we were founded on. Those laws along with God's blessings have produced the most productive, civil, and free society that has likely ever existed. The biblical Judeo-Christian laws say that:

We are to love God with our whole heart and mind.

Worship in obedience to the Most High God is required to be our number one priority. Jesus' affirmation of this is recorded in Mark 12. Jesus was responding to a question by a scribe concerning which is the first commandment of all. Jesus' response was recorded in verse 29 and 30.

Mark 12:29 *Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.*

30) And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. (NKJV)

He followed up on the next verse saying, we are also *to love our neighbor as ourselves.*

31) And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ' There is no other commandment greater than these." (NKJV)

"Love" in the context of *loving our neighbor* has been defined within the churches of God as outgoing concern for others or the way of give rather than the way of get. From God's laws we know not to steal or covet what others have.

In verse 15 of Exodus 20, it says *you shall not steal.*

In Exodus 20 verse 17 it says *you shall not covet.*

Verse 12 tells us *to honor our parents, our fathers and our mothers.*

Exodus 20:12 *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. (NKJV)*

Jesus' condemnation of our lame excuses for not doing so is recorded in Matthew 15:4-6. For the sake of time, we're not going to turn there. His laws forbid any sexual activity outside of marriage. Verse 14 of Exodus 20 says *you shall not commit adultery.* Turn to Leviticus 18 God forbids the destruction of our defenseless children.

Leviticus 18:21 *And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. (NKJV)*

Passing newborn infants through the fire to Molech was a way of terminating the life of inconvenient babies. God also forbids homosexuality, in verse 22.

22) You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. (NKJV)

In the next chapter in Leviticus 19, God condemns disfiguring or marking our bodies with tattoos.

Leviticus 19:27 *You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard.*

28) You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD. (NKJV)

The next verse, verse 29, warns that illegitimate sexual activity will cause the population to become wicked and destroy the nation.

29) Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness. (NKJV)

In Deuteronomy 23; God forbids the sexual mutilation of our bodies.

Deuteronomy 23:1 *He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD. (NKJV)*

For a final scripture on this topic of mutilation, turn to Philippians 3:1.

Philippians 3:1 *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*

2) Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! (NKJV)

Some think that this phrase, the warning against mutilations is a warning against male circumcision. The reference to mutilations is not circumcisions but rather to punishing oneself through physical harm. Through Christ we are free from such punitive punishments and those punishments are an abomination to God. All of us are susceptible to one degree or another to the pulls of society. Part of our protection is our fellowship with those of like mind, concerning what is right and proper in thought and action. The problem becomes more difficult as society strays off course from what God teaches us is morally correct. Currently, as noted, for those of us in Washington State, a morality contrary to God's laws is being legislated into State law. Through the force of law in Washington State, parents are being dishonored. God given responsibility for parents to care for and protect their children are being legislatively hindered by the laws of the state and others across the nation. Under the Senate bill 5599, parents can be forcibly stopped from protecting their children from permanent harm. Beyond just sexually neutering your child, the treatment they might undergo will likely permanently change them. If the treatments are done before the end of puberty, the change is totally

irreversible. Most end up suffering from permanent depression and mental illness. Our families and children are under attack. Evil has obtained a beachhead from which to conquer. Each of us—our wives, husbands and children—are in danger of being groomed and seduced.

Those who practice disobedience of God's laws in legislation and who that put to a vote and protect those who do so, are in open, hostile rejection of Almighty God, the Most High God, the Creator God and Jesus Christ our elder brother, Lord and Mediator. As we know, there is only one Most High God and that is the same God Jesus Christ worshipped as His God. The Most High God is the God who created all things through Jesus Christ. According to Alan Knight in his book The Spirit of Antichrist; Against the Hebrew God of Creation, published in 2007, this rebellion against God in favor of determining for oneself whatever gender is desired, is nothing new. Some ancient literature written from the earliest times is still available and much has been translated into English. Some of that literature was written by Enheduanna who is credited as being the world's first author of anything written where the author is known. Enheduanna was the oldest of four children from Sargon Akkad. Sargon was also known as Sargon the Great or king of the universe and is credited with establishing the first empire of the world over 4000 years ago. He lived from 2334 to 2279 B.C. His daughter, Enheduanna was a priestess of the moon god. She lived in Ur a city of Samaria which was located in southern Iraq. She is venerated as the goddess of Inanna, an earlier name for the goddess Ishtar. Her poems and hymns were written to Inanna. Knight states that Inanna proclaims in the following words, her right to total freedom. He then quotes the poem Inanna and Ebih written by Enheduanna written from the book, Inanna, the Lady of Largest Heart. This is what Enheduanna is saying and she is attributing this to Inanna:

