

Turned Over to Sin Romans 1:24-27

Introduction

Kelly Monroe Kullberg – was the founder of the Veritas Forum – an organization that sought to bring in to Ivy league institutions some of the deeper Christian thinkers of the day - - to address various topics from a Christian perspective

She was once asked to fill in for a speaker she had lined up for a seminar to be given at a state University in NY – the topic advertised was *the Bible and feminism*

It was a hostile crowd

At one point in her talk - she addressed the issue of homosexuality – and how Christianity is often seen by LGBT activists as something oppressive and tyrannical to their desires

Kelly Monroe Kullberg: 'Some of you want a sound bite to fuel your sense that Christianity is oppressive. I wish you could see that lies are oppressive and that Jesus is freedom.'

Kullberg: 'I'm not pushing morality on anyone. The point is that God, like a loving father, doesn't want His children used or exploited. His word says that we're not meant to love and then leave, or to be left, repeatedly. Regarding gender, if you think about our anatomies, there's a rather obvious, um, design there. Like pieces of a puzzle fitting together. Naturally, we'd see disease and confusion when design is repeatedly abused, and we'd see wellness where design is respected. God wants us to live well in the body.'

Lies are oppressive / truth leads to freedom

John 8:32 - 'and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

There is no greater friend of man than the truth as it is found in the Christian faith

We come to a rather contentious passage in the book of Romans - - - as it pertains to discussions about homosexuality in our day and age

The Apostle Paul asserts that homosexual behavior is unnatural – goes against God's created design for humanity – and is in fact evidence of God turning a society or people over to their sinful desires

3 times in this next section [vv. 24-28] – Paul refers to God abandoning or giving people over to their sin and perversion

It's an important passage if we wish to understand our world / our own day and age

There is a progression that Paul lays out

Paul said the unbeliever is 'without excuse' [v. 20] – in his turning from God to various false religions and idolatries

If man willingly suppresses the truth about God - - - God judicially abandons the sinner to his sin

James Boice: 'We think that by running away from God we will be happy, wild, and free. But it doesn't work out that way . . . instead of freedom we find the debilitating bondage of sin.'

Rosaria Butterfield was a radical feminist homosexual – taught Lesbian studies at Syracuse University – then became a Christian – broke up with her Lesbian lover - - - ultimately married a guy

She refers to the LGBT narrative as one of the great lies of today

Rosaria Butterfield: 'The normalization of homosexuality is the central controlling narrative of our anti-Christian age, so we must confront the question head-on. Is it true? Is homosexuality normal?'

What she means by that – is that we live in a day and age - - - in which practices that once were roundly rejected by the vast majority of society as deviant - - - are now trumpeted as normal - - - and even to be celebrated as diversity

The issue has overtaken the church and society by storm

We are living in the midst of a revolutionary sea-change of cultural values

2015 – a liberal Supreme Court – legalized homosexual marriage

In churches - - - LGBTQ ideology has divided many denominations [in the last 20 years]: Episcopal Church USA, ELCA, PCUSA), Mennonite Church USA, United Methodist, Church of the Brethren, RCA

i.e. – the lie is trumpeted so loudly and so forcefully that many professing Christians are not sure what to think

Christian musician Lauren Daigle was once asked if she 'felt' that homosexuality was a sin -- - said she was not sure

Is homosexuality a sin? / Can you be a Christian homosexual?

In this passage – Paul says homosexuality in a culture is evidence of God turning a society over to its sin

God in wrath is giving humanity over to what it has chosen in rebellion against Him

John MacArthur: 'He says in Romans 1, "Do you see My judgment? You have had a sexual revolution. That means I've taken My hands off of you. In some way, I'm no longer restraining you; I'm letting you go the way your sins are taking you, without any restraint. You've had a sexual revolution, which is so embedded that people think it's normal. Then you had a homosexual revolution: lesbianism and male homosexuality. And then you had a revolution of insanity so that people now think things are true that are absolutely, obviously, patently, clearly not true. Look at what's happening to your society. Keep going down this road, and that wrath of abandonment ultimately becomes eternal wrath." It's almost as if we're standing at the gates of hell warning people, "You can't keep going that way."

How do we make sense of this world we find ourselves in? / all the sexual / gender confusion

Romans 1 is key and a battleground passage

I. Embracing Lies - vv. 24-25

Here we come to the first Judicial abandonment – 'God gave them over'

People suppress the truth [v. 18] - - - about God - - - God gives them over to their sin

To the lusts of their hearts / impurity - - - various kinds of sexual sins – Paul will become more specific on in vv. 26, 27

We note a progression or chain of events - - - it begins with suppression of revealed knowledge about God – which leads to idolatry and perversions of worship – which then leads to the perversion of sexual expression

When people reject the truth - - that leaves a void in their life – they will fill it in with something – some false religion / some false god / some cause

God giving someone over = a judicial abandonment

Judicial abandonment does not mean that a person or group of people are irredeemable

In fact – Paul spoke very clearly to the idea that some of the Corinthians were homosexuals before they became Christians – just like Rosaria Butterfield

They are not Christian homosexuals - - - they are former homosexuals who were now Christians

Note – how Paul refers to this

I Corinthians 6:9-10 - 'Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.'