*To destroy, to build, to lift up, to put down are yours Inanna.
To turn man into woman, woman into man, are yours Inanna.*

Gender bending or sexual perversion is a major theme of witchcraft and idolatry with systems that are in open hostility and open rebellion against our Creator God, Yehovah. The verses from Enheduanna represent a direct rejection of Genesis 1:27 where it states that God created the first two humans, one is a male and the other is a separate and distinct human created from the male. Adam was created from the dust of the earth, Eve was created from the rib of the male, she was female. According to God they were created male and female. God assigned our male and female bodies and the roles He determined us to perform. When we step out of our roles, that is a serious problem to God. The story of Exodus contains stories of individuals stepping outside their roles and presumptuously taking on the role given to someone else. The story of Korah and his rebellion is such a story. The story is not an example of men trying to be women or women trying to be men. It is a story of God's reaction to people stepping outside their assigned roles, trying to take responsibility on themselves and authority that does not belong to them. At the end of the story, three Levites, Korah, Dathan and Abiram had stirred up the people including 250 of the prominent leaders, to challenge the leadership roles of Moses and Aaron. Turn to Numbers 16:3.

Numbers 16:3 *They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"* (NKJV)

Moses' reaction is a very stern rebuke. In verse 8.

8) *Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi:
9) Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them;
10) and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also?
11) Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD. And what is Aaron that you complain against him?"* (NKJV)

God's reaction was to destroy all three of the rebellious leaders, all 250 prominent men in Israel and the next day the people in Israel come back to complain to Moses and God's reaction there was to kill another 14,700 people.

God has made us male or female. By comparative analysis is a small thing that God has made you a man and not woman or made you a woman and not a man. Men and women are equal in our potential for being part of God's Kingdom as eternal spirit beings. In this flesh, being male or female is mutually exclusive. A person cannot be both male and female. God even condemns our fantasizing about being the opposite sex. For example, we are not to play silly games like cross dressing. Turn to Deuteronomy 22:5.

Deuteronomy 22:5 *A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.* (NKJV)

My goal here has been to demonstrate that what is being sanctioned and protected by government regulations concerning perverse sexual activity, either surgically or chemically gender bending or infanticide, either before or after birth is an abomination to God. Thinking that these types of activities are good and acceptable, actually go against nature and the thoughts of a sound mind. The opposite of a sound mind is a mentally ill mind. Mental illness is described as a debased mind in the New King James translation. In the King James version mental illness is translated as a reprobate mind. A debased mind is a result of rejecting God. The more we stray from God's laws, the more debased we become. Turn to Romans 1.

Romans 1:28 *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;* (NKJV)

Then he lists those attitudes and activities that are punishment for rejecting God.

- 29) being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,*
30) backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31) undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;
32) who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (NKJV)

The evil permeating our society continues to grow. Our challenge is that we must learn to reject the forces of evil permeating our society. Not only must we reject evil, we are also obligated to teach and lead others in the way of righteousness. Specifically, we are responsible for our children. To the men, as fathers, by nature you are the most qualified in the family to lead and protect your family. Wives if you have an intact family, with a husband, you increase your family's odds of being able to defend off evil by supporting your husband. Your support strengthens him. When you are contentious, when there are contentions between a husband and a wife, the husband is actually weakened. From the first time your child walks out your door, that child is susceptible to the influence of this world. In our day many of those influences are evil and seek to destroy or damage your children. When society's norms no longer protect your children, our only sure defense is the information and lessons of character they have learned to date. They will need all the strength of character that has already been set in their minds. The character strength with which they will stand firm normally comes from the father. Your child's most important influence of character strength is from the father.