Paul says – there is no such thing as a Christian homosexual / a gay church – anymore than you can be a Christian fornicator

If someone comes up and says – ‘Hi – I’m a Christian fornicator’ - - - we would say – well – I hope you have repented - - - b/c that is not what a Christian is – a Christian is a new creature in Christ

Someone might stumble and fall into sin - - - but if they are truly born again - - - they can’t stay in a pattern of sin - - - and they invite the discipline of the Lord into their lives

Thomas Watson: 'It is not falling into water that drowns, but lying in it. It is not falling into sin that damns but lying in it.'

I Corinthians 6:11 - 'And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.'

Among the Corinthians were former homosexuals - - they left it behind

This is a contentious issue today / highly debated

Canada in 2022 – passed a law into effect that essentially criminalizes what it calls any ‘conversion therapy’ – in the case of homosexuals / transgenders / etc.

i.e. – it’s illegal to seek to change a person’s ‘sexual orientation’ – ‘gender identity’ / etc.

Why?

The law has no quarrel with someone trying to convert an adulterer or pornographer or thief - - - but the homosexual is singled out as being a sinful behavior under legal protection – you must leave such alone [that’s Canada]

We are seeing this period of time in which God is turning society over to its sin

The punishment is the sin itself – the abandonment – letting the sinner have the fill of his sin and its outcome

A Time magazine article written at the height of the AIDS epidemic [which hit the homosexual community pretty hard] quoted a lady who was well known advocating for sexual abandon – but she seemed to recognize cracks in her position

Erica Jong: 'It's hard enough to find attractive, single men without having to quiz them on their history of bisexuality and drug use, demand blood test results and thrust condoms into their hands. Wouldn't it be easier to give up sex altogether and join some religious order?'

She's on the right track - - - but over shoots

We would say: How about - - - respect the institution of marriage as given by the Creator - - - and practice monogamy – one man / one woman in the covenant of marriage – embracing the God of Scripture

In judicial abandonment – there is a kind of mercy - - - that may lead the sinner to see the truth the hard way

The Father of the prodigal son – gave him his money and let him go

Ultimately – the son sees the folly of his way - - - when he encounters the hardships of his choices

That is how our world works - - - God designed it to be that way

If we make sinful and foolish choices - - - we come up against a moral order

Charles Cranfield: 'We suggest then that Paul's meaning is neither that these men fell out of the hands of God . . . nor that God washed His hands of them; but rather that this delivering them up was a deliberate act of judgment and mercy on the part of the God who smites in order to heal [Is. 9:22], and that throughout the time of their God-forsakenness God is still concerned with them and dealing with them.'

John 3:16 – is still true

We can say to the homosexual – 'God loves you – and wants you to turn from this – embrace Jesus - - - but the road you're on is leading you to hell

Some people have to learn the truth the hard way - - - by being exposed to the depths of their own sin – seeing the folly of the lie they have embraced

In a sense – that is the story of the whole human race - from Adam and Eve forward

The good news of the gospel is that we don't have to stay in the garbage dump of sin - - - there is a way out - - - it's the way of salvation / gospel of Jesus Christ

MacArthur: 'The divine abandonment of men to their sin about which Paul speaks here is not eternal abandonment. As long as sinful men are alive, God provides opportunity for their salvation. That is the marvelous good news of God's grace.'

II. Homosexuality - vv. 26-27

Here Paul spells out in language that is pretty hard to miss

Women turned from the natural function / men turned from the natural function of the woman / etc.

Paul sees the sin of homosexuality as being unnatural / degrading to the body

There are normal and natural appetites of the human body - - - one is for the sexual relationship

In fact – that very desire is what allows the human race to flourish and increase in number

It's why we are here today

God made male and female - - - created the marriage union - - - brought Adam and Eve together – and told them to be fruitful and multiply

Marriage / sex / babies - - - all part of God's good design – and go together biologically / naturally - - - it takes a man and a woman to produce a baby

In fact – God refers to the marriage relationship in Gen. 2 – as a one flesh relationship

Genesis 2:24 - 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.'

This refers to the sexual relationship between a man and a woman – it's according to nature

Now – it can be abused and misused: adultery / fornication / pornography

Paul shows this in I Corinthians

I Corinthians 6:16 - 'Do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For he says, "The two will become one flesh."

There the point is - - don't become one flesh with someone you are not married to

Some scholars picked up on this theme of ‘one flesh’ – and used it in a legal analysis of the concept of gay marriage

The study was titled: ‘What is marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense’

It was published in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* [2012] – before gay marriage hit the supreme court

They make the point that marriage between a man and a woman creates an organic union where the body of male and female come together to fulfill a biological function - - - creating another human being.

We have biological systems in our world – that function together in concert to produce certain ends

Your own body is a biological system – you have a heart that pumps blood / you have lungs to take in oxygen – you have a liver / a pancreas - - - all of these organs function together in a biological unity to fulfill a biological purpose: to keep you alive

There is a design there / purpose

When God made man and woman – there was a design and purpose

[Girgis, Anderson, George]: ‘Your organs are one body because they are coordinated for a single biological purpose of the whole they form together: sustaining your biological life. Just so, for two individuals to unite organically, their bodies must coordinate toward a common biological end of the whole that they form together. When they do so they do not just touch or interlock. Their union is not just felt, or metaphorical. It is as real as the union of a single body’s parts.’ [What is Marriage? p. 25]

It is only when the body of a man and woman come together – can it be said that a real union takes place biologically – evidenced by the fact that a child can come from it

In fact – if all practiced homosexuality - - - the human species would die off in a little over a 100 years.

Human anatomy itself points to what is natural / unnatural

While Homosexuality does not lead by nature to babies - - - that does not stop some from pursuing that aspect of life – thru adoption – or surrogate births

Writer Allie Beth Stuckey says this is another part of the abomination of the issue - - - with our technology and lack of morals - - - two men - - - can go to a fertility clinic – pick out a

genetically suitable egg - - - have the fertilized egg - zygote placed within the womb of a surrogate mother - - - who carries that baby to term for the two men [and is well paid for her services]

Allie Beth makes the point that we are purposely bringing into the world motherless children - - - not only in their upbringing - - - but we strip away from them the birth mother – which a child has inevitably thru nature bonded with over the period of pregnancy

When a child is born - - - the sound of his mother's voice is a comfort to him - - - he already knows this person

He knows her routine – if she listens to Beethoven or Taylor Swift or John MacArthur [not likely]

We – in our self-aggrandized wisdom – no big deal - - - that baby doesn't need to hear his mother's voice ever again - - - he's got two dudes to raise him

There is a psychological toll that is placed upon children – thru all of this monkeying with God's order and design

Homosexuality has been around a long time – not normally gaining the status of acceptable human behavior in society

Luther gives us some insight into 16th century Germany in his comments on Sodom and Gomorrah – Genesis 19

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were leveled by God [burned to the ground] - - - in God's judgment upon them for rampant homosexuality – Gen. 19

Luther: 'Moses proceeds with a description of a terrible sin. I, for my part do not enjoy dealing with this passage, because so far the ears of the Germans are innocent of and uncontaminated by this monstrous depravity; for even though this disgrace, like other sins has crept in through an ungodly soldier and a lewd merchant, still the rest of the people are unaware of what is being done in secret.'

In our day and age – its thrust in front of us - - - gay pride parades / pride month / the rainbow flag / it's in our government / it's in our schools / it's on tv / movies / everywhere

Over 4000 schools in the US host gender and sexuality clubs

Asking kids – 'Do you feel like a boy or a girl?'

Rosaria Butterfield: 'It all comes down to this: Do your feelings know you best, or does the God who made you? True Christians believe God's Word over their feelings.'

MacArthur: 'In America we're seeing an aggressive expansion of this sin . . . It's everywhere. The President, leaders of the nation, the Supreme Court, all affirm the nobility and morality of it.'

How did this happen?

I John 5:19 - 'We know that we are of God and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.'

Satan is a liar / the father of lies

Paul calls homosexuality a sin against nature [Romans 1]

Lev. 18 – mentions it as an abomination among the Canaanite peoples – that was not to be practiced by God's people

Leviticus 18:22 - 'You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.'

Leviticus 18:24 - 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.'

In fact – God said this was one of the reasons he was handing the Canaanites over to judgment / giving the land to the Israelites

The abominations of idolatry / homosexuality / child sacrifice / bestiality / etc.

Jude 6, 7 – refers to the sin of Sodom as going after strange flesh

Conclusion

Truth is under attack

We are to be vigilant – stand on the truth of God's

Isaiah 40:8 - 'The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.'

Certain churches and church leaders cave to the lies of the world - - - and the LGBT lobby on these issues

Why? It's easier

It's like a frazzled parent – whose child is throwing a tantrum – it's just easier to give them the toy – than continue to listen to the fuss he's making – or to spank him

MacArthur: 'This culture is making critical thinking an exhausting battle. They just continually hit us with a barrage of lies and deception, with the notion that they can wear out our will to fight; and it works.'

Truth remains – Jesus once said

John 8:47 - 'He who is of *God* hears the words of *God*.'