In an April 3, 2003 article entitled, "Want Your Church to Grow? Then Bring in the Man", published on the internet by Baptist press at the web address, baptistpress.com, Under their resource library the article begins with the following quote:

Did you know that if a child is the first person in a household to become a Christian there is a 3.5% probability everyone in the household will follow. If the mother is the first person to become a Christian, there is a 17% probability that everyone in the house will follow. But if the father is first, there is a 93% probability everyone else in the household will follow.

At the bottom of the article, the statistics are referenced as coming from Focus on the Family Publishing. Also do not forget the quote I referenced in a previous sermon in an interview from Arthur Brooks. He said in that interview that people of all religions want their children to grow up in their faith. The most important influence, regardless of the religion, is the father of the household. He must be seen practicing the faith and doing what is expected. *The father is the most important influence.*

The evil forces that are influencing our society are hard at work to emasculate men and destroy the family structure. A stark example of that is what happened to the black communities in our country. Currently 72% of black children are born to unmarried mothers. Before 1960, the majority of black women were married before having children. Black children were as likely to grow up in a two-parent home as whites. Our governments welfare policies of financially rewarding women for having children out of wedlock and keeping the father outside the household has damaged the cohesiveness of black families. Instead of cementing families, government policies have destroyed the underpinnings of the family structure. Black families were initially more vulnerable to government welfare policies because as a group in the 1960's, they were generally less financially affluent than those who were white. The welfare system was perceived by the blacks as providing better financial stability. Currently, as a result of these policies, black homicide rates are 7-8 times more than homicide rates among whites. That means for 1 white killed in a homicide, 7 or 8 blacks are killed. Because black boys are almost exclusively by single mothers, without a father, they grow up with feminized emotions. They have not had the influence of a father to teach them to control their emotions. By not controlling their emotions, they overreact to stress and insults. In order to protect their undisciplined ego, they resort to that natural male heart which is to conquer. They do that by destroying their offender.

The way of God and righteousness does not get respect. Rather, we must show respect. We must learn righteousness. A couple weeks ago I had the opportunity to speak at a church of God men's Northwest weekend retreat. My topic was man's responsibilities and influence in the family and men's roles as protectors and leaders within our families. My statements to the men were,

As a man of our society, we are by nature the most impactful teachers of righteousness. For the benefit of those we love—our families, our children, our wives and our friends—we must take care to walk the walk of righteousness and not just “talk the walk”.

For people who have left the church, the number one reason is their observation of hypocrisy within the church. The same may also be true within our families. Our greatest influence for our families and our friends is to faithfully practice the ways of righteousness. On the other hand, we must remember that even under the best circumstances there will be losses. Not everyone in all of our families will continue in righteousness. We all hope for “all”, but that is not the reality that we see in scriptures.

For example, Ishmael and Isaac both had the same father. Abraham loved Ishmael. Even with all the love and direction from Abraham, Ishmael chose to reject God. Jacob and Esau had the same mother and father. Jacob followed God, Esau did not. We must hate or condemn those that mistakes. The way life goes, we can expect ourselves and those that we love to make mistakes. Some of those mistakes will have horrible consequences. Remember not to condemn and give up on those who make mistakes. Remember the example of the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul was like a wolf, persecuting the church and God brought him to repentance.

Another example is King David who took another man's wife and then had the man killed. A cruel and vicious set of sins, yet God allowed him to repent. We must stay strong and confident that God knows what He's doing and that the trials we endure are for our good. Our trials are nothing compared to the potential reward from God. Evil forces and rebellion against God are seeking to destroy us and our families. We need to strengthen our bonds among ourselves. We need to be watching out for each other. Have you ever wondered how strong Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego would have been if they had to stand there alone in front of the king? We see from the example from Daniel it was possible, they could have stood alone and still resisted the king. But based on my experience I suspect they were strengthened by each other.

We are bound together as a family by God's Holy Spirit. If we have God's Holy Spirit, then we are children of God and brethren among ourselves, together and brethren with our elder brother, Jesus Christ. We are in the midst of challenging times. We may be on the cusp of horribly perilous times. Jesus said that the decisions concerning whether to follow or rebel against God will cause family members to turn against each other. As those circumstances develop, we must stand strong in our faith in God and continue to do our best to lead those we love. We must remain strong for our families and build those defensive walls by our words and examples of righteousness